The concept of space in the postmodern era has, to a large extent, replaced the once dominant concept of time in theoretical discourse. This displacement constitutes neither a change of aesthetic nature nor a differentiated choice of analytical tools, but has rather been dictated by the ever-changing course of human experience per se in the contemporary technologized and culturally homogenized world. The perception of time in the postmodern era has changed dramatically due to the advent of globalized culture: simultaneous information spreading, shrinkage of hierarchical structures and taxonomy principles in the recording and making sense of events, multiple subject positions, and constant re-writings of History, in such ways that the sense of linearity of events is shattered within the postmodern consciousness. ¹ This reality essentially allows

¹ Lefebvre points out the weakening of the concept of time in the process of the construction of the social self even since modernism. He specifically talks about the disappearance of time from social space and its consumption and exhaustion due to the dominance of political and financial space. He concludes: “Time may have been promoted to the level of ontology by the philosophers, but it has been murdered by society” (95-96).
the unfolding and perception of events in space. However, even space itself is perceived as volatile, fragