GREEK SURREALISM: FROM ITS ROOTS IN FRENCH SURREALISM TO THE POETRY OF CALAS, ENGONOPOULOS, AND EMBEIRIKOS

A Thesis
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ABSTRACT

The Greek surrealist movement gained momentum in the 1930s, at about the same time that the French surrealists were dispersing and searching for a new base due to the onset of World War II. The war and subsequent political problems the Greeks faced during the first half of the twentieth century stimulated surrealism instead of quelling it. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the reasons for the differences in Greek and French surrealism by analyzing the history of both movements, and by studying the work of three surrealists who typify the Greek movement.

The first chapter of the thesis discusses the history of surrealism, beginning with the French movement and its roots in modernism. Because the nature of the surrealist movement is to rebel against tradition, it is important to understand modernism, the tradition against which surrealism was reacting. Modernism in France culminated in an aesthetic movement vocally opposed to the ideals of bourgeois society. The French surrealists maintained their predecessors' rejection capitalism, but decided to express these ideas in a radically different way. The Greek surrealists, because their modernist precursors were not concerned with capitalist society, were not so much interested in it as they were in Modern Greek identity, a theme addressed by the Greek modernists. Like the French surrealists, the Greek surrealists appropriated the topics addressed by the modernists, but treated them in a totally original "surrealist" manner.
The subsequent chapters of the thesis each deal with a Greek surrealist. The second chapter singles out Nicolas Calas and aims to prove that his writing contributed to the surrealist effort to undermine the modernist legacy. The third chapter analyzes the poetry of Nikos Engonopoulos, whose writing also challenged his predecessors and the traditional use of language. Andreas Embeirikos, who is the subject of the fourth chapter, was different from the rest of the surrealist poets, and indeed from the rest of Greek literature, for his erotic writing. The explicit descriptions of sexuality subverted traditional morals and social standards while challenging concepts of high and low literature.

The three writers discussed in this thesis played a significant role in the Greek surrealist movement. The analysis of their poetry in light of the development of surrealism in France a decade before provides a clear picture of the aims and outcomes of surrealism in Greece.
Dedicated to my parents and brother
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INTRODUCTION

Surrealism was an aesthetic movement that challenged tradition, both literary and social. André Breton and his circle spearheaded the movement during the 1920s in Paris. Breton's first *Surrealist Manifesto* in 1924 outlined the primary goals of the movement as liberation of the unconscious, recognition of the dream realm, and the creation of art through the instantaneous expression of thoughts. The surrealists attempted to achieve these goals in an effort to free society from the domination of bourgeois ideology.

At about the time that the French surrealists were dispersing and searching for a new base due to the onset of World War II, various Greek artists, inspired by the French surrealists whom they had met or read about, appropriated surrealist techniques and began producing surrealist art in Greece. Embeirikos’ collection of poems *Ψυχάμβος*, published in 1935, is generally considered the beginning of Greek surrealism.

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the history of French and Greek surrealism in an effort to establish the differences between the two movements, and the reasons for these differences. I will then analyze the work of three surrealists who typify the Greek movement, and I will prove that Greek surrealist art challenged an oppressive
nationalist ideology perpetuated by the modernists and endorsed by governmental institutions.

The first chapter of the thesis discusses the history of surrealism, beginning with the French movement. I will discuss the importance of French modernism\(^1\), out of which the surrealist movement emerged. The modernist movement had its seeds in the symbolist poetry of Baudelaire and in the prose of late realists like Flaubert.\(^2\) Modernism evolved throughout the second half of the 19th century and into the 20th, and culminated in an aesthetic movement that rejected the values of bourgeois society of which it was a part. The downfall of French modernism was brought about by its inability to see itself as a product of bourgeois culture; the fact that the modernists remained within the confines of bourgeois culture, and lived by its laws of rationality, capitalism, progress, prevented it from ever succeeding in posing a real threat to bourgeois society.

Greek surrealism similarly was influenced by, and at the same time reacted against the Greek modernists. Modernism in Greece, however, was different than modernism in Western Europe. One reason for this difference was the way in which capitalism developed in both countries. Whereas capitalism in France had reached a mature state of development by the end of the nineteenth century, it was only in the first half of the twentieth century that capitalism began to develop in Greece.\(^3\) As a result, the early Greek modernists, like Constantine Karyotakis and C. P. Cavafy, wrote poetry

\(^1\) Modernism: The aesthetic movement, with seeds in the symbolist movement, that reacted against the morals and ideology of bourgeois life brought on by the modern era. Chronologically, modernism is everything post-Enlightenment. See Calinescu, pages 41-100

\(^2\) Calinescu, 44-47, Bradbury and McFarlane, 31, 36, 50, Eyseinsson, 2, 21, 40.

\(^3\) Mouzelis, 22-29, 115-133.
that resembled European symbolism in form, but was less concerned with the critique of the philistine than the French symbolists.\(^4\)

The high modernists of the 1930s, who appeared at a time when capitalism was established as an important social discourse, did not critique bourgeois culture in their writings either. Whereas the French modernists felt oppressed by the rules and regulations of French society, the Greek modernists felt a need to carve out the perimeters for and define Greek society still searching for its identity in the modern world. Even though the Modern Greek state had been in existence for over a century, and even though the Generation of the 30s was not the first group to attempt to create a Greek identity, it was the first group to blend modern European aesthetic techniques with indigenous Greek elements.

The Generation of the 30s combined modernism with two specifically Greek themes: the Aegean (the sun, light, the blue of the sea), and the continuity of Greek history (from the classical period, through Byzantium, and contemporary Greece). The Generation of the 30s reinforced their ideas about Modern Greece by endorsing earlier literary works with similar platforms, such as Makriyannis.\(^5\) According to critics like Dimitris Tziovas, the modernist literature of the Generation of the 30s created a one-sided or “monoglossic” literary canon that portrayed a narrow view of the Greek identity.\(^6\)

The Greek surrealists rebelled against this viewpoint, just as the French surrealists had rebelled against the ideas of their modernist predecessors. The French surrealists

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\(^4\) Calinescu, 44-46.

\(^5\) See Lambropeoulos’ Literature as a National Institution, especially chapter 2.

\(^6\) Tziovas, To Πολιτισμό... 177-213, 221.
believed that the French modernists had failed to pose a threat to bourgeois society, and the Greek surrealists believed that the Greek modernists had failed to create a plural Greek identity. Both surrealist movements set out to correct the mistakes of the modernists.

The subsequent chapters of the thesis each deal with a Greek surrealist. The second chapter singles out Nicolas Calas, and aims to prove that his writing contributed to the surrealist effort to undermine the modernist legacy. His poem *Acropolis*, in particular, challenges the idea of a continuous Greek history (propounded by the modernists) and questions the meaning of that history. This poem not only attacks ideas promoted by the Greek modernists, it also criticizes the image of Greece that was created by Western travelers in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Calas’ poem implies that these established ideas about the Parthenon, although they claim to represent it truthfully, do not do so. Calas’ poem undermines ideas about Greekness, both indigenous and from abroad, and destroys imposing discourses about the Greek identity.

One could argue that Calas’ poem only provides another version of the Modern Greek identity. I will maintain, however, that Calas’ poetry does not claim to relay “a” truth, nor does it pretend to provide the only legitimate account. Some of Calas’ poems analyzed in this thesis, for example, urge the reader to question the importance and legitimacy of language and literature. This surrealist technique of revealing the fictionality of language emphasizes the questionability of any truth, and the illusive quality of reality.
The third chapter analyzes the poetry of Nikos Engonopoulos, whose writing also challenges the legitimacy of language. His use of satire and absurdity force the reader to reconsider the rationality of language and the world in general. Several of the French surrealists use this technique to surprise and shock the audience. Whereas Calas employs an aggressive, almost angry style to surprise the audience and undermine traditional ideas of the Acropolis, Engonopoulos often uses the element of humor and absurdity to shock the audience and undermine their ideas about Greek culture. In his poem Perhaps, for instance, Engonopoulos juxtaposes the idea of Homer with a mad, irrational character; the idea of Homer as a lunatic adds humor to an already light-hearted poem, and at the same time questions the seriousness and legitimacy of Homer and his literary legacy.

Whereas Calas left Greece with the advent of the dictatorship in the 30s, Engonopoulos remained in Greece, and his poetry reflects this close connection with and profound understanding of the events that took place there. Although his poem Bolivar makes no direct reference to the German occupation, the story of two real revolutionary war heroes (one Greek, one Venezuelan) defending freedom must have rung true to the ears of listeners, gathered to hear it at secret meetings during the end of the occupation.

Andreas Embeirikos, who is the subject of the fourth chapter, also remained in Greece, and fought against the Germans during the occupation. His poetry, however, is different from the rest of the surrealist works, and indeed from the rest of Greek literature, for its erotic quality. His training in psychoanalysis left its mark on many of the sensual moments in his oeuvre. Embeirikos' use of katharevousa, or formal
Greek, to describe poignantly sexual scenes also intensifies the erotic element. The contrast between the formal language, which is interspersed with demotic words, and the “demotic,” or informal sexual content, heightens the erotic tensions within the work.

Whereas Calas uses passion, and Engonopoulos uses humor, Embeirikos uses sexuality to challenge the predominant modernist aesthetic paradigm. Several of the poems discussed in this thesis present a picture of love and sexual freedom that differed dramatically from the symbolic representations of love in modernist poetry. These statements about sexuality are the closest that any Greek surrealist comes to criticizing bourgeois society. Embeirikos’ work redefines ideas about sex in Greek society, and at the same time challenges literary tradition with new ways of depicting sex in literature.

The three writers discussed in this thesis are not necessarily the most important Greek surrealists, nor are they necessarily the most widely recognized. They did, however, play a significant role in the Greek surrealist movement. The analysis of their poetry in light of the development of surrealism in France a decade before, provides a clear picture of the aims and outcomes of surrealism in Greece.
CHAPTER 1

The History of Surrealism in France and Greece

According to Nanos Valaoritis, the role of Greek poetry is to compensate for the loss or void felt by Greeks vis-à-vis their belatedness to the rest of the world.\(^7\)

Valaorits' statement, although it is a generalization, reflects an important factor in the development of Greek literary movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the influence of the West. Even Greek surrealism, which made an appearance on the literary scene in Greece in 1935\(^8\), more than a decade after Breton's 1924 *Surrealist Manifesto*, is a smaller component of a larger Western movement.

The belatedness of Greek surrealism vis-à-vis its French counterpart is a pattern that can be traced back to the 1700s, during the Greek Enlightenment.\(^9\) During this time, European Enlightenment texts were beginning to be known in the Balkans, and certain intellectuals, such as Iosipos Moisiodax, Demetrios Katartzis, and others, began to propagate contemporary Western ideas in the hopes of enlightening the

\(^7\) Tsékénis, Valaorits, 14-15.
\(^8\) The publication of Embirikos' *Ypsikaminos* is generally considered the beginning of Greek surrealism. The history of surrealism in Greece between 1924 and 1935, however, has been addressed in the following articles: -Panniotou, Yiorgos. 1984. Γιώργος Πανιώτου. "Ένα πρώτο μελέτη του υπερρεαλισμού." Η Λέξη 36 (Ιούλιος-Αύγουστος) 1984: 536-542. -Vagenas, Nasos. 1984. "Σημειώσεις για μία προσπάθεια του ελληνικού υπερρεαλισμού." Η Λέξη 37 (Σεπτέμβρης) 1984: 618-626.
Balkan peoples in the Ottoman Empire. Using the West as an example, they translated these texts into Greek and wrote their own treatises promoting similar ideas. Some of these texts helped galvanize the War of Independence in 1821. The inception of the new and independent Greek state in 1833 laid the foundation for the birth of a national literature.

The West continued to exercise a certain amount of influence on Greek texts, throughout the Greek romantic period in the mid nineteenth century, and with the first Greek modernist texts (i.e. Cavafy and Karyotakis) of the late nineteenth century. In the 1930s, a new wave of modernism emerged that was typically Greek in that it promoted certain ideas about Greek culture. The modernist experiment in Greece, which was different than the Western one, led to a certain type of surrealism that resembled its western counterpart aesthetically, but not so much philosophically.

One of the basic philosophies of European modernism was its dismissal of the modern age bourgeois mentality. According to Matei Calinescu, bourgeois mentality was influenced by the ideals of the Enlightenment and eventually galvanized the advent of the industrial age. Calinescu defines the industrial age and the mentality that kept it going as modernity. Modernism was the aesthetic reaction against modernity. Calinescu writes that the two aspects of modern society, the material and the aesthetic, worked against each other and “rage[d] for each other’s destruction.”

In other words, the modernist artists attempted to undermine ideas such as capitalism, industrialization, logic, scientific progress, and education of man as the path to

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9 See Jasdanis’ Belated Modernity, “Chapter 2, From Empire to Nation-State.”
10 Calinescu, 41.
enlightenment, among other things, all of which were products of modern, industrial society.

According to many critics, the symbolists and the late realists marked the beginning of modernism in France. Initially labeled the “decadents,” the symbolists, according to Matei Calinescu in *Five Faces of Modernity*, were characterized by their strong anti-middle class ideals.\(^{11}\) Subsequently, realist writers such as Gustave Flaubert, in *Madame Bovary*, began to create a stale and bitter image of bourgeois life. The naturalists, such as Emile Zola and J. K. Huysmans, depicted and even darker picture of life for the lower classes in a capitalist, bourgeois society.

These writers, who sowed the seeds for modernism, began to implement some of the techniques typical of modernist writers wishing to undermine bourgeois ideology. One of modernism’s subversive tactics was defamiliarization, which consisted in making the text seem foreign to the reader, surprising the reader with an unconventional, “illogical” work. Inevitably, modernist writers emphasized the form and presentation of a work. This is why Stephen Spender, in his *Struggle of the Modern* distinguishes modern artists by their “sensibility of style and form more than in subject matter.”\(^{12}\) One technique used to alter the form of a work was the implementation of free verse.

Structurally, modernist works presented a void or emptiness that the work itself attempted to fill or replace. The modernist artists’ rejection of modernity, progress, science, capitalism, resulted in an art that longed for another solution to replace the

\(^{11}\) Calinescu, 44–45.
\(^{12}\) Calinescu, 89.
chaos and emptiness that the negation of these ideas created. François Lyotard would label such large ideas or “myths” such as capitalism, progress, and science as “grand narratives.” A typical modernist work longs for a real grand narrative that would act as a central point of reference for the work. In order to reject capitalism, for instance, a modernist work might replace this idea with another grand narrative about a nostalgic past, before capitalism existed.

Some of the first theorists to point out that the modernists’ project of rejecting bourgeois society was unsuccessful were the Marxists. Georg Lukács in “Art and Objective Truth” claims that modernist literature from the 1830s onwards not only was ineffective in counteracting bourgeois ideals, but in fact contributed to the rise of bourgeois culture. In “Narrate or Describe,” Lukács argues that artists after the bourgeois revolution of 1848 chose to reject society by refusing to participate in it. Realist and naturalist writers, such as Flaubert and Zola, became “aloof... observers and critics of capitalist society” in a triumphant bourgeois society. Because these artists isolated themselves from society they did not understand the struggle of opposing forces within society and therefore could not hope to express them in their writings. They became less and less aware of the class struggle and were unable to capture the essence of the proletarian condition.

Like Lukács, the surrealisists believed that modernist literature was ineffective. Their solution, however, was entirely different from Lukács’. Lukács remained in the paradigm of rationality. He believed that participating in society would create a

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13 Brooker, 16.
14 Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, Appendix.
15 Lukács, “Art and Objective Truth,” “Narrate or Describe”
realistic picture of class struggle, and thus enable the writer to aid in the revolution of the proletariat. The surrealists, however, completely rejected the idea of realism and rationalism and refused to participate in society in a conventional way.

Disillusioned with post-World War Europe, André Breton, Paul Éluard, Louis Aragon, Robert Desnos, and Benjamin Péret, among others, gathered and wrote surrealist literature in the hopes of changing society. Unlike Lukács and other critics of modernism, the surrealists decided to completely extricate themselves and their art from bourgeois society by creating an aesthetic and leading a lifestyle incompatible with bourgeois logic. They believed that they could liberate society through art and through revolutionary action.\(^\text{17}\)

Although the first self-proclaimed *Surrealist Manifesto*, written by André Breton in 1924, does not blatantly call for the downfall of bourgeois society, it proclaims ideas that threatened its tenets. Breton describes surrealism as absolute freedom of the mind and body, which can be achieved through the disavowal of social laws that curb our desires and in effect control the way we act. By freeing desire and unleashing repressed emotions, the individual can approach *surreality*.\(^\text{18}\)

Inspired by the work of Freud, to which he refers in the *Manifesto*, Breton defines *surreality* as the state between dream and reality. Breton views both the dream state and the unconscious as territories free from the restrictions imposed by social laws. According to Freud, however, the unconscious is a “physical” storage place where

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\(^{16}\) Lukács, “Narrate or Describe,” 119, 122, 127, 147.
\(^{17}\) Nadeau, 226-227.
\(^{18}\) *Manifeste*, 20-22, 24.
repressed emotions and other sentiments of which we are not aware are amassed.\textsuperscript{19} This misreading (perhaps intentional) of Freud, redefines the unconscious as a realm of personal freedom.\textsuperscript{20}

The concept of another realm, or the existence of something metaphysical beyond that which one sees or feels, is understood during a moment of clairvoyance, according to Valaoritis.\textsuperscript{21} Willard Bohn claims that this moment of clairvoyance was prompted by two scientific breakthroughs: the invention of the x-ray, and mathematical discoveries in four-dimensional geometry, about which artists such as Guillaume Apollinaire (1880 -1918), the inventor of the word surrealism, wrote.\textsuperscript{22}

Unsatisfied with mathematical explanations for a fourth dimension, Apollinaire became interested in aesthetic and metaphoric depictions of another dimension. In the collection of poetry that Apollinaire published a few months before his death in 1918, he mentioned his interest in the investigation of new worlds.\textsuperscript{23} Apollinaire’s belief in “new worlds,” or another dimension, was similar to what we might experience in a dream state. Art, accordingly, should be built upon dreams and the imagination. According to Apollinaire, art should not be a reflection of things as they are, but of things as we think they are.\textsuperscript{24}

The surrealists did not merely create a \textit{surreality} in their works, they attempted to live their everyday lives in the spirit of surrealism. Breton, for instance, in his novel

\textsuperscript{19} Freud, 70-72.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Manifeste}, 20, 24.
\textsuperscript{21} Tsékénis, Valaoritis, 24.
\textsuperscript{22} Bohn, 7-15. Apollinaire was the first to use the word surrealism when he entitled his play \textit{Les mamelles de Tirésias, une drame surréaliste} (or \textit{The Breast of Tiresias, a surrealistic drama}) (1917). See Bohn, page 126.
\textsuperscript{23} Bohn, 121-139.
\textsuperscript{24} Bohn, 22-27.
Nadja, describes the surrealist way of life: walking the city streets without purpose, searching for haphazard coincidence, and appreciating life as one would appreciate a surrealist work of art: without rational judgment.

Roger Shattuck, in his introduction to Nadeau's seminal History of Surrealism, explained that the surrealist experience was comprised of love and laughter. A new love of life emerged with the release of the imagination. Laughter was also a dominant quality of surrealist works, as absolute freedom tended to provoke circumstance and chance, which undermined logical reality, and provided an oftentimes-sarcastic or humorous insight into life.25

This surrealist way of life was another method used to achieve the ultimate goal of the surrealists: freeing society from bourgeois ideology. Part of this lifestyle included participation in the proletariat revolution in order to challenge bourgeois society. There was contention among the surrealists about how to become a part of the revolution.26 Before joining the communist party in 1927, Breton, Aragon, Éluard, Péret and other surrealists agreed that it was imperative to intellectually revolutionize society before joining the proletarian revolution. Surrealist literature, for example, could be used to change the minds of the people, in order to prepare them for the social revolution. After 1927, however, Breton changed his mind, and decided that it was more important to participate first in the social revolution, by joining the communist party, even if the proletariat was not intellectually ready.27

25 Shattuck, 11-34.
26 Nadeau, 128-132.
27 Nadeau, 119-121, 135.
Despite these disagreements about the role of surrealist poetry in the proletariat revolution, the surrealists remained loyal to the original goal of challenging existing society. One way of doing this was to prove that reality (which included social laws, class distinctions, perceptions of history, etc.) was always questionable. For example, René Magritte’s painting of a smoking pipe entitled ‘Ceci n’est pas une pipe’ insists that the painting of a pipe is not a real pipe.\textsuperscript{28} Surrealist writing similarly undermined traditional concepts of realism. Automatic writing, or \textit{écriture automatique}, was an exercise used to reach the unconscious and attain a surrealistic state. Automatic writing, and the instantaneous expression of ideas, allowed the individual to practice tapping into the depths of his unconscious, which, like the dream state, was a realm of freedom and liberation.\textsuperscript{29} Automatic writing emphasized the illusory quality of the logical, tangible world.

This is why Jacques Lacan, who personally knew the French surrealists (and who later befriended Embeirikos\textsuperscript{30}), would see surrealist poetry as the only type of language without neuroses. According to Lacan, language that pretended to have a true, absolute meaning was sick; Lacan believed that language could not relay one singular message. Language, (or the word equation, signified/signifier), and specifically the signified, was infinitely deferred or commutable (or possessed infinitely different connotations referring to other images, which in turn possessed infinitely different connotations referring to other images, ad infinitum) so that one true, precise meaning was completely impossible. Thus reality, and the real, tangible

\textsuperscript{28} Sarup, 22.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Manifeste}, 33.
\textsuperscript{30} See Thanasis Tzavars’ article in \textit{Xapot》17/18, November 1985.
individual, could not be properly expressed through language. Consequently, when an individual believed that he/she could express himself/herself logically and clearly through language, he/she was susceptible to neurosis. Surrealism, however, made no pretense of preaching absolute truth. 31

All the economic developments that led to the eventual rule of the bourgeoisie in France resulted in modernist literature (which revolted against the rule of the bourgeoisie) and subsequently surrealist literature (which reacted against the ineffectiveness of the modernist effort). Bourgeois society in Greece, however, by the mid-twentieth century, was in its beginning stages. 32 There had been no social revolutions in twentieth century Greece as there had been in France. Although there was a bourgeois class in Greece (which was mainly imported from Asia Minor and the Diaspora), the Greek modernist writers did not react against it as did the French.

Some of the modernists and various other Greek writers around the turn of the nineteenth century produced a nationalist discourse that helped to construct and enforce a Modern Greek identity. Manuel T. Cheretis writes in 1905:

I believe in one Greece, great and indivisible, thrice-glorious and eternal, country of the spirit of enlightenment, of wisdom, and of science, of all that is perfect; creator of art, of beauty, of civilization, and of all progress. 33

Examples of such nationalist discourses resemble Enlightenment texts, and glorify the very ideas that contemporary French writers sought to destroy.

32 Jusdanis, "Is Postmodernism Possible..."., 69.
33 Dimaras, 40?.

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Greek modernism, instead of revolting against the dominant social class, worked to construct an identity for Modern Greek society. This new definition of Greece would help define and distinguish Greece as a modern nation. The “Generation of the 30s” was one of the most popular modernist literary groups, and advocated a certain idea of modern Greece based on the geographical beauty of the Aegean and ancient Greek history. They advocated a specific national ideology of Hellenism that included historical and cultural continuity from antiquity to the present.\textsuperscript{34} Greek modernism, according to Artemis Leontis, did not react against tradition, but “revisited” it. The nationalistic ideas of the Generation of the 30s were eventually appropriated by the state and used for its purposes. According to Lambropoulos, the Generation of the 30s eventually succeeded in establishing Greek literature as a national institution.\textsuperscript{35}

Whereas the French modernists were concerned with material reality and the rule of the bourgeoisie, the Greek modernists were concerned with building their nascent nation and creating a distinct national identity. Although the Modern Greek nation had been in existence for almost one hundred years, and although previous writers had also attempted to create a modern Greek identity, the Greek modernists were the first to incorporate European aesthetic techniques with specifically Greek content. Greek modernism sought to recreate Greece by leaning on the past and at the same time, linking it with the present, using European modernist techniques.\textsuperscript{36}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{34} See Artemis Leontis' \textit{Topographies of Hellenism}, Vassilis Lambropoulos' \textit{Literature as a National Institution}, and Dimitris Tziovas' \textit{Το Πελεμονιστό της Ελληνικής οφνημος}.\textsuperscript{35} Judanis, “Is Postmodernism Possible...” 86. Lambropoulos, \textit{Literature as a National Institution}, Introduction.\textsuperscript{36} Leontis, 142.}
In order to legitimize this fabricated Greek identity, the Generation of the 30s drew on and promoted earlier Greek writers of the Generation of 1880, such as Kostas Palamas, Yiannis Makriyannis, or Perikles Yannopoulos, for their nationalistic ideas. These writers emphasized Modern Greece as a specific geographical place, which would in turn serve to strengthen the idea of Modern Greece and its identity in the contemporary world. Perikles Yannopoulos wrote in 1903:

Everywhere light, everywhere day, everywhere charm, everywhere ease. Everywhere order, symmetry. Everywhere purity of lines, the versatilty of Odysseus, the melodiousness of the *palikare*. Everywhere gentleness, grace smiles. Everywhere the sport of Greek wisdom, the desire for laughter, the Socratic irony. Everywhere philanthropy, sympathy, love. Everywhere a passion for song, for embracing. Everywhere a desire for the material, the material, the material. Everywhere a Dionysiac pleasure, a desire for intoxication through light, a thirst for beauty, a cherishing of felicity. Everywhere a breath of air full of war songs, a vitality, a gallantry and an ardor everywhere, and, simultaneously, a breath of air of melancholy beauty, a sadness of beauty, a lamentation of a dying Adonis. And everywhere the air of a bright war song, and at the same time the air of the flute softening the body with a voluptuousness. And everywhere a breath of air, everywhere the lamentations of Aphrodite, and simultaneously, a very strong acid satire.  

Such images of deep indigo seas, white cubic houses, and wild bare rock have not only been used to formulate a common identity, but have also been appropriated by the Greek state. The National Greek Tourism Organization, for instance, appropriated these images and placed them on the posters that appear ubiquitously in tourist agencies all over the world, enticing potential vacationers to come to Greece.

This new idea of a romanticized Aegean dreamland, along with a sense of a continuous past, became the Greek homeland in the mind of Greeks. A large part of

37 Lambropoulos, Chapter 2, especially page 62, Leontis *Topographies*, 84-89.
38 Dimaras, 410.
this need for an ideal Greece stemmed from the *Megali Idea*, or Great Idea, which was a vision that "aspired to the unification of all areas of Greek settlement in the Near East within the bounds of a single state with its capital in Constantinople."\(^{40}\) In 1919, Venizelos, one of the main proponents of the *Megali Idea*, sent Greek troops to Smyrna in Asia Minor in an effort to recapture the former Greek territories. By 1922, the Greek army had lost its campaign and was forced to return home with burning Smyrna at their heels. The subsequent exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in 1923 symbolized the death of the *Megali Idea*. The resulting sense of loss and disillusionment manifested itself in many ways, including literature.

According to Artemis Leontis in *Topographies of Hellenism*, the lost center of Greece has been a discussion in action since the early 18\(^{th}\) century, and was intensified by the Asia Minor Catastrophe.\(^{41}\) This lost center symbolizes the lost greatness of Ancient Greece and Byzantium, and Modern Greece’s struggle to recover it. This theme of loss is so prevalent in the Greek psyche that Leontis includes *Mycenae*, a short story by Ilias Venezis about the Asia Minor Crisis and the resulting loss of center, in a collection of writings aimed to acquaint the foreign traveler to typical Greek literature.\(^{42}\) In western European modernism, a similar search for an ideal society was important, but it was a result of dissatisfaction with political and economic circumstances, and not a result of a need for a modern identity. Whereas the lost center of Greek modernism is often the missing homeland,

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\(^{39}\) Beaton, 171.

\(^{40}\) Clogg, 3.

\(^{41}\) Leontis, *Topographies...,* 133-134.

\(^{42}\) Leontis, *Greece: A Traveler’s Literary Companion.*
the lost center of European modernism is an ideal society, free from the chaos and alienation of the capitalist world.

The Greek modernists, and other Greek writers preceding them, became preoccupied with this idea of an idealized Greek homeland and with the creation of a Modern Greek identity. Several contemporary critics have condemned Greek modernism’s preoccupation with these topics. Dimitris Tziovas, for instance, criticizes Greek modernism and some 19th century Greek literature for its “monoglossic” quality. He claims that much of Greek literature after the 1821 revolution was conservative because it served the purpose of nation building.43

The surrealists were the first significant literary movement in Greece to thoroughly break this tradition. Tziovas writes in his introduction to Greek Modernism and Beyond:

Poets such as C.P. Cavafy, Costas Karyotakis and the surrealists (Empeirikos, Engonopoulos, Calas), with their cosmopolitan outlook and their challenging aesthetic and social stance, can be seen as representing the avant-garde, whereas Seferis, Elytis44 and to some extent Kostis Palamas can be treated as modernists because their attachment to Greek tradition shaped and restrained to some extent their experimental impulses.45

Tziovas’ definition implies that Greek surrealism, just as its European counterpart, distinguished itself by breaking with tradition. Greek surrealism rebelled against the

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43 Tziovas, Το Παλαιομονοτό, 177-213, 221.
44 It is interesting that Tziovas calls Elytis a modernist. Odysseas Elytis, 1979 Nobel Prize winner, is often classified as a surrealist, and is even compared to French surrealists, Éluard in particular (Kohler, 104). It is true that his style is generally surrealistic, but the content of his poetry, according to Politis, is “full of light, [and] of the Aegean...” (Politis, 71) typical Greek modernist themes. Elytis’ modernist qualities will become more apparent in the third chapter of this thesis, when his poetry is compared with that of Engonopoulos.
45 Tziovas, Greek Modernism... 5.
stringent aesthetic paradigms established by the Generation of the 30s, whereas French surrealism reacted against oppressive economic and social conditions.

French surrealism and its ideas, however, were imported into Greece by the 1930s. Shortly after the publication of the first major surrealist work by Embeirikos in 1935, Greek writers came together to publish a collection of translated French surrealist poetry. Nicolas Calas, Andreas Embeirikos, Nikos Engonopoulos, Odysseas Elytis, and others, collaborated and published their translations of major French surrealist texts in February of 1938 in a book entitled Υπερ(ρ)εαλισμός (Sur(realism).)  

These Greek surrealists were part of the avant-garde circle in Greece, which included the Greek modernists. Because all of these movements developed nearly simultaneously, they often overlapped. Nanos Valaoritis, in his introduction to a French anthology on the Greek surrealists, writes that surrealism in Greece confused itself with the modernist movement.  

According to Elizabeth Arseniou, the Greek avant-garde was a conglomeration of high modernists, futurists, literature of the absurd, Beat, and nouveau roman, among others. All of these avant-garde artists published in the same journals and frequent the same cafes. One such journal that played an especially significant role in the development of the Greek avant-garde was the short-lived Pali (1964-1966).

Elizabeth Arseniou argues that the contributors of Pali wanted to create an avant-garde that could be transferred to the Greek context in a mixed narrative that

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46 Amatzopoulo, Nikos Engonopoulos, 22.
47 Tsékénis, Valaoritis, 14.
48 For a description of the social and intellectual atmosphere in Athens from the late 1930s through the 1960s, see Naon Valaoritis' Μοντέρνισμος, Πρωτότυπο χωρί Πελάτη.
expressed the break with the Greek establishment as well as the experience gained from the Western avant-garde.\textsuperscript{49}

The hybrid nature of \textit{Pali} attested to the diversity of the Greek avant-garde; in Western Europe, the different avant-garde movements existed autonomously, and during different periods of time; the futurists (early 1910s) and Dadaists (late 1910s) eventually founded the surrealist movement (1920s). In Greece, however, these various avant-garde movements sprouted nearly simultaneously, and often worked together to achieve the same goals, one of which was to modernize Greek literature.\textsuperscript{50}

According to Christopher Robinson:

\ldots[Tα \ Νέα \ Γράμματα and other modernist periodicals in Greece] helped to preserve a connexion between surrealist and non-surrealist poetry, e.g. between Seferis on the one hand and Embirikos on the other, a connexion very significant for the maintenance of a unity between the different styles of writing.\textsuperscript{51}

This connection between the traditional modernists and the surrealists distinguishes Greek surrealism from its French counterpart, which was more exclusive and independent. The integration of the avant-garde in Greece resulted in a more plural and less radical surrealist movement.

Greek surrealism was not as politically radical as western surrealism. This was not due to a lack of class-consciousness in Greece. Although capitalism in Greece was not as advanced as it was in Western Europe, the communist party and other leftist political factions enjoyed considerable success in Greece.

\textsuperscript{49} Arseniou, 222.
\textsuperscript{50} Arseniou, 217-226.
\textsuperscript{51} Robinson 121.
With the exception of a few surrealists, such as Nicclas Calas, who reacted against "bourgeois art" and who promoted the struggle of the proletariat class, most Greek surrealists were not directly involved with the proletariat struggle. Siafleakis concludes that Greek surrealism was concerned more with aesthetic results than with "extra-literary" elements. Similarly, Mario Viti writes, "[w]hen the surrealistic wave arrives in Greece, it arrives maimed, only as an individual revolution, freedom of the subconscious forces, restoration of the dream, while the program of social revolution remains in the dark." Surrealism in Greece was not concerned with overturning bourgeois society because there was no such bourgeois society to overthrow. Greece never became the industrial society that French was when the French surrealists rebelled against it.

Siafleakis, Vitti, and others do not judge Greek surrealism on its own terms, but in relation to the French movement, which was inevitably different for the reasons we have discussed in this chapter. It is important to recognize not only the aesthetic qualities of Greek surrealism, but also the ideology that aimed to undermine dominant ideas about Greek nationalism. The Greek surrealist movement was not "maimed," but armed with different weapons than the French movement. Greek surrealism strove to liberate the mind from the dominant nationalistic ideology concerning the Greek identity. Such an undertaking, although different than the French surrealist one, was no less significant or honorable.

52 Siafleakis, 18.
53 Siafleakis, 158.
54 Vitti, 125.
The following three chapters each present a different Greek surrealist that played a significant role in promoting surrealism in Greece. I will show how each artist, like their surrealist counterparts in France, reacted against their modernist predecessors and tried to create a different way of understanding literature, and of understanding Greece and the modern Greek identity. Although Nicholas Calas, Nikos Engonopoulos, and Andreas Embeirikos are far from being the only, or the most important surrealists in Greece, I have chosen them because their poetry seems to typify the effort of the Greek avant-garde to bring Greece into modernity by deconstructing existing nationalistic paradigms.
CHAPTER 2

Nicolas Calas

Nicolas Calas, the son of an important Athenian doctor and unsuccessful poet, was born Νίκος Καλαμάρης (Nikos Kalamaras) in Lausanne, Switzerland. After his birth, his family returned to Greece, and Calas grew up in Athens. In order to save his family from embarrassment or criticism (because surrealist writing often generated negative criticism, especially in the 1930s, and was also considered subversive during the Metaxas dictatorship), and perhaps wanting to escape the stigma of a failed literary reputation, Calas wrote under several pseudonyms (Νίκος Καλαμάρης -Nikos Kalamaris-, Νικήτας Ράντος -Nikitas Rados-, M. Σπιέρος -M. Spieros-) before settling on the name Νικόλαος Καλάς, -Nicolas Calas-.  

55 Nicolas Calas’ name has also been catalogued in some libraries as Nicholas Kalas.
56 Phrakasiki Ampatzopoulou draws a connection between the pseudonym Nicolas Calas’ and the historical figure Jean Calas (1698-1762), insinuating that Nicolas Calas chose his pseudonym because of the French protestant condemned in court to death. See Ampatzopoulou, Δεν Ανθιστάνου, page 379. Jean Calas was a protestant revolutionary who was tortured and burned alive for his beliefs and for his accused responsibility in the suicide of his son. Voltaire (1694-1788) eventually took up the case and cleared the family name in 1765.
Calas is the only one of the three poets discussed in this thesis to leave Greece during the Metaxas dictatorship (1936-1941). He subsequently traveled through Europe and permanently settled in the United States. Although Calas’ facility with foreign languages and his international travels should have enabled him to reach a fairly wide readership, he remains today largely unknown, even among surrealist and avant-garde scholars.

Not even in Greece, Calas’ home until the age of 31, is he part of the literary canon, despite the eulogistic prologue written by Nobel laureate Odysseas Elytis for Calas’ collection of poetry Οδός Νίκητα Ράντου [Nikiia Radou Street]. His obscurity in Greece is partly due to the fact that most of his work has only recently been translated into Greek.

Calas’ rebellious writing represented a break with the modernists of the Generation of the 30s, who played a large role in defining the Greek literary canon. The French surrealists generally had a cynical attitude towards the canon. Louis Aragon, one of the founders of surrealism along with Breton and Philippe Soupault, vituperated all literary movements that came before surrealism in his essay Traité du Style. He defended surrealism as a form of expression completely different and independent from literature; thus, it should not become part of literary history.

It seems Calas was destined to remain in the side-halls of literary history. Although most of the writers who have edited an anthology of Greek surrealist poetry include Calas, they do not consider him one of the mainstays of surrealism. The typical

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57 Vistonitis, 188, 193.
58 See the articles in Διάφοροι Χόδοι, Issue 387.
59 See page 3 and page 16.
attitude is that expressed by Z. I. Σιαφλέκης [Z. I. Siafleks], who published a study on Greek and French surrealists. In this book entitled, Ἀπὸ τὴν Νύχτα τῶν Ἀστραπῶν στὸ Ποιημα Γέγονός, Siafleks defines Andreas Embeirikos, Nikos Engonopoulos, and Odysseas Elytis as the “Κορυφαίοι υπερρεαλιστές,” or “leading” surrealists.⁶¹

The poem Ἀκρόπολις, or Acropolis, sheds some light on why Calas is excluded from the canon. This poem undermines the traditional idea of the Acropolis as a symbol of perfection and ideal beauty. Classical architecture was an inspiration not only to Greeks, but to Westerners as well. Several avant-garde artists in the West had already addressed topics such as the Acropolis, ancient art, and classical architecture.

Guillaume Apollinaire, for instance, deliberately omitted a reference to classical architecture in an article he translated into French entitled “The Fourth Dimension from a Plastic Point of View,” originally written by Max Weber, a Russian-born American artist who spent several years studying in Paris.⁶² Although Weber mentioned the Acropolis and certain Palatine structures “as examples of dreams realized through plastic means” (my italics), Apollinaire chose to exclude those references in his translations. Willard Bohn, in The Rise of Surrealism, argues that the reason for this omission is Apollinaire’s dismissal of classical style as mechanical

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⁶⁰ Nadeau, 146-149.
⁶¹ Siafleks, 10.
⁶² Bohn, 15-20.
and interfering with “a true sense of proportion,” which is also what Picasso would have believed.63

Despite the controversy among Western avant-garde artists about the surrealistic qualities of classical architecture, Calas chose to use the Parthenon and its surroundings as the setting for his surrealist poem Acropolis. This building, according to Alexandros Argyriou, has been a dominant symbol in the imaginary of twentieth century Greek poets.64 Argyriou attributes this emphasis on the Parthenon to the writings of western philhellenes, like Ernest Renan (1823-1892), who visited the Acropolis in 1865 and later published poetry inspired by it.

In the latter half of the 19th century, various Greek poets made frequent reference to the Parthenon.65 Kostas Palamas (1859-1943), for example, repeatedly referred to the Parthenon in his poetry. Argyriou discovered that the word “Acropolis” occurs 88 times in the sixteen volumes of Palamas’ Complete Works; the name of Ernest Renan occurs 18 times in Palamas’ article “The Acropolis as a Source of Inspiration.”66

Since the Parthenon maintains such an important place in Greek society, it is important to understand what sort of imagery such a culturally loaded symbol evokes in the Greek collective imagination. Artemis Leontis, in her book Topographies of Hellenism, extensively describes the meaning and significance of Greece as a homeland to Greeks and foreigners alike. Beginning with Renan’s description,

63 Bohn, 21.
65 Argyriou admits that the symbol of the Parthenon was in use before the latter half of the nineteenth century, but he claims that it was not as ingrained in the psyche of early nineteenth century Greek writers. Solomos, for instance, makes few references to the Parthenon and antiquity in general. See Argyriou, “The Parthenon...,” 342.
66 Ibid.
Leontis finds that the Parthenon and the Acropolis in general represent perfect beauty and unmatched artistic refinement. Renan writes of his visit to the Acropolis in 1865:

There is only one place, not two, where perfection exists: it is this place here... What I encountered before me was the very ideal incarnate on Pentelic marble. Until this time I believed that perfection was not of this world... it is a type of eternal beauty... When I saw the Acropolis I accepted the revelation of the divine... Then the entire world seemed barbarous to me.\(^5^7\)

Leontis concludes “... the Acropolis finally acquires an aura of virtual reality so powerful that it replaces Europe as one’s real home.”\(^6^8\) In other words, Westerners and Greeks alike looked to the Acropolis as the womb of humanity.

Like Renan and Palamas, the Generation of the 30s also added layers of meaning to the symbol of the Acropolis. Writers such as Seferis and Elytis and Palamas, promoted historical continuity from ancient Greek civilization, through Byzantium, into modern-day Greece, in order to create a new Greek identity steeped in the traditions of the past, according to Leontis.\(^6^9\) In a way, modernist poets like Elytis “promised to reclaim for the Neohellenic people the classical past appropriated by Western rationalism,” and thus substantiate their very existence.\(^7^0\)

Although the content of Elytis’ poetry resembled Greek modernist works (i.e. he referred to the blue sea, the lost Greek center, the light of the Aegean), he often employed surrealist techniques. Perhaps his “middle way” of blending modernist substance with avant-garde technique earned him the Nobel Prize, while his more extreme surrealist contemporaries remained on the peripheries. While Elytis does not

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\(^{57}\) Leontis in Topographies..., 51.

\(^{58}\) Leontis, 52.

\(^{69}\) Leontis, 135-146, 173-217.
mention the Acropolis or the Parthenon in his poetry, his views on a very specific Greek identity founded on Hellenism are made quite clear in his poetry.

Over the centuries, and particularly during the past two hundred years, the Acropolis became a meaningful symbol in the minds of Greeks and foreigners. When a visitor finally visited the real site, that had until that moment been only a figment of the imagination, he/she would experience an inevitable sense of alienation and confusion resulting from the confrontation between imagination and reality. Sigmund Freud, for example, studied ancient Greek history in school, and later visited the sites he hadimagined in his youth. Louis Rose explores the impact of visits to such sites that once were symbols in the imagination. Rose writes:

Freud’s visit to the Acropolis not only stirred memories of the past but produced in him a momentary feeling of inner detachment, which only years later he resolved fully.... Throughout centuries visitors had ceremonially approached the ancient site to rediscover remnants of antiquity and reexamine their own sense of engagement with the present. So too did Freud... approach the work of art, exploring there how fragmented images of the past remained alive, and how estrangement from the present sought resolution.

For Freud, the visit to the real site of the Acropolis shattered the symbol he had created in his youth. The fragments of the past image blended with the reality of the present moment, creating a yet another idea of the Acropolis.

The image of the Acropolis in Calas’ poem Acropolis resembles Freud’s experience of blending the past and the present. Calas’ representation is an encounter of the past modernist image and the present surrealist image. In his poem, Calas

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70 Leontis, 201.
72 Leontis, 195-217.
73 Rose, 159.
attempts to undermine this neat modernist image by undermining it, fragmenting it, and dissecting it, so that it no longer resembles its original form.

Calas creates this new image of the Parthenon by employing various surrealist techniques. He creates new words, plays with word order and grammar, and de-familiarizes the reader with the text in order to achieve a chaotic, segmented image. For instance, in the second line of the poem *Acropolis*, Calas uses a fabricated word Παρθενός [Parthenos], instead of the regular word, Παρθενώνας [Parthenonas]. Regardless of the implied meaning of this new word, (which could be related to the adjective/noun παρθενός, meaning virginal/male virgin) the fact remains that Παρθενός is new and foreign and throws the reader off course. Thus, from the very beginning of the poem, the reader is invited to question the use and meaning of the word that actually embodies the subject of the entire poem.

Other examples of foreign words like "ρόλ-φίλμ αγκφά κοινάκ" [roll-film, agfa, Kodak] (In 49), or the combination of foreign words and onomatopoeia such as "φωνάζουν τα κλικ των κοινάκ" [they scream the clicks of Kodak] (In 60) also serve to de-familiarize the reader. The use of foreign words that are heard and spoken, but are generally not employed for literary purposes, convinces the reader to reconsider his/her definition of literature and language. The use of foreign words in juxtaposition with the Acropolis parallels the modern and foreign world invading the ancient space of the Acropolis. Renan’s image of the sacred, perfect realm of the Acropolis is undermined by Calas’ description of what the Acropolis has become: a tourist trap.
In his poem, Calas is critical of the exploitation of Greek culture by foreigners. He alludes, for instance to the Caryatids, which are columns of the Erechtheion shaped like the body of a woman. The Caryatids on the Acropolis, however, are replicas; four of the originals are in the Acropolis museum and the remaining one is in the British Museum in England. The story of the fake Caryatids calls to mind the Elgin marbles in general, which were also taken from the Parthenon by the British. Calas brings to light the reality that the sacred space of the Acropolis has been altered over time. He challenges the Greek modernist myth of ownership by the modern Greeks of the Hellenic past. Calas emphasizes the reality of the Acropolis, and not the nostalgic idea that many poets have chosen to extol.

This is perhaps why he criticizes Boissonnas and his interpretation of the Acropolis and of Greek culture in general. Fred Boissonnas (1858-1946) one of the leading Swiss pioneers in photography, traveled to Greece for the first time in 1903. He fell in love with the country and returned three more times before his death, traveling and taking pictures of all aspects of Greek culture, form the Acropolis to Mount Athos. Calas refers to Boissonnas’ pictures as detrimental to Greek culture. He writes in the opening lines of the poem:

Στο πρώτο πλάνο
Ο Παρθενός
Ο δηλητηριασμένος με ψυχαρική μελάνη
ο ψεύτικος ο νεκρός
ο σκοτωμένος με φακό σε πλούσιο χαρτί
από του Μπουασονά
νεκροθάτη της Ελλάδας-

On the first plane,
The Parthenos,
poisoned with psychic ink
false, dead
killed with a lens on rich paper
by Boissonnas
Greece’s gravedigger-

Calas’ criticism of Boissonnas as Greece’s gravedigger, and the metaphor of
Boissonnas’ camera as a murderer of Greek cultural symbols like the Parthenon,
echoes a more contemporary opinion published in an article in the newspaper Το
Αλλα Βήμα in January of 2002. A Greek man, after viewing a photography
exposition of Boissonnas’ work, comments, “[ο Μπουκασούς, ο ξένος,] μας
εβλεπε σαν ζώα σε ζωολογικό κήπο” or “[Boissonas, the foreigner] saw us
like animals in a zoo.”74 Both Calas’ opinion of Boissonnas and the contemporary
Greek exhibit patron reveal a resentment of foreigners who appropriate aspects of
Greek culture and redefine them with their own discourses. By including Boissonnas
in the poem, Calas emphasizes the exploitation of the Acropolis by Westerners.

A few lines before Boissonnas’ name, Calas mentions another individual
significant in the interpretation of Greek culture. The third line of the poem makes
reference to Yiannis Psycharis, one of the leading proponents of the demotic language
in the late part of the nineteenth century. He writes, “Ο Παρθενός / ο
dηλητηριωμένος με ψυχαρική μελάνη / ο ψευτικός ο νεκρός…” [The Parthenos
/ the poisoned with psychic ink / the false the dead...]. The phrase “psychic ink”
is surrounded by words with negative connotations, such as poisonous, false, and

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74 Zenakos, 10.
dead. These strong words indicate that Calas believed Psycharis had a deleterious affect on the idea Parthenon and the history of the Greeks.

Calas was critical not only of Psycharis, but of Costis Palamas, another mainstay of the Greek literary cannon. In a letter published in *Nέα Φώλα* in March of 1937, Calas writes:

Όχι, αυτά [τα ποιήματα] δεν είναι υπερρεαλισμός πιο πολύ απ’ότι τα πεντασύλλαβα δεκατετράστυχα η άλλα πολυσέλιδα βιβλία του Κ. Παλαμά είναι ποίηση!

No, these [poems] are not surrealism any more than the pentasyllabic fourteen versed and other multi-paged books of K. Palamas are poetry.\(^{75}\)

Calas’ criticisms of important Greek writers like Psycharis and Palamas, and also of foreign artists, such as Renan and Boissonnas, are part of his effort to undermine tradition, especially that concerning Greek culture.

Calas uses poetry to challenge the promulgators of a certain idea of Greekness and revolutionize the view of Greek identity promoted by the conservative modernists. He expresses his ideas about the revolutionary potential of poetry in his article *Surrealism Pre and Con*. He writes:

Surrealism looks for a transformation of the world, a transformation by a change of environment, and not, as religion does, for a transformation through prayer, and invocations of supernatural powers. . . . Poetry is an exigency and leads to revolution, which is a concrete force by means of which obstacles are overturned, further desires set free.\(^{76}\)

By thus freeing the reader from ingrained ideas, Calas opens up a new discourse about the significance of the Acropolis and of Greek antiquity. Such freedom

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\(^{75}\) Trivizas, 98.
threatens the established principles of the Greek modernists and in turn
“revolutionizes” certain ideas of Greek identity.

Calas aims to “overturn the obstacles” of traditional thinking by cutting up or
dismembering the physical setting of the Acropolis. He describes the scene with
pieces of marbles lying around as a dancer jumps over them (Ins 25-29). Paralleling
the segmented pieces of marble is Calas’ metaphor of the dismembered body. Calas
mentions feet, bellies, chests, hands, hair (Ins 21-22). Such images of isolated body
parts are typical of surrealist art and literature.\textsuperscript{77} In André Breton’s novel \textit{Nadja}, for
example, there are numerous references to isolated eyes, legs, hands, and lips.\textsuperscript{78}
Georges Bataille, whom Calas praises in a letter to Yiorgos Theotokas in 1946,
similarly emphasizes parts of the female body in his work \textit{Bleu du Ciel}.

Like Breton and Bataille, Calas dismembers the body, beginning with a pair of
hands in praying position (Ins 8-15). The concepts of prayer, faith, and religion
occupy a significant place in Calas’ theoretical writings. He addresses these issues in
his largely forgotten work \textit{Foyers d’Incendie}.\textsuperscript{79} He writes:

\begin{quote}
La poésie est désir de conquête, tandis que la prière exprime une fuite
de l’objet. L’artiste, le poète, sont révolutionnaires, mais le croyant
reste fondamentalement réactionnaire malgré les apparences souvent
contraires. Tout révolutionnaire est poète, puisqu’il doit être inspiré
par la donnée immédiate, et tout poète est révolutionnaire puisqu’il
cherche à transformer la donnée immédiate. Pendant ce temps le
croyant prie et le prêtre se soumet à son Dieu.\textsuperscript{80}
\end{quote}

Poetry is the desire to conquer, while prayer expresses escape from the

\textsuperscript{76} Calas, \textit{Surrealism Pro and Con}, 14.
\textsuperscript{77} Man Ray, Salvador Dali, Max Ernst, Joan Miro, George deChirico, and many other surrealist artists
depicted isolated body parts in their work.
\textsuperscript{78} Breton, 129, 130, 178,179.
\textsuperscript{79} Translated from \textit{Foyers d’Incendie} into Greek as \textit{Eστίς Ἡμώνων}.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Foyers d’Incendie}, 144.
object. The artist, the poet, are revolutionaries, but the faithful remains fundamentally reactionary despite appearances often to the contrary. Every revolutionary is a poet because he must be inspired by immediate reality, and every poet is revolutionary because he seeks to transform immediate reality. All the while, the believer prays and the priest succumbs to his God.81

Thus, the marbled hands in prayer represent the antithesis of art, since prayer and religion are reactionary and not revolutionary, as is poetry. The juxtaposition of poet and believer, revolutionary and reactionary, actor and re-actor, emphasizes the passive role of the Parthenon throughout history: like a priest, she prays, and she watches the progression of time take its toll.

There is a connection between the marbled praying hands and Renan, whose famous poem is entitled, “Prière sur L’Acropole” [Prayer on the Acropolis] (1876). Renan describes his poem as, “[t]he prayer I made on the Acropolis when I was able to comprehend its perfect beauty.”82 The word “Prière” in Calas’ poem is in fact the largest, most conspicuous word printed on the page (In 17).

Calas, however, does not pay homage to Renan’s poem. The bitter sarcasm in his poem is reflected in the fact that Calas does not mention Renan’s name within its usual context. That is, he describes Renan’s name flickering like a neon sign, which calls to mind commercial advertising and seedy hotels. He also redefines Renan as the official Acropolis verger, watching over the temple, taking care of it, and possibly possessing it. Calas’ poem destroys the noble and well-respected place Renan traditionally holds within the Greek collective imaginary.

81 All translations are my own.
82 Argyriou, “The Parthenon…” 344.
By harshly criticizing Psycharis and Renan and by removing them from their traditional roles as philhellenes, Calas undermines their mythical statures. He also undermines the idea of the Parthenon itself by playing with words and grammar, by juxtaposing ambiguous images (like praying hands and flickering lights) on the sacred space, and by dividing its marbled, architectural parts into detached limbs of the human body. Thus, Calas’ poem allows readers to understand the Parthenon in an unconventional way, freeing them from dominant interpretations and ideologies.

According to Calas, providing such freedom is the task not only of surrealists, but of all intellectuals alike. In a letter addressed to Yiorgos Theotokas on August 10, 1946, Calas writes, “Η κύρια υποχρέωση των διανοομένων σήμερα είναι βέβαια να προστατεύσουν την ελευθερία από κάθε είδους ολοκληρωτισμόν” [The main task of intellectuals today is, of course, to protect freedom from every kind of totalitarianism].

“Totalitarianism” could refer to a political phenomenon, like that of Franco in Spain, which Calas experienced first hand as he traveled from Paris, through Portugal and Spain, and on to the US in 1939. “Totalitarianism” could also refer to any kind of absolutism or tyranny, political or cultural.

On the most general level, "protecting freedom from totalitarianism" implies a heightened awareness of liberty. In the untitled poem of Συλλογή Γ [Collection G] of Οδός Νικητή Ράντου [Nikita Radou Street] Calas poses the question to the reader: “Ποιός είπε πώς είμαι ελεύθερος?” [Who said I am free?] (In 5). Unlike the covert methods employed in the poem Acropolis, this poem, by openly displaying

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83 Konstandoulaki-Xatzou, 53.
the word freedom, forces the reader to reflect upon the concept. But the poem not only addresses the reader, but also writers and poets. According to the poem, freedom is not only important for the audience (which is freed from cultural hegemony in *Acropolis*), but for the poet as well, so that he may write poetry liberated from any constraint. Calas writes, "Ξύπνησε η ώρα, ἐδώξα τις εἰκόνες / φόβοι πιά δὲν υπάρχουν" [The hour has awoken, I chased out the images / fears no longer exist] (ln 1). By eliminating images and fears, the mind can begin to work and write, free from obstruction.

The act of writing, however, continues to challenge the poet. Calas describes the slow process of writing, of waiting for the poem to materialize; he describes the space between the words and a wavering proposal trying to find direction (lns 2-7). In another essay Calas writes, "The poet has to wait for the metaphors to happen; he cannot will them to happen." Writing poetry is like a game (ln 9), which can sometimes be asphyxiating (ln 8). Only when the poet is free from the conventions of reality, as expressed in the poem of *Collection G*, can writing flow freely. According to the poet then, the aim of poetry is liberation of thought.

The French surrealist poets of Breton’s circle practiced the emancipation of thought using hypnotism, writing in the “automatic” style, and walking haphazardly through the streets of Paris. These practices emphasized the illogical and challenged conventional ideas. Similarly, Calas reminds the reader and the poet of the importance of irrationality and chance by describing the haphazard creation of poetry.

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84 Konstandoulaki-Xatzou, 13.
Eventually, by line 12, a vision materializes, but it evaporates just as quickly as it appears, and the poet finds himself struggling for words again (Ins 13-14). Unable to create anything, the poet submits to literary tradition as he quotes a line from the Prologue of Kostas Varnalis’ Σκλάβοι Πολιορκημένοι [Enslaved Beseiged] (ln 15).86

The final line of the poem undermines the preceding line, however. It sarcastically dismisses the excerpt from Varnalis as mere fiction. Calas writes, “ὅπως λέει στις τοβέρνες του λόγου” [as they say in the taverns of the word], which expresses the poet’s consciousness of the artificiality of the quote in the penultimate line, and of written language in general. Thus, Calas’ poem, step by step, describes the process of writing poetry: from the beginning stage, where the poet tries to cast away all impressions and constraints in order to write on a clean slate, through the middle stage of fighting against the authority of the literary canon, to the end state of accepting literature as fiction and not reality.

Accepting literature as fiction was an important part of surrealism. One of the surrealists’ greatest criticisms of modernism was that it took itself too seriously by trying to imitate reality. The surrealists, and Calas in his poem, attempted to liberate the reader from bourgeois aesthetic criteria that judged art based on its faithfulness to

86 In line four of the Prologue of Kostas Varnalis’ poem “Σκλάβοι Πολιορκημένοι,” which is a pun of the title of Dionysios Solomos’ poem Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι [Free Beseiged] he writes, “κολποποριτία αφεντικά, πως τα καλοπερνάτε;” Calas, in line fifteen of his poem, writes “Κολποποριτία Αφεντικά, πως τα καλοπερνάτε;” The only difference is the “good evening” of Varnalis’ poem, and the “good day” of Calas’. The penultimate line of Calas’ poem could also refer to Varnalis’ poem “Μες στις Υπόγειες τις Τοβέρνες...”
reality. Calas proved that writing and poetry, understood as fiction, could free the mind from such ideologies.

In the collection entitled *Ενηκα και δύο ποιήματα* [Eleven and two poems], poem number 6 also connects poetry with freedom, but a new element is introduced: love, which is an integral aspect of surrealist art, as Shattuck has written. In poem number 6, love consumes freedom; love needs freedom to survive (I ns 2-3). Thus, true love implies complete freedom. In his essay, *Freedom, Love and Poetry*, Calas expands on the surrealist stance towards love, initially defined by Breton. Calas writes:

According to Breton, Rimbaud’s call to “change life” means that we must love, and in his *Communicating Vessels* he says that, with the exception of social revolution, “[l’amour unique” has been for him the most important single issue. In the name of love Breton investigates events and ponders coincidences, interpreting them as expressions of the unconscious.87

Calas, building on the writings of Rimbaud and Breton, concludes that pure love liberates the spirit and the unconscious. He writes in *Foyers d’Incendie*, “Pour vaincre, il faut aimer! [To triumph, it is necessary to love!] (209). In the same spirit, the poet in poem 6 differentiates, plays with, and searches for love (I ns 1-2).

According to Calas, love of life, which presupposes love of the material world, is necessary in order to live freely. He writes in *Foyers d’Incendie*:

Il faut réunir désir et amour. Nous ne pouvons y arriver que par le hasard objectif qui est le moyen le plus fort pour nous faire sentir la nécessité de l’objet

It is necessary to unite desire and love. We cannot achieve this without objective hazard, which is the most effective method for

understanding the necessity of the object.98

Similarly, Breton's novel Nadja defines love as being free from social constraints and open to chance occurrences. Thus love, according to Calas and the surrealists, requires an espousal of chance, hazard, and one's material surroundings, which may result in chaos.

Poem number 6 alludes to this chaos. After searching for love through freedom, the poet questions himself: Without anxiety, why do we want freedom? Where is poetry going? And then the poet concludes: "poetry, freedom, love, or panic." Panic, or the state of intense fear that paralyzes thought and drives one to a state without reason, and to potentially irrational acts, is a kind of chaotic state conducive to freedom from the rational constraints of society.99 The poem suggests that poetry, freedom, love, and panic are equivalent. Such a statement clearly fits into the surrealist philosophy of freedom of thought through literature, love, laughter, and the unfamiliar.

The three poems examined in this paper adhere to this philosophy of freedom, as do most of Calas' theoretical writings on poetry and surrealism. Even Calas' personal life reflects his philosophy of liberation from institutionalized ways of thinking. Not only does he undermine Greek social and literary standards in his writing, he rejects Greek society by permanently leaving his homeland and living in France and then the US. Calas died in New York, scarcely known outside the literary circle of his expatriated friends. Despite the prolific amount of articles, books, and poems written

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98 Calas, Fovers d'Incedie, 208.
99 See Yiorgos Babinotis' (Γιώργος Μπαμπινιώτης), Λεξικό της Νέας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας.
in diverse languages that Calas bequeathed as his œuvre, he remains a thorn in the side of the Greek canon, like a true surrealist.
CHAPTER 3

Nikos Engonopoulos

Even though Nikos Engonopoulos (1910-1985) preferred to be known as a surrealist painter, he is better remembered as one of the most characteristically “orthodox” Greek surrealist poets. Several critics use the word “orthodox” as a means of expressing Engonopoulos’ faithful adherence to the surrealist movement, from his first publication until the end of his life. Unlike the other two poets examined in this thesis, Engonopoulos was born in Greece, in Athens, and studied there as well. The fact that he spent more time in Greece than Calas or Embeirikos, however, does not mean that he was better received by the Greek public.

The writings of Engonopoulos, according to Phrankiski Ampatzopoulou, for many years instigated scandal, caused general hilarity, and gave birth to embarrassment, all of which were magnified by the silence of the critics. Christopher Robinson’s description of Engonopoulos’ poetry is even harsher. He writes:

If Embirikos was the father of Greek Surrealism, Nikos Engonopoulos was undoubtedly its enfant terrible, and in a sense his deliberate policy of shocking the public did real harm to the cause of modernism of any kind in Greece for a number of years.

90 Ampatzopoulou, Nikos Εγγονόπουλος, pg 41fn, Argyriou, Διαδοχικές..., 167, 170, Politis, 71.
91 Ampatzopoulou, Nikos Εγγονόπουλος, 13.
92 Robinson, 124.
Because of his controversial poetry, Greek critics and publishers, especially in the 1930s, generally ignored Engonopoulos. The journal _Nea Grammata_, for instance, which first appeared in 1935, had published surrealist works of Embeirikos and Elytis, but not of Engonopoulos, whose poems were first published in 1938, in another (and arguably less prestigious) journal, _Kyklos_. Shortly afterwards, Engonopoulos published these same poems in an independent collection of poetry entitled _Μην Ομιλείτε εἰς στὸν Οδηγόν_, (or _Talking to the Driver Prohibited_).\(^93\)

It was not until 1944 that _Nea Grammata_ finally decided to publish his poems, as well as some criticism on his poem _Bolivar_.\(^94\)

Even his recognition in 1954 as the only Greek invited to participate, along with other surrealist artists from around the world, in the 27\(^{th}\) “Biennale di Venezia,” an international art exposition, did not do much to boost his popularity. Engonopoulos was not officially recognized in Greece until four years later, in 1958, when he won a national poetry prize.

Engonopoulos states in an interview that that Greek critics judge harshly and relentlessly.\(^95\) As a result, he does not place much importance on literary criticism. He says, “...για τον ποιητή η ιδια η ποιηση είναι το βραβείο...” (“...for the

\(^93\) Amfatzopoulos, _Νίκος Εγγουόπουλος_, 24-25. Engonopoulos’ poetry collections have not been translated into English, (although there are a few books in English, such as _The Hydra of Birds_, edited and translated by Yannis Goumas, that contain versions of randomly selected Engonopoulos poems translated into English). Therefore all translations of titles and of poems into English are my own. _Μπολιβάρ_ has been translated into French and Spanish as _Bolivar_.

\(^94\) Amfatzopoulos, _Νίκος Εγγουόπουλος_, 100.

\(^95\) Kentrotis, 17-19.
poet, poetry itself is the prize.”  

Andreas Embeirikos, a friend and contemporary surrealist artist agrees, and leaves Engonopoulos this piece of advice in the periodical Tetradio, in 1945:

“Νικόλαος Εγγόνοπουλε, σε αυτόν τον κόσμον δύο είναι τα μεγαλείτερα και πιο πολύτιμα στοιχεία. Ο Ερωτας και το Σπάθι. Όλα τα άλλα έχουνται κατόπιν και τελευταίο απ’όλα η κριτική. Η πραγματικά μεγάλη ποιήσης είναι καμωμένη βασικά από αυτά τα πρωταρχικά και κορυφαία στοιχεία. Εσύ είσαι παργματικά μεγάλος ψηφιτής όσε – λοιπόν να λευ σε άλλοι ότι θέλουν.”

“Nikos Engonopoulos, in this world, the greatest and most precious elements are two in number. Love and the Sword. All the others come after, and the last of them all is criticism. Really great poetry is made fundamentally of these primary and preeminent elements. You, you are truly a great poet – leave then, the others to say what they want.”

Engonopoulos himself discounts the opinions of others when discussing the poetry prize in an interview. Engonopoulos reveals, “Είναι η μόνη τιμή που μου έγινε ποτέ από το επίσημο κράτος.” (“This is the only honor that I ever received from the official state”). 

Engonopoulos’ statement may contain a hint of bitter sarcasm in the use of the word “official.” He was known for his bitter irony. After another meeting with Engonopoulos where interviewer Anna Tzogia asks him about his work, she remarks, “Πικρό χιούμορ και ειρωνεία. Φεύγει αφήνοντάς μας μελαγχολικός” (“Bitter humor and irony. [Engonopoulos] departs, leaving us melancholy”).

96 Kentrotis, 135.
97 Embeirikos, Νικόλαος Εγγόνοπουλος, 37.
98 Engonopoulos, Ποίηματα, vol. 1, 150-151.
99 Kentrotis, 27.
In addition to being overlooked, Engonopoulos is underestimated by his contemporaries and predecessors in the literary world. According to Anastasias Vistonitis, Engonopoulos never had a good relationship with the Generation of the 30s.\textsuperscript{100} Seferis, one of the most important poets of the Generation of the 30s, publicly voices his dislike for Engonopoulos’ work.\textsuperscript{101} In an interview in the newspaper \textit{Kathimerini} on October 17, 1976, Veatriki Spiliadi asks Engonopoulos to define his relationship with the Generation of the 30s. Instead of answering the question, he offers a critique of the Greek canon. Engonopoulos claims that the Generation of the 30s choose the writers that posterity will remember, unlike in France, where greatness and inclusion into the canon is not decided by certain artists.\textsuperscript{102} As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, the Generation of the 30s’ preference for certain artists above others played a role in the creation of the Modern Greek literary canon.

Apparently Engonopoulos was aware of this partiality and did not approve of it, particularly since he was not a member of the preferred group of artists.

Even though Engonopoulos is generally remembered as one of the more important Greek surrealists, far fewer books have been written on him than on Embeirikos, the other mainstay of Greek surrealism, or Elytis, the modernist/surrealist Nobel Prize winner. As early as 1945, Embeirikos writes, “Νικόλαε Εγγονόπουλε, τη ώρα της δόξης σου έφθασε προ πολλού και είναι στραβοί ή κακόπιστοι όσοι ακόμη δεν το βλέπουν,” or “Nikos Engonopoulos, for a long time now your hour of glory has arrived and those who still do not see it are blind or have bad

\textsuperscript{100} Vistonitis, 180.
\textsuperscript{101} Vistonitis, 175.
faith.” 103 Forty-two years later, Phrankiski Ampatzopoulou, in her book, Νίκος Εγγονόπουλος, still wonders why Engonopoulos continues to be disregarded. She believes that by writing her book, she is helping to bring Engonopoulos out of obscurity. 104

In several instances, Engonopoulos voices his appreciation for the obscure, unappreciated artist. He believes, as Cézanne once wrote (and he quotes Cézanne in his poem Περί Υψούς from the collection Εν Ανθρώπῳ Ελλῆνι Λόγω, 1957), that man must grow spiritually, but the artist must remain in the shadows. 105 Engonopoulos’ modesty is also apparent in the Σημειώσεις, or the notes in the back of the first volume of his works. Engonopoulos explains that he first published his poems somewhat reluctantly, and that they were ill received. He writes that he was never interested in fame or fortune, but that he was driven by his passion, which was always to live life unnoticed among his contemporaries. 106 It is interesting to compare Engonopoulos’ humble testament to his poetry with Breton’s Manifestos. Engonopoulos does not display any of the fiery jargon or revolutionary spirit that Breton uses in his Manifestos to defend and expound surrealism.

Part of this humbleness stems from Engonopoulos’ understanding of Greek poetry, and of Greece in general, as belated in relation to the rest of western Europe. When talking in an interview about the importance of the Nobel Prize, Engonopoulos

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102 Ampatzopoulou, Νίκος Εγγονόπουλος, 96.
103 Embiricos, Νικόλαος Εγγονοπουλος, 37.
104 Ampatzopoulou, Νικος Εγγονόπουλος, 97-106.
105 Kentrotis, 129.
reveals his interest in pushing Greece forwards, out of the hardships it has suffered. He writes:

Με το Νόμπελ τιμήθηκε περισσότερο η Ελλας! Βέβαια, ο Ελύτης είναι ενας αξιόλογος ποιητής! Γυμνίζετε πως η θέση μας είναι λεπτή, τόσο λεπτή... Σας το είπα κι άλλη φορά: είμαστε ενας πολύ βασανισμένος λαός.

With the Nobel, Greece was distinguished even more! Of course, Elytis is a deserving poet! You know how our position is precarious, very precarious. I have told you another time how we are a tortured people.¹⁰⁷

For Engonopoulos, it is significant that a Greek poet receives the prize; it is less important which Greek poet. The fame and attention that the Nobel Prize brings to Greece is more important than Engonopoulos’ own failure to be recognized as a poet.

Engonopoulos proves his patriotism by remaining in his homeland, unlike many surrealists in France and Greece who flee the chaotic events of the twentieth century. Although surrealism gains prestige over much of the world, particularly in the American continent,¹⁰⁸ by the time WWⅡ breaks out in 1939, it is struggling to find roots. Eventually, many of the surrealists, including Calas, move to New York, the post-Parisian surrealist hub.¹⁰⁹

Despite the efforts of the French surrealists to continue their revolution with the onset of war, the movement never regains the impetus it experienced during the interwar years. At the time that the western surrealist movement is slowing down, the Greek surrealist movement is growing. It seems that Greek surrealism thrives off of

¹⁰⁷ Kentrosis, 136.
¹⁰⁸ Breton travels to Mexico in 1938 (the year of the publication of Engonopoulos’ first collection of poetry) where he meets Diego Rivera, Frieda Kahlo, and more importantly Leon Trotsky, with whom he forms a friendship. They agree that for art to remain revolutionary, it must live completely independent of politics and government. They create Clé, a monthly bulletin founded to promote revolutionary and independent art. See Nadeau, Chapter 18.
political instability in Greece. The fact that Engonopoulos and other surrealists remain in Greece helps the movement to flourish there, especially during the tumultuous political times of WWII and the period after, when “renegade” literature is most needed for inspiration against dictatorial regimes.

Alex Argyriou claims that Engonopoulos' poetry, compared with other rebellious movements of the time, is surprisingly subversive vis-à-vis the repressive regime. For instance, the *rembetika* songs, which are part of an underground Athenian culture that sees itself as seditious (which it unarguably was, at least until the 1940s, when rembetika had mainly been appropriated by the middle class), are less militant than contemporary surrealist poetry, according to Argyriou. Argyriou argues that the difference in subversive qualities between the popular songs and surrealist poetry proves the existence of a large divide between the Greek masses and avant-garde.\(^{10}\)

*Μπολιβάρ*, or *Bolivar*, Engonopoulos' third collection of poetry, is an example of such rebellious poetry. Engonopoulos writes the poem during the winter of 1942/1943, after his experience fighting in WWII. Metaxas has pronounced his famous “Όχι” to the Italians, entering Greece into the war on October 28, 1940 on the side of the Allies. By 1941, however, the Germans have arrived and occupied Greece.

That same year, Engonopoulos leaves to fight on the Albanian front. He is taken prisoner by the Germans, escapes, and flees to Athens by foot.\(^{11}\) Similarly, *Bolivar* is a story about a voyage into freedom. Engonopoulos publishes the poem in leaflets

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\(^{10}\) Nadeau, 209-211.

\(^{11}\) Argyriou, Διαδοχικές, 157.
during the end of the German occupation in 1944, and distributes them at
revolutionary meetings. A few months later in October of that same year, British
and Greek liberating forces enter Athens.

Calas, who leaves Greece during the dictatorship, is perhaps too far removed from
the events in Greece to create poetry with a similar role in the Greek resistance
culture. This is why a poem like Acropolis addresses issues such as socio-historic
constructs, capitalism, and international industry, which affect people not only in
Greece, but everywhere. Bolivar, however, has a double capacity to speak
specifically to Greeks, and at the same time address issues recognizable by people of
any nationality.

Bolivar has an obvious connection with the events that took place in Greece during
World War II. The poem has been characterized as a surrealist Υμνὸς εἰς τὴν
Ελευθερίαν, Solomos’ patriotic hymn to liberty. Engonopoulos’ poem begins
with the words, “For the big, for the free, for the young, the strong...,” just as the two
heroes of the poem, Simon Bolivar (the father of South-American independence) and
Odysseas Androutsos (hero of Greek independence of 1821) are “free, big, young,
and strong.” An often quoted line of this poem, “Μπολιβάρ, είσαι ωραίος
σαυ Ελλήνας,” or “Bolivar, you are beautiful like a Greek,” implies that beauty is a
particularly Greek quality.

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111 Engonopoulos, Ποιήματα, vol. 1, 150.
112 Engonopoulos, Ποιήματα, notes on Bolivar.
113 See Karandonis’ article in Τα Νέα Γράμματα, τ. 7, 1944, pages 425-428
The most important idea of the poem, however, is the universal concept of freedom. The strong must take a trip, according to the narrator of the poem; the sole goal of the trip is freedom. He writes "Μ'ένα σκοπό του ταξιδιώτικος: προς τ'άστρα." ("with the sole goal of the trip: towards the stars"). This line could refer to the necessary journey of fighting and hardships the Greeks would have to undertake in order to fight the occupation.

Some critics claim that Bolivar is not a surrealist poem. It is true that it is not as extreme in its form as some of his other poems. Bolivar does, however, contain some surrealist elements, particularly its philosophy. The poem speaks out, in a subversive manner, against the power of a suppressive force and inspires the oppressed to rise up.

Engonopoulos is able to inspire a Greek audience without making constant reference to Greece. Although he makes allusions to Greece and its history in some of his poems, does not give these images a place in the forefront of his poems. Elytis, on the other hand, would use these images as predominant themes. Anastasis Vistonitis categorizes the poetry of Odysseus Elytis along with the poetry of the Generation of the 30s as vehicles for promoting a certain idea of Modern Greece that is indelibly linked with the past.

French scholar Robert Jouanny would agree, and explains that Elytis relies on the Greek myth. He writes, "Elytis finds sureness in the image of Greece. A country of myths where it is normal to find the supernatural on every shore. Greece, as far as myth is concerned, plays more or less the role that Paris, its streets and its daily life..."
played for French surrealists.\textsuperscript{116} Whereas French surrealism, namely Breton’s work \textit{Nadja}, depicts a lifestyle of wandering Parisian streets, Elytis’ version of surrealism is often an exploration into the world of Greek mythology. Perhaps if Elytis had depicted life wandering the streets of modern-day Athens or Thessaloniki, critics like Vistonitis would have considered him a surrealist. Because Greece and its rich history and tradition play such major parts in Elytis’ surrealist work, Vistonitis claims that Elytis cannot be a surrealist.\textsuperscript{117}

Greek surrealists such as Calas, Engonopoulos and Embeirikos react against literature that exploits Greece’s past and makes frequent reference to Greek mythology. The true spirit of Greek surrealism does not aim to impose Greek culture, but rather induces people to question their idea of Greekness. \textit{Bolivar} is a pertinent example of revolutionary literature that works against a certain idea of Hellenism by enticing Greeks to be “strong” and to reconsider reality.\textsuperscript{118}

Engonopoulos’ poem \textit{Στομα και Ακρόπολις}, or \textit{Trams and Acropolis}, which is part of the \textit{Talking to Driver Prohibited} collection, is an even more threatening poem to traditional Greek conception of antiquity. It is similar to Calas’ \textit{Acropolis} in that it subverts and redefines a significant Greek symbol and helps dismantle Hellenic ideology promoted by the Generation of the 30s.

Whereas Calas describes a chaotic scene, where the Acropolis is fragmented and broken, Engonopoulos creates a living and powerful structure that starkly contrasts with the dreary dull backdrop. Engonopoulos describes the Acropolis on a still, rainy

\textsuperscript{116} Jouany, “Aspects of Surrealism...”, 689.
\textsuperscript{117} Vistonitis, 187.
\textsuperscript{118} Vistonitis, 174.
day, quieted by the rain. The dreary, almost dead atmosphere of the first stanza differs from the traditional idea of the Acropolis (promoted by the Generation of the 30s) of a white marble temple set against a deep blue Mediterranean sky. Similarly, the juxtaposition of the ancient ruins with the modern-day traffic of the tramcars that pass just beneath it emphasizes the Acropolis as part of the everyday life of Athenians.

The third stanza of the poem, however, reveals the power of the Acropolis to rise above this mundane dreary scene. The poet would have been overcome by the sadness of the scene had not the “hope of the marbles” and “the emergence of a luminous ray of light” described in the penultimate stanza given a new life to the magnificent ruins “perfectly identical with a red flower among green leaves.” This ending in bright colors is typical of surrealism. Engonopoulos does not leave us with the serious, melancholy scene at the beginning of the poem. He introduces the playful element of irrationality; how can the acropolis look like a red flower among green leaves on a rainy day? The element of absurdity forces the reader to abandon preconceived ideas and images of the Acropolis as a ruin reconsider it as a living monument that retains much of its ancient glory despite the dreary decrepit surroundings.

Another poem of the same collection, Ισως, (or Perhaps,) begins with the words, “it is raining,” which recalls Trsns and Acropolis. Perhaps makes reference to another great symbol of Greek culture, Homer. This brief poem, written in paragraph form, tells a story of a girl who has a flower instead of a mouth, and who lives in a grand, deserted house without windows. The girl asks the poet why he is fixed there
since the morning and the poet responds that he was talking with “Homer, the poet” (my italics). It is understood that this is the great Greek poet who wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey, although there is no direct reference to these texts. The following line, however, directs attention away from Greek history to another unknown “Homer,” who lived all his life in the trees like a bird, and who is known in the lake district as ‘the man of the bridge.’

The second “Homer” of the poem contrasts with the “father of western literature,” who happens to be his namesake. The second Homer seems to be irrational, perhaps mad, as he lives in the trees and is known as ‘the man of the bridge.’ The juxtaposition of these two extreme personas with the same name forces the reader to question the connection between the two. Are they the same person? What does the second Homer have to do with the first?

The two poems, Trams and Acropolis and Perhaps are representative of the poetics of Engonopoulos, which redefines traditional Greek symbols. Similarly, Bolivar undermines traditional ideas of Greek identity by using clearly international protagonists along with Greek characters in order to contrast national ideology with universal concepts. Thus, the Greek references in many of Engonopoulos’ poems do not necessarily define a singular idea of Greekness.

The references do, however, define a Greek aesthetic within Engonopoulos’ work. This “Greekness” is the aspect of Greek surrealist poetry that distinguishes it from its French counterpart. As early as 1946, the question of Greekness in surrealist poetry appears in journals like Nea Estia. Chourmouzios explains that the talk of a “Greek” surrealism does not mean that poetry under that category is somehow less prestigious
than French surrealism. On the contrary, such a term designates the independence of
greek surrealism as an autonomous literary movement, capable of earning its own
merits.119

The success of Engonopoulos’ poetry lies in the way that he skillfully marries
Greek tradition with European avant-gardism.120 For Rena Zamarou and Anastasis
Vistonitis, Engonopoulos’ poetry exemplifies Greek Surrealism. Other critics, like
Alex Argyriou, also consider Engonopoulos a true surrealist, but argue that he was
one of the few 20th century artists that does not blend tradition with the modern.
Because he discards tradition, Argyriou praises him for his truly avant-garde
poetry.121 Whether the “Greekeness” of Engonopoulos’ poetry is a result of a new
interpretation of tradition, or a complete rejection of it, it is undisputed that
Engonopoulos’ poetry is avant-garde because it does not treat tradition in the same
way as his predecessors.

The language used by Greek surrealists also demonstrates a break with the
Generation of the 30s. Poets of the Generation of the 30s are generally proponents of
the use of the spoken language, or demotiki. They believe that the use of the current
spoken language in contemporary literature will free writers, enabling them to use the
natural demotic Greek, and not the artificial katharevousa promoted by the state.122

The Greek surrealists, however, do not take part in the language issue. The
surrealists often use katharevousa in combination with demotiki. They do not

119 Chourmouzios, 182.
120 Zamarou, 7, Vistonitis, 192.
121 Argyriou, Αισθητικές ..., 167.
122 For a summary of the debate between demotiki and katharevousa, see Jusdanis’ Related Modernity,
   pages 41-46.

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necessarily choose *katharevousa* in order to make a political statement; contrarily, they employ it, as Engonopoulos in *Bolivar*, in conjunction with words from different periods of Greek civilization, in order to prove, as Chatzivasileiou points out, that the Modern Greek language is a palimpsest of various different languages layered on top of one another.\textsuperscript{123} By using all these layers in their writing, the Greek surrealists prove that “η ελληνική γλώσσα είναι μία” (the Greek language is one).\textsuperscript{124} Embeirikos' use of *katharevousa* is particularly poignant because of the content with which he chooses to combine it. The following chapter will take a close look at how Embeirikos manipulates *katharevousa* in order to undermine social values and ideas about the demotic promulgated by the Generation of the 30s.

Engonopoulos writes about his choice of language in the notes at the end of the first volume of poems. He writes that the language he *speaks* is rich, and he implies that he uses this spoken language in his written work. According to Engonopoulos, poetry should be free of rules of language (the French surrealists, of the same opinion, created automatic writing). Placing too much emphasis on language and forcing it to conform to a certain mold “wages war” against the imagination.\textsuperscript{125}

Not only does Engonopoulos use different versions of the Greek language, he writes in foreign languages, such as French. It is somewhat surprising to see, in the middle of *Talking to the Driver Prohibited*, a poem written in French, *Le Pape aux Entonnoirs (The Pope with the Funnels)*. There is another French poem in the collection *Στα Κλειδοκύμβαλα της Σιωπής (The Clavichords of Silence)*.

\textsuperscript{123} Chatzivasileiou, 97-98.
\textsuperscript{124} Vistonxis, 193.
entitled *L'évasion des Centaures (Escape of the Centaurs)*. In fact, most of Engonopoulos' collections contain French poems, or dedications in French to French artists. In the last section of his collection "Στὴν Κοιλάδα μὲ τοὺς Ροδώνες," Engonopoulos includes various translated texts from French, Spanish, Russian, and English.

Engonopoulos' mixed language compliments the mixture of references to different historical periods. The "notes" at the end of the poem *Bolivar* are filled with explanations that help the reader to understand the poem and clarify a wide range of references made in the poem, from names of Greek islands, to Greek demotic songs, to ancient Greek philosophers, to allusions to French and Italian literature. The international and inter-historical spirit of the poem is exemplified in the note for page 10, which explains the name Odysseus Androutsos, one of two of the heroes of *Bolivar*. Engonopoulos describes Androutsos as one of the most brilliant characters of the Revolution of 1821, and as one of the most dominant figures of universal history (my italics). The use of the word universal demonstrates that Engonopoulos judges Androutsos not along Greek standards, but along international standards, which lends to the universal aspect of Engonopoulos' poetry.

References to foreign artists also introduce an element of internationality. "Γυψ καὶ Φρουρό," which is part of the collection *The Clavichords of Silence*, is dedicated to Guillaume Apollinaire. The dedication, written in French, and with a capital "I" in the middle of the name ("homage à apollinaire") just underneath the

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title of the poem, calls attention to itself and urges the reader to question the
significance of Apollinaire in Engonopoulos' poetry. Perhaps Engonopoulos felt
indebted to Apollinaire for his radical work in the aesthetics of a fourth dimension,
and in the importance of the imagination and dream in art. Or perhaps Engonopoulos
felt empathy for a fellow surrealist who also fought in a World War, and who wrote
about these experiences in his poetry. 127

"Γυναικεία" is relatively short, consisting of two stanzas with mainly
one-word lines. There is no plot, or story, nor is there any logical progression of
ideas. The first stanza introduces three words, "Μύκονος, Μυκήνες, μύκητες"
("Mykonos, Mycenae, mushrooms," ) that contain alliteration. The following one-
word lines are "three, words, but, two, only, wings." The next stanza of the poem
introduces another image typical of surrealist poetry, that of a woman's palm, in this
case white like asbestos and bright, "that lights up, in, the night, like a carnivorous,
vioin, and perhaps, -again-, like the glass, drills, inside of the, fragile, minds, of
poets." The overall significance of the poem is ambiguous, but one can certainly
draw upon several dream-like, surrealistic images such as the woman's palm, the
violin, or the mind of the poet that seem to be juxtaposed in the poem like a surrealist
collage. Perhaps this imagery is meant to resemble the dream realm, or Apollinaire's
fourth dimension.

126 Engonopoulos, Ποιητικά, vol. 2.
127 Bohn, 121-139.
The following poem in the same collection, Ζη o Μέγας Αλέξανδρος (Does Alexander the Great Live?)\textsuperscript{128} is similarly ambiguous, but does not conjure up the same type of collage-like images. The four stanzas of this poem have the same form. The first line of each stanza makes a statement, and the following three lines, which contain the onomatopoeic words, do not have any obvious relation to the initial sentence. The four statements are: I burn my youth, I say the sum, I cry [for] the memories, and I am the Minotaur. The minotaur, in ancient mythology, was a creature half-man, half-bull. Minos, the king of Crete, owned a beautiful bull that he refused to give as a sacrifice to the gods. The gods, resentful of Minos’ rebuff, cast a spell on his wife Pasiphaë, so that she would fall madly in love with the bull. The spawn of this sexual liaison between Pasiphaë and the bull was the minotaur. Minos kept the minotaur hidden in the labyrinth, and every seven years, he would order boys and girls from Athens in order to feed the it. Only Theseus, with Ariadne’s help, succeeded in killing the minotaur and exiting the labyrinth safely.

The minotaur became an important symbol for the surrealist movement, in France and in Greece. From June of 1933 to May of 1939, an artistic magazine, which eventually became the organ of surrealist literature in France, was published with the title Minotaure.\textsuperscript{129} Perhaps the surrealists chose the minotaur as the mascot of their magazine because of its destructive and devouring qualities. As we have seen, one of the aims of surrealism, according to Breton’s first manifesto, was to destroy past

\textsuperscript{128} This question is part of an undated folklore tradition that is often followed by “Ναι, ζεί και βασιλεύει” (“Yes, he lives and reigns”).

\textsuperscript{129} The first magazine dedicated to surrealist literature in France, La Revolution Surréaliste (Dec. 1, 1924-March 15, 1928), and published by Breton and other surrealists from their Parisian office, Le
traditions such as realism, reason, logic, and rationality. The minotaur, then, would represent well the surrealists' efforts to "devour" regimes and oppressive ways of life in order to make way for a new (sur)reality. The surrealists could have also chosen the minotaur because of its grotesque and droll appearance and because of the subversive sexual connotations that the myth of King Minos represents.

Engonopoulos painted his own version of the minotaur, as did other French surrealist artists. Although Engonopoulos' painting "Ο Ταύρος των Βορτών" ("The Bull of Celebrations") was never printed in Le Minotaure, as were the works of many surrealist artists such as Dali, Picasso and de Chirico, this work remains an original rendition of a surrealist minotaur. Engonopoulos' minotaur has leaves and branches for hands and tree-roots for feet; he has a sword jabbed in his back, a snake emerging from his genitals, and is writhing in the wooden chair in which he is seated. One has the impression that this disjointed and confused creature is apt to jump from his seated position and to demolish anything in his path.

The traditional idea of the minotaur as a destroyer, and the appropriation of the symbol of the minotaur by the surrealists, Engonopoulos included, provides the minotaur in the poem "Does Alexander the Great Live?" especially rich layers of meaning. The poet claims he himself is the minotaur, the devouring monster that destroys everything, even human flesh. The poem, effectively, acts as a minotaur by destroying preconceived notions about language. Instead of using words that elicit specific meaning in a structured word order, Engonopoulos uses made-up vocabulary

*Bureau de recherches surréalistes,* 15 Rue de Grenelle, was followed by *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution,* (July 1930-May, 1933).
and illogical syntax. For example, the word “κινύρα,” does not exist in Greek, even in one of the most complete Greek language dictionaries.\textsuperscript{130} It seems that this word’s only use in the poem is as an onomatopoeic device, and not as a unit of meaning.

In addition to disrupting popular tradition and standard syntactical structures, the poem also threatens the idea of the past. The poem tries to undermine the concept of a continuous past, of the past being part of the present and future. For example, the second stanza of the poem contains the word “Μερόπη,” (“Merope”) which is a woman’s name. Merope is also the name of one of the seven Pleiades in mythology, the daughters of Atlas, and half-sisters of Hyades, who were placed among the stars to save them from the pursuit of Orion. Thus the name Merope implicitly refers to the stars, to an escape into the infinite sky. The concept of escape reminds the reader of the first line of the poem “I burn my youth,” because burning one’s youth or one’s past is the same as escaping from it.

The third stanza, however, implies that fleeing from the past is not always easy, as the poet grieves over memories. Instead of grieving over the past, the belief that Alexander the Great still lives allows Greeks to incorporate the past into the present, keeping it alive. This is one reason why modern-day Greeks traditionally respond to the question of the title, “Does Alexander the Great Live?” with “Ζει καὶ βασιλεύει” (“He lives and reigns”). They continue to ask if the legendary historical figure is still living, over two thousand years after his documented death, just as some

Americans believe in Elvis and his eternal life on earth as “the King.” In both cases, the past persists and continues to live in the present.

The poem, however, rejects the idea of a living past, as it makes no other mention of Alexander the Great. The absence or negation of Alexander, so prominent in the title, implies that he is not so important after all. Perhaps the greatness of the past is no longer important in the present, or for the future. The last line of the poem, which alludes to the minotaur, implies that destruction is possibly the only solution for defeating the past. The poet-minotaur, by ignoring the traditional affirmation of Alexander’s immortality, succeeds in destroying the past, and consequently, freeing space in the imagination for the future.

Engonopoulos’ poetry often provides a liberating vision of the future by questioning existing standards and attempting to discredit them. For example, “Πρωινό Τραγούδι,” (“Morning Song”) from the collection The Clavichords of Silence, encourages the reader to question the traditional role of a woman. The story is about a young girl who sweeps the entire house clean the eve of her marriage day. She cleans thoroughly because she does not relish in promises of marriage with white lace and frills. So, she hides the big yellow butterfly and paper flowers that are in her head, as well as the embalmed bird that is in the box in her chest, under the floorboards. This reference to the embalmed bird of an unhappy girl brings to mind Felicité from Flaubert’s short story “Un Coeur Simple,” although there is no direct reference.

In both Flaubert’s short story and Engonopoulos’ “Morning Song,” the woman, because of her social or gender position, is not in control of her life. The woman in
Engonopoulos' poem hides her innermost possessions under the ground, as if she were hiding them from those elements that exercise control over her life.

Throughout these three stanzas, which contain somewhat of a narration, the poet asks why the unhappy girl cleans and hides her precious possessions. The last three stanzas of the poem, which attempt to answer "why," are illogical and absurd, and do not answer the question. But the repetitive "why," becomes an obvious answer in itself: there is often no logical response to "why?"

Thus, the poem emphasizes two ideas. Firstly, it reveals the isolation and powerlessness of the protagonist because of her traditional gender role. Secondly, the poem exposes the absurdity of the situation, and of all life situations, by reiterating the question, "why?" which has no answer. Engonopoulos' criticism of tradition and logic is typical of surrealist art.

Surrealism in Engonopoulos' poetry emerges like a wave from a sea of Greek tradition, taking with it some aspects of the past, but arriving onto the shores of the present with a new and different version of history. Engonopoulos' work creates images that urge the reader to reconsider his own notions of nationalism, identity, and history. Engonopoulos' poems float above rationality, above preconceived ideas of reality, just like "...la voix surréaliste, celle qui continue à prêcher à la veille de la mort et au-dessus des orages" ("...the surrealist voice, the one that continues to preach on the eve of death and beyond the storms.")

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131 Engonopoulos uses this quote from Breton's first Surrealist Manifesto to introduce his first collection of poems.
CHAPTER 4

Andreas Embeirikos

Andreas Embeirikos (1901-1975) uses the same citation from Breton’s Surrealist Manifesto (quoted at the end of the previous chapter) three years before Engonopoulos, at the beginning of ΥΨΗΛΟΜΗΧΑΝΗ (Blast Furnace), published in March of 1935. The “surrealist voice,” to which Embeirikos and Engonopoulos refers, expresses a distinct style of surrealism for each poet. Whereas Engonopoulos’ surrealist voice tends to sing and promote objective hazard and humor above all else, Embeirikos’ voice has an erotic and sensually liberating tone. Embeirikos describes his search for the surrealist voice in Amour, Amour, from the collection Γραπτά. He writes:

Ποτός ξέρει, ίσως να έψαχνα ακόμη μέχρι σήμερα, αν η συγκλονιστική για μένα επαφή με τον υπερρελισμό δεν μου άνοιξε τα μάτια. Από την ημέρα εκείνη, μπορώ να πω, πως μονομιά σχεδόν, διέκρινα που βρισκόταν ο δρόμος και ρίχθηκα με ευθυσιασμό, με αληθινή αγαλίαση, στο ρεύμα του ιστορικού κινήματος. Είχα ακούσει το κάλεσμά του και το δέχθηκα. Είχα ακούσει την φωνή του, την φωνή εκείνη, του τόσο σωστά είπε ο Μπρετόν, στο πρώτο του μανιφέστο, όπως εξακούληθε να
Ψάλλει, καὶ στὶς παραμονές τοῦ θανάτου, καὶ επάνω από τὶς καταιγίδες.\textsuperscript{132}

Who knows, perhaps I would be looking even today, if the shocking, for me, contact with surrealism, had not opened my eyes. From that day, allow me to say, I almost immediately perceived where the path was found, and with enthusiasm and real jubilation, I hurled myself into the current of that historical movement. I had heard its calling and I accepted it. I had heard its voice, that voice of surrealism that Breton explained so well in his first Manifesto, how it continues to sing, even above the storms, and at the eve of death.

His gratitude to the surrealist movement for allowing him to express himself freely and effectively, and for enabling him to discover new worlds, is evident not only in this passage, but in most of his work. He also owes much to Freud and the psychoanalysts, who with the surrealists do the most to “pierce the dark shadows” that surround him and cloud his reality.\textsuperscript{133}

Embeirikos plays an active role in disseminating the ideas of surrealism in Greece. 1935 is an especially important year for Greek surrealism, and for Embeirikos in particular. He manages to organize an exhibition on foreign surrealist painters and publishes his first collection of surrealist poetry. But perhaps the most significant event for surrealism in Greece is the lecture Embeirikos gives at the Atelié in Athens on January 25 of that same year. Although this lecture is never recorded or published, Odysseas Elytis, who attends, talks about it in an interview. Elytis comments that the lecture made several bourgeois members of the audience very uncomfortable, and that names such as Freud and Breton shocked them.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{132} Embeirikos, \textit{Γραμμή}, \textit{Αμούρ, Αμούρ, (Amour, Amour)}, 11.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{134} Ampatzopoulou, \textit{Δεύ Αθήνας...}, 370-371.
The reaction of the audience reflects the difficulty with which many Greeks accepted ideas of psychoanalysis and surrealism. This is perhaps why the editors of *Nea Grammata* selected the tamest of Embeirkos’ poems for the collection of 1935. His longest and arguably most important work, *Ο Μεγάλος Ανατολικός* (The Great Eastern) published posthumously in 1990, forty years after Embeirikos began writing it, and thirty years after he finished it. Only the first two volumes of about ten have published. One of his more sexually explicit works, *Αργώ η Πλούς Αεροστάτου* (Argo or the Voyage of a Balloon) (which is the first part of a trilogy entitled *Τα Χαμενιά του Ερωτα και των Αρμάτων* and written between 1944 and 1945), was published in an abridged form between 1964 and 1965 in the avant-garde periodical *Pali*, was translated into English in 1967, and finally appeared in its complete form in Greek in 1980. The second book of the trilogy, "Ζεμφύρα η Το Μυστικόν της Πασιφάς" ("Zemflyra or the Secret of Pasiphae"), was printed in 1998, and the final part of the trilogy remains unpublished today. Because his most controversial works were printed in Greece only recently, Embeirikos, for most of the twentieth century, was not considered as controversial or as provoking as Engonopoulos.

Hector Kakanavatos sees this delay of publication as a reflection of the strict and oppressive moral standards of Greek society. Kakanavatos was a personal friend of Embeirikos, and would meet at his house, along with other surrealists such as

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135 Kakanavatos, 11.
136 Mario Vini on page 124 of *Η Γενιά του Τριάντα* writes that Embeirikos was the most orthodox surrealist and Engonopoulos was the most provocative Greek surrealist.
Elytis, Gatsos, Eagonopoulos, Papaditsas, Likos to read his poetry. Among this group, Embeirikos was one of the most international in world outlook. Because Embeirikos was born outside of Greece, and spent many years traveling and studying abroad, he was predisposed to observing Greece’s problems and actively participating in an effort to change Greece, or at least the idea of Greece, through his literature. Born in Romania of a Russian mother and Greek father (from Andros), Embeirikos spent his early years in Greece, first in Syros, and from the age of seven, in Athens. He studied in Europe, and returned to Athens to practice psychoanalysis. Like Engonopoulos, Embeirikos fought against the Germans during the occupation. After the retreat of the Germans and the onset of the civil war, Embeirikos remained with the guerilla camp, traveling across Greece. He eventually succeeded in escaping from the communists and hiding from them with the help of Greek and Albanian farmers. This experience, according to Valaoritis, steered his political views away from the communist party, which exercised control over the guerilla resistance movement.

Embeirikos remained a leftist, however, and often expressed his liberal political opinions. He voiced his disapproval of the narrowness of Greek society in interviews, and in his work. In Argo, which he wrote during his experiences as a guerilla fighter, Embeirikos created a division between the Old World and the New World, between the “pure-blooded” Spanish family of Don Pedro and the “vulgar” Native American Indian who was his daughter’s lover. Although Don Pedro desperately tried to prevent his daughter Carlotta from seeing her Native American

137 Kaknavatos, 11-13
139 Valaoritis, Μία Προκωπίτσα ..., 6-7
lover, they consummated their relationship in the end, and are killed by Don Pedro for transgressing his law. Thus, the law of the Old World proved to be powerful even in the New World; traditional social values were difficult, if not impossible, to uproot.

There are three other protagonists in this work, representatives of the Old World, who are chosen to navigate the flight of the balloon called the Argo. All three characters are male and all are internationally famous and respectable. The Russian Admiral, the biggest and tallest of the group, transgresses social boundaries when he instantaneously falls in love with a young mulatto native and takes her with him on the voyage of the Argo. In that moment, as in the other examples in the Embeirikian oeuvre where men physically seize the women before a sexual encounter, the Admiral forcefully grabs the innocent girl by the waist.\textsuperscript{141} This kidnapping can be seen as a metaphor of the Old World exploiting the New World; the end of the novel does not provide much hope for the young mulatto girl, trapped in the balloon with and at the disposal of the older, stronger, and virile European men.

Similarly, in The Great Easterner, the voyage of the ship by that same name begins in Liverpool and ends in New York, with no return. Hector Kaknavatos believes that the direction of the voyage away from the Old World signifies a rejection of this society in the hopes of finding or creating a better one.\textsuperscript{142}

These rejections of European bourgeois society, as I have discussed, are typical of the modernist, and especially the surrealist, movements. Most surrealists, as we have seen, use various techniques in order to voice their rejection and make it effective (or

\textsuperscript{140} Kaknavatos, 11-13.
\textsuperscript{141} See page 76 for an excerpt of this scene.
\textsuperscript{142} Kaknavatos, 13-14.
at least attempt to make it effective). Embeirikos, however, chooses a slightly different revolutionary path. He imbues his work with layers of eroticism, sometimes thick, sometimes subtle, that elicits a different reaction from the audience than Engonopoulos’ shocking “nonsense,” for instance. With some exceptions Calas and Engonopoulos shock their audience by means of challenging literary tradition and Greek ethnic identity. The sexual element in Embeirikos’ work, however, questions ideas about ethics and morals in modern-day society. The sexual element in his work not only challenges the way the reader might conceive of reality, consciousness, and dream; it also contests the way Greek society conceives of sexual identity and how this sexuality could be expressed in literature.

Several critics have compared Embeirikos to Georges Bataille, at one time a member of the French surrealists’ circle, and considered today one of the most erotic and sexually explicit writers of the twentieth century. Both authors had difficulties publishing their works: Bataille published some of his work under a pseudonym; Embeirikos’ most sexual works were published posthumously.

Eroticism in literature was a theme used by the French surrealists, as Susan Sulieman points out. She writes that the surrealists “… placed eroticism at the center of their preoccupations with cultural subversion.” According to Sulieman, surrealists and subsequent generations of avant-garde writers used eroticism as a way to challenge bourgeois morals and participate in a literature of shock and confrontation. Not only was the sexual content used to transgress social norms, the text itself and the sexual qualities of the language also participated in the subversion

143 Redzou, 41.
of social traditions. Sulieman quotes Roland Barthes, "The transgression of values, which is the declared principle of eroticism, has its counterpart-perhaps even its foundation-in a technical transgression of the forms of language." 145

Embeirikos used a combination of katharevousa and demotic, as did the other Greek surrealists. The juxtaposition of two (and arguably more) registers of Greek language provided the narration with various layers of meaning. Bataille used a similar technique in his "Histoire de l’oeil." Sulieman effectively explains the effect of such techniques on the reader:

But certainly one thing that contributes to its effect - even to its pornographic effect - is the contrast one feels between the long, sinuous, grammatically 'exquisite' sentences (which in French appear even more so because of the use of the past historic tense [passé simple] and the imperfect subjunctive, indices of classical literary narration and the explicitly sexual, obscene words ('stiff prick') that crash through the structure of the syntax... 146

While the "crash" in Bataille's work occurred between formal, literary language and argot, the confrontation in Embeirikos' work was between katharevousa and demotic. Let us take a look at the example when Don Pedro fondled himself in Argo. 147

Ο ντόν Πέντρο ἔβαλε το χέρι του στο πέος του. Σε αυτό, εσκέπτετο, και ὁχὶ στὸ μυαλὸ του, ὥφειλε παν ὅτι εἶχε κάμει. 148

Don Pedro placed his hand on his penis. To this, he thought, and not his brain he owed everything he had done. 149

144 Sulieman, 74.
145 Sulieman, 75.
146 Sulieman, 81.
147 As with the French translation into English of Bataille's novel, the Greek translation into English cannot render the nuances of the language, but I will provide the passage in both languages nonetheless.
148 Embeirikos, Argo, 24.
149 Embeirikos, Argo, 14.
The Greek word used for “thought” is not the more informal and familiar “σκεφτόταν,” but pure katharevousa form of the word. The last phrase “ώφειλέ παν ὅ’τι είχε κόμευ” is grammatically demotic, but the verb “ώφειλέ” resembles the katharevousa form. Whereas some contemporary writers such as Nikos Kazantzakis would have used rougher demotic versions of the word “πέος” or penis, Embeirikos chose the formal version of the word.

The demotic language is usually associated with Greek folklore, or of the life of the people rooted in the soil, which can lend to potentially “vulgar” connotations. This is why the use of katharevousa to describe a more demotic content also creates contrast within the work. Perhaps emphasizing the sexual content of the passage with katharevousa exaggerated sexuality in a different way than using a crass word from an argot register would. Perhaps the formal version of the word underlined the forbidden or illicit nature of the act. In any case, Embeirikos’ blend of language challenged any conceived notion about high literature and low literature, about sex and pornography, and about how sex and pornography could be described in high and low literature. Finally, Embeirikos’ language heightened the sexual (and pornographic?) tensions within the text.

In addition to his prose works, Embeirikos’ poetry also expressed poignant sexual moments. For instance, the poem Κορή (or Girl) of the collection Hinterland,
described the sexuality of a young girl and her desire for sex manifesting itself in the flight and freedom of birds.\textsuperscript{150}

\begin{verbatim}
Τo σπίτι βρίθει από χαρά
Καθώς λαγήν πλήρες γάλακτος στον ήλιο
Ενα κορίτσι στο παράθυρο κρυφά
Δίνει τα στήθη της στα περιστέρια

Γιούματα σφύζουν τα βυζιά
Και στέκουν όρθιες οι ρώγες
Τα πιπλίζουν τα πουλιά
Κι αίφνης το γάλα ξεχειλίζει.
\end{verbatim}

The house is full of joy
As a pitcher full of milk in the sun
A girl at the window, secretly
Offers her breasts to the pigeons

The breasts full and throbbing
And the nipples remain erect
The birds suck on them
And suddenly the milk brims over.

The sexual imagery of the poem is vivid and graphic. Embeirikos employs words such as breasts, nipples, milk, throbbing, not only in this poem, but in much of his poetry. According to Pantelis Boutouris, the word “breasts” in particular is followed by the word “birds” 31 times in the collections \textit{Ψυκάμινος} (\textit{Blast Furnace}) and \textit{Ευδοξώρο} (\textit{Hinterland}).\textsuperscript{151} In this poem, the girl’s repressed sexual desires manifest themselves and are released with the discharge of milk and the flight of the birds.

\textsuperscript{150} For a deeper psychoanalytic interpretation of this poem, see chapter 3, part D of Pantelis Boutouris’ book.

\textsuperscript{151} Boutouris, 178-120.
These ideas of sexual repression and its release are a reflection of Embeirikos' studies in psychoanalysis. Embeirikos went to Paris in 1927, after having studied literature at the University of Athens, economics in Switzerland, and then literature again in England. Once settled in Paris, Embeirikos studied with the psychoanalyst René Laforgue, and during this same time encountered surrealism.\textsuperscript{152} According to Nanos Valaoritis, Embeirikos actually met Breton in the period between 1927-29.\textsuperscript{153}

Embeirikos returned to Greece with his first hand experiences in psychoanalysis and was one of the first to practice it in Athens. Nanos Valaoritis, after meeting Embeirikos, asked for the poet to psychoanalyze him. According to Valaoritis, however, the therapy lasted only one session, as Embeirikos assured Valaoritis that his mental problems would heal with time and that he had no need for psychoanalytic treatment.\textsuperscript{154}

One of the more striking instances of psychoanalysis in Embeirikos' work can be found in \textit{Argo}. At the beginning of the narration, Don Pedro's lust for his own daughter is revealed to him in a dream. He imagines a white horse with a masked rider stopping under the tree where his daughter is lying. The rider grabs the girl by the waist (again the abduction by the waist), takes her with him, and rides to an oasis in the desert where both characters descend the horse and make passionate love. When the rider unveils himself, Don Pedro is shocked to see his own image. From this point forward the reader and Don Pedro are both aware of the latter's possessive

\textsuperscript{152} Amaptzopoulou, \textit{Δια Αγνώστου...}, 370-372.
feelings toward his daughter. These feelings manifest themselves at the end of the narration.

These two scenes that describe sexual desire for an offspring would have been more shocking to a Greek audience than to a western one because as Elytis said, Freud and psychoanalysis were not well known in Greece, nor were they well received, initially. Whereas the trend in France among the avant-garde of the 60s and 70s was to become more sexually expressive, the trend in Greece seemed to do the opposite. Writers like Elytis wrote texts with religious references, such as To Αξιον εστι (1959), which showed that some Greek artists, even those considered surrealists at times, were moving away from the shocking techniques of surrealism.

Embeirikos, however, continued to swim against the current, and produce more and more erotic art as his career progressed. Eroticism in Embeirikos’ poetry forced the Greek reader to reconsider normal values and their expression in literature. In addition to obvious descriptions of sex, Embeirikos used sexual metaphors to emphasize his rejection of traditional values. Water is a recurring sexual image in Embeirikos’ work. According to Voutouris, it often alludes to sperm and symbolizes sex and fertility.155

An example of a water image in Embeirikos’ work is in Amour, Amour, when after describing his confrontation with surrealism, he goes on to illustrate the winding river and waterfall that initiated his contemplation on life and his subsequent discovery of surrealism. The narrator (Embeirikos) becomes sidetracked from the narration about self-discovery and begins to follow the course of the river. The narration turns into a
fictive voyage to a bucolic scene along the Danube. Embeirikos describes a woman in the fields, taking a quick pause from thrashing wheat to give birth, and a young blonde bohemian girl lying in the shade of a tree, fantasizing about making love to a hero from the novel she is reading. 156 Such images, rich in sensuousness and fantasy, create a world where human life is dominated by physical instincts and sexual impulses. The water scene acts as a segue into a human scene of sensuousness and sex.

A similar scheme unfolds in Argo, just before Don Pedro fondles himself, inducing the fantasy about making love to his daughter. Embeirikos writes:

Don Pedro Ramirez now saw before him a vast flowing river, a river which was at places inaccessible to navigation because of the seething course of the water, or because of great waterfalls, and at other places calm and accessible, a river which sometimes winded voluptuously and nonchalantly, passing through unending plains and prairies, while elsewhere it rushed through clefts of steep and vertical rocks or about wooded mountains which rose in tall volcanic peaks in the midst of tropical vegetation dense with huge wide-leafed plants and immense pines, under which cobras, pythons, and boas wound and unwound, and where black pumas or supple velvet-like jaguars stalked or stood and listened.... 157

This passage has numerous sexual metaphors; the flowing river and ejaculation, the jungle and a woman’s loins, boas, cobras, pythons and a man’s sexual organ. Like the scene in Amour, Amour, Embeirikos uses the flowing water as a transition from the narration into an obvious sex scene, in this case, masturbation and a sexual dream.

In the erotic dream, just as in the bucolic scene of the daydreaming girl, a strong man of heroic proportions grabs the female around the waist and both engage in

152 Voutouris, 193-195.
156 Embeirikos, Τραγαίνω, 16-17.
157 Embeirikos, Argo, 13-14 (Embeirikos, Argos, 22-23).
sexual intercourse. According to some literary critics, such a scene exemplifies a male vision of sexuality.¹⁵⁸ Not only does a male write the work, but the dominant protagonist of the story is a male as well. The male protagonists of both excerpts grab the woman possessively in an act of dominance. According to Sulieman, this is typical of the male idea of eroticism: domination over and violence toward women. Sulieman writes, “[t]here is something in our culture that endorses and reinforces violence against women...and this violence seems to be inextricable from very old, deeply ingrained, essentially masculine attitudes toward sex.”¹⁵⁹

This same attitude is apparent at the end of Argo, in the relationship between the Russian admiral Vladimir Vierhoy, one of the three men chosen to navigate the Argo balloon, and the indigenous mulatto girl. After kissing this brown-skinned girl who came to see off the aeronauts, the admiral looks up to the sky, and for the first time in his life, he sees God. But he quickly realizes that it is not God whom he sees, but himself. Embeirikos writes:

That was not the face of God. He was seeing himself up there, dressed exactly like Mohammed. He wore a large turban on his head. In one hand he held a sharp sword and in the other a small bottle of perfume. An exquisite girl was sitting on his knees, a girl identical to the chocolate-brown orphan... Vladimir Vierhoy’s eyes were still upturned, however, and everyone thought that he was praying. A wild tempest was raging in his heart. Within a few seconds, this warm-hearted man had fallen deeply in love with the chocolate-coloured girl whose name he didn’t even know... In six seconds he crossed the space that separated him from the mulatto girl. When Vladimir Vierhoy reached her, he took her by the waist, and returning to the balloon, climbed aboard with his precious cargo.¹⁶⁰

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¹⁵⁸ See Kate Millett’s Sexual Politics and Andrea Dworkin’s Pornography: Men Possessing Women. See Leontis’ article “Surrealist Poetry of Identity...” for an in-depth look at gender roles in the poem Σπροφές Σπροφέλων.

¹⁵⁹ Sulieman, 80.

Although intercourse does not take place between these two, the last pages of the novel infer that it may sometime in the future. Embeirikos writes:

The three aeronauts looked each other in the eyes, then looked at the beautiful girl, whose throbbing young breasts were being caressed by Admiral Vierhoy’s large hands. All four now felt they had always been brothers.  

The word for “brothers” in Greek can be “brothers and sisters,” which is obviously the case since the mulatto is a female and there are only four people in the air balloon. The sexuality of this scene, in accordance with Sulieman, is definitely a reflection of woman’s vulnerability in face of man’s more dominant physicality. Although the narrator says that they all felt like brothers, the reader has to doubt whether the helpless girl is capable of feeling or understanding anything at all. The reader has no idea, at any point in the story, what the young girl feels; she seems to exist as a doll, without any opinion or emotion.

There is an instance in the narration, however, when the female has a voice. This occurs when Carlotta is in the haystack with her lover. Embeirikos writes:

Carlotta tossed about with increasing voluptuousness while her upturned eyes swept the clear sky, on which, by a miracle, the balloon had stopped. In the midst of her sighs and the deep pleasure that she shared with Gonzalez, her eyes rose to the unexpected, magnificent sphere, which seemed to be oscillating and swaying as if in harmony with the movements.

Finding the two nearing the point of ecstasy in the haystack, Don Pedro, becomes increasingly jealous and full of sadistic anger. As he fantasizes about beating both young people until their flesh bleeds, another image escapes from his subconscious.

161 Embeirikos, Αργο, 49 (Embeirikos, Apyr, 84).
A repressed memory suddenly emerges and Don Pedro sees before him a picture similar to the one he sees before him, when, as a child, he glimpsed his parents making love. He equates the two scenes at that moment, and subsequently kills the two lovers in a state of dream-like madness. After realizing what he has done, he kills himself. ¹⁶³

While Carlotta is making love, the narrator focuses on her impressions of pleasure and the observations she makes about the things around her, such as the balloon in the sky. This short intermission from the male voice is broken by Don Pedro's abrupt arrival. He transforms the sexual experience of his daughter and her lover into a reenactment of the sexual experience between his mother and father. Sexuality, for Don Pedro, always refers back to the Oedipal impulses of the child towards his mother. According to Sulieman, in order for the avant-garde or any literary movement to express a vision of sexuality other than the predominant one, it must step envisioning sexuality "...in terms of a confrontation between an all-powerful father and a traumatized son, a confrontation staged across and over the body of the mother."¹⁶⁴ Embeirikos' scene, according to Sulieman, would be another example of an Oedipal confrontation, involving the desired and dominated body of the mother.

If Embeirikos' erotic work was not subversive towards predominant ideas of sexuality, it challenged accepted ideas about literature and culture. Whereas Calas and Engonopoulos alluded to aspects of Hellenic history and Greek culture and attempted to redefine these ideas, Embeirikos' work tended to overlook these themes.

¹⁶² Embeirikos, Argo, 41; Embeirikos, Apyró, 74.
¹⁶³ Embeirikos, Apyró, 74-75 and Embeirikos, Argo, 44-45.
¹⁶⁴ Sulieman, 87.
The neglect of Greece in Embeirikos’ poetry is curious not only because the
Generation of the 30s and other predecessors devote a significant amount of their
œuvre to it, but because his fellow surrealists also directly address Greece in their
own work. The combination of a provocative eroticism and at the same time an
obvious neglect of Greece marks Embeirikos’ work as doubly subversive. By
ignoring (with a few exceptions) the Greekness of his own identity and society, and
by emphasizing the scandal of eroticism, Embeirikos’ work posed a challenge to
literature as a national institution in Greece and to sexual identity as a repressed social
element.

The poem “Στροφές Στροφάλων” (“Crankshaft Strophes”), in the collection
Hinterland, is one of a few examples where Embeirikos actually refers to Greece.\(^{165}\)
Intermingled with the charming sea-faring description of an ocean-liner on the
Aegean are erotic symbols and phallic metaphors. Before even the first line of the
poem, Embeirikos employs a subtle sexual reference in the title, whose
onomatopoetic sounds make reference to the sounds in the word “phallus.”\(^{166}\)

The first stanza of the poem contains all the references to Greece. The first Greek
reference is the word “σποράδες,” or “Sporades,” (In 4) a group of Greek islands in
the Aegean Sea. The other references to Greece are literary. In line 7, for instance,
the poet lauds the ocean liner for not being enticed by the “σεμιρήνες” (or “the
Sirens”). The poet also praises the ocean liner for being brave and not fearing the
“συμπληγάδες” (or crashing rocks, which could be an allusion to Homer’s “Sibyl”)

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These short references both to Greece as a place and to the Greek literary
tradition are not juxtaposed with unfamiliar images, as they are in the poetry of Calas
or Engonopoulos.

Embeirikos combines these ideas of Greece with subtle sexual images. For
instance, the first line of the poem, and the first line of every other stanza in the poem,
"Ω υπερωκεάνειν τραγουδάς καί πλέχεις" ("O ocean liner, you sing and
you float") sets the mood of the poem, and its repetition throughout creates a rocking,
swaying rhythm. Although initially this may seem to correspond with the movements
of the boat, by the end of the poem, the reader can be fairly certain that the motions
described correspond to the act of love-making. The background of the rocking
Aegean Sea becomes a larger metaphor for a woman having sex.

It is not necessary to go into greater detail about the numerous sexual metaphors in
this poem. What is important is that the sexuality in Embeirikos' poem redefines a
certain image of the Greek Aegean by juxtaposing it with the idea of a woman having
sex. The poem implies that traces of sexuality exist everywhere, even in the innocent
movements of nature. Such notions challenge the idea of the pure blue sea against a
bleached white column from an ancient temple and persuade the reader to reconsider
his/her notions of Greece as a natural, geographic site. Greece becomes a place full
of erotic connotations and natural instincts.

165 The poem has been translated by Kimon Friar in Modern Greek Poetry (New York: Simon and
166 Boutouris, page 196fn.
The last lines of the poem express the idea that the destination of the ocean liner, which metaphorically speaking would be the state of orgasm, is ephemeral and ever changing, like “our songs for the women that we love.”

The idea of love in another story, Zemfyra or the Secret of Pasiphaë, is more positive and lasting than in the previous poem. This story alludes to a myth we have already seen in Engonopoulos’ poetry. Here again the minotaur, which is inextricably linked to Pasiphaë, brings to mind the image of a hideous creature with both human and animal qualities. In Zemfyra or the Secret of Pasiphaë, Zemfyra, like Pasiphaë, falls in love with an animal, in this case, a lion. Yiorgos Yiatsromanolakis compares the two protagonists. He points out that although both women fall in love with a beast, Zemfyra’s life becomes calmer, as she is tamed by her sexual relationship, whereas Pasiphaë’s life becomes more complicated and problematic because she gives birth to the minotaur.\(^{167}\) Both stories, however, exalt in the idea of love without bounds.

The emphasis on sexuality and freedom certainly parallels the themes of much French surrealist poetry. Embeirikos, however, distinguishes himself from the French surrealists in his sexual textuality, which he accomplishes by combining katharevousa and demotic elements. This combination of official and informal, of gravity and playfulness, effectively reflects the serious and at the same time humorous qualities of human sexuality. The erotic element in Embeirikos’ work defines him as the only Greek surrealist to dedicate a large portion of his oeuvre to redefining ideas of sexuality in Greek society and literature.

\(^{167}\) Yiatsromanolakis, 38.
CONCLUSION

The work of writers such as Calas, Engonopoulos, and Embeirikos proved the existence of a Greek surrealist movement independent of the western European one that inspired it. Greek surrealism resembled French surrealism aesthetically. Greek surrealism also was similar to French surrealism in its rebellion against its modernist predecessors. Modernism in France, however, differed from Greek modernism in various ways, and consequently French and Greek surrealism differed somewhat in ideology.

French modernism attempted to undermine bourgeois society. The French surrealists, however, realized that the attempts of the modernists were futile in that they did not succeed in changing the values of society in any way. The surrealists decided that in order to challenge bourgeois society, one had to step outside of its laws; this is why the surrealists rejected rationality, realism, logic, progress, and other bourgeois ideals in their aesthetic, and in their way of life.

André Breton and Philippe Soupault, for instance, in their seminal poetry collection *Les Champs Magnetiques* published in 1919, broke with tradition by writing what many believed to be nonsense and irrational babbling. Nine years later, in 1928, Breton continued to expound surrealist ideas with his book *Nadja*, by describing the surrealist way of life that consisted of living without direction, wandering the streets
of Paris without goals or expectations, and above all, appreciating the love and laughter that life provides. Both of these works are typical examples of the surrealists' attempt to discredit traditional bourgeois ideas about literature and society in order to liberate the reader from the oppression of bourgeois ideology.

Similarly, Greek surrealist art attempted to subvert ideas about Greek culture and Greek history. Because the modernists before them had created such a one-sided definition of Greekness, the surrealists saw a need for a more plural Greek identity. They employed French surrealist techniques, such as emphasizing the dream realm, pursuing the irrational, and stressing unbound desire, in order to prove that there were many versions of the truth, and various kinds of Greekness.

The Greek surrealists, however, did not actively take part in the social revolution, as did the French. Although some of the Greek surrealists were members of the communist party and other leftist political groups, and although some of them, like Calas in *Towards a Third Surrealist Manifesto*, actually wrote about changing modern ways of life, the Greek surrealists did not do much to galvanize society into revolutionizing the world. Unlike the French, they were not necessarily dissatisfied with society; they were dissatisfied with the Greek identity.

I have chosen the work of Calas, Engonopoulos, and Embeirikos, despite the existence of other Greek surrealists, because their work typifies the goal of the Greek surrealist movement, which was the liberation of the Greek identity. Greek surrealism challenged traditional ways of understanding Greek culture, and opened the door to new and various interpretations, changing conceptions of Greek literature and Greek identity at the same time.
APPENDIX A

POEMS
Αχρόπολη

Από ποιητή μεγαλόπνου πολύ
tόν Χέρ Κάρλ Μπέντεκερ-
τό δίκα αυτά
κάποιας ξύθες Ζαππείου δ προθλάκες
κολάμα πίες- γάλλικου
τά χηματία ισανικά
με μπουντές στ’ αυτά μας
εξει σπάραση ο άθεορος-
νά με το φεγγάρι
υπ’ σε νύχτες πανσελήνου
ο φαράτζβες ελασπάττε τ’ φιλιά
που κρύβει ψεύτικης καρυάτιδας ή φουότα
μ’ αφήνει σ’ αύτές
χοντρές κοιλίες
α’ αυτώς σωληνάρια έξακοσία έξ
μόνο κυλινδροφ αγγοντσέι εδώ πέρα
κολάνες ίσιες πεπημένες
μαρμάρινα αλλ’ άλλες
ρόλ-ρόλει άνθρα καντάκ
νομισμάτων– τά ρέοστα
άλλα γιμνών δολλαρίων αλλ’ κτερλιών
κυλινδρικά έξις ε’ άλεξες έκατες
ζώοι ε’ ύπερ τέρτουλ
λέξει βιοπειρούσες
άπ’ τη φύλε που μάς προχεινούν
οι κακομόμη του Μορόζίνη-
τά κακόνια μ’ αυτά κυλινδρικά
κάθε μέρος γκρεμίζουν τάς άχρόπολες
που ανασταθμίζουν αλλοι σε πλάκες άρνητικές
φωνάζουν τά χλικά τών κοντάκ
λέξει που αφαγγέλλει
με ρυθμό μηχανής αντλερ
κυρία θυμοπόσι
εκπονεί τ’ αυτά μας
μ' ἀδύναμο λάρυγγα
θετό τῆς ψυχῆς τῆς
ποῦ χύνει τελικά
σε χειροφροτήματα
-μαύροι ἀφρόλθαλασσίς ἐνετικής.
Ξύπνησε ἡ ἡμια, ὑπαγε τὰς εἰκόνες
φόβοι πιὰ δὲν διάρχουν. Γράφεις
γιὰ νὰ ἱδεῖ τὸ κοίτημα, ἵνα ἀποστάσεις
τὰν λέξεις ἰκούγονται. Διακρίνω
κάποια καταθέννη. Ποιὰς ἐντού πῶς ἕμαι ἑλεύθερος;
ἔχω μιὰ πρότασι τραμενή;
Τί ἔσα ἐπικολουθήσετε; Ποδ πέφτει τὸ βάρος
"Ας ματι καὶ λίγος ἄρας
καὶ τὸ παιχνίδι ἀποκτή κάποιο ἐνδιαφέρον;
Προσέχε: ἢ προσευχή τοῦ θεοῦ.
Τολμᾶ: ἢ ἄροσεξία τοῦ ἄρχου.
Τὸ δράμα! Τὸ ἠλλοθι σχηματίζεται πάλι
διακόφτεται τὸ κοίτημα, ἀπὸ ἄλλα τροφοδοτεῖται.
Δὲν μοὴν πέφτει πιὰ λόγος:
Καλημεροῦδα! Ἀφεντικά, τὰς τὰ καλοπερνάτες
ὅπως λένε στὶς ταβέρνες τοῦ λόγου.
Διαφοροποιώ, παίζω, ἀναζητώ
τὴν ἁγάπη πού καταναλίσκει
τὴν ἑλευθερία. Τὸ μίσος ποὺ καίει
tὴν ἑλευθερία. Χωρίς ἀνησυχία
tί θέλουμε τὴν ἑλευθερία;
Ποῦ πάσει ἡ ποίηση;
Ποίηση, ἑλευθερία, ἁγάπη ἢ πανικὸς.
ΜΠΟΛΙΒΆΡ,
ένα ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΠΟΙΗΜΑ.

ΦΑΣΜΑ ΘΕΣΙΩΝ ΕΝ ΟΠΛΟΙ ΚΑΘΟΡΑΝ, ΠΡΟ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΕΠΙ ΤΟΥΣ ΒΑΡΒΑΡΟΥΣ ΦΕΡΟΜΕΝΟΝ

Le cœur d’un homme vaut tout l’or d’un pays

Γιά τούς μεγάλους, γιά τούς ἐλεύθερους, γιά τούς γενναίους, τούς δυνατούς,

'Ἀρμόζον τά λόγια τά μεγάλα, τά ἐλεύθερα, τά γενναία, τά δυνατά,

Γι' αὐτούς ἢ ἀπόλυτη ὑποταγή κάθε στοιχείου, ἢ στιγή,

Γι' αὐτούς τά δάκρυα, γι' αὐτούς οἱ φάροι,

κι' οἱ κλάδοι ἐλιάς, καὶ τά φανάρια

"Ὅπου χρονισθηκότεν μὲ τό λίκνισμά τῶν καραβιῶν καὶ

γράφουν στούς σκοτεινοὺς ὀρίζοντες τῶν

λιμανῶν,

Γι' αὐτούς εἶναι τ' ἀδεία βαρέλια πού σαραστήκανα στό

πιό στενό, τάλι τοῦ λιμανοῦ, συκάκα,

Γι' αὐτούς οἱ κουλούρες τ' ἄπτοσα σκοτιά, κι' οί ἁλωτικές, οἱ ἄγκυρες, τ' ἄλλα μανόμετρα,

Μέσα στὴν ἐκνευριστικὴν ὁσμὴ τοῦ πετρελαίου,

Γιά ν' ἄρματασαν καράβι, ν' ἀνοιχτούν, να φύγουν,

"Ὅμως μὲ τράμ ποῦ ἄκανας, ἄδειο κι' ὅλοφατο μέσο στή

νυχτερινὴ γαλήνη τῶν μαχτοτέατος,
Μήν σκοπάς τού ταξειδιοῦ, προς τὸ δ στράφη.

Γάταιος θα πώ τὰ λόγια τὰ δρατά, ποὺ μοῦ τὰ ἤπατον γράφεις ἡ Ἑρμηνεύσεις, Καθάς ἐφάσισες μέσα στὰ βάθια τοῦ μυαλοῦ μου διόλω συγκινήση.

Γά τὶς μορφὲς, τὶς αὑτοπροέρχες, τοῖς ὑπόκρισις, τοῖς Ὀδυσσείας Ἀνδρόντου καὶ τοῖς Σίμωνοις Μπολιβάρ.

"Ομοίς γὰρ τάρα θά ψάλαι μοναχά τὸν Σίμωνα, Ἀφήνοντας τὸν ἄλλο γὰρ κατέλημεν καίριόν, Ἀφήνοντάς τον γὰρ νάν τὲ ἀσφαλέσθη, σῶν θρόνων, ἢ ἄφρα. Ἰσως τὸ πιὸ ἅρπαγισμὸν ἱππαλαὶ

ποτὲ, Ἰσως τὶ θραυστὸν ὑπαγόν ἵππα αὔτον τὸν κόσμον.

Κι αὐτά δεξί γά τὰ δεῖ δι' αὐτόν τὸν δυὸ τοὺς ἀπήρκεν γὰρ τὰς πατρίδες, καὶ τὰς θύρες, καὶ τὰς συναλα, κι ἄλλα παραφούμε, ποὺ δὲν ἐχαίρουν.

Παρὰ γιατί σπαθήκασε μέσα στοὺς αἰθένες, κι αὐτὸ τὸν, μονάχοι πάντα, κι ἄλλοι, μεγάλοι, γενναίοι καὶ δυνατοί.

Βῆμα τὴν ίδια τοὺς, νὺξον κι' αὐτά ποὺ λέα τάρα γὰρ τὸν Μπολιβάρ, ποὺ δὲν αἰθρεῖ γὰρ τὸν Ἀνδρόντου.

Δέν εἶναι κι' εἶσκολο, ἀλλατε, νὰ γίνουσ τὸσο γλύπτω αἰσθητικῶς μορφὲς τῆς σμαράζης τ' Ἀν-

δρόμους καὶ τοῖς Μπολιβάρ.

Παράδειγμα σύμβολο.

'Αλλ' δὲν περνοῦμε γρήγορα: χρόνος Θεοῦ, δξί συγκινήσεις, κι' ἐπάρξοντας, κι' ἀπελπώνοντε.

'Αδιάφορα, ἢ φιλάνθρωποι να εἶχαν προφωνήσει οὔτω γὰρ τοὺς ἀθένες.

Ως τὸ μέλλον, τὸ κόσμιο, τὸ μακρυνό, σὲ χρόνια, λίγα, πολλά, ίσως ἐντος μεθανατίον, κι' αντιμεθανατίον.

'Ισομή τὴν ὠρᾶ τὸν δὲ ν' ἀρχίσους ἢ Γῆς νὰ κυλάῃ ἄδεια, κι' ἀρχίσους, καὶ νεκρῆ, στὸ στάρματα, Νέοι θὰ ἐξενδᾶνε, μὲ μαθηματικήν ἀκριβεία, τὰς ἱμας νότιας, πάνω στὴν κλίνην τους.

Νά βρέχουμε μὲ δάκρυα τὸ προσκέφαλό τους, ἄνελογοι-ζημίαις ποὺς ἑμοίς, σκαρφαλώνοι Πάρα διπρόστι κάποτες, τὰ λόγια εἰμάτα, τὰ ἰδιόμους ἱππαλά.

Καὶ τὰ θεορήματα κύματα, δὴν ξεσπόνθη κάθε βράδυ στὰ ἅψα τῆς Τέχνης ἀκρογόνων, Κι' αὐτὸν ἄρρωσιν, καὶ τὸ ψηλὸς αὐτὸ ποὺ καταβάζει τὰ δρομάτια.

'Αδεσπος, ἀκούσας, θὰ νὰ βροντοφωνεύτῃ τὸν άθανάτου.

"Ας διανέλθωμε ὅμως στὸν Σίμωνον Μπολιβάρ.

Μπολιβάρ "Ονόμα ἀπὸ μέταλλο καὶ ἕκλο, ἑκσυνά ἔνα λουσσού καὶ μικροῦς ἑκσυνά μικροῖς τῆς Ἡλίασι Ἀμερικῆς."
Ήδη τὴν εὐθένεια τῶν λουλουδιῶν μέσα στὴν καρδία σου, μέσα στὰ μαλλιά σου, μέσα στὸ βλάσμα σου.

'Η χέρα σου είτε έτανε μεγάλη σὰν τὴν καρδία σου, καὶ σκορπιός σαν τὸ κάλο καὶ τὸ κάκο.

Ροβόλαγε τὰ βουνά καὶ άπεμα στὴν φάτνη, κατέβαινε στοὺς κάμπος, καὶ τὰ χρυσά, τὶς ἀκαμήλιοι,

θλα τὰ διάκριτα τοῦ βαθιοῦ σου,

Μές τὸ ντοφάκι στὸν ὄμο ἀναρρημένο, μέ τὰ στήβια ἐξόσκητα, μέ τὶς λαβκοματέες γιοράτο τὸ κορμὶ σου,

'Κι ἐκαθόσουν ὀλόγυμνοι σὲ πέτρα χαιρή, σὲ ἀκροβαθάλαιοι,

'Κι ἔρχονται καὶ σ᾽ ἐβραίοι μὲ τὶς συνήθειες τῶν πολέμων τῶν Ινδιανῶν,

Μ᾽ ἄσβεστοι, μισόνο ἄσπρο, μισό γαλαξία, γιὰ τὸ φαντάζεις σὲ ῥημακλήσι σε περάγας τῆς Ἀστικής,

Σὰν ἐκκλησία σὲ τῶν γαίαντικῶν τῶν Ταπεινῶν, ὀψάν ἀνάχαρο σὲ κόλη τῆς Μακάδανας ἄρχημη.

Μπολιβάρ! Είσου πραγματικότητα, καὶ εἰςαί, καὶ τάρα, δὲν εἴσαι δυναμορ. 'Όταν οἱ εργασίοι νυκτὶγοι καρφάνουν τοὺς ἄγερους αὐτοὺς, καὶ τὰ ἄλα ἄγρια πουλιά καὶ ζώα, Πάν᾽ ἄπ᾽ τὶς ἐξίτες τὶς πόρτες σε ἄγρια δάση,

Ἐνανθή, καὶ φανάζες, καὶ ἀθρόος,

'Κι εἴσαι ὁ Θεός εὖ λό το σφώτ, τὸ καρπὶ 'κ ἀπότος.

'Αν στὰ νησιά τῶν κοραλλιαίων φυσικὲν ἄνεμα, κι ἀναχαροστάζουν τὰ όρημα κακία,

Κι' οἱ παπαγάλοι ὀργιώξωνε μὲ τὶς φωνὲς τὰν πέφτει ἢ μέρα, κι' οἱ τίς πῶς εἰρήνατον πινούμενοι σ᾽ ὀρασία,

Καὶ στὰ ψηλὰ δεντρά κορμιάς τὰ κοράκια,

Σκεπθήτε, κοντά στὸ κύμα, τοῦ καφενεῖου τὰ σιδερένια τὰ τραπέζια.

Μέσα στὴ μαύρα πὼς τὰ τρόπι τὸ ἄγιό, καὶ μακρὰ τὸ φοῖς π᾽ ἄναβε, σῆμα, ὃς ἀναβαίνει, καὶ γυρίζει πέρα δώθε,

Καὶ ἠμεράνει — τῇ φρεντή ἀγανά — ὅσταρα ἀπὸ μία νύχτα δίχας διπό,

Καὶ τὸ νερό, δὲν λέει τίποτε ἀπὸ τὰ μυστικά του.

'Ετσι ἢ ζωῆ,

Κι' ἔρχεται ὁ ήλιος, καὶ τῆς προκυμαίας τὰ σπάτα, καὶ τῆς νησιώτικες καμάρες,

Βαμμένα ρόζ, καὶ πράσινα, μ᾽ ἄσπρα περβάζει (ἡ Νάναξ, ἢ Χλιό),

Πῶς ζοῦμ! Πῶς λάμπουν σὰ διάφανες νεφάδες! Άδος ὁ Μπολιβάρ!

Μπολιβάρ! Κράζει τὸ δυναμὸ σου παπαγαλέενος στὴν κορφὴ τοῦ Βουνοῦ Έρα,

Τὴν πώς ψηλή κορφή της νήσου "Υδρας,

'Απὸ δό ή θέα εκτείνεται μαγική μέχρι των νήσων του Σαρακινικοῦ, τῇ Θήβα,

Μέχρι καὶ κάτω, πέρα δὲ τῇ Μοναστηρά, τὸ τραπό Μισιρι,

'Αλλά καὶ μέχρι του Παναμά, τῆς Γκουατεμάλα, τῆς Νικαράγκου, τῆς Οντοκράς, τῆς Ατλάς του Σάν Ντομίγκο, τῆς Βολιβίας, τῆς Κολομβίας, του Περού, τῆς Βενεζουέλας, τῆς
Χιλής, της 'Αργεντινής, της Βραζιλίας, Οθρουγούάντ, Παραγουάν, του 'Ισημερινού, 
'Ακόμη και του Μεξικού.
Μ’ ένα σκληρό λαβάρι χαράζω τ’ θνομά σου πάνω στην 
πέτρα, νάρχουν δρόμοις οι άνθρωποι νι’ 
προσκομισθήκα τ’ πιστικότητά και
Τινάζονται χιόνια καθώς χαράζω — έτσι έπαιρε, λένε, ο 
Μπολιμπάρ — και παρακολουθή το χέρι μου καθώς γράφω, λαμπρά μάστα στόν ήλιον.

Βίδες γιά πρώτη φορά το φέρο στο Καρακάς. Το φέρο 
tο δικό σου
Μπολιμπάρ, γιατί ής ύπαρξη ή Νότια 'Αμερική διάλεκτο 
κλήρη είτεν θεωρόμενη στάκι περικοκλάδια.
Τ’ θνομά σου τόρα είναι διψός άναμμένος, πολ’ φαίνε 
ζει την 'Αμερική, και τη Βόρεια και τη Νό 
tια, και την οικουμένη.
Οι ποταμοί 'Αμαζόνιοι και 'Ορονόκες πηγάζουν από τι 
μάτια σου
Τα ψηλά βουνά έχουν τις ρίζες στο στέρνο σου,
'Η δροσερά τάν 'Ανδέας είναι ή ραχοκοκκαλιά σου.
Στην κορφή της κεφαλής σου, παλλακιδώς, τρέχουν 
t’ άνηθερα άτια και τ’ θεριά βόδια
'Ο πλούτος της 'Αργεντινής.
Πάνω στήν κοιλά σου έκτισθαι αι άπεραντες φυτείς 
tου καφε

Σάν μίλας, φοβερό σεσομοί σημαίζουν τό πάνω,
'Από τις έπιβλητικές άρτημες της Παταγόνιας μέχρι τι 
παλάμαρια νησιά
’Ηφαίστεια ξεπέρασαν στο Περού και ξεράθηκα στά 
οδάνια την άργη τους,
Σειώνται τα χώματα παντού και τρίζουν τα εκκονιάμα 
tα στην Καστοριά,
Τη σιωπηλή πόλη κοντά στη λίμνη,
Μπολιμπάρ, είσαι όφρας σάν ‘Ελληνας.

Σέ πρωτοσυνάντησα, σάν είμουνα παιδί, σ’ ένα υλη 
ρικό καλνύρμι του Φαναριού,
Μιά καντήλα στο Μουχλό φνιζέ το αθηναϊκό πρό 
σαιτό σου,
Μήπως νάσαι, όραης, μιά από τις μύρες μορφές ποι 
πήρε, κ’ άφηνες, διαδοχικά, ο ‘Κωσταντίνος 
Παλαιολόγος;

Μπογιάκα, 'Αγιακούτσιο. Έννοιες υπέρλαμπρες κ’ αιθ 
νες. Πήσουν δεκα.
Πίχαμε από πόλης περάσει, ήδη, την παλιά μεθόριο:
πίσω, μακριά, στο λευκόβικαί, έίχαν ανάγκη φωτίζες.
Κ’ ο στρατός άνέβαινε μέσα στη νύχτα προς τη \nάκη, 
κ’ άκοψεν κάτι οι γνώριμοι της ήχοι.
Πλάτι κατάρχουν, σκοτεινή Σύννεφα, αδέσποτα αιο 
φορείς με τούς πληγαμένους.

Μήν ταραχθεί κανείς. Κάτω δεκα, νά, ή άστιμη.
'Από διά όλα περάσουν, πάρ’ απ’ τις καλαμίες,
’Υπομονετικά οι δρόμοι: Εργο και δόξα του Χαρμο 
βίτη, του ξυκουστού, τού διφαστού στά τέτοια.
Στής θέσεις σας δυοι. 'Η σφυρίγμα ήξερε
'Ελάτες, ἄλτε, ἐξέγειτε. Ἀς στηθοῦν τὰ κανόνια, καθαρίστε μὲ τὰ μάκτρα τὰ κουτά, τὰ φωτίλια ἀναμμένα στὰ χέρια, τὰ τόπια δεξιά. Βράσ! Βράσ, ἅλβαντι φωτά: Μπολιβάρ!

Κάθε κοιμαράς, π' δεξιοφένονίζοντας κι ἀναφέ, Είτεν κι' ἐνα τριαντάφυλλα γιὰ τὴ δόξα τοῦ μεγάλου στρατηγοῦ, Σκληρός, ἀτάραχος ὡς στέκοντας μέσα στὸν κορνιχτό καὶ τὴν ἀνάρα, Μέ τὸ βλέμψι' αἰνεῖόντας πρὸς τ' ἀνηλί, τὸ μέταζο στὰ νέφη.

Κι' είτεν ἢ θέα τοῦ φρειτή: πηγὴ τοῦ δέους, τοῦ δίκην δρόμος, ὁπτράπεσας πόλη.

"Ομως, πόσοι καὶ πόσοι δὲ ὁ δεξιοβουλευτήκαν, Μπολιβάρ, Πόσα «ιντολάκια» καὶ δὲ σοῦ «στῆς» νὰ πέσης, νὰ χαβής.

"Ενας πρὸ πάντων, ένας παλιάδρατος, ένα σκουλήκι, ένας Φωλικοπολίτης.

"Αλλά σ' τίποτα, ἀτράγαντος σὲν πόργος στεῖκοντας, δρόμος, στὸ «ἀκογόδρακο» μπρος τὸν τρόμο, Μία ψοφερή ἕλιαρα ἄκρατης, καὶ τὴν ἀκράταινας πάνω διὰ τὴν καθήη σου.

Οι φαλακροὶ κόνδυλοι σκιάζονται, ποὺ δὲν τοὺς τρόμουσε τὰς μάχες τὸ κακό καὶ τὸ ντομάρι, καὶ σὲ κοπάδια ἀγριμένα πέτουν,

Κι' οἱ προβάτοκαμήλες γκρεμιοστασάλωντας στὶς πλαγιές, σέρνοντας, καθάς πέφαν, σύννεφο τὸ χέρια καὶ λιθάρα.

Κι' οἱ ἠχοροὶ σου μέσα στὰ μάμφας Τάρταρα ἐχάνοντο, λουφάζαν.

Σὰν θαρήθη μάρμαρο, τὸ πό καλό, ἀπὸ τ' Ἀλάβανθα, μ' ἀγίασμα τὸν Βλαχερνάνθαν ἂ βρέξα τὴν κορφὴ μου,

Θὰ βάλω δὴ τὴν τέχνη μου αὐτὴ τῇ στάσῃ σου νὰ πελεκήσῃ, νὰ στῆς ἀνυόν νέου Κούρου τ' ἀγάλμια στῆς Σκύνου τὸ βασιλά,

ὑ' λησμονώντας: βήβαση, στὸ βάθρο νὰ χαράξω τὸ περίφημο ἑκείνο «Χαῖρε, παρέδωκες τῷ Θεῷ».

Κι' ἔδω πρέπει ἰδιωτέρας νὰ δέχωθη δότ' ὁ Μπολιβάρ δὲν δῳψεῖμη, δότ' «σκιάσεις» ποὺ λέν. ποτέ,

Οὔτε στὰν χαίτις τὴν ὁρα τὴν πό ἀνακατέφθας, οὔτε στῆς προδοσίας, τῆς ἀναπόφευκτης, τὰς πικρές μαμρίλες.

Λένε πὼς γνώριζε ἀπὸ πρὶν, μὲ μιᾶν ἀκρίβης ἀφάνταστη, τῇ μέρα, τὴν ὁρα, τὸ δευτέροκροτο ἀκόμη: τῇ στιγμῇ,

Τῆς Μάχης τῆς μεγάλης ποὺ εἶτεν γ' α ὅ τ' ὁ να μὸ νο

Κι' ὅπου θ' νατάνε αὐτοὺς ὁ Ἠμίος στρατός κι' ἐχθρός, ἠπτημένος καὶ νικητής μαζί, ἤρεας τροπαίοι-

χος κι' ἥξιστηριο τὴμα.

Καὶ ὥς τοῦ Κύριλλου Δουκάρας τὸ κενδρία τὸ ἐπέραμι μέσα του στέκονταν,

Πὼς τὶς ξεγέλασε, χαλήνους, τὸν Ἡσαυλίδα καὶ τὸν
ΧΟΡΟΣ

στροφή

(entrée des guitares)

Αν ή νύχτα, δραμάτικη περάση,
Παρηγόρια μας στέλνει τις παλιές τις σέλινες,
Αν στού κάμπού τα πλάτη φαινομένων σκοτάδια
Λοστικόμους παρθένες μ’ αλκοόλιστες φορτάνον,
Ηρο' ή δρα της νύχτας, ήρθε δρα θριάμβου.
Είς τα σκέλεθρα t’ αδεία συναρπάζουν πολεμάρχουν
Τρικαλίτης θα φορέσουν ποιο ποιητικήν μ’ αίμα,
Και το κόκκινο χρώμα πούρχαν πριν τη θυσία
Θά σκεπάση μ’ αχτίσες τις σημαιές το θάμπος.

αντιστροφή

( the love of liberty brought us here)

t’ ἀρτοποι Στόχον φαινομένων τις ρίζες
kt’ ή θῆλεος
πού λαμπρός άνειλέει
σὲ τρόποι’ ἀνάμεσα
καὶ πουλίται
καὶ κοντάπια
θ’ ἀναγεγέλη ως ἤκτε ποὺ κυλάει τὸ δάκρυ
καὶ τὸ καίριναι ὁ κέρας στῆς
θαλάσσης

επιλέξεις

Μπολιβάρ! Είσαι τοῦ Ρήγα Φεραίου οικία,
Τοῦ Ἀνατολικοῦ Οικονόμου — πώς τόσο δίκαι τόν σφά-
ξαν — καὶ τοῦ Πανανθρώπου Δηλόφου,
Τ’ ἀνείρι τοῦ μεγάλου Μάχειλιμποῦ ντά Ρομπαθαθέρ
ξαναζεῖ στὸ μέτωπό σου.

Είσαι ὁ ἀλευθερωτής τῆς Νότιας Ἀμερικής.
Δὲν ξέρω πού ἡ συγκέντρωσε σὲ συνέδρες, ἐν σέπινες ἠπόγονος
σου ὁ ἄλλος μεγάλος Ἀμερικανός, ἀπὸ τὸ
Μοντεβίντες αὐτός.

"Ενα μονάχα εἶναι γνωστό, πάς ἀλαι ὁ γνώς σου.
τά βάθη
τὸν φρυγῖνατον δρόκο
tό φρυγίτερο σκότος
tό φρυγίτο παραμοῦθι:
Li b e r t a d

ἐπὶ ωδές

(χορός ἐλευθεροτάνων)
Θέγετε μακρόν μας ἀρέσ. μὴ Ἰσαβέσετε πιά, σοφιζόν.
'Απ' τὰ λίκνα στ' ἀστέρια, ἀπ' τές μήτερες στὰ μάτια,
σοφιζόν.
"Οποιο ἀφόγρημοι βράζοι, καὶ ἡφαίστεια καὶ φάκες,
σοφιζόν.
"Οποιο πρόσωπο σκοῦρο; καὶ χειλιὰ πλατεῖα, κι ὄλωτα
λεοντα δόντια, σοφιζόν.
"Ας στηθῇ ὁ φαλλός, καὶ μορτὶ ἀς ἀρχήσῃ, μὲ μυστες
ἀνθρώπων, μὲ χρόνος, σοφιζόν.
Μέσα σὲ σάρκας ἐξεφάντασα, στὸν προγόνον τὴν ὀξύ,
σοφιζόν.
Γιά να σκέφτουν τὸ σπάρος τῆς κανονοτικῆς γενικῆς
σοφιζόν.

ΣΥΜΠΕΡΑΣΜΑ:

Μετὰ τὴν ἔπικράτησιν τῆς νότιοαιμερικανικῆς ἐπα
ναστάσεως στήθηκε στ' Ἀνάπλα καὶ τῇ Μονεμβάσσα, διέ
ἔρημοικοι λόφων διεπόδωσαν τῆς πόλεως, χάλκινος ἄν
dριας τοῦ Μπουλίμ. "Ομοιό, καθὼς τὶς νότιας ὁ σφα
δρός ἀνέμος πὸ ψυχάθαι ἀνατάραξε μὲ βίας τὴν ρεντ
ΤΡΑΜ ΚΑΙ ΑΚΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ

le soleil me brûle et me rend lumineux

μέσο στή μονότονη βροχή
tίς λάσπες
tήν τεφρήν ἀτμόσφαιρα
τά τράμ περνοῦνε
καὶ μέσο ὁπό τήν ἔρημη ἄγορά
― ποῦ νέκρασε ἡ βροχή —
πηγαίνουν πρὸς
tά
τέρματα

ἡ σκέψη μου
γιομάτη συγκίνηση

τ’ ἀκολουθεῖ στοργικά ὠσποῦ
νά φθάσουν
ἐκεῖ π’ ἀρχίζουν τά χαράφια
ποῦ πυγόε ἡ βροχή
στὰ τέρματα

τί θλίψη θά ἦτανε — Θά μου —
tί θλίψη
dn δέ με παρηγοροῦσε τήν καρδιά
ἡ δεξίδα τῶν μαρμάρων
κι’ ἡ προσδοκία μάζας λαμπρῆς ἀχτίδας
ποῦ θά δόση νέα ζωή
στὰ ὑπέροχα ἔρεισια

ἀπαράλλαχτα ὅπως
ἐνα κόκκινο λουλούδι
μέσο σε πράσινα φύλλα
ИСΩΣ

Βρέχει... Κι' ὅμως λυποῦμαι νά σᾶς τό πάδ : ἦταν, νά, ἕνα σπίτι' ἕνα μεγάλο θεάρατο σπίτι. Ἑτανε ἦρημο. Δέν εἶχε κανένα παράθυρο, κι' εἶχε δλο μπαλκόνια καὶ μιὰ μεγάλη καπνοδόχο. Ἐκεῖ καθόταν μιὰ κοτέλλα δίχας μάτια, ποῦ ἀντὶς γιὰ φωνή εἶχε ἕνα λουλουδί. Μέ ρότησε :
— Μά τί εἶχατε καὶ καρφάνατε, ἔτοι, σιήμερις ἀπὸ τό πρω' ;
— "Α, τίποτες... τίποτες. Μιλούσα μὲ τὸν "Ομήρο.

— Μέ τὸν "Ομήρο, τὸν ποιητή;
— Ναι, μέ τὸν "Ομήρο τὸν ποιητή, καὶ μ' ἔναν ἄλλο "Ομήρο, ἄπ' τῇ Μοσχόπολη αὐτὸς, ποῦ ἔζησε ὅλη τοῦ τῆς ᾿Αἰαὶ πάνω στὰ δέντρα, σάν πουλί, κι' ὅμως ἦταν γνωστός σὰν «ἄνθρω- πος τοῦ γιοφυριοῦ» στὶς γειτονιές κοντά στῇ λίμνη.
ΓΥΨ ΚΑΙ ΦΡΟΥΡΑ

hommage à apollinaire

Μύκονος
Μυκήναια
μύκητες
τρεῖς
λέξεις
δμος
δυό
μόνο
φτερά

σάν ἀσβέστης
σάν γυναίκεια
παλάμη,
ποῦ λάμπει
μέσα
στῇ νύχτα
σά σαρκοβόρο
βιολί

κι' ἵσας
— ἄκομη —
ὡςάν τά γυάλινα
τρυπάνια
μέσα στούς
λεπτούς
ἐγκεφάλους
tῶν
ποιητῶν

97
ΖΕΙ Ο ΜΕΓΑΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ;

καίω τά νείματά μου
ποῦ εἶναι κιθάρα
ποῦ εἶναι κινάρα
ποῦ εἶναι κινύρα

λέω τό άθροισμα
ποῦ εἶναι Μερόπη
ποῦ εἶναι μετόπη
ποῦ εἶναι μέ τόπα

- κλαίω τίς θύμησες
  σάν τό κοράκι
  σάν τό Κοράνι
  σάν τό κοράλλι

κι' εἰμ' ο Μινώταυρος
μέσ' στό σεντούκι
μέσ' στό σεντόνι
μέσ' στό σεντέφι

98
ΠΡΩΤΟ ΤΡΑΓΟΥΔΙ *

dρατήσα
κάποιες γιατί
τάχατες
ή τραγική
καὶ σεμινὴ παρθένα
ποῦ λέγονταν Πουλχερία
τὴν παραμονή τοῦ
gάμου τῆς
σφουγγάρισι προσεχτικὰ δλο

tὸ σπίτι
καὶ τῆν ἐπομένη
ἀπέθανε;

μιᾶ
ποῦ καθάρισε καὶ νοικοκέρεψε
τὰ πάντα
γιατί δὲ χάρης
καὶ αὐτῇ
τῆς μακρυνὲς λευκῆς γυναῖκας
τοῦ λευκοῦς πολύσπολοκοῦς φαρμακάδας
καὶ τὰ πολύχρωμα
μεγάλα
φτερά
τοῦ γάμου;

γιατί
ἐναπόθεσε διὰ σιωπῆλα
χάμο στὰ
σανίδια
τῇ μεγάλῃ κίτρινῃ πεταλοῦδα
καὶ τὰ χάρτινα λουλοῦδια
ποῦ ἦταν μέσα
στὸ κεφάλι τῆς;
τὸ μπαλασσωμένο
πουλί
ποῦ ἦταν μέσα στὸ κλουβί
τοῦ τράχκα
τῆς;

γιατί;

dιότι
-- ἐστὶ τὸ ἱκανὸν ἡ κατέρας μου --

διότι
πρέπει νὰ ἴχνη
ὁ στρατιῶτης τὸ ταυγάρο του
tὸ μικρὸ παιδί
tὴν κοῦνα του
κι' ὁ ποιητὴς
tὰ
μονιτάρια.
tου

διότι πρέπει
νὰ ἴχνη
ὁ στρατιῶτης τὴν
πλεκτάνη του
tὸ μικρὸ παιδί
tὸν τάφο του
ὁ ποιητὴς τῇ
ροκάνα
του

διότι πρέπει
νὰ ἴχνη
ὁ στρατιῶτης
tὸ σκεπάρι του
tὸ μικρὸ παιδί τὸ
βλέμμα του
ὁ ποιητὴς
tὸ
ροκάνα του
"Ω ύπερωκεάνειον τραγουδάς καί πλέχεις
Αναφο στά σώμα σου καί κέτριν στις ταμινέρες
Διώτι θαρέθηκες τά δρομερά νερά τόν άγορομολόγω

'Εσσο πό όγκημες τός μακρονές αποφάδες
'Εσσο πό όθωμες τά πώ ψηλά μπατράκια
'Εσσο πό πλέχες ξέθαρφα στός πώ καμάνδυνες σπηλιάδες
Χαίρε πό όφθημες νά γοητεύης ἀν' τός σωφήνες
Χαίρε καί δέν φοβήθηκες ποτέ τός σιμπαλγάδες.

"Ω ύπερωκεάνειον τραγουδάς καί πλέχεις
Στό σέλας τής θαλάσσης μέ τός γλάρους
Κ' ελμί σε μία καμπάνα σου δώσος έσσο μέσα' στήν
καρδιά μου.

"Ω ύπερωκεάνειον τραγουδάς καί πλέχεις
Οι αφές μάς εγνώμισον καί λύνουν τά μαλλιά
tous
Προστέθουν κι είνες καί πλαταγίζουν οι πτυχές
tous
Διακές οι μέν καί πορφυρές οι δέ
Πτυχές κτυποκαρδιών πτυχές χαράς
Τόν μελλόντοριν καί τόν παντρεμένον.

"Ω ύπερωκεάνειον τραγουδάς καί πλέχεις
Φυσείς έδω καί φάλανες στό πέρασμά σου πάρα
κάτω
'Από τά θεραλά σου άντλονε τά παιδά τήν μακα-
ριότητα
'Από τό πρώσιον σου τήν ομοιότητα μέ σένα
Καί μοάξεσις μέ αύτούς πός έσσο κ' εγώ γνωρίζουμε
'Αφού γνωρίζουμε θά ήτα τή φάλαινα
Καί πός ηχηλατούν οι άλλες τά ψάρια.

"Ω ύπερωκεάνειον τραγουδάς καί πλέχεις
Φυγομαχούν δοςι κρυφά σε μυκτηρίζουν
'Οσοι πολυόν τά δίχτυα σου καί τρώνε λίπος
'Ενώ διασχίζεις τής θαλάσσης πρωμές
Καί φθάνεις στά λυμάνα μέ τά πούσσαλα
Καί τά κοσμήματα τής δύορης γοργόνας
Ποθεί στό στήθος τής ακόμη τά φιλιά σου.

"Ω ύπερωκεάνειον τραγουδάς καί πλέχεις
Είναι ο κατενες σου πλοώμος τής ελιμωρένης
Πού ξενυλεύεται μέσα' στήν αιθεία καί ανεβαινε
Σάν μικρή κόμη ήδυσαθείς παρθένας οιρανός
Σάν λυρική καραγή τός μοιετήν
'Οταν άστραφη ή πλώρη σου στά κύμα

ΣΤΡΟΦΕΣ ΣΤΡΟΦΑΛΩΝ

Στίχον Δεκαόντα Α. 'Ελληνικά
"Οπως ὁ λόγος τοῦ Ἀλλαχ στὰ χεῖλη τοῦ Προφήτη
Κι ὅπως στὸ χέρι τοῦ ἡ στιλπνὴ καὶ ἀλάνθαστη τοῦ
σπάθα

"Ὡς ὑπερωκενάειον τραγουδάς καὶ πλέχεις
Στὰς τροχίτες τῶν δαβυτικῶν ὁργομάτων
Ποὺ λάμπουν στὸ κατόης σοῦ σὰν τροχίς δρομήδου
Ἀλλαχ οἰκοπεδεύεις χαράς ἢδονῆς ποὺ ἀσκαλοῦσαν
Μέεπ στὸ λιοτόφι καὶ στὸ φῶς ἢ κάτω ὅπ’ ὑ’ ἀστεῖα

"Ὅταν οἱ στροφαίλοι γυρνοῦν πόλις γιγάντων καὶ σπέρνεσις
"Ἄφρο δεξιά καὶ ἀφρός ἅρβα στὸ φίγος τῶν ὁδότων.

"Ὡς ὑπερωκενάειον τραγουδάς καὶ πλέχεις
Θαρρόω πῶς τὰ ταξιδεῖα μας συμπέσουν
Νομίζω πῶς σοῦ μουάζω καὶ μοῦ μουάζεσις
Οἱ κύκλοι μας ἀνέκουν στὴν ὄσιομνή
Πρόγονοι ἔμεις τὰς γενεὰς ποὺ ἐκκολάπτονται δικαίωμη
Πλέχομεν προχωροῦμε δίχως τόπες
Κλαστήρια κ’ ἐγκοστάσια ἔμεις
Πεδίαις καὶ πελάγη κ’ ἐνεκτήμανα
"Ὅπως συνέχονται μὲ τὶς νεάνιδες τὰ παλληκάρια
Κ’ ἤπειτα γράφοντες στὸν σωφρὸν τὶς λέξεις
"Ἀρμάλα Πόρας καὶ Βέλμα,

"Ὡς ὑπερωκενάειον τραγουδάς καὶ πλέχεις
Ἀνθεῖος πάντα στὴν καρδία μας οἱ μηλίες
Μὲ τῶν γλυκών χυμοῦ καὶ τὴν σκιά
Εἰς τὴν ὁποῖαν ἔρχονται τὸ μεσημέρι τὰ κορίτσια
Γιὰ νὰ γενθοῦν τὸν ἔρωτα μαζὸ μας
Καὶ γιὰ νὰ δοῦν κατάπι τὰ λείανα
Μὲ τὰ ψηλὰ καμπαναρία καὶ μὲ τῶν πόρων
"Ὅπου ἀνεβάζονται κάτω γιὰ νὰ στοιγάσουν
Οἱ στροφαίλοι πολύλας τὰ μαλλιά τῶν.

"Ὡς ὑπερωκενάειον τραγουδάς καὶ πλέχεις
Ἀχοῦν οἱ φορμίγγες τῆς ἀκλάς χαράς μας
Μὲ τὰ σκυρόγραμα τοῦ ἀνέμου πρόμα - αλάρα
Μὲ τὰ συνία στὰ σύμπτα τῶν καταρτιῶν
Μὲ τὴν ἤμηρα τῶν ἀναμυνθήσουν σὸν κανονικάλα
Ποὺ τὰ κρατά στὰ μάτια μας καὶ ἔλεγε
Νά πλησιάζομεν τὰ νησί καὶ τὰ πελάγη
Νά φέργουν τὰ δελφίνια καὶ τὰ δρόμια
Κυνηγητές ἔμεις τῆς γονητάς τῶν ἀνείρων
Τοῦ προορισμοῦ ποὺ πάει καὶ πάει μᾶ δὲν στέκει
"Ὅπως δὲν στέκουν τὰ χαράματα
"Ὅπως δὲν στέκουν καὶ τὰ φίγγα
"Ὅπως δὲν στέκουν καὶ τὰ κόματα
"Ὅπως δὲν στέκουν καὶ τὰ ἄρτια καὶ τὰς δαμαίδους
Μήποτε καὶ τὰ τραγούδια μας γιὰ τὶς γυναῖκες ποὺ ἀγαπάμε,
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