

# ESSAYS



NIKI LABAKI PHILIPPOV



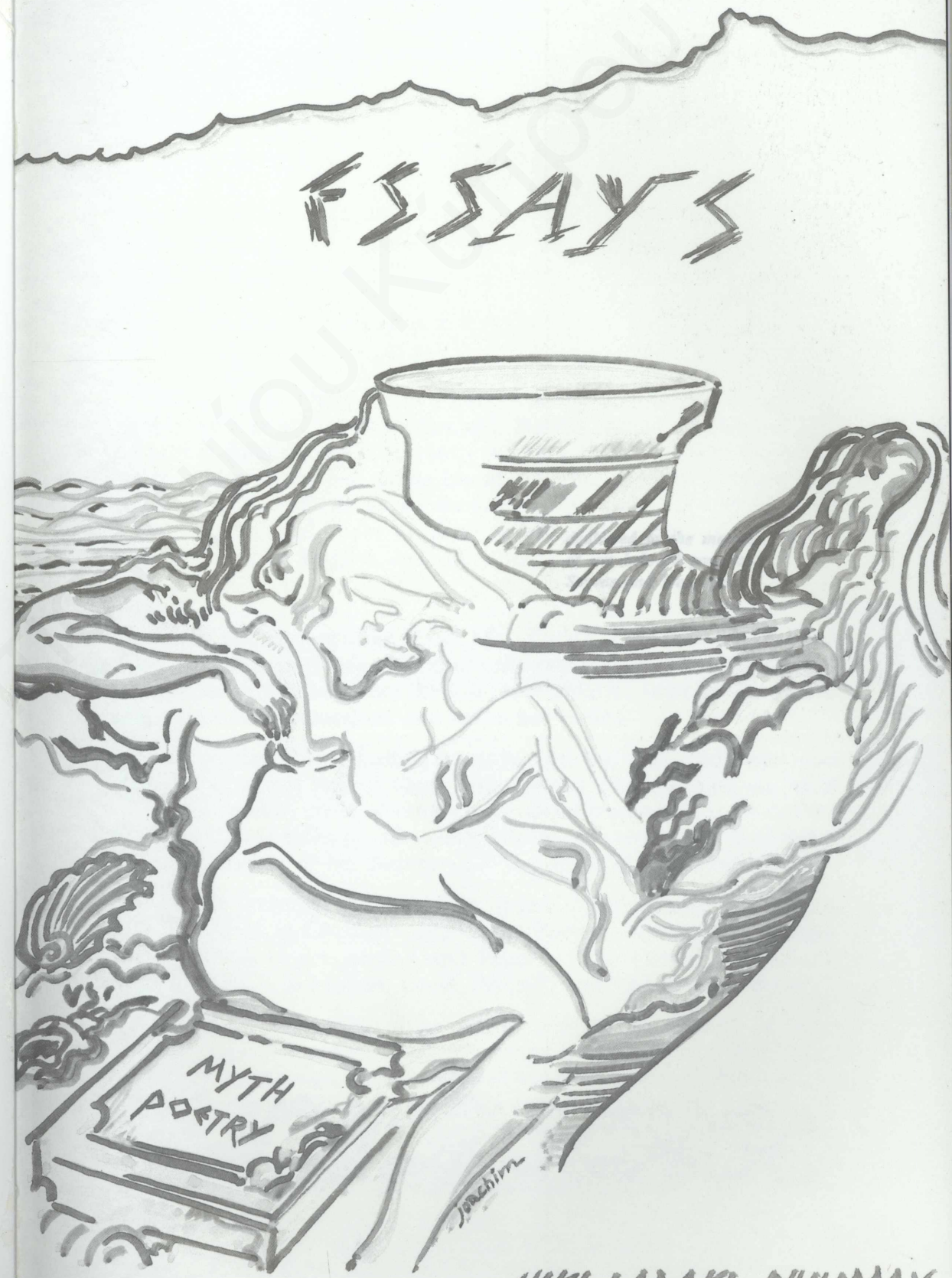


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LITERARY SOCIETIES

- *Member of the Executive Committee of Cyprus PEN.*
- *Member of the National Society of Greek Writers of Cyprus.*
- *Member of the National Society of Greek Writers of Athens.*
- *Member of the International Society for Contemporary Literature and Theatre, London.*

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NIKI LABAKI PHILIPPOU



## PREFACE

Mrs. Siki Ladaki Philippou is a lady of many talents and substantial achievements as a Cypriot intellectual. Having earned degrees in Classics and in English, she is currently working as Secretary to the Ministry of Education in her native island, Cyprus. Happily married, and a devoted mother of two grown daughters, Mrs. Ladaki has a well-known reputation with several books of verse to her credit. Her lyrics have appeared in English and other translations. The title of her new book, *Essays*, is different, as its title suggests, its purpose is to

*dedicated to the memory  
of my beloved parents  
Savvas and Neophyta*

I will not say anything about Mrs. Ladaki's sensitive and refined style in this brief Preface, because the readers will have the chance to judge for themselves from the few representative samples she quotes. I will quote her discussions and make her points.

On reading Mrs. Ladaki's essays, articles, and addresses one feels that she is one of those rare persons who combine the roles of poet, creator, critic of poetry, and social commentator on crucial issues. These challenge, stimulate, inspire, or even hurt a thoughtful person of her background and sense of belonging.

The book features the following items: "Melancholy in Cypriot Poetry", "Poetry as a Language of Understanding and Peace", "The Contribution of the Woman to Modern Greek Poetry", and "Science and Poetry".

Though her telling titles readily suggest the 'themes' of Mrs. Ladaki's papers, I cannot resist the temptation of offering here words to emphasize the significance and validity of her sound observations,

and to express my admiration for her courage and conviction in her research and findings. Insights from her work are a



dedicated to the memory  
of my beloved parents  
Zavara and Neophytos



## PREFACE

Niki Ladaki Philippou is a lady of many talents and substantial achievements as a Cypriot intellectual. Having earned degrees in Classics and in English, she is currently working as Secretary to the Minister of Education in her native island, Cyprus. Happily married, and the proud mother of two grown daughters, Mrs Ladaki is a well-known poetess with several books of verse to her credit. Some of her lyrics have appeared in English and other translations. The nature of her present book, *Essays*, is different, as its title implies, and so is its purpose.

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By reading Mrs Ladaki's essays, articles, and addresses one realizes that she is one of those rare persons who combine the roles of literary creator, critic of poetry, and social commentator on crucial issues, as these challenge, stimulate, inspire, or even hurt a thoughtful and alert woman of her background and sense of belonging.

*Essays* features the following items: "Melancholy in Cypriot Poetry", "Myth in Contemporary Greek Poetry", "Poetry as a Language of Mutual Understanding and Peace", "The Contribution of the Cypriot Woman to Modern Greek Poetry", and "Science and Poetry".

Although her telling titles readily suggest the 'theses' of Mrs Ladaki's papers, I cannot resist the temptation of offering here some comments on the significance and validity of her sound observations, for her work does not belabour the obvious, and does not merely enumerate facts and data to express views in a journalistic fashion. On the contrary, tapping on her erudition and scholarly training, and adding to her objective findings insights from her own function as a



literary creator the authoress achieves a commendable balance between factual truth and an intuitive understanding of matters.

Her first essay offers a panorama of Cypriot verse from remote antiquity to the turbulent and uncertain present, showing in the process that historical realities have conditioned the Cypriot poet, in general, to write bardic verse of a contemplative mood wherein national adventures and collective suffering necessitate resort to expressions of melancholy — a state of the mind and of the psyche, at the same time individual and collective. Still, this serene sadness is far from negative or pathetic despair. The poet does not brood, does not sulk, in Cyprus. Even his occasional lament is heard against the living sounds of life, for life goes on, and hope sustains it on an island that has endured, because an existence of endless struggles against all manner of odds seems to have been its destiny. The Cypriot has been schooled by adversity, and he knows how to oppose adversity, even how to thrive in it.

Myth has been the flesh and bones of Greek poetry ever since the legendary times of Homer, she tells us in her second long piece. Again, beginning with a synthetic, overall, picture Mrs Ladaki moves on to analytical details reaching up to the present with Elytis and other creators, recreators, and users of myth — an ancient myth or a contemporary one, which, however, is not just a fable but a crystalized record of human experience with perennial dimensions.

In between these two pieces, we find a brief presentation of Nobel-Prize winner Odysseus Elytis. As an islander, a citizen of “sea-girt” Cyprus, the authoress stresses the fact that he is the poet of the Aegean, *par excellence* — of a Greek watery space which extends up to her island home, surrounds it, and offers it a Greek identity. Equally short is her address to the International Meeting of Writers where, in a straightforward and economic way Mrs Ladaki emphasized the role of the poet as a bridge-maker and, thus, peace-maker among the nations of the world.

Her third long essay, once more starting with universals and concluding with specifics, examines the contribution of women poets to Greek poetry — to which, of course, Cypriot verse is a local manifestation. Though a Cypriot poetess often has something special to say, her artistic creation does surpass the narrow cultural boundaries

of her home, and expresses concerns of Hellenism, in general, and even universal truths about the human condition. Both, subject and object in Cypriot verse, I might add that the gifted Cypriot woman has substantially contributed to the fiction and the poetry of Cyprus. Indeed, any objective researcher and student will readily admit that women authors are in the forefront of all kinds of creative endeavour in their island.

“Science and Poetry” — one of the longest and best of her studies — offers a thesis comparable to Shelley’s celebrated dictum, ‘Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world’. Solitary and determined in their individual search for truth, both, poet and scientist follow separate paths, while, unwittingly or in full consciousness, both help each other. The concrete data established by the scientist assist the poet in his search for universal values and truths. And vice-versa: the poet’s comprehensive preoccupation with humanity’s problems of existence and behaviour, intrigues and challenges the scientist to seek logical reasons offering understanding and suggesting solutions. The universal encompasses the specific; but the mind of man cannot grasp the universal before fully realizing the nature and function of the specific.

Niki Ladaki Philippou knows what she is talking about. She alludes to appropriate names, titles, and cultural details to illustrate her points and support her views. She argues firmly, though without polemics. She is patriotic without being chauvinistic. Her preferences are stated clearly, though without prejudice or dogmatism — a salutary practice for an intellectual in Cyprus where the fierce individualism of some artists and thinkers makes them underscore their few and petty differences at the expense of emphasizing their many and characteristic similarities.

Linguists have taught us that a writer’s language and style are determined by the form and system taken and formed by his thinking process, his conceptualization of the world about him. Thus, “structures” of thought are reflected in “structures” of expression. As a native speaker of Greek, and an intellectual nourished in a Greek cultural milieu, the essayist thinks and, conversely, writes in a typically-Greek fashion. The translation of her literal expression into English cannot, of necessity, have the naturalness and specific characteristics found



in a comparable text written by a native speaker of English, whose linguistic structures and cultural conditioners are different by definition. Mrs Ladaki the translator would have to betray Mrs Ladaki the essayist if the former were to completely 'Anglicize' the language and style of the latter. To boot, the authoress is a poetess as well, and that fact has decisively conditioned the way she perceives, conceptualizes, and expresses matters. But all these minutiae have little bearing on the purpose of Niki Ladaki Philippou's *Essays*. These unassuming pieces of wisdom and truth send a message from Cyprus to sympathetic receivers in all parts of the world. Their medium (translation) in this case is not their message: their candor and lyrical vibration are. The author is not addressing the erudite scholar in the Anglophone world: she is addressing Man, wherever he lives, whatever dialect he uses.

I am proud to present and introduce here the essays of a former student and a cherished friend of mine.

Professor M. B. Raizis  
The University of Athens

## MELANCHOLY IN CYPRIOT POETRY

Our moments of joy are so private and at the same time so absolutely personal that we keep them to ourselves, whereas there is no pain, no tears shed by a poet that fail to have some value in the long course of literary creativity. Whatever is worth preserving is registered by the creative mind and then realized in some art form. And in order that one should understand these moments in life that have been given a special value, one needs neither an index nor a guide. Each individual can understand them as he wishes, as he lives and as they suit his particular character.

Melancholy has no peculiar or autonomous poetic substratum, nor is it a self-sufficient source of poetry. Melancholy is something that exists wherever any pressure or pain exists or wherever any other form of concrete human experience is created. Melancholy is something that we all know but is precisely that which none of us can describe exhaustively. For it to exist there must be depth and for it to last there must be permanence. When the way is familiar there is no difficulty of approach nor any obstacle to acceptance. Thus poetry, at least in its relation to melancholy, adapts itself to the particular case which we are considering and which covers our personal experience. The creative artist's success is really measured by the degree in which his experience can come to terms with the experience of his reader and I maintain that in the case of melancholy this goal can be achieved more completely than in any other case.

The particular state of mind of a poet which is part of his own emotional world has the advantage of being adaptable to every individual. The poetry of melancholy is an act of adaptation. And it is one of the few occasions when the reader actually shares in the experience of the creative artist.

When the verse stops, the mind does not exist, nor does the meaning, nor the inspiration nor the complication. Each particular



moment is subject to interpretation and can take on new dimensions in the mind of the reader. It can stimulate other emotions which the poet himself might perhaps never have been able to direct.

That is why we say that melancholy is always as it were a basic ingredient, a necessity, a prerequisite for the existence of poetry. It is made up of those elements which are permanent, which exist in time, which circulate and which we encounter as everyday incidents — our friend's "Good morning" or a cheerful word.

Melancholy, as we see it, not against the loud roar of events, is something simple, peaceful and beautiful that proceeds from the dark folds of pain but does not end in the chaos of doubt.

Thus melancholy is the best source of inspiration in every age and at every time. So it would be strange indeed if melancholy had left the poet in Cyprus untouched, and we must admit that Cypriot poets express melancholy in their writings and that Cypriot poetry has been enriched by this very source. Thus everything that we have said has its particular shape and variation in the body of Cypriot poetry. Thus in the picture that we have tried to give is also purely and simply an example of what may exist in any as yet unexamined poetic text, in any, even casual poetic composition.

When the poet feels melancholy he transfers this feeling to his verses and thus it is as if the reader receives a personal letter from him. After the poet has begun to think of something concrete he finds that things that he has thought of and has not been able to express, things that he has wanted and has not been able to hear, things that he has desired and has not been able to possess, that all these things take on words and become poems. Melancholy in poetry, is utilized by the poet to express his own particular psychic make-up, which cannot be regarded as something alien to the Cypriot people.

We are basically people with a profound emotional substratum with sudden and intense changes of mood people constantly sleeping and waking, rising and going to bed happy or sad.

This nation has produced poets that correspond exactly to it in character, and the Cypriot poet writes with a melancholy that reflects

and acknowledges the melancholy of his people, from within the very nation with which he shares it.

It is profound melancholy, a powerful melancholy we find in Nicos Kranidiotis:

*Once more they fly in my spirit  
the black crows.  
Rain will fall again  
and the evenings robe themselves in melancholy.  
On the low horizons, pallid  
the Moon chases her dreams  
and from the antennae of the mournful tree  
the earth's awe rises to the stars...  
Under my trembling roof  
my dreams have come like swallows.  
Shy, fearful and in flocks  
The backbirds of a lost Spring...  
Outside on the ground of portent of death  
keeps tired hope company.  
The resisting wind tries  
the gloomy cloak of evening  
and bangs loudly on the outer doors of tombs.  
I hear the threnody of the hours! Liquid darkness  
drips bitterly upon the eyelid of Pain!  
And the boredom of heaven slips and enters  
Thick and muddy within my heart...  
This evening!  
This evening, O Lord, my God,  
let one ray of your light come and warm me  
one ray of your light, the black swallows...*

The poet is a man, and that means that he is an active factor in his human situation. He expresses his social and individual being in its every aspect; he is a receiver of those things that go on around him while at the same time he acts as a spring to those feelings that are created by the circumstances in which he finds himself. What he writes emerges from the harmony of the world—the starting point of all aesthetics—but emerges under the watchful eye of the creative imagination



and the responsible aesthetic conscience, becoming a conscious poetic creation. And poetry in the most general sense of the term would seem to be an unending road along which our spirit progresses towards itself, seeking out its most intimate and personal light.

In Cyprus this poet begins his journey with the relief votive offerings or epitaphs of the ancient city of Marion and Amathus and becomes the poet who awaits the Fact of Death with bitterness in the epitaph from Marion:

*O, passer-by, for me, alas  
the path of life has ended.  
And now you see how sad  
how inexorable, how hostile is that end.  
All my allotted span  
I spent, poor wretch, sailing inhospitable seas  
at the gunwale of my boat  
till the thin thread of my fate was exhausted.  
My sweet wife was once all my joy—  
her fate and the years spared the bitter eares  
and left me deprived of her sweet comfort.  
Dead too the goddesses of death  
hold my child in his tomb  
and grief once more surrounds his loss,  
the unhappiness granted him by the Fates.*

Melancholy continues to maintain its place on the Cyprian Parnassus at whatever stage in its history, but in the form of creative melancholy and not that melancholy which leads to a death-wish. And this is true whether it be ancient Cypriot poetry, Byzantine religious poetry, medieval love poetry or folk songs. It is worth noting at this point that in our folk poetry there are none of the dirges that are so characteristic of the poetry of Mani in Sparta. The only instance is to be found in the happy "Wedding Song" in which, when the girl takes leave of her mother, there is a separate section of sadness which one cannot really call a dirge but rather a sudden and passing cloud of melancholy. In dialect poetry there is again melancholy, which eventually finds its place in contemporary Cypriot poetry.

It would be an omission if we were not to make a brief survey of the history of poetry in Cyprus, always stressing the human element of melancholy, a melancholy however transformed into a refined form of pessimism.

Cultural life in Cyprus began in Homeric times. Since then all types of poetry have been cultivated in the island of the goddess of love.

The Homeric Hymns to Aphrodite were most probably connected with the worship of the goddess in Cyprus. One of the poets of Cyprus, the seer Euclus, whom tradition would place in time before Homer, prophesies, in some verses preserved by the traveller Pausanias, the birth of Homer in Salamis.

*And then a great  
and glorious singer will be born  
in sea-girt Cyprus  
Themisto, chosen of the chosen  
shall bear this offspring.  
This offspring born  
in barren field alone  
far from the riches of Salamis  
shall leave Cyprus behind  
and upon the waves  
shall to great Greece sail  
first to sing the dark  
patterns of her fate.  
Divine song that shall prove him  
young in age, alive in death.*

Analogous to these cultural expressions of the worship of Aphrodite, and in the same period i.e. the 8th and 7th centuries B.C., epic poetry began to develop in Cyprus with Stasinus as its main exponent. The "Cypria" which are attributed to this poet and are poems that relate events before the Trojan War and which constitute a sort of introduction to the "Iliad" of Homer. Unfortunately, however, like the other works of ancient Cypriots, they have not survived, and all we have of them to-day is fragments. In these fragments, however, the presence



of the poet is always powerful, his imagination lyrical and his philosophic temperament obvious, sometimes tinged with melancholy.

In the fifth century B.C. the lyrical poet Pindar refers to the development of lyrical poetry and of music in Cyprus in connection with Cinyras, King of Paphos, that fine patron of the arts, Euripides too speaks of refecent in a famous chorus from "The Bacchae":

*O to set foot on Aphrodite's island,  
On Cyprus, haunted by the Loves, who enchant  
Brief life with sweetness; or in that strange land  
Whose fertile river carves a hundred channels  
To enrich her rainless sand;  
Or where the sacred pastures of Olympus slant  
Down to Pieria, where the Muses dwell—  
Take me, O Bromius, take me and inspire  
Laughter and worship! There our holy spell  
And ecstasy are welcome; there the gentle band  
Of Graces have their home, and sweet Desire.  
Dionysus, son of Zeus, delights in banquets;  
And his dear love is Peace, giver of wealth,  
Saviour of young men's lives—a goddess rare!  
In wine, his gift that charms all griefs away,  
Alike both rich and poor may have their part.  
His enemy is the man who has no care  
To pass his years in happiness and health,  
His days in quiet and his nights in joy,  
Watchful to keep aloof both mind and heart  
From men whose pride claims more than mortals may.  
Quietness, the life that wins the poor man's voice,  
His creed, his practice—this shall be my choice.*

Apart from Stasinus, many other names of Cypriot epic poets are known to us. Cleon of Curium whose writings Appolonius of Rhodes used as a source to write his "Voyage of the Argo". Hermias, the iambic poet from Curium, who most probably lived in the third century B.C. and of whom the only information we have is to be found in Athenaeus' "Banquet of the Learned" where his mocking epigram on the stoic philosophers is included.

*Listen, Stoics, merchants of the wagging tongue,  
hypocrites of the world  
whom if luck brings a banquet  
alone guzzle down the dainties  
without so much as a word to their wise host  
and who are afterwards caught red-handed  
doing the opposite of what they spout.*

Sopater of Paphos, a famous poet, specialized in comedy and particularly in the light form of comedy known as "Phlyakes", a sort of burlesque or parody. The largest fragment of Sopater that has survived is from "The Gauls" in which the unknown hero of the comedy ridicules with great finesse the Stoic philosophers and in general philosophers who do not practice what they preach. It is quite obvious from the poetry of "The Gauls" that the audience that watched it was both cultivated and aware of its value.

Thanks to the archaeologists' spade we also see other scattered verses that we have from ancient Cyprus written on relief votive-offerings or as epitaphs, epigrammatic verses of an elegiac nature with a solemn and sometimes melancholy tone.

The development of intellectual life in Cyprus from the fourth century B.C. onwards is due to the cultural movement which king Evagoras I of Salamis began and which was later continued under his successors, the Ptolemaies. The fact that the orator Isocrates and philosophers such as Aristotle and Theophrastus addressed some of their works to the Kings of Cyprus shows the profound respect that these important writers of the fourth century B.C. felt for the intellectual development in Cyprus and reveals the significance of the Cypriot kings at the time when efforts were being made to find a way of solving the problem of how to make the ideal city-state a reality. Historical works were also written on Cyprus, such as that of Hellanicus, the fourth century B.C. historian, while other equally well-known historians frequently referred to Cypriot in their works. The Greeks' interest in Cyprus was great and Cyprus' contribution to contemporary thought essential.

It is worth mentioning that every ancient Cypriot work was written in the panhellenic Greek dialects which were employed according



to the kind of work in hand, and not in the ancient Cypriot dialect. Because Cypriot literature in general kept pace with Greek literature and tradition, drawing from it and being Greek in character, a character maintained until the close of the ancient period.

In general, the intellectual work of the ancient Cypriots cannot be separated from the rest of Greek literature, contemporary or more ancient. It was under the influence of this literature and for this reason that in all the relevant writings it is always examined in common with Greek literature and indeed as part of it and not as an independent entity.

During the Byzantine period learned Cypriot poetry did not flourish whereas popular poetry progressed, following the rest of the Greek world in the flowering of popular verse which then existed. Most of the Acritic ballads present a living picture of these times of great struggles, of resistance, of heroism and sacrifice. The Cypriot Acritic ballads are considered among the finest of the Greek Acritic cycle. In the person of Digenes is born the ideal type of Greek strength. Digenes is for the Cypriots a symbol of security against the Saracen raids which continued from the seventh until the tenth centuries. He is the brave hero, the fine figure of a man who, with his physical and mental strength, his courage and chivalry; his heroism and understanding of human weakness makes the Cypriot people sing verses in that poem which is so well-known "Digenes and Death":

*And in black did Charon dress, in black on his horse did mount  
Girded on a pitch-black sword and went off to the feast.  
And in the middle of the feast the local lord made merry  
"Welcome, Charon, come and eat and drink your fill among us,  
Eat of the venison so rich that is the food of heroes  
And drink sweet wine, the wine they call the liquor of the blood.  
I have not come, I Death himself, to eat and drink among you,  
But I have come for this alone, to take Digenes with me.  
On hearing this Digenes straight began to rant and rage  
Kicked the tables in his way, unsheathed his sward ablaze.  
Hand to hand they come to grips, they wrestled on the ground,  
"Grip me lightly, Digenes, and lightly too I'll grip you.*

*Digenes lightly did him grip but Charon gripped him hard,  
And where old Charon gripped his flesh the blood did freely spurt  
And where Digenes gripped old Death his bones he sorely hurt.  
And they did wrestle three whole days and three whole nights  
together*

*Until upon the third night Digenes took the prize.*

Another example of beauty and dramatic power of a fine, melancholy kind, is the poem "Rose". A young man who is about to die speaks to his beloved.

*When you see them laying me within the church so tall  
With all your power you must cry and see the building fall.  
When you see them end their work, that they bury me forlorn  
Make the speechless stones, my sweet, my early death to mourn.  
Slip secretly from your mother's house and tear your lovely hair  
When you see them hold the pick, and ready is the shovel  
Throw some earth, Rose my love, throw a little gravel  
When you go to the church to light a candle for me  
Take me from your heart my love, forget your melancholy  
And when they bring you food to eat that for the dead is served  
Then say "O, God, please bless for me the young man whom I  
loved".*

At the same time, the tendency of the people to sing of their toil, their joy and pain prepares the ground for the appearance of poems of labour, of love, of life and death that were to assume a unique position in Greek popular poetry. Listen to some of these:

*Endless are my troubles, friend, for whose can perceive them  
if I sigh upon the waves, no boat may move upon them.  
I sigh and all within my breath the pain like fire burns  
May he who came and parted us die here the long year turns.  
I loved her deep within my heart and she did love me truly  
but bitter cleander juice of vain desire she gave me.*

It was in this Byzantine period that the twelfth-century monk Neophytos lived a life of self-incarceration. He hollowed out a cave in a rock and spent his life there singing praises to God and was later



canonized. Among other works that he has bequeathed us there are folkloristic works and very polished commentaries on biblical works such as the "Psalms".

From the period of Frankish domination only one manuscript has survived. It is from the sixteenth century, was found in the Marcian Library of Venice, and contains the so-called "medieval love songs" of Cyprus which are clearly influenced by Italian poetry. These love poems that include the first sonnets written in Greek are the work of an unknown learned poet with great talent. Many of these songs are remarkable for the excellence of their art, their sad and fine lyricism, their melancholy. These songs, I repeat, are of particular significance because they introduce the sonnet into Greek poetry for the first time and perhaps they also introduce rhyme for the first time, opening out new horizons in Greek literature. Listen to some of these:

*O paths and lanes that wind in peace, tranquil and alone  
You who, concealed among the woods, may hear my secret moan  
It's you, my trees, so straight and tall, your foliage rich and green  
Than with your shade expel the morn, and you, clear flowing  
stream*

*And you small birds on silent wing, companions of my sorrow  
You all stand witness to my grief, my agony may follow*

*O hills and mountains and these plains that know my secret pain  
Dew-fed grass and flowers that spread their fragrance far and  
wide*

*Among you Cupid and stern Fate my wandering paths would  
guide.*

*When will cruel Death who angered comes to those whom call  
And to those who hold their peace comes none the legs in harted  
When will he quench the fire that burns, the flames that are my  
pall*

*He who it seems in silence waits and yet so long has waited?*

*Aching heart where would you take me,  
why would you lead me astray?*

*Aching heart where would you take me*

*Why would you lead me astray?*

*To hold off Death, a hard task*

*for he all can end in one sweep  
pain, worry, passion and the eyes that weep.*

*I love you and yet conceal  
the boundless agony I feel  
only my love within me knows  
the suffering, the secret throes.*

*And if I conceal the love  
that I feel and yet restrain it  
it is but to save your fame  
that you may not say I stain it.*

Thus in Cyprus, while on the one hand we have the plentiful remains of the Akritic cycle, on the other there is the development of poetry in dialect. The ballads and love poems of Cyprus show how precious an instrument, the Cypriot dialect, generally regarded as too harsh-sounding and heavy for literary use, can be in the hands of a good craftsman. Its one disadvantage is that it limits any poetic work to the island itself. But the Cypriot-dialect poet uses his language with skill and enriches the poetry of his country. These dialect poems want for nothing in freshness, polish and sincerity. Poetry in the Cypriot dialect contains no fusion of vowels. The Cypriot speaks slowly, pronouncing each well-rounded vowel separately so that there is no possible merging of vowel sounds. In these poems the smell of thyme and mastic is mingled with the pain, joy, and toil of people of sea-girt Cyprus. It is anyway impossible for anyone who is not Cypriot to judge fairly the contribution made by those who have lovingly worked the Cypriot dialect. Thus it happened that not only the folk poetry and learned tradition of the middle ages were ignored in the wider Greek World but the more recent dialect poets too found no place in the histories of literature of Modern Greece or in anthologies published in Greece. Yet we have many worthwhile items to show that are written in the Cypriot dialect. First of all, of course, apart from the ballads and medieval love poems, there is the work of two poets who made the critics of Greece notice them — the national poet of Cyprus, Vasilis Michaelides, in whose poems we find the Greek spirit of Cyprus and this enslaved people's desire for and devotion to the ideal of freedom, and Dimitris Lipertis. Listen to a small part of "The Elf", a very well-known and much loved poem by Michaelides:



*My cares consume me  
even those that hidden are  
from the very birds that sing.  
Since that time wherever I look  
I tremble at the elfish stare  
turn away from eyes that sting.*

Then there is the lyrical poet of our dialect poetry. Dimitris Libertis, whose simple and unsophisticated verse brings the real Cypriot peasant to the fore so that Libertis becomes the poet of the Cypriot soul. His melancholy is powerful and unique like that in "Sunset":-

*To-morrow when they come for me, the pall-bearer for my body  
within that chaos and confusion  
come to church and to communion  
and feel no shame nor tarry.  
I loved you to insanity and so they cannot taunt you  
if you're a girl that knows my way  
come at once and don't delay  
before the earth forestall you.  
It is the living that they hate, the quick they cannot stomach.  
there is forgiveness for the dead,  
a single flower, a prayer said  
can hardly bring them havoc.  
They give them blessings, pray for their souls  
because from this sad world of lies  
to the true world the spirit flies  
to eternal judgement.  
If they forget and should neglect the honours of the dead  
grant me, my sweet, the consolation  
do not ignore my desolation  
visit my icy bed.  
When the sun begins to set, the dusk begins to fall  
when empty is the village lane  
and not a soul to give you pain  
startle you any call*

*Come, then, in secret, to my tomb, come place upon my grave  
a single candle, taper bright  
and sprinkle incense in the light  
and kneeling mourn your love.*

Pavlos Liasides, who makes his living tilling the soil that he loves and waters with his sweat, writes verses like these:

*Neighbours that live near at hand and those from distant parts  
Welcome to my humble house, step in and feel at home  
Don't let the smell of incense, friends, the heavy air disturb you...  
Don't let the flickering candlelight, the strange reflection stop  
you.*

*It was my son's last request, it was his sweet command  
My son who closed his loving eyes and left us here alone  
He made me swear a solemn oath that I should not forget  
That I should not grow mean, he said, and keep my doors tight  
closed.*

Costas Montis belongs to a group of poets who write in Standard Demotic but he has also written charming poems in the dialect. "The Cup" is one of the few examples of poetry that leads to a death-wish.

*So you would tell my fortune?  
But if I yet have life to lead  
I look this way and that and see it in the past recede.  
No single trace of life appears before me,  
if you should find a road, it is the road of death  
if a happy lot awaits me  
and you should find an open door  
it is the open grave you see.  
Can't you see I have no roots, nothing I have to hope for  
Can't you see I am overturned  
like the coffee cup turned over?*

Today there is in Cyprus a new poetic tradition working within a panhellenic context. The contemporary poet keeps pace with the age in which he lives, with the changing ways that are the hallmark of each period. His main characteristic is a continual quest. And the



*It is here and our spirits feel the footsteps of the pallid dead,  
startle them with speechless and inscrutable awe;  
and it is, you think, the shivering lament of the plane-trees,  
the spirit of a lovely summer that dreams and weeps.*

The same poet in his "Ballad of Autumn" tells us:-

*However many mild summers like talismans adorn  
My memory with attic nights and dreamlike dawn,  
For your sake, autumn, I shall forget all  
Come take my heart, I shall not resist your call.*

Manos Kralis, in his "Autumn Elegy", is more melancholic than ever before:-

.....  
*And when you find yourself alone in a meadow of asphodels  
beyond the bounds of the earth, and beyond the shining foliage  
of a golden day  
before you stoop to drink of the dark water of oblivion —  
Turn  
and weep for your love in the secret light of the evening star  
sing again, softly, softly, the song of man  
"A yellow horse, a yellow rider took my love away".*

Pavlos Krinaeos in "The Blood of Nine Moons" lets his melancholy cover his verses with a gossamer-like veil:-

*Farewell, mountain heights, the time has come for me to die in  
the sea,  
says the forest stream;  
farewell, butterflies, border flowers, rosemary  
says the cherry blossom,  
I'm off to become a ruby.*

Dina Payiasi Katsouri is more melancholic than ever before in her poem "Silence":-

*How can you deny silence?  
It was always there,  
there,  
from the first stirrings of creation*

*in the overclouded junk-room  
of the ages  
between our breath  
and our clenched fists.  
How can you deny silence?*

Panos Ioannides in "Lost World":-

*I sit in a reverie  
of fleshless hulks of ships like skeletons  
Which grow which titled  
On the side of sleep  
Among the infant shingle,  
And andambush awaits me  
of longing for sunken cities  
That I know, among the sea-shells and the weed.*

Sophocles Lazarou in his poem "My father's face" sings sadly:-

*The sky has passed with its weight  
the open plain with its spaciousness  
the mountains with their bulk  
and time with its lightning speed  
across my father's face.  
Now that face is old and tired;  
it awaits the unhindered stroke of death.*

Xanthos Lyssiotis writes sadly of the memory of his only daughter in "Silent Smiles":-

*Her smile is silent, silent are her eyes  
what heavenly light bewitched you?  
O silken beauty of your hair  
Grant me one curl for company.*

A. Lykavgis in the following poem sadly asks:-

*What am I to do with the broken violin  
and the clead swans  
that were spent in a moment of feasting?  
As if I was aware of the moment*



*When they were burdened with death  
and they call upon me,  
keep calling upon me to weep?*

And Costas Montis, one of whose dialect poems we have already quoted, says sadly:-

*They cannot be divided, darkness is more than light.  
And even we don't know to which of the two we add.  
Where there is no light is darkness  
but where there is no darkness is not light.  
Why so many Memorials to the Unknown Soldier  
and not a single one to the Unknown Human Being?  
Where are we to put our wreaths?*

.....  
*Where did this pain plant itself?  
Who has wept so close to my heart?*

Antis Pernaris grieves in his poem "Mother's Passing", and the reader grieves with him:-

*O the endless circle of earth to life  
and life to earth,  
the tide under the unchanging sky  
under the stars that mock at our vanity:  
The morning post brought best wishes for a swift recovery  
the evening post a sad harvest of condolences.  
The red rain of the rays of the setting sun  
crumpled the azure cloak of an August day  
wrung it out and Mother's life with it  
wrung it and her children's hearts with it  
and called upon the night without a rainbow  
to cover the wretchedness of our fate.*

Irene Panayi is bitter in her poem titled "Bitterness":

*The words toss  
upon the wide sea of my breast: "My love".  
You stoop, bending to hear better ... you kneel.  
Where could you lean? My body was one huge  
round and my soul  
and bitterness.*

Spyros Papageorgiou in his poem "Nostalgia" writes:-

*You ask me, mother, what I want  
you to bring me here in prison.  
What am I to say? Cut a rose  
from the rose-bush  
at the well and say  
that I asked for it.*

Christodoulos Papachrysostomou in his poem "Libation" gives the feeling of a libation to melancholy:-

*Night passes, the sun comes out  
but in my soul grief remains  
a cold north-wind has frozen it  
and there is no sun to bring it light  
and it grows dark and dies a lingering death.*

Michalis Pashardis in his "Distich", a poem so full of grief, writes:

*I've found the very edge of life where I alone remain  
where joy is at an end and now begins the pain.*

Andreas Pastellas in his poem "A simple Pain":-

*A girl weeps this evening  
at my dark window  
A delicate ribbon  
round my neck,  
In my heart the touch of love  
that never came.  
Morning star.  
A Greco Madonna  
With the infant of your agony in your arms,  
outside in a plant-pot a caterpillar is drowning  
See how the rings round your eyes grow wider  
Suns shoot forth from the rain  
and the fields lie in hope waiting for poppies-  
a lull in the pain that I keep within me  
A girl weeps this evening  
at my dark window  
two cloudy rivers drown my heart.*



Niki Ladaki - Philippou creates an atmosphere of melancholy in her "Episodes":

Episode VII

*Five fingers are  
not enough to hide  
your face  
just as obduracy and pretence  
cannot hide love  
and there will be enough love left  
by which to judge you  
just as enough face to give you pain.*

Episode VIII

*If I could bathe your face  
with my tears  
every morning  
how many tears would I shed  
in the long nights  
between my sheets  
and I should reflect  
this shape  
this face  
this life  
within those pools  
searching to find your lincaments  
charting their destined course  
through the changing weathers*

Kyriakos Charalambides in his poem "He was lucky to live", achieves a kind of strange melancholy:

*and unseasonable reversions  
of this life.  
On these things he meditated  
and from the gunwale of his bed  
he gradually made the shore  
move slowly in his mind,  
with his hands moulded plants*

*that, if he turned on his side away from his memories,  
trembled, nor could he laugh;  
only sad news did his wound any good.*

Dimitris Hamboulides is very persuasive in his "Scherzo of Death":

*Trees die standing up  
and man, what else does he do but die standing up  
every day, at work, at home, everywhere.  
And when the time comes for him to yield  
to draw once and for all his very last breath  
then will he be redeemed from that upright death  
that he tasted of daily while he was alive.*

Kypros Chrysanthis' poem, "The Chorus of the Naked Forest", melancholy pervades:

*The forest is full of feeling. Nature is strange  
in its moment of nakedness.  
Dead tree trunks lose all hope. And the grass, how  
could it cover  
the shadows in their shapelessness?  
Mist passes and casts in the air and hangs from the boughs  
locks of hair from a comb  
And the wind that threaded its green years  
like beads, makes moan.*

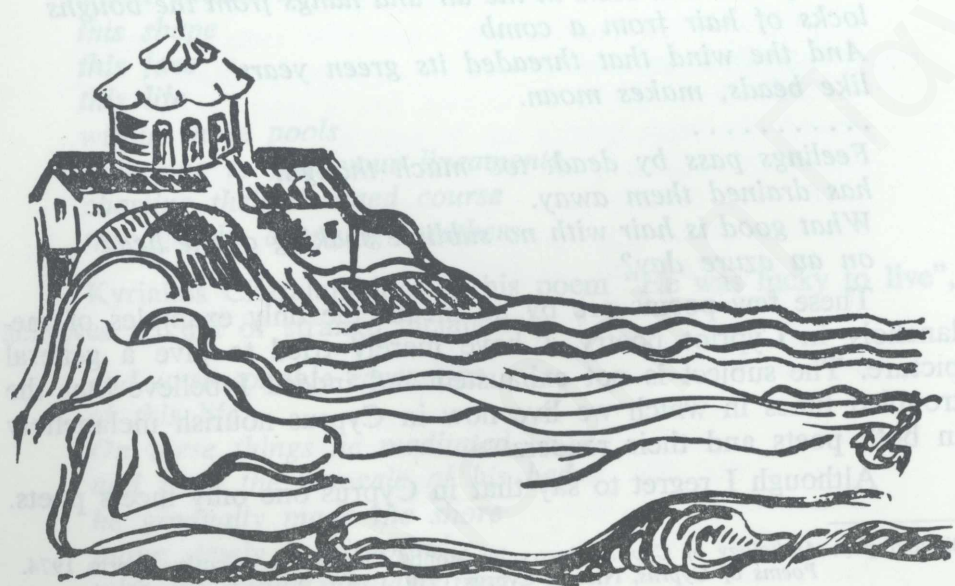
.....  
*Feelings pass by dead: too much thought  
has drained them away.  
What good is hair with no sublime shaking of the head  
on an azure day?*

These few poems are by no means the only examples of melancholy in Cypriot poetry. I have merely tried to give a general picture. The subject is not exhausted and indeed I believe that the troubled times in which we live now in Cyprus nourish melancholy in both poets and their readers.

Although I regret to say that in Cyprus one only meets poets.

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## ODYSSEUS ELYTIS, THE POET OF THE AEGEAN

(Nobel Prize 1979)\*

*I will tonsure my head, monk of things verdant  
 And reverently serve the order of birds,  
 I will come to the matins of Fig Trees out of the night,  
 Dew overed, to bring in my apron  
 Blue, pink, purple  
 And to kindle the generous water drops,  
 I the more generous.*

*Worthy It Is*

The awarding of the Nobel Prize to Odysseus Elytis not only constitutes a victory for modern Greek poetry, language and historical memory, a victory for modern Greek optimism for the privilege of someone's being Greek and speaking Greek, but it is also an opportunity for all People, Greek or not, to get to know the Poet and his work.

Odysseus Elytis was born on 2nd November 1911 in Heraclion on the isle of Crete in the neighbourhood of Efta Baltades. His father, Panayiotis Allepoudelis from Mytilene, settled in Heraclion in 1895 where he established a soap factory. His mother, Maria Vrana, was also from the isle of Mytilene. Odysseus was the youngest of six children. At the outbreak of World War One in 1914, the family moved to Athens. Elytis spends his summers now in Crete and now in Mytilene. During his years at the Gymnasium, as a member of the mountaineering group of Yiannis Sarris, he begins his acquaintance with the Greek countryside. In 1930 he enrolls at the Law School of the University of Athens.

\* Lecture delivered at the Annual Conference of the International Society for Contemporary Literature and Theater held in Bruges, Belgium (11 - 25 July 1980).



His acquaintance in 1935 with Andreas Empirikos and the literary company of the journal "Nea Grammata" (G. Sarantaris, A. Karantonis, G. Katsimbalis) and the discovery of the painter Theophilos and of surrealism mark his turn towards poetry.

*This Story begins on the day I look my fate in the face, and I accepted it. I mean that I definitely differentiated my responsibilities from the family traditions, the Academic merits and the ambition for social advancement.*

(Open Book, 1974)

Elytis is a man who keeps to himself, and who from his early years has denied the property of "Literary-intellectual" man, and the picturesque role which the middle-class usually offers the poet.

He has also always avoided those public statements that would have won for him easy popularity. His whole life has been a denial of distinction and prizes.

He declined three foreign prizes (Italian, Belgian, American) and two Greek ones as well as a position at the Athenian Academy. The Nobel Prize justified a way of life of the Poet that has kept him away from social justifications, positions, and prizes. Forty-four years ago, in the journal "New Letters", the first poems of Odysseus Elytis were published. A little later his poetical work "Orientations" (1940) revealed the Poet's personal myth, a myth deeply Greek that was to give the modern greek reality. His world and our world, "This small world the Big World" kept inside it all the passions of our People and believed in the constant revolution of the sun — Symbol of Justice.

A worshipper of the Painful Greek light, Odysseus Elytis loved Greece. He loved it physically, psychologically, sensually, irresistibly. And in all his life he defended this vital need of the imagination, refusing every formal award until the Nobel Prize came to justify 44 years of Poetry. The 44 years on the beaches of Homer. The "One Swallow and the Spring is dear" that witnessed the hope and the despair in the difficult years of Hellenism.

I met him in October 1979 in his apartment in Skoufa Street. He was surrounded by simple things, folkloric embroidery, a wood-carving, a painting by his co-patriot painter Theophilos. All things of

his taste, all close to his own poetic expression, and far from the myth of the rich son of the Alepoudelis family (Elytis' real name).

During our meeting that Thursday evening he disclosed to me with some awe and uncertainty, that from some indications he had had, he expected the award. He also explained to me that he would very much like to respond to my invitation to visit Cyprus. I had invited him on behalf of the National Society of Greek Writers of Cyprus, of which I am the President. I realized that should he be awarded the prize he would have many commitments and he would not be able to come to Cyprus. Nevertheless, he did not rule out the possibility. He asked me to write to him again. I left, wishing him good luck and hoping to hear the good news on my arrival in Cyprus.

The good news of all the Greek Poets. And I am sure that the Nobel Prize did not surprise the simple Poet of the Aegean, the calm and simple man who for years lives and works in the same place in isolation. After the announcement that Elytis was the Nobel Prize winner, I telephoned to congratulate him. He answered the telephone and said: "Thank you, and I never forget Cyprus".

In the person of Olyseus Elytis, 16 years after George Seferis had won the award, the modern intellectual Greece was indicated once more.

His poetry, one of the best in the world, is crowned with the 1979 Nobel Prize. The Poet of the Aegean is crowned, the eternally Greek Aegean is also crowned at the top of the Universal Parnassus justly and worthily. He went through many phases of evolution, as it always happens with great people. His evolution began with the spontaneous movement of surrealism, whose first serving hierophant was himself. Many have written about the renovating contribution to our Letters of the Journal "New Letters". It is through this Journal that the poet's work made its first appearance. That was a beginning, a diction entrance into the renovation for modern Greek Poetry, a renovation of which he was an evangelist.

Naturally, his service did not stop there. It is as if he conceived his mission as one of herald who cannot escape the continuation of the Greek Poetry through the aeons. For this reason, "according to



the law", using the resources that the new renovated forms gave him, he had to first plunge into the depths of tradition and then emerge new, full of life, like the sun, to convey his messages.

*He has gradually evolved a more mystical theory about the ambivalent nature of the sun, which would lead one from extreme light to extreme darkness. It's a familiar mystic symbol that one might call, for short, the black sun.*

In this way his service began, service of study and adoption of the classics, of the popular song, of Solomos and his contemporaries, to enable himself to sing onwards.

Beyond surrealism, he had already treasured the way and technique, the European trends, of Elyar, Apollinaire, Lorca, and others. All these, after an absolute refounding were to submit to his hellenism. And he subjected them like a true apostle of Poetry. However, at this Point, his Aegean roots prevailed and forced him; for it was impossible that he, born of the sea, would escape the Aegean vision. And his poetic metabolisms were worthy and unparalleled. He followed the adventure of his race, and having reinforced his technique and adaptation to the rational and controlled picture-making, he glorified his innate, whole, glowing lyricism.

He reconsidered the richness of words and picked the musical associations which give new dimensions, new colours, new ways of inspiration with new flowers to the language of poetry.

But beyond all these, he was called by the vision; he was enchanted by the sun and the light, the sky and the sea, the Greek faithfulness of himself, which he repeated and dominated impetuously, continually in his verse.

He discarded all that was commonplace or boring, and with the anthology of his soul outflanked the form and the beauty. He appeared, after various assimilations, like a river that carried in it the revery, the dream, and above all the Greek-island landscape that appeared newly-born, reformed and perfect in his poetic hues.

He did not cry out loud: he has as his voice the peaceful breeze of the sea, the sapphire of the sky, the vision of life through their

adornment, and with a kindness that just converted the reader and led him to the purity of peace, not through persuasion, but through participation, recording what is simple and great.

From a certain point onwards he has let his reader experience for himself his vibrations among a plethora of imaginary secret paths, that were the shade and roof in the dazzling light of the Aegean.

All these, like a movement into nature itself, that creates ecstasis and surprise, a completion of the unexpected, the singular and the real. It is the limit of life in the Aegean climate.

We can hear the Poet confess:-

*To me, the Aegean is not only a part of nature, but a kind of fingerprint (as a critic correctly observed). I am my generation — and I include Seferis — tried very hard to find the true face of Greece. This was necessary, for up to that time, that which the Europeans saw as Greece, appeared as the true face of Greece. To achieve this, we had to get rid of the rationalistic tradition that weighed down the West.*

(This can also explain the influence that surrealism had on Elytis' poetry).

Naturally, a prerequisite of this sailing together was some preparatory work or at least some predisposition, which even if the reader did not have, he nevertheless felt carried away and adapted.

Even at the hours of Protests, Elytis became a visionary, and a prophet of hope.

Pure lyricism prevailed.

The multiple successions of his compositions revealed him as if he wanted to tell everything from the beginning, and the whirling of his soul many a time bore the burden of the race, the myriads of voices that wanted to find expression but did not have wings, and which united constituted his poetic voice.

Many a time he must have wanted to say more and more. But he chose to instill them in his verse, all together, all Greek. In all this titanic and continuous contribution he seemed to wait for those



who had not heard him, to hear him through his creation. He seemed as if he was waiting for his hymn to the light to enlighten and electrify and change everybody. The award of the Nobel Prize came at the right moment. There came the universal recognition of his perseverance. Thus, in the recognition of Odysseus Elytis, the light of the Aegean passed onto the world through Elytis' Poetry. His Hellenism is passed onto the peoples of the earth beyond circumstance, beyond change, beyond compromise, beyond hypocritical expiendence.

I would like to finish off quoting Professor George Savvides, who occupies the Seferis Chair or Modern Greek Studies, at Harvard University:

*In Elytis, you attain wisdom through a purification of the senses, without ever denying the senses, which normally a mystic would do.*

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#### MYTH IN CONTEMPORARY GREEK POETRY

One could say that the poetic synthesis, the poetic expression, is in itself a merit. One could also say that the abuse of poetic licence has deprived many a Poet of its use and value. But wherever we place poetry, wherever we find it, it will never cease to be symbolic, parasymbolic, metasymbolic, multisymbolic, or descriptive or Parnasian and not simply representative. We can say that it is sometimes necessary for poetry to be placed under the veil and the mist of myth.

It was thus that it first appeared and it is thus that it is perpetuated day by day. And in this case, myth lends, borrows, weaves, it is itself woven, *it* expands, *it* undulates, *it* condenses, *it* increases, *it* surrounds itself, and it becomes a vast myth that covers the whole of Greece from Taenaron to Pindus. Surely the geography of myth cannot be exhausted in the geographical boundaries of the Greek state or the Greek intellect - but at least in this way it takes a Greek form; both for those who understand Greek as well as for those who do not.

Even where there is a deliberate effort for its absence Myth still exists. It is the Myth of Myth, the need for myth-making, the need for transformation in which the weaknessess of the needs, the hopes, and the continuous presence of many expressed or unexpressed factors can be hidden.

The horizon of myth in poetry is infinite; there are no orientation points. There is no navigator that could explore them. There can be no cartography of myth so that we could have cartography of poetry. Both myth and poetry have a boundless freedom. And they exist. And we accept them. And we live by them which are based upon the analysis of the balance of the senses and especially within the horizon of the personal vision of the creator and the personal participation of the reader with a conventional or any other connection or relation.



