Identity of a Woman: authenticity and individuality in the work of three modern (women) playwrights (Margarita Lyberaki, Loula Anagnostaki, Kostoula Mitropoulou)

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Studies on female playwrights and female dramatis personae, mostly from the feminine point of view, have appeared either in whole books or in papers during the last twenty years, following the arousing of interest by so many historical, sociological, psychological, semiological or philological works. Focusing on modern Greek drama, especially the post-War and contemporary, besides the occasional comments of performance critique, there have been some general assessments of the female image in the work of (the most prominent) contemporary Greek playwrights either of both sexes or of women playwrights especially.

All to a varying extend have pronounced on the subject that the female image in modern Greek drama lags behind the historical/social evolution and is for the greatest part traditional, in presenting female characters as ‘the second sex’. Patsalides, analyzing the work of several women playwrights, draws attention to the fact that the post-War female voices were all involved in the feminist movement. This helped them better understand the relationship between gender conflict and class struggle, as they presented female characters as more willful, witty and liberated than in the previous works; however the family remained the dominant theme, though they exposed its role in order to show how familial relationships serve male authority.

He holds women playwrights responsible, because they continue to write according to models provided by men playwrights. Petrakou and Sakellaridou tend to agree with him. Still women understand women better, and discern with more insight and penetration the lever-role that a woman plays, using those famous wiles, in her effort to command respect in a world that until recently did not allow her to do it openly and did not praise her for her power. On the contrary, it condemned her for it and considered her abnormal if not a real monster. Their female dramatis personae are presented more from inside out than as dimly lit objects; they are intelligent and sensitive subjects, who are interested in themselves, although seldom in each other, and they enter into intense relationships of love, alliance, conspiracy, hatred, and solidarity. All of them, however, are undermined by their irresistible attraction to men, and in trying to satisfy this need they

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1 See selectively Savvas Patsalides: Το «άλλο» θέατρο. Σπονδή στις φεμινιστικές και αφρο-αμερικανικές δοκιμές (The “other” theatre. Study on the feminist and Afro-american efforts), Tolidis, Athens 1993; Elizabeth Sakellaridou: Σύγχρονο γυναικείο θέατρο. Από τη μετα/μητρική στη μετα/φεμινιστική αναπαράσταση (Contemporary female theatre. From meta/Brechtian to meta/feminist representation), Ellinika Grammata, Athens 2006, both containing Greek and international bibliography.


4 Patsalides: “Greek Women Dramatists…”, ibid., p. 89.

5 Patsalides: «Ελληνικό γυναικείο (φεμινιστικό) θέατρο…», ibid., pp. 135-136.

6 Petrakou, ibid., p. 59; Sakellaridou, ibid., p. 314.
always betray their comrades of their own sex and even themselves one way or another. In this complex and ambiguous situation they find it difficult to define their identity, perplexed as they are by finding themselves between their social and psychological/existential being.

In Margarita Lyberaki’s dramas, as in all female playwrights’ dramaturgy, the women’s roles are stronger and more conscious than they are in the plays of their male colleagues. Her ‘mythical’ plays, Danaids, Kandavlis’ Wife, The Mystical Bed, Erotica, Laceration, have an inner connection through myth, a myth in which through a story of erotic union and relationship, the man gets killed and the woman survives like life itself, which goes on triumphantly. Still, despite the collectivity of the anonymous - with some exceptions – characters, the issue of identity is axial in almost all of them - the primitive mind struggles for individuality as if by impulse, among the driving forces of the subconscious and the instinct, which include mostly irresistible attraction and at the same time repulsion and deadly (as in the case of Danaids) antagonism in relation to men, belonging to the gender conflict. In this play the men are openly aggressive and threatening. They tell their scared women-cousins that they will dominate them (p. 96), that they intend to make love to them and thus turn them into beautiful, small and dumb beings (p. 100), that the women are their slaves (p. 119). that they wish to tear them to pieces (p. 126), besides promising the joys of sexual fulfilment. The women seem uncertain, almost yielding but in the end they stub them, except for Hypermenestra who loves and spares Lygeas. The only persons, mythical and dramatic, who refuse this destructive ending to the conflict have names - some kind of identity. The author seems to interpret the myth as an expression of the simultaneous conflict and tendency for union, both immanent in human beings of either sex.

Lyberaki went on to create a whole group of plays with a mythical and indeed primordial background, in modern expressionist style, which were intended and indeed have been staged as rituals, with Laceration as the basis for a ballet by Maurice Bejart (1967), using music by Iannis Xenakis. These plays have Choruses as collective heroes, so it is rather unrealistic to discuss matters of identity, although authenticity prevails. It is in her (quasi) realistic plays that Lyberaki investigates the issue of identity more clearly, and in the case of female identity her ideas are fluctuating. In The Other Alexander (the novel of the same title written in 1950, the play in its French version in 1957) the author, among political, class and existential issues, investigates identity in a deep and original way. The dramatic time is the time of writing of the play, a few years after the German occupation and the Greek civil war, the memories, wounds and consequences of which are still recent and painful. The dramatic population are a bourgeois, patriarchal family as it is defined by the Marxist theory: those who own the means of production - a coal mine in this case - and exploit the workers. The

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7 On matters of identity from several aspects there is such a rich bibliography that it is impossible to take into account here.

8 Information and analysis of the whole dramatic work of Margarita Lyberaki in Walter Puchner: Η σύγκρουση των φύλων στον αρχαίο κόσμο της Μαργαρίτας Λυβεράκη [The sex conflict in the archetypal world of Margarita Lyberaki], Δίαλος, Αθήνα 2003.

9 M. Lyberaki: Μυθικό θέατρο. Η γυναίκα του Κανδαβίλη, Οι Δανάες, Το μυστικό κρεβάτι [Kandavlis’ Wife, Danaids, The Mystical Bed], Ermi, Athens 1980. This edition was used here.

10 Puchner (ibid. pp. 81-84) stresses in his analysis that the issues of love and identity are directly related in a destructive and at the same time creative way.

11 For an analysis of style see G. Pefanis: "Για τι αντίκατα του εξαρτημένου στο υφάς της τελευτηγίας. Για τη Μαργαρίτα Λυβεράκη" ("The threads of Expressionism in the woof of ritual. About Margarita Lyberaki"), in Θέματα του μεταπολεμικού και σύγχρονου ελληνικού θεάτρου (Issues of postwar and contemporary Greek theatre), Kedros, Athens 2001, pp. 98-103. See also Puchner, ibid., passim.

12 M. Lyberaki: Ο άλλος Λεξανδρός [The other Alexander], Kedros, Athens 1999. This edition was used here.
father, a dominating and imposing figure, loves or oppresses his family members according to his moods. Additionally, he makes use of a feudal right and has children by his women-workers. He gives them the same names as the legitimate ones and supports them, but not equally: his natural children are workers in his mine. The sons react or rebel in several ways, trying to dethrone the father or at least escape from the clogging suffocation of a family that has as a raison d’être to perpetuate the oppression and exploitation. All the legitimate progeny feel a strong attraction to their illegitimate brothers and sisters, and one of them has a child by his half-sister. They struggle for some individuality and personal choices, but the social and familial structures are unbreakable. No such matters preoccupy the female characters. They have no duties, they are allowed only to exist and be decorative, and if fertile so much the better. They are spoilt by the men and there is a lukewarm rivalry between them. They arouse desire by their looks and the grace of their existence, they are able to feel desire themselves, yet all their wishes are blind: these men and these women can do nothing with each other, not even produce children. The Mother, like a wounded she-bird who has lost her little ones, fills the air with the groans of her anguish and pain. She has understood nothing of what has happened in her own life, she has always been submissive and scared. She does not even have a name. The women of the powerful class can have only one function: to bear children. They do not even need to raise them - there are servants for that role too. Eventually they decide not to have any. They dream their lives instead of living them and when they are no longer young enough for dreams they are left empty-handed and questioning. Sometimes they have a premonition of the truth: they have no identity. Aglaïa unintentionally and unconsciously copies the dresses of her sister-in-law (who, by the way, is the lover of Aglaïa’s husband) (pp. 25-26), identifies herself with her half-sister, also named Aglaïa (the one who bears her brother’s son), almost feeling her labour as if happening to her, and dreams literally that she has no identity (pp. 77-78). In Lyberaki’s last play, Zoë (1982), the character of the title, the Byzantine empress Zoë of the Macedonian dynasty (11th century A.D.), although a historical person, has become almost mythical, with her unusual personal history: famous for her beauty, surviving to her middle age together with her virginity, she married when she was fifty, and shared the rule of the state with her celibate sister Theodora. Lyberaki’s character is a selfish, complicated woman, who inspects her inner self and her experiences with the sensitivity of a poet. In this investigation of the self and, to a much lesser degree, of the function of the external world, the matter of identity and authenticity is pivotal. In the introduction, the author herself explains a few things about her dramaturgical intentions: Zoë, like all human beings, plays her role and leaves. She directs (in the theatrical sense) her own life, with life and theatre merging in a space which is really a theatrical device, as the protagonist and the director at the same time. We meet her in the period during which she lived out her destiny, that is in her middle age, when she married for the first time and became empress. She had spent the first fifty years of her life confined in a laboratory, becoming almost a chemist - or a witch, as chemists, or rather alchemists, even for some centuries to come were considered magicians - producing perfumes, cosmetics, which she used on herself with very good results, and potions, some healing and some poisonous. Later Zoë becomes passive and submissive to her adopted son’s violence, but when she is restored to power she becomes the empress again. Still she marries for the third

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13 History considered them very good rulers and when they where dethroned by a conspiracy of Zoë’s adopted son, a rebellion by the people restored them to power.

14 M. Lyberaki: Zoë (Zoë), Estia, Athens 1985. This edition was used here.
time, despite her sister’s warning of the male’s ingratitude and vengefulness against the woman who gave them power. Zoë has risen above all this egoism, she has signed a contract undertaking not to claim sexual intercourse with her husband, without bearing a grudge over it; she even likes her husband’s lovers and refuses to worry. She intends to return to her laboratory, but she still declares to all interested that she is the ruler (p. 75). Only one thing escapes her: she thinks she is still young. Theodora disillusions her about this and suddenly she understands it herself: she is an old woman, her senses are weak, she has no more desire for life. Now it is the time for passing her life in review. She asks herself if it would be possible to understand who she really is, what her destiny was, what is the nature of the unity between people and things, the pattern, the scheduling, how she could piece all those items in the picture like a jigsaw puzzle and find peace. However, she finds it difficult to give a meaning to the absurd and to all those fragmentary personalities and experiences, but she hopes that by recording them she will extract their meaning. Theodora refuses to agree that there is a meaning and asks what Zoë is seeking in this world (p. 94). Zoë makes some more efforts by practicing mirror-divination. All her dead men appear through the mirrors and Zoë expresses the thoughts and feelings they inspired in her. No, there is no ultimate answer, not even partial ones. Zoë prepares herself for death. The show is over, she tells Theodora, who corrects her: the show is over for her.

As Puchner stresses, the whole action of the play is seen from Zoë’s point of view, in compliance with similar movements of the European avant-garde of the 20th century. Patsalidis comments that her elusiveness and avoidance of power is itself some kind of rebellion against her place in the world as a woman, in order to escape her stereotype role, disrupting in this way the established dialectic of relationships and the realistic expectations of the usual dramatic specifications in form and content. Zoë defines herself, perplexing others. “Are you a healer or a poisoner?” (p. 54) asks her second husband, who feels defeated by this lack of certainty (p. 63), but in truth he is only displaced from the rational centre to the irrational perimeter. When this play was staged by the National Theatre in 1992, some critics considered it a historical drama, although they also penetrated deeper. Then Lyberaki gave an interview in which she explained that she was attracted by Zoë’s strange personal story - although she was not an exceptional empress - together with the historical period, when the decline of the Byzantine Empire had begun. She explained that Zoë’s chemistry, medicines and poisons are symbolic female features, not real. She believed that the play would appeal mostly to female audience. She based her main character on self-analysis in order to create her heroine, who searches for the essence of life both in plants and human beings. History is in fact just a pretext. If by the playwright’s authority, Zoë seeks the essence of existence which is the authentic meaning and function of living things and beings, is identity a part of it? Zoë is unquestionably an individual; there is nothing collective about her or in her, but others and she herself repeatedly question who and what she is. There is not a single or a permanent answer to this. She is the empress and an ordinary woman who succumbs to male authority - sometimes, when she cannot resist, because she intends to resist and manages to triumph each time. She is selfish and sometimes unselfish, good and mean, strong and weak, sincere or a liar, clear-sighted and blind. She has all these contradictory

15 Puchner: Η σύγκρουση των φύλων στον αρχετοπικό κόσμο της Μαργαρίτας Λυμπεράκη, ibid, pp. 157-205.
16 Savvas Patsalides: «Ελληνικό γυναικείο (φεμινιστικό;) θέατρο. Μια πρότιτη προσέγγιση», ibid., p. 132.
18 Thymeli («Ζωή Πορφυρογέννητη (Zoë born in the purple) Ριζοπάπης, 25. 10. 1992) wrote that it is the existential condition of the dramatis personae that interests the author through the prism of their political state.
qualities like most people. Then what is her identity? The obvious answer is that her dominant identity is that of the empress, followed by the Zoë-the-chemist one. It is rather a male identity, as her foremost qualities are her political and scientific activities, whereas she started to act out her womanly-sexual nature at the age of menopause, when the female hormones had vanished and she could not be a mother any more, and throughout history, woman is nothing if not a mother. Only in contemporary times can a woman be identified with what she does, skip motherhood and design her own life. So her identity, if authentic externally and obscure internally, as she understood her own personality, became authentic for the present time, as when such women do exist, and this perhaps attracted Lyberaki into using her as a central figure in a play.

The writer-director Giorgos Michailides, in a book presenting the most prominent writers of postwar Greek theatre\(^20\), declared that Loula Anagnostaki’s first plays were not psychological dramas, as psychology concerns the individual - although the socio-historical conditions are absorbed by people and become part of consciousness and the unconscious, something that psychologists often ignore. They were not realistic in style, which approached the absurdist, and very political. However, in Anagnostaki’s characters both the individual and the social factor functions. It has also been assessed later that her plays depict - besides the general and/or external events, conditions and evolutions - a “continual process towards the exploration of human existence, up to ultimate self knowledge”\(^21\). But with Victory onwards she turned to realism and with it the characters became more complex; this process in the direction of the exploration of human existence as far as ultimate self knowledge inevitably leads to questionings of identity. Anagnostaki’s plays have a lot of female characters, even quite a few of her titles are of female grammatical gender\(^22\). This does not mean necessarily that they bear the central dramatic weight, but they are many and substantial. In her first dramaturgical period (up till Victory -1978), the national traits in her settings and characters are intentionally unstressed. In Victory, the setting is a German city and the characters are Greek emigrant workers. It is basically gynocentric, with extensive monologues, which amplify the subjective point of view\(^23\). The migrants have arrived somewhere and they try to make a life for themselves, trying to persuade themselves that it satisfies them or may in the future. This Germany is really a no-man’s-land, in which the efforts to relate to the native population never succeed, while the immigrants of the Greek micro-world continually quarrel and rend with each other. The main character, Vasso, has decided to win in something. Her dreams are realistic and she hopes that by right dealing and organization the negative may change to positive; she no longer counts on her useless husband, accepts her stepdaughter in the place of a child of her own, and is ready to take care of the baby that her brother will have with his German fiancée. It all comes to nothing, and Vasso is reconciled with her mother when all is lost as they join in despair. They have no doubt about their national identity - they

\(^{20}\) Giorgos Michailides: Νίκαι Ελλήνες θεατρικοί συγγραφείς (Modern Greek Playwrights), Kaktos, Athens 1975, pp. 35-51. The plays Anagnostaki had written then were the trilogy of one-act plays Η πόλη, Η διανυκτέρευση, Η παρέλαση (The City, Overnight Stay, The Parade - 1965), Η συναναστροφή (Social Gathering - 1967) and Αντίνοο ή το μήνυμα (Antonio or The Message - 1971).

\(^{21}\) It was written by the critic Kostas Georgousopoulos in his review of the first production of Anagnostaki’s play Η νίκη (The Victory – 1978) and the theoretical critic Aliki Bakopoulou-Halls (οΛούλα Αναγνωστάκη: το όραμα της ανθρώπινης νίκης (Loula Anagnostaki: the vision of human victory), Διαβάζω 89, 1984, pp. 29-33 and in her book Modern Greek Theatre: Roots and Blossoms, Diogenis, Athens 1982, pp. 145-146).

\(^{22}\) The City, Overnight Stay, The Parade, Victory, Social Gathering, The Cassette (Η πόλη, Η διανυκτέρευση, Η παρέλαση, Η νίκη, Η συναναστροφή, Η κατασκευασμένη).

are always Greeks - or their class - they are proletarians, but there is a confusion about their human one. Vasso confesses to her mother that she believes that the only exceptional event in their lives, which made them exceptional themselves, was the murder of her lover by her brother and his subsequent life imprisonment. Everything else is darkness. One would rather think that the murder and the sentence imbued everything with darkness, but Vasso sees them differently: the fatal action gave them a special identity, otherwise they would be utterly common. There is no doubt that this definition of herself and her family members as exceptional is authentic, as it comes into direct opposition to social standards. This play has an inner relationship with her more recent plays *The Sky Crimson* (1998) and *To You Who Listen to Me* (2008). Anagnostaki must have had them published all three together intentionally for this reason, as they did not succeed each other in writing. The first is a long monologue delivered by a middle-aged woman, whose feeble-minded and unattractive son has been imprisoned for women trafficking. She starts by giving precisely the items of her identity: “Here I am. Here I am. Here I am an old woman in a dry month. I.” She goes on to give her father’s and mother’s names and the information that she used to be a teacher of the French language in a state school, having also studied Philology and speaking English and Russian. The qualifications end here. She was fired from the school because of heavy alcoholism. Then she narrates the story of her son’s relationship with and exploitation of a beautiful Russian girl, his arrest and sentence. Now she lives only to support him. She feels humiliated by their social degradation, which she cannot fail to be aware of, but, like Vasso, she makes an existentialist decision: she will give her life her own meaning and it will be a positive one. She despises decent people, because they delude themselves that they are something, although they are nonentities, dead. She is something special, even in this negative way, she stands out alone. We may interpret it that Sophia has made her own revolution eventually, based on classic models. The dramatic setting of *To You Who Listen to Me* is again the marginal if not the underground world of Greek immigrants in Germany. This time the Greeks have managed to mingle with the Germans, by marriage or co-operation, but not to their advantage, though they make some money. The family ties and traumatic past haunt them all and they are unable to make a new life or invent a new identity for themselves. Sophia, a young girl who is a drug dealer in order to support her Greek family who live in Constantinople (Turkey), has a Greek lover who aspires to write a book about a young revolutionary (woman) and was attracted to Sophia because she seemed ideal as a model for her, but then he was disillusioned and disappointed: she is common, introspective, boring and disgustingly attached to her family. In truth, Sophia’s attachment is due to feelings of guilt and obligation, not of love, but the bonds seem indissoluble, no matter how much she dreams of breaking them. She is also filled with social anger, admires her lover and wants him to appreciate her, so she tries to hide the darkest sides of her life from him. Some of the characters try to record their life experience on a tape, as sincerely and crudely as they can, in order to be heard at a big demonstration. Their cruel stories will be their manifestation in a world that ignores them - they are nevertheless determined to be heard and announce their existence and identity to this indifferent world. Nothing happens; Sophia simply gets killed in the street, probably by accident, like Vasso’s brother. Moving from the working classes to the privileged ones, the central female figure, Anna, of *Diamonds and Blues* (1989), is a middle-

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24 Loula Anagnostaki: θέατρο. Η νίκη, Ο ουρανός κατακόκκινος, Σ’ ισίας που μ’ ακούει: (Theatre. Victory, The Sky Crimson, To You Who Listen to Me), Kedros, vol. 1, Athens 2007, p. 67. This edition was used here.

25 Loula Anagnostaki: θέατρο, ibid. p. 73. This edition was used here.
aged bourgeoisie, existentially in abeyance. She thinks of herself as “finishing her life”\textsuperscript{26}, that is, she has arrived at an age when eroticism vanishes - at least for women. Both her lover and her husband abandon her. Anna has a strong personality which has been canalised into nothing, although she is also a mother. In her life, love was the only content, as an obsession in her mind rather than as a real feeling, let alone passion. Even the motherly role did not demand any sacrifices of her egotism, it was almost its expansion. She has always been her heroine in any other Greek playwright’s, male or female, to her Mitropoulou’s plays, more than that of his personality and political commitment. He suffers from feelings of guilt about his duty toward humanity, in which the woman is not included. She is really an accessory, her destiny is to satisfy one part of his personality and someone else can take her place easily. By way of contrast, her woman lives for feeling. She invents it, she extracts it, she keeps it by the skin of her teeth and at any price. All her female characters seem to prove the old saying “For man love is one thing among others, for woman love is her whole existence”. Whatever Mitropoulou’s heroines may be, first or second-rate artists, lower or middle class - she ignores salon ladies, as she has phrased it\textsuperscript{27} - or underground figures, they are obsessed by an overwhelming, almost hysterical and masochistic passion, which makes them passive and pushes them into the margin. If there is a wife, comfortably settled in her marriage, the play is satirical, as in Hotel and The Visit\textsuperscript{28}. The main motif is this: the woman-subject is utterly subdued through her love for a sacred male object, she adores him and falls into ecstasy. The man-object decides as a subject on his own truth, rejecting her view of their relationship and story. He stresses to her that the terms were set at the beginning, the game was pre-ordained, that they both knew that they would not find the only possible satisfaction in love: mutuality. She never listens, she complains and quivers in despair. There is, however, a second level. For Mitropoulou’s heroines, often writers or actresses, the game is less obvious. They cannot explain how they fell into such a doomed and exhausting love affair, which devastates them. They cannot foretell the future, there is no future, all seems to end there and then. The same motives and roles seem to be repeated in all Mitropoulou’s plays, although she also investigates some

\textsuperscript{26} From the text of the program of the first production of the play (theatre group of Karezi-Kazakos, 1989-90).

\textsuperscript{27} She stated it herself, in a review about her work she gave to me in the past for a television show. She explained that her plays were inspired by personal experiences.

\textsuperscript{28} Kostoula Mitropoulou: Hotel in the collection of one-act plays Στην ίδια πόλη (In the Same City), Govostis, Athens 1978, pp. 53-59, Η επίσκεψη (The Visit) in the collection of one-act plays Ντιγκα (Trailer), Govostis, Athens.
other dimensions of reality. Her actresses, who are many, are all losers, failures as artists and they have become almost relics as human beings. They have no personal life: they would not or could not make one for themselves. Beyond the limelight, which never lit them really, they did not do much, as the only thing they pursued was love. When it faded, together with their short success on the stage, they were left with a bitter intuition alternating with moments of ecstasy, as old illusions never quit their souls. Despair makes them fall back into long monologues, deliriums of megalomania or crises of self-sarcasm and bitter cynicism. Instead of performing in their shows, which anyway do not interest the audiences overmuch, they fall back into de profundis confidential revelations, asking for some love. However, they have a worse decay ahead of them: old age and death in loneliness and need. Sometimes the audiences take pity on them and give them some applause or a consoling word, but soon they get tired and feel infected by the fear of a destiny which does not involve only unsuccessful actresses. Mitropoulou has also written some social dramas, in which the characters are seen in a less symbolic and abstract light. Still the focus remains on the emotional and existential issues. There are also the political ones, concerning perhaps the time of the seven-year dictatorship in Greece, although they could also be about the civil war. The man in them is member of the resistance and married, the woman is an understanding companion and mistress. He is a sensitive human being who worries and feels that he is betraying everyone: his comrades, who sacrifice their lives and bodily ability for a right cause, his mother who died alone, his family from which he is always absent, his mistress who spends her life waiting for him. All the female characters are passive, devoted, they accept the situation without becoming indignant or trying to change it. The wife lives expecting the daily routine, the mistress expecting the rare meeting. Both cling to their memories. Not so the male character. He has dilemmas and the responsibility of choice haunts him. The women feel that they had no choice, therefore no responsibility. Unlike the man, they are reconciled to themselves. Life is something that happens to them, they do not decide upon or operate the levers of its functioning. They only exist through their men. They aim at harmony and if they fail it is because things are beyond their powers, as they have always known. They are sorry about but not utterly annihilated by failure, strong in a certain way in their weakness, like the osier tree, which bends but does not break.

Naturally, the three authors examined above are not the only playwrights who have created varied and interesting female roles. They were chosen because, besides their talent, they are prolific in production, permitting a general assessment of their point of view on this subject. Two of them have already passed away. Lyberaki was the first (in order of appearance) woman playwright to achieve prominence: her first play was produced in France before Greece. As she left Greece to live in France in 1946, she was perhaps strongly influenced by


30 Kostoula Mitropoulou: Οι τέσσερις ερμίες (The Four Isolations), Govostis, Athens 1981, Μουσική για μια αναχώρηση (Music for a Departure), Govostis, Athens, no chr., Γράμμα από την Αγγλία (Letter from England) in the collection of one-act plays Περιθωρικοί, ibid., pp. 71-84

31 Kostoula Mitropoulou: Το παιχνίδι και μια τύχη (The Game and one Piece of Remorse), Οι αφοσιώστροι (The Uninvited). As far as I know these plays were not published. They texts were given to me by the late author.
the existentialist views on personal decision on the meaning of life\textsuperscript{32}, by Claude Lévi-Strauss’s theories of the ‘savage mind’ and the myths of the fifties onward, together with Simon de Beauvoir’s theoretical feminism, and produced her plays examining, but above all creating, female characters, who, on the realistic level are passive and unaware of their identity, defined and controlled by external factors, mostly patriarchal, but at the deeper level, the unconscious, which is primitive and collective according to Carl Jung, they are or become autonomous, self-sufficient, self-defined, proud and ruthless, terrible demi-goddesses, real queens or queens in their subconscious. Mitropoulou, who appeared in the sixties, although aware of female conquests in the social context, interpreted the female soul and mind as obsessed by the male presence, and, despite occasional and vain rebellions against it, defining herself through the male estimation of her, a mechanism Jean-Paul Sartre believed can be applied to all people\textsuperscript{33}. Anagnostaki has kept a balance between these two attitudes, the social and the personal identity inextricably interwoven in her heroines in several degrees and changing within the same play. Their male colleagues have seldom managed to create such complicated and multi-levelled dramatic characters, with some exceptions of course, such as Giorgos Maniotis’s mother roles, especially in his first family plays\textsuperscript{34}, in several plays of Vassilis Zoga’s\textsuperscript{35} or in Pavlos Matasis’s Exile (Εξόριστο). In the plays of most male playwrights the psychological background of their female characters seems one-dimensional and shallow, and a deeper analysis does not bring much to light. They contain truth but they are too simple, as all human beings seem when examined superficially. It is not their talent that is in question, nor do they conceal - let us hope - a conscious or unconscious misogyny; they are mainly interested in the Great Mechanism of the world, and in this women have no role, or they still have a secondary one\textsuperscript{36}. Fortunately, there are many women writers appearing and manifesting themselves in the theatrical world, and they will manage to fulfil what Galatea Kazantzaki set as the duty of the woman playwright in 1910, when the first professional women playwrights were emerging, herself among them and additionally a theatre critic: that their vocation should be to depict the female world from the woman’s point of view, revealing the hidden secrets, and not to imitate their male colleagues\textsuperscript{37}.


\textsuperscript{33} 
\textit{Être-pour-l’autre}. In a simplified phrasing, the image we have for ourselves passes and gets validated through the image the others have for us.

\textsuperscript{34} Το μας, Κοινή λογική, Καθησυχή ζωή (The Match, Common Sense, Sedentary Life).

\textsuperscript{35} Χρωματιστές γυναίκες, Οι γάμοι, Τα εφτά κουτιά της Πανάνθρα (Colourful Women, The Marriage, Pandora’s seven boxes)

\textsuperscript{36} See the conclusions in Petrakou: «Η γυναίκα στο σύγχρονο ελληνικό θέατρο...”, ibid.

\textsuperscript{37} Petroula Psiloriti (Galatea Kazantzaki): «Τα υπό και τα κατά» (Pros and cons), Panathinea, 15-30 Sept. 1910, pp. 310-311.