We cannot think of ancient poetry without the presence of myth. Homer, Hesiodus, Pindar, Herodotus, abound in myth. In each person there is a myth, exactly as in the ancient tragedy Sophocles cries out:

ὦ κοινὸν ἀντάδελφον Ἰσμήνης κάρα

or as the contemporary poet expresses his thoughts:

*They still smell of incense and  
their face is burnt  
From passing through the Dark  
Great Places  
There, where at once were thrown  
by the Unshaken  
Face down, on a soil where  
even the smallest anemone  
would be enough to embitter  
the air of Hades  
(One hand in front, as if struggling  
to grasp the future, the other  
under the poor head, turned to the side,  
As if seeing for the last time  
into the eyes of a gutted horse,  
a pile of ruins giving out smoke)  
There, they were redeemed by Time.  
One wing, the reddern  
covered the world, whilst the other,  
gentle, already fluttering into space  
And no wrinkle, or remorse  
but in great depth.  
The old unmentioned blood that  
began with difficulty to take  
shape, into the blackness of  
the sky.*

And another poet:

*I caress the rusty canons,  
I caress the oars,  
for my body to revive and to decide  
The sails give only the smell  
of the salt of the other tempest,*

*The stars of the night take me back  
to the expectation  
of Ulysess for the dead amongst  
the asphodels  
when we put down sail amongst the  
asphodels we wanted to find  
the gorge that saw Adonis wounded.*

Or another poet:

*Oh Mother Poetry, accept me:  
my body is a cross on which  
they nailed  
my life like the  
Nazarene  
My treasure was shared out  
to people unworthy  
and of people low the spit  
I carry on my face.  
Revenge of sounds of the wound  
makes, the lamentation,  
I never tasted undisturbed my bread  
in the sweat, that I poured  
working on the soil,  
shine your just arrows of your brilliancy.*

All these are but a tiny part of the mythical element, as others have experienced it, or as we do, or as our children will do.

If there is a common element among poets who believe in the unity of poetry, this element is myth and its boundaries are repeated, these boundaries are an expansion of one of the many senses, beyond



the known sense - word from within word, and a second world which believes that in all these "mytho-logies" or "Zoo-logies" are insufficient.

For those who like to refer to dictionaries, Myth is the spoken word, the allegorical narrative, an address at a public meeting, or a way of behaving. For many others — including myself — Myth cannot be interpreted. It has simply existed before anything else.

Myth was and still is the first germ, the first substance, the raw material of the poet. Myth existed before the poet, independently of the poet, independently of the human elements; in the process of time it was identified with speech to which it contributed and under which it found shelter.

Myth always functions in this way; it is absorbed, it is used and it is fulfilled in its role and in the content of allegorical narrative. It is retold differently each time, although it still remains the same, and is repeated unchanged.

Myth is the constant renewal, the constant repetition; it is the never-resting wings of the wind. Myth is the adaptability of images, of metaphors, of forms, of allegories: it is the *font* of the renewal of the mythical element. Myth in all its forms is always an inner bond, a strong structure; it is the spinal cord for the arrangement of thought, be it right or wrong. Within Myth, there is another myth, and above and beyond there is always the need for Myth, which inspires and is the basis for poetic creation. Myth is the need which the poet feels, *the need* to give new life to the old tradition, to transform it adapting it to his own artistic standards. It is the poet's demand that the myths he uses must be in harmony with the ethical, the religious and the social elements by which he lives.

The poet knows better than anyone else the value of the mythical world; he knows how fertile the existence of an intellectual relationship between modern life and the past is for a nation, and the educational value of archetypes.

It is for this reason that we find Myth in almost every kind of poetry; epic poetry and tragedy take their material from history and Myth. Myth is also very important in lyric poetry and is always present in comedy.

The mythical element is not unrelated to poetry. On the contrary, it is very relevant and it can be found in all poetry of all epochs and and all schools.

Like the sculptor, the poet always tries to find what is beautiful in Myth, although he must never ignore the occasional ugliness which a myth may include.

The poet knows how to project the inner beauty of Myth; he knows how to utilize its values, to exploit its dramatic element. He is also ready to enforce it with new themes, with new images and new experiences.

We must never forget that neither the epic nor the lyric or tragic poet narrates the Greek myth only to entertain his audience, but to teach people, using a multitude of great heroes. It is for this reason that Kakrides—an expert on Homer—says that Homer has been heavily criticised from the 6th century B.C. down to our own days, when the new ethics of the Greek People could no longer find satisfaction in the words and deeds of Homeric Gods and heroes.

It is well known that Homer introduced the Greek myth greatly enriched and organized towards the end of the geometric and the beginning of the archaic epoch. It is one of the striking characteristics of the Greek world that the great ethical (moral) problem that tormented the Greeks from the Homeric period up to the end of the 5th century B.C., is taken from the mythical world.

The heroic epic poem takes its material solely from myth. So does the Attic tragedy from the end of the 16th century B.C.

Also in the choral poetry which flourished during the archaic period, between the epic poem and the tragedy, the mythical narration is one of the most stable and essential elements of poetry. Instances of this we find in the works of Stesichorus, Alcman, Hibycus, Simonides and Pindar.

During the Alexandrine period the Greek myth goes through a renewal with both Callimachus and Apollonius of Rhodes. We also have the elegies of poets with love-themes and some idyll of Theocritus. Later on we have the Roman poetry, which continues that of the Alexandrians, and embraces the Greek mythical world.



In Cyprus we have a mythical figure, that of the Queen, and there are many stories about her, her castle, her baths. We also have stories about the Queen and Digenis. During the last few centuries the presence of the Greek tradition is strong in literature. Many recent works both in prose and poetry, particularly in dramatic art, have as their subject the Greek Myth. All those who tried to ignore myth or to diminish its importance did not succeed in their efforts. Nowadays, myth is small, momentary, fragmented, it is about the everyday simple things of life and love which in the hands of the poet become very meaningful.

Seferis uses the Homeric myth in his poetry. I will just give a few lines from one of his poems. Obviously he describes current affairs referring to mythical events.

*There was nothing in Troy - only an idol  
This is how the Gods wanted it.  
And Paris, was sleeping with a shadow  
as if it was a real creature  
And we killing ourselves for Helen  
For ten years.*

Human life has become very complicated since the time of Homer. There is no time, there is no memory for such great themes as we find in the early myths. As difficulties increase, so do possibilities, and so literature remains always the same — the centre of the intellect — and poetry the centre of literature.

In the past myth was oppressive. Nowadays, it comprises small parts which, in an experienced hand, combine to form a harmonious work of art.

Seferis called one of his poems "Mythistorima" combining the words *Mythos* and *story*. He did so because he tried to express, with some consequence, a situation which existed independently of himself. He said:

*Now that you are going,  
now that the day of payment dawns  
now that no-one knows  
whom he will kill and how he will end up*

*Take with you the child who saw the light  
in the shadow of that plane-tree  
and teach it to study the trees.*

Odysseus Elytis skillfully harmonizes the mythical element with the ethical, the religious and the social which he has in himself to give us the "Passion" in his poem "Dignum Est" "Worthy It Is".

*The language they gave me  
was the Greek;  
a bare house on the shores of Homer  
My sole concern was my language  
on the shores of Homer.*

Cypriot poetry, belonging to the main body of Greek poetry, has myth as its essence. Our poet Antis Pernaris in his poem "Song to Kinyras" speaks directly to the heart in a mythical and at the same time lyrical way:

*You are a symbol, singer  
lyre-player King,  
Pride of beautiful Paphos,  
you who made sisters of  
laurel and olive-tree,  
For you sweet singer, priest, and King,  
Life and tomb were made.*

The Cypriot poetess Niki Ladaki Philippou in the following poem uses myth and sings:

*Through the white pillars of Salamis you advance —  
A worshipper, on whose soft breasts  
A blossoming almond twig rests,  
A worshipper in whose white palms,  
As on offering to Palas,  
a quivering sunbeam nests,  
Oh, Virgin of the Steps.*



Another Cypriot poetess Vera Panayiotidou - Korfioti in her poem "Subject: Poetry":-

*We are tragic  
We could not otherwise  
combine  
time with eternity  
Except in myth  
and give temporary comfort  
to our soul.  
No measure of love  
can hold the soul  
no measure of dreams  
can touch the soul  
no measure of happiness  
can measure the soul.  
There where we turned our back  
on life  
it threw us a bone  
and we turned again  
to it.  
Secretly silently  
like silk worms  
we weave our soul.  
In the rhythmical circles of silence  
you begin to hear the heart of things  
the stone, the plant become words.  
You begin to hear the growing grass  
you slide into all things.  
The soul with all its internal essence  
the soul with all its internal essence  
transports the chaos  
of the world.*

And again poetess Niki Ladaki Philippou with the help of myth expresses her grief for the destiny of her land but never loses hope:-

*Here was my land  
sprinkled with holy water and far-famed  
here is my land*

And again Xanthos Iyziou in his poem "Subject: Poetry":-

*ruins and ashes.  
Here...  
Aphrodite was born  
here  
there is only silence  
To-morrow a new day will dawn.*

In another poem poetess Ntina Pagiasi Katsouri:-

*She is  
not ours  
nor of the myth,  
that Aphrodite  
who dressed  
in a black scarf  
and whose eyes  
heat the fields  
and the wounded fingers  
of the villagers  
Where is Adonis  
—sign of recognition—  
where is the procession  
with the bare-breasted virgins,  
the baskets,  
the cup bearers,  
the doves  
and the phallises?  
That Aphrodite,  
that girl  
who sits  
on the Bastions  
and wanders  
on the piers and jetties  
with a line of grief  
on her lips  
surely  
cannot be ours.*

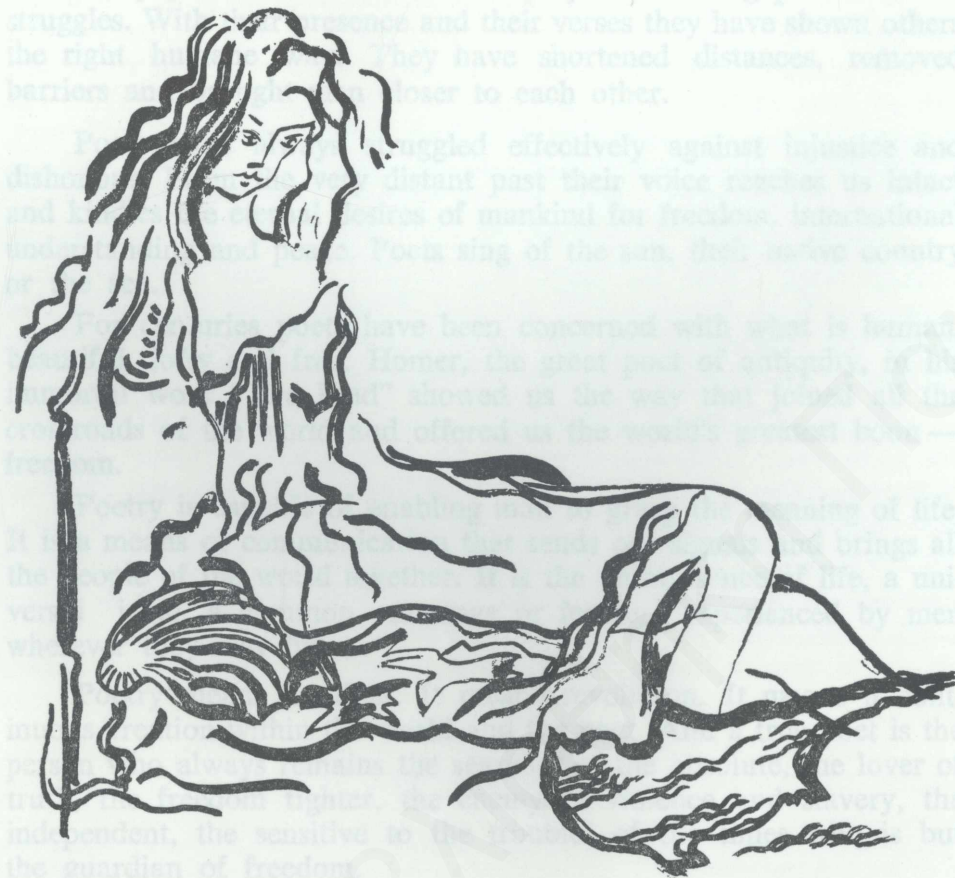












## THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CYPRIOT WOMAN TO MODERN GREEK POETRY

Poetry is something beautiful, romantic and precious; it is a song that echoes everywhere; it is the melodic lyre which will never cease to please the souls of the people.

Poetry will exist as long the human heart exists; poetry is the everyday logos, the motion, the thought and the energy, and as such will accompany our times and the future generations.

Poetry, in general, appears to be an outgoing road, on which the soul proceeds towards itself seeking for its own light, a light that has dimmed. If poetry fails to get it and reach the end, then it follows another path and is lost; it falls into obscurity.

The poet is a human being and this signifies that he is the architect of his own human condition; he express his social and individual substance, a state that causes in him a constant and intense thought; a problem which relates to the saving of his individuality from the oppressive forces of our technological civilization; in this struggle, the poet by saving his individuality he can save "man" himself.

However, the poet who confronts these problems, without the requisite qualifications, having as his basic objective only the freeing of his poetic logos from every external commitment, not only succeeds through his poetry in transforming reality to picture but he also approaches the models in an external and superficial manner, without offering himself something substantive. He remains always the poet who keeps silent whenever he has nothing substantial to say or again whenever he has nothing to say that it is not his own. He always remains within the context of a sterile verbalism.

Poetic synthesis has nowadays reached the dimensions of a cinematographic film of the new wave. Its themes are not water-light;



it constantly releases something new and during its course it does not for a moment allow the reader to think, but it enslaves him with the first impression.

Thereafter, thought and judgment follow when the duration of the synthesis becomes longer than the time taken by the reading.

The poet who knows how to expand his subject-matter with all the charm inherent in the innovative (modern) logos, certainly manages to give successful fruits and products.

Nowadays the poet expresses modernity; he openly posits, individually or collectively, the problems of our times and peruses them; a person with abundant psychic energy, he externalizes varying degrees of psychic tension: through his poems he employs different ways and means to communicate with modern man; he succeeds in shaking modern man, in causing him to share the poet's poetic disposition.

His poetry, the product of an ardent heart and a dramatic mind, forcefully expressed touches the very depths of the soul of the tormented and harassed modern man who has a thirst for redemption and who yearns for a little love and beauty.

The modern poet goes forward hand in hand with his era and its different manifestations; his main characteristic is incessant search, while the epicentre of his searches is knowledge of the SUBSTANCE of things. The modern poet is left to his own devices — to his own senses, and he must either create a new consciousness of return to the original one.

Cyprus in recent times has shown a rich and remarkable cultural and artistic activity. Every now and then important books and literary journals are published, cultural associations print annual reports with the active participation of many writers, the theatre is in full swing, lectures are delivered by Cypriot writers both in Cyprus and abroad, book, painting and sculpture exhibitions are organized, literary competitions are also held by the cultural service of the Ministry of Education; the Cypriot cultural creators continue undaunted, and proudly enrich their rich ancient cultural inheritance.

The 1955 revolution has given back to our people their lost pride, has absolved them from long-term feelings of quiet and has removed from their face the mantle of inferiority feelings. For the first time, after many a century since the era of Evagora Cyprus has become Hellenism's main concern, its pride and glory. We as a nation have experienced the dawn of a new day, and we have felt that henceforth we shall play a primary role in the process which will shape our fate but even the fate of Hellenism as a whole. We have felt that we have matured; we have felt that we have shaken the manacles from our hands, we have removed a wedge from between our lips and untightened our hearts; we have been reborn. And in this torrent of change and renewal many a name of male and female writers, who admittedly are the most sensitive receptors among the people, felt deeply this psychological change and gave it expression by way of poetry and prose. Some of these names have established themselves as writers and poets of authority and with a panhellenic stature. Gradually but steadily this forward going process becomes all the more felt. The cultural creation in all areas of activity follows the trends and directions developing in the Greek cultural world. But this world is being continually shaped drawing from Greek culture and in the process it nurtures and gives birth to the fruits of its labour, its pain and secret psychic agony and in this way it contributes to Modern Greek literature in its own way.

In the literary space, women's names appear at the side of the Arodaphnouses, the Reginas and the other heroines of our demotic songs, at the side of the women of Cyprus who at the times of the Turkish occupation of the island taught elementary writing and reading in the basements of their homes — the «δασκάλεινες» as they used to call them; these modern female writers names appear today next to the mothers of our hanged fighters, — these mothers bring back to memory the Spartan and Souliot woman — they appear next to the heroines of 1955 who, wearing a blue school uniform and carrying a fiery heart, defeated the conqueror's army — the Cypriot poetess, carrying her pen and the wealth of her sensitive heart, as her only weapon. She comes to add an important work in terms of quality and quantity to the other i.e. the cultural products of her country. In this way she is claiming many times an appropriate panhellenic recognition.



The contribution of the Cypriot woman is manifested in all areas of creation. We do not intend to enumerate by name the women who have in the past created and continue to create indefatigably and positively. The time at our disposal is limited while the number of women-writers who have contributed significantly is large. I would like to lay emphasis only to some points in the area of the Cypriot women's contribution to the Modern Greek poetry, points which, I believe, should be stated:

The anxious thoughts of a generation, living for many years now almost without recess under the shadow of war, are transplanted with the magic of the artistic rhythmic logos in female verses at the stage of glorification and exaltation.

*They took him from her when he'd been killed. His eyes absolutely dry rocks at the edge of the sea. His arms two broken oars in the sandy-places. His one leg trod only in the middle of the room, the nerves pressed the flesh, leaving a red line to take it from behind: "I can get along also with my one leg. Let me plant a rose-arbour or a lemon-tree grove on the edge of the Dikomo hill. Tomorrow I can separate in two that enormous public park the half for wild pigeons and the other half I will make into a children's earthly paradise. With multi-coloured swings and ponds and rich shade evergreen trees".*

*His mother had sat at the feet of the coffin. Motionless like a stone pillar. She thought perhaps that she had him as once fifteen months old in a pale-blue cradle.*

*"Rose of May  
and birds of dawn  
uncut lily, fragrant as musk,  
my one-and-only precious boy, ah!"*

*Her eyes two fountains dried in the sun of the summer.*

*Her eyebrows were two crepes for mourning. On the forehead her black scarf descended. And as she loosened it, its tips blew upon his pale motionless face: "If it weren't for the war my son would be living."*

The anxiety, the agony, is in the last analysis an experience of our punishment into a different world. It is also a tension for the purpose of Salvation, for freedom. In women's poetry, agony has two directions — one of darkness and one of light. We can say, that it has dual substance — the agony of death, the agony of life.

*Dearest of my heart  
the night is sweet tonight  
just like your eyes  
I know that if by chance  
I get heart, if I die  
you won't be able to love without me.  
Even so,  
my girl, I prefix my chest  
I prefix my thirty years  
full of tender words for you  
heavy from your memory  
I prefix the only  
in the world thing that I know interests you  
I prefix my life  
so the cannibals do not keep  
not even a span  
of our island.*

The other side of the coin, the fighting force of the soul, is interpreted as a solution and as a reply:

#### **THE WALL**

*You were passing by from hill to hill  
with a smile of blissfulness smelling of mould.  
Here and there you stopped  
to check up on the compass and your heart.  
The altimeter was convenient for both.*



*You can, if you want, sit in the evening next to the fire  
and recollect old secrets weighing you down  
no none will see the bitter butterfly in your eyes,  
only the flames will seize an imperceptible turn as though from  
a broken gramophone record.*

*At that hour of loneliness perhaps of consolidation  
another stone in the wall which you built around you and in the  
little world of the insects  
around you and in the complex of unknown voices.  
Barely two metres the breath of the grass is found.  
Barely two peaks is the vision of the city with the heroic ghosts  
and with the belfries ringing out for marriages and festivities  
and a resurrection shining in the depth of the well.*

*The others, outside the wall forgot the colour of the lark  
and the scent of wounded dignity  
propping their gaze upon black trunks of cypress-trees  
whatever was lost from the fire and fatigue.*

*There is also a third parenthesis  
perhaps not even worth your reckoning,  
that one of the elegant puppets revolving around the gilded throne  
taking care not to wrinkle the feathers and the hair-do.  
If you reflect well upon these things  
perhaps you will prefer your wall which at least is familiar  
closing the Acropolis from outside  
and the bellows of a nightmare you will refuse to acknowledge.  
If you reflect upon it well, perhaps you will consider happiness  
the enjoyment of bread in packages, which has nothing in  
common with the mother's oven  
and with the hot dreams which used to be kneaded in the trough.  
That old friend of the childhood whistles  
left suddenly just like that by the back door,  
the little back door, the one sealed with heart-beats.*

The world around, the greater Nature in women's poetry, has attained transparency, a fine veil behind which you view "Beauty", love, and beyond which you view God that functions, and everything is an emanation of this inner mystical function.

*When planting trees - the promise.  
When cultivating trees - the reconciliation  
when picking the crop and sharing it  
the practice of virtue.  
and... I come from the sea  
my name is blue  
my hair is stripes  
from prayers layed in front of your feet.  
My new story  
is embroidered in the darkness  
My present steps, sunk  
in the grass of waiting,  
my heels are getting green  
with hope.*

In women's poetry death is a triumph of life, an entry or submer-  
sion into the being, and a future life is clearly evident beyond, the life  
of the future country and "the resurrection of the dead"; and the  
Cypriot Muse with her note appears as a rapture that "is beheld", that  
sees and deciphers the wonders in the form of visions, whose inter-  
pretation is a revelation.

*Every morning  
Salamis is moving  
in a modern world  
with half closed eyes  
and registering  
in all of it's brain  
the vibrations  
the reactions  
and the exclamations  
of the world around  
it.*

*Though  
I would not want  
to be faced  
with a colourful crowd of people  
who are struggling  
to be on time  
for the gathering.*



The erotic sound is heard more intense and lyrical from the sensitive lyre played by a woman. Eros circulates parallel with the threat of other dangers in women's sensitive verse. The most significant point is that this essential eros which takes root over and beyond feeling, widens in the ground of existence and from individual love it becomes love for others, overriding loneliness and making up for its wounds. Moreover, in the verses of the Cypriot poetess eros in certain cases over and above its width attains depth, that is, instead of being one swallow it becomes a flight of swallows, it becomes life itself, the very beginning of life.

*Well, what were we saying?*

*Oh, yes, my good friend,  
is in your heart!*

*When you loose what you love most in the world  
or when you say father and they tell you he is dead.  
You are not the same any more. You have changed greatly  
You have grown at least by ten years  
Night all around. Ruins. Night-owls  
They took everything from us, Louci  
except the love and the faith  
that flood our hearts. Enough  
Help to lift the world high  
on a throne next to the sun. Its down.*

We can also safely admit that the Cypriot poetess has gone beyond the goal of perfection in love into the pursuit of perfection in aesthetics. Such really classical perfection is evidenced in some of her poems. Perhaps the one, i.e. perfection of love, does involve the other, that is the perfection of aesthetics. Perhaps the two co-exist in such an attitude of life, that is, love and Beauty.

The fact, however remains one and the same: That we have verses as the following:-

*The wound that you have given me  
sure proof that we met  
is deepen continuously is worsen  
I wasted my blood*

*in the waiting rooms  
in keeping alive anaemic causes  
and now how can I write you a verse.*

*and Don't insist*

*our four summers have died  
your blonde hair  
oh how it colours my days*

*Now*

*we will not catch butterflies anymore  
the bay trees have sealed  
our honest silence  
our feet follow the road  
I feel a bitterness  
that belongs to others  
I have a wound  
that they decorated me with  
for a whole trip of searching  
those who never knew  
my real name.*

*While I breathe  
the flowers grow in my garden  
and while I live  
the hope flickers  
while I hope  
the ships leave  
the port of expectation  
while I expect  
I pray  
and I pray  
for you  
for everyone  
for me.*

The relaxed human lyricism is the other side of the contribution of the Cypriot woman to modern Greek poetry. Verses of deep analysis to the point that allows a poetic confession, that speaks and that affords us evidence by keeping silent in regard to what should not be said or has no place in poetry.



Starting from this need to confess and at the same time to uncover that which remained unsatisfied and was not said before, the Cypriot poetess transforms herself often choosing from myth, history and life different fitting masks in her own personal manner, not by plagiarizing the foreign relevant element but by transmitting or adding to these having made appropriate changes, her own stamp and turning out poems which are almost identical with herself. And it is here that the Cypriot Muse attains really poetic creations.

#### *WHEN THE TAPS WERE TURNED ON*

*I was coming  
I was listening to the great river  
and I was coming  
bringing with me  
the lullaby of my first years.  
Now only a tap that drips endlessly  
at night counting the seconds  
dripping sadness  
in my loneliness.*

*The dusted heart of summer  
it muddles our blood  
We talk about the Spring  
in order to kill the summer  
We talk about winter  
in order to drive the dust away  
but a whole autumn still intervenes  
and many days of summer*

and

*The sorrows and the joys  
like an undefined shape  
of our virtue  
show us the they.  
When did history begin?  
Who knows! Who can say?  
The time continuously shortens  
it becomes limited  
so limited.*

*Completely unprepared  
we found ourselves locked  
within the walls of Jericho.  
Why?*

And then the adolescent moments of the poetess follow. The attempt to break the hands is an attempt to break the heart and the body and divest it from whatever is personal and private and unique which concentrates not so much on the face, but on the hands, signs of the ego that communicates outwardly, that reaches out for things and people, bridges of communication and contact between souls and bodies, "palms that we did not have the time to observe" "Masks" that we did not have the time to study.

*Your voice changed  
the direction of the wind  
and unified the whole world's voices.  
It lifted the cross from the living  
and from those who died from a wound on their chest.  
We did not have time to study the masks,  
to distinguish the palms.  
... It was enough for us to hear your voice taking ours.*

The Cypriot poetess is not in the margin of our time. She is in the very centre and being a responsible cultured person she keeps her conscience on the alert. The personal is identified with the universal and balances with the fate of the world at the critical point of our times. She questions herself, she is part and parcel of the things that absorb modern man and with those things that constantly caress the seashores of her island and she writes and sings.

But life does not become nullified. Man will again reshape it in accordance with the ideals for which he had fought. And the Cypriot poetess, motivated by this faith and this optimism turning out verses whose content however universal pertinent to her much tormented island, it has special significance and deals specifically with its desires, creates dreams about the "White City" of the future.



*State white state*

*I look for you with my feet  
sunk in the sand*

*with the worn out sandals of my adolescence  
with the big eyes of the girls  
that worry, searching the silence,  
with the lost hands of my childhood.*

*White state*

*I look for you on the face  
of the child who is asleep on my breast  
awaiting to be annunciated with a lily.*

The Cypriot poetess I believe that in certain cases managed to surpass the limits of her country and times, to go beyond the personal, the general, the social and the cultural boundaries. She has contributed through her own aesthetic exaltation to the material and cultural interest and to the psychic development of man as a whole.

This exceeding of the boundaries of place and time gives continuity to the very presence of the Cypriot poetess and to her work; it constitutes evidence for her worthiness, it gives her a prominent place among the modern Greek poets and focuses on her distinct contribution in the area of modern Greek poetry.

We Cypriot women, who have come to breathe the fragrance of thyme and the rush along with the smell of gun powder and to share in the hardships of our people, we are uniquely proud of every female cultural presence — a presence which gives us added strength to move forward to the dawn of a happier day for our country.

Poetry is the very voice, the living voice, the warm voice of man. It is the voice spoken by the poets of Cyprus, Greece, Japan — the voice heard all over the world, on behalf, or for the benefit, of all people. It is the poetry that eternally protects the rights of man, that reveals the truth about human beings through the poets, that truth which the human logic cannot grasp. Yet the poet speaks in the most natural way about the most natural things — he has no other way to convey the ideas he wants to convey. His nature is one, unalterable for ever. Has anybody ever criticized a foreign language,

that one does not understand simply on the ground that he does not speak it or is not acquainted with it? If it is really an asset to speak the language of Poetry, it is equally important to love and understand this language.

If however now the majority of people do not understand poetry (as much as they do not understand English or French, since they would not or could not learn it) this means that they did not wish to study it or they did not have the necessary ability to do so, in which case (regarding the second condition) one cannot, of course criticize them.

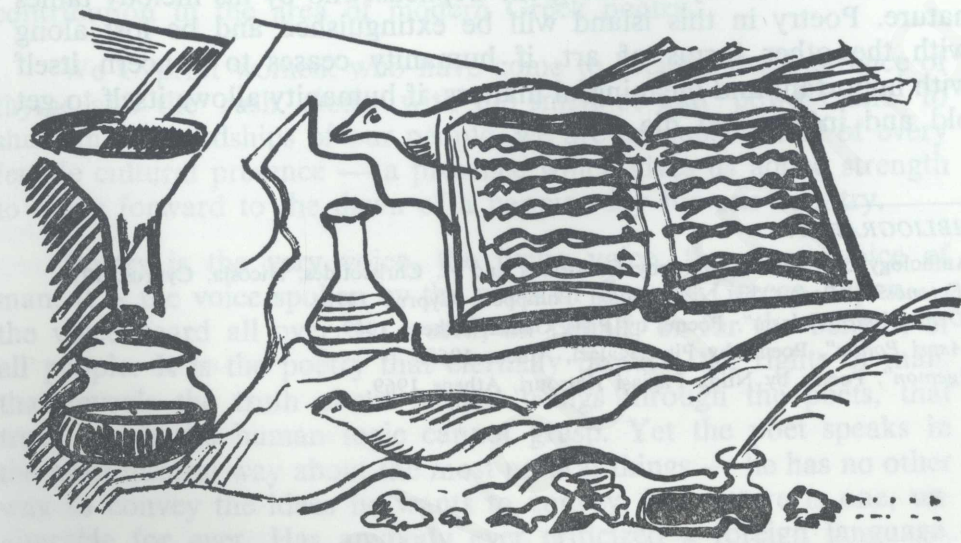
In any case, it is possible that the number of people that understand or study poetry is greater than we think. What I mean is that people have a natural predisposition and an inherently disinterested need for Art. We, moreover, maintain that this inherent need is present all over our island, a condition that will always be inherent in the hearts of people who live and breathe the life-giving air of the Cypriot land, an air that is constantly enriched either by the aroma of the lemon Blossom or the earthy fragrance of a land that gave birth to poets, heroes and to the Goddess of Love and Beauty herself.

Man will always be the great Orpheus who by his melody tames nature. Poetry in this island will be extinguished and be lost along with the other forms of art, if humanity ceases to concern itself with important and meaningful matters, if humanity allows itself to get old and infirm and die.

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### SCIENCE AND POETRY

To the question "who is the creator of poetry and science"? surely the answer is "man". Not simply the intellect or the heart of man or what we call feeling. In poetry and science the very essence of man, its *gestalt* contributes or participates. What makes poetry different from science is its form and expression by employing different means than science. In poetry the material are words printed on paper, while in science we use many other means to "realize" our ideas, and the term "technology" expresses these means. Great poets and great scientists are "objective" in their work. By this I mean to say that what they impart to us has permanency as it touches certain laws which are "objective". Naturally the history of poetry and science followed a course of development and each person in his era added something new. This means that Great Poetry and Great Science are great because they reflected and gave expression to their times; in other words poets and scientists added something new and touched through poetry and science the very sources of the law. In the past poetry and science were separate but gradually they started touching each other. What is a permanent element as a law of nature and man is the mind that writes, the laws that move, the eyes that see, the ear which hears the sound of the typewriter. The internal contradictions in man himself do not allow him to "perceive" or "touch" the "permanent" and "unresolvable" reality in which we live, move and exist. The individual mind is directly associated with the Supreme Mind or the Insight or the World intellect. This area is the area of ideas and angels, and he who creates by way of poetry or science enters it the more or the nearer the individual mind enters it or becomes part of the world or Common Mind of humanity, the more complete and integrated becomes the individual self, the person who



is a poet or scientist. Both of them attain an expanded consciousness and both of them, poet and scientist possess analogous imagination and knowledge.

Yet in terms of time and place and relatively to the physical environment each one's accent and emphasis is distinct. The first one transforms the "intellectual activities" that arise from the world of insight into verses employing words as his material, while the second one uses what he gets out of "pure insight" and gives it out with his scientific realization, a realization which may be based on his theory or theoretical ideas or on a realized objective act.

The poet and the scientist use their expressive means in order to create, and in due course, discover truth. Great works of poetry and science can be achieved, without their creators having as a goal the offering of something new or great.

Man the poet might have achieved or have created something self-consciously; he might even have perceived that there exists a commonality between poetry and the mathematical or pure logic in the thinking process. However, one thing remains imperceptibly impressed in man, i.e. that his personal voice, this sound, these words, these meanings and this particular scientific knowledge achieve their purpose whenever they contribute their presence as a "historical conscience" to their times or era; in this way they collectively help the formation of that which eternally IS; that IS (BE) whose laws they attempt to define in their poetic and scientific work.

It would be very difficult for somebody to believe that there is any connection between Poetry and Science. I begin by making an allowance and an admission and with the request that no misunderstanding should arise, I therefore start with two facts: What is Poetry is not Science, and what is Science is not Poetry. I believe that this is at least the way for one to differentiate to begin to pursue his subject, and exactly on this basis there should be sought a relationship, if any such relationship exists, either equal or parallel between the two subjects which are the object of this evening's communication with you.

There is a certain relationship, I could say a certain correlation, between art and science. The man who thinks with external thoughts

possesses a scientific spirit, while the one who thinks by employing internal ideas creates art. Therefore the difference between the scientist and the artist does not lie in imagination — an ability which the scientist requires as well in order to adduce the necessary hypotheses be able to synthesize the data of his observation — nor in the observation process, a process which the artist requires as well — but it lies in the subject-matter of the thinking process. The union of these two kinds of thinking material, which evokes the emotion, for there is art and feeling in scientific discovery, simultaneously produces the wise man and the poet. Our era attempted to cruelly separate these two qualities.

That which gives to the human spirit the impression of beauty is the adjustment to the external world. The aesthetic enjoyment is a kind of an internal echo. The harmony that is engendered within us is in essence a reflection of the harmony that exists in nature. Art is expressed in accordance with the laws of this harmony, which philosophy attempts to work out. More universal minds like many of our ancient Greek ancestors, correlate the scientific observation and research with the poetic inclination and the aesthetic sense. But ever during the Renaissance, a period of rebirth of the ancient Greek spirit, with the poetic inclination and the aesthetic sense. But ever seen in such intellectuals as DaVinci, whom Valéry includes "among the heroes and semi-gods of spiritual Myth", of course, Kant's aesthetic for the ancient caused a confusion in the area of ideas, substituting concept of beauty with the more undefined concept of art. He has that is to say, recognized that the essence of beauty lies in the satisfaction of the senses and in the spiritual intention of the creator, the poet. By examining a subjective beauty as an "internalized beauty" he has removed it from life. Thus, he has taken it out of its mission, a mission which is to surround life with an intangible net of joy, sympathy and grandeur.

Nowadays, we tend to go back to the classical conception of art and see it as a means towards making life more acceptable, more attractive and meaningful. Is it perhaps not this, or should not be this even the mission of science? Of course in life there is antithesis, everywhere dialectics prevail and through this humanity moves forward. But how does one know all this process of becoming? How does



one learn his own destination as much as the world's destination? The answer is: by way of knowledge, insight and alienation.

What essentially characterizes scientific knowledge is the impersonal, the objective, to use the classical term. Science exists as long as an agreement between thought and object is achieved, so that in this way thought will surpass and go beyond the individual tastes and the individual qualities. On the other hand artistic perception changes not merely as a result of change of times or schools of thought, but also change is effected by individual artists, since each one perceives things individually and differently.

Moreover science examines the different phenomena, earthly or cosmic, separately, in piecemeal. Only through a metaphysical, a poetic viewpoint man can understand the general unity of purpose in the world and seek thereafter his place and mission in it.

True science is a contemplation, a review, that is to say a pure spiritual gazing at the realities which are beyond the world of our senses. Therefore we can realize a philosophy which will complement science and the data of the intellect, by following the road of art but surpassing the personal and the individual in order to reach the generic and the world-wide conception of life. However, this is the secret of the creators not of all of them, but only of the exceptional, the select scientists or artists.

The poetic feelings have been almost the same since the time of Homer, Sappho and Theocritus. The motives are almost the same, though their expression changes. The "artful" crafty Ulysses is not a warrior anymore, but a scientist.

Freud has dealt a severe blow to erotic poetry and has influenced deeply all poetry and prose, by positing the chaotic unconscious and his studies on the interpretation of dreams. The poetic reflection expresses the spiritual anxiety of our times and the lyrical mind often puts aside feelings.

Speaking about Poetry and Science we accept in advance that the measure is Science, and what is measured is Poetry, that the first is Science and the second is Poetry, in spite of the fact that many a time science gives Themes and meaning to Poetry through its achieve-

ments. Nor do we forget that Poetry anticipates or precedes Science. Poetry, as every form of art searches for aesthetic enjoyment. It spreads a shade over our soul, a soul which is hers too. Science seeks mostly what is real, searches for truth. Feeling and thought are the two poles of human behaviour. Thought assisted by knowledge has given us science.

Once upon a time someone has separated men into two large categories. The prosperous ones and the anxious ones. The anxious ones are the poets and the scientists. The blissful ones belong to the establishment. Therefore, on the basis of this definition those who devote themselves to science are poets and those who devote themselves to Poetry are equally poets. Poetry is considered something beautiful, romantic and distinguished as well as easy and accessible to everyone. On the other hand Science came to be considered, as a result of its technological developments, as something which appeals to the more select among the people and to a smaller number of them. To both these axioms there is a difference of opinion and a different development. Poetry, we must admit, that with the development of so many schools, so many adherents of symbolism, and so many different currents after the war, has undoubtedly been placed in the sphere of the establishment even if it differs and I believe it differs radically from what is considered as science. Moreover, science with its technological conceptions or technocratic possibilities has been placed on a higher plane, where the older poets had placed only the muses and their own ideas. Therefore I believe that though Poetry is not a science the spheres in which both move are mutually associated, and have expanded so much that each one preserves whatever belongs to it in the area of the other. Science is developing within Poetry, and Poetry is developing qualitatively as a science.

However, the relation between science and poetry is neither a relation of equivalence, nor a relationship of a parallel experience. The establishment in any form or relationship has always the positive, the particular, many a times the laboratory content, and is nothing more than the contribution and the mixing of many a positive, particular, element following a particular evaluation, assessment and research. In this way the means of research are continuously renewed



and the establishment is also continuously renewed by expanding into a sphere where previously no scientific research was ever possible. The fact that Poetry in its development is possible to become a form of scientific thinking should not surprise us, because Poetry is not the Poetry of our grandmothers or of those romantic people who wanted to have "twenty autumns and no spring at all" and who were sighing in Alexandrian rooms or at the Kyrenia harbour, people who had not any more a pioneering status; but the poetry of new people walking new roads having new orientations which allow or pre-judge reviews and researches and foresee creative requirements. The representations of poetry continuously became wider and developed of course both the small versifier of children's preparatory exercises and the ambitious youth of adolescent first-fruits are poets. But if poetry can run away from man, it must have the power to escape from itself. This transitory nature of poetry many a times has no other relationship but as a relationship of mutual suffering (interaction) which continuously contains new forms, new methods, and I could add, seeks new orientations in their sphere.

Therefore one may very well — forgetting both the adolescent first-fruits as well as its preparatory exercises — be in a position to touch Poetry by investigathing and studying the means of scientific review which are always to him incomprehensible or inaccessible. However, the planning is common and mainly the environment has no difficulty to present him with.

Both poet and scientist are often solitary persons, living outside their community. We never expected Einstein to be a social person. The poet is not the person who is presented or applauded, but the person who thrives in his retreat, who thrives and is tried by his pen and his ideas and mainly by his efforts to attain a new sphere, in order to win as many readers as possible. Where poetry has really attained a shining success, there has always existed an axiom. The axiom that the more people understand a poem, the more their poets; this reflects more on science. The more understandable or meaningful or tangible are the scientific achievements, the more their creators become.

I offer a small example, Costas Montis poem "Drosoula" — a poem written in the Cypriot dialect, which at this moment nobody

can say that it is not a democratic poem — in order to support my first view point.

*Drosoula I will not tell you that I love you  
with though your hazel eyes may cry  
even if you stumble with your  
plaintive words.*

*You are the dawn  
that brings the day and light  
and I am the dark, I say,  
awaiting for the darkness to fall.*

*You are like a bird that flies  
without turning back to see  
and count the kisses given.*

*I do count the kisses I give  
because I am not a little bird  
and dont blame me for it  
and dont leave your beautiful  
lip tremble.*

*You are the blossom on the lemontree  
and I the ripe lemon*

*You're the festivity that starts  
and I the festivity that ends.*

*Drosoula, I will not tell you that I love you  
Even though I will see you crying  
better to cry now  
than cry secretly later.*

I cannot imagine that people who have heard the exciting news of the 21st of July — a signal date in our century — that human beings have stepped on the moon, have not considered themselves as participating scientists in this gigantic venture, the conquest of the moon.

In the beginning I have made a parallelism and an abstraction, that is, there is no relationship of equivalence whatsoever between Poetry and Science. Modern Mathematics do not affect, but their equality affects me. It is a fact whatever is in the established order



is not necessarily poetic, nor whatever falls within one sphere does not necessarily fall simultaneously in another sphere; but it is not always possible for us not to exclude that the highest scientific achievements in themselves have a poetic mood.

A person in love once wanted to climb to the sky and offer his sweetheart the stars or to swim down to the depths of the ocean in order to collect pearls for his beloved. Now science has removed for his beloved. Both Pikar and the Americans have unfortunately stars to his sweetheart nor can he engage himself in collecting pearls for his beloved. Both Pikar and the Americans have unfortunately deprived the poets of their gardens of tender and romantic blissfulness. Therefore the poet who wished to climb to the sky in order to gather stars for his sweet-heart must be considered an embryonic pre-scientist.

Science along with its related branches of psychology, psychopathology, psychoanalysis and history offers the continuously renewed means of devising the poetic word. Research, the supervision and the prescription of a poetic work should not be left any more to the so called exaltations of the moment nor to the products of traditional inspirations but it should be interconnected all the serious evaluation and assessment of feelings and ideas as if they were a concrete, real fact, which needs scientific focusing.

A classical example of this process is Paul Valéry's poem "The Sea Cemetery". Not a single verse in this poem is the product of sentimentality. Every word, every meaning, is the result of reflection and perusal.

Our times demand much specialization and moreover every theoretical branch or branch of specialization requires a technological disposition. The subject is extensive and even greater is the difficulty we experience in relating the one with the other within the time limits of a lecture. However, we must accept as a fact that the evaluation of Poetry requires now no improvised criticism but a scientific viewpoint, planning and perhaps the employment of many a means, which perhaps for others constitute the mechanical aetiology of Science, while for us, in spite of the perfect means for interpreting

the poetic content, are part and parcel of the process of development and are congruent with the needs of the public.

Paul Valéry in modern times has interpreted the principles of geometry and architecture in relation to poetry. He gave a philosophical and intellectual emphasis to all his poetic theory, as he believed that reflection and intelligent thinking must precede inspiration.

If poetry is one of the beautiful things of life, science is one of the necessary things; and if Poetry is a necessary condition, then it is the only thing that beautifies and establishes a balance opening new perspective in new spheres of influence of the spiritual work. Experiences are also common to both of them, as much as is their myth. Both apply to man serving perhaps different needs, yet the same goal of integration, perfection, and the worthiness of man under any technological positions, primitive reservations or poetic predispositions. A good poet experiences many a scientific moment, and the scientific moment is nothing more but the absolute creation to the level of perfection.

Poetry has never before had any relation with science but step by step either with the passing of time or by way of evaluation of data elements have been used which tend to compose scientific poetry or poetic scientific thinking. These elements can be placed in many spheres either Poetry before the birth of Christ, or generally epic and lyric poetry, or Platonic poetry; these elements were perhaps the first written scientific word and probably the new form of Essay poetry after war, a time when new roads or even new means of poetic expression were opened, which necessitate, or predispose towards scientific thought and evaluation of data.

Costis Palamas in nearly all his works is excited by science. Perhaps in his first poems "Iambic and Anapestic Verses" he judges science severely; however in these verses he does not refer to the real science, but to the static the scholastic science, the science that has tormented so much the world particularly our country.

*With a thunder and a lighting  
the unmerciful science  
hits and breaks the idol  
and turns it into ruins*



*And then it becomes an idol  
in the universe too;  
Recreating unwillingly  
whatever it came to destroy.  
And thus the chains are put around us  
divine darkness everywhere  
Every cause a mystery  
every truth a religion.*

The "Salute to the Sunrise" is one of Palamas' poems which calls he himself. The Great Visions and where he reveals his world cosmotheory. In this poem the seed of the *Twelve Works of the Gypsy* (1975), is enclosed. The Gypsy, a man free from his Bonds Palamas free from prejudices and personal interests narrates first what is past and gazes at the future; he also sees that the romanticism of his youth was an illusion, and he searches for the truth not outside the earth, not far away from humanity; he searches for the meaning of life in the matching of heart and mind, of beauty and science:

*Where is truth? Do not be deceived  
you don't find that wound only  
inside you man.  
With the eyes of life  
you will find it everywhere  
in the matching of your  
heart and your thought.  
Raise the third Olympus yourself.  
put Science up there.....*

We must observe that in Palamas' song science is not scientific poetry, nor does he make science a song. The poet enriches his poems with scientific viewpoints, even with scientific expressions, for it is his nature to be a searcher. But even his inspiration is particularly biblical. In his library his literary books were next to every kind of scientific editions. "I see" he writes in the Prologue of his poem *The Twelve Words of the Gypsy* (1975), "that my heart is full of mind, that its beats are made of ideas". In this first synthetic poem, the "Salute to Sunrise" he presents science as a plain Muse, ungrateful

and unadorned who sits in a grandiose house but as sad as a prison, he looks at the stars and he discovers the bond of the earth with the Universe and our relationship with the celestial spheres.

We must, of course note that this idea is not new in Palamas' work; we come across it in many of his poems. On the cover of his book *Altars* we find Goethe's reflection "Whoever knows science has a religion". We must not also forget that Palamas lived creatively at the time of epistemology, at a time, that is to say, when man astonished at and taking pride in the many scientific discoveries of his times, dreamed that science could cure all the evils of humanity and that it would offer him an easy and pleasant life. Our poet was deeply affected, as much as many other select minds, by the wise and enchanting works of the great teachers of his times which combined epistemology with the literature of Taine and Renan.

We find then a unity in Palamas' multifaceted work. So by way of knowledge and imagination he arrives at the general, the synthetic ideas which almost set limits between science and poetry. But we can add something else: Science — for better or worse — has now entered our life. It is a reality which the poet can escape but he is not in a position to ignore. Poetry is the dream of Truth. But this does not mean, Palamas writes, that logos will not put a Bridge on poetic visions and that science will not nourish them. Our era is above all critically inclined. Even the most daring imagination cannot erase from its thinking as a source of Art the knowledge and the scientific idea which save us from lies, however attractive their smiles are.

Now, another way of viewing the same subject: Is it ever possible for a poet to be considered a scientist? Surely, no. But in contrast to the scientist, for whom reality is the only natural law, the poets seek by way of an elliptic but deeply integrated thinking to catch the quintessence of life. If on the one law the scientist tries to transfer the supernatural into natural, to set barriers and limits to the endless and the unlimited, the poet wishes to embrace the Chaos to grasp, irrespective of place, time and number, whatever does not impinge directly on his logic or scenes... For this very reason many



years ago Science was criticized as being myopic, whereas poetry free from limitations and restrictions moves towards infinity. And yet the true poet, the true creator is not the one that is being driven blindly by internal urges, by the traditional inspiration failing to try to place his work within the historical and biological continuity of the *gestalt* in which it ultimately belongs.

This means that the basic element in the poetic creation is above everything retrenchment. In the retrenchment which is subject to every genuine poetic creation we recognize the common ground which ties poetry with science, for the theoretical foundations of science refer above all to the internal reflection which challenges the world as a being and as a conscience. The commonality of the problematization of these two mental abilities lies in the commonality of the fundamental ideals which characterize both the scientist and the poet. An example of this state is the pre-socratic philosophy which was simultaneously science and poetry.

Parmenides' poem is a classical example. Differentiation exists only in the externalization of the esoteric problem and in the methods of expression which the two thinkers follow. The first one adopts the empirical, objective method, while the second one remains within the sphere of subjectivity externalizing his thinking process by way of Logos.

The first approach of research, Parmenides says, is that the being exists and that it is impossible not to exist, this is the road of Persuasion for it follows truth. The other approach of research says that nothing exists and that this non-existence is necessary. I advise you that regarding this road you should not ask anything, for it is impossible to be acquainted with the non-being for such a thing is unattainable nor is it possible to express it in words.

Poetry brings us into direct contact with the infinite world of the human soul so that recognizing in our very selves the truth of our existence, we feel that an experience of redemption from the strains of our everyday selfish life, is engendered within us, having in this way won the precious abstraction of dreams. And in this particular instance if Poetry is Beauty, Science is necessity. Imagine, then the condition where beauty and necessity have a scientific attainment as

a common pinnacle, where the poetic ideal combines with the scientific thesis.

Our subject is extensive. We could, however, without either being dogmatic or absolute, suggest the following epilogue:

Poets preceded Scientists, but at this moment the scientists with their scientific achievements have extended a helping hand to Poetry in order to guide it, to afford it new means of propulsion, devising and evaluation.

Man will always need science in order to know the secrets of nature. But he will always need Poetry as well so that he may perceive and feel himself more fully and feel that part of reality which he is capable of ruling only by his imagination. The progress in technology and in skills will afford man the potential and the time to devote himself more to art. Man will always remain the great magician, the Prometheus who steals and brings down to Earth the light of the Heavens but he will also be Orpheus, who tames nature with the enchantment of his melody.

Poetry will exist as long as there is a human heart. Poetry is the every-day word, the motion, the energy, the thought, and as such will accompany our era and all future time.

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Βιβλιοθήκη Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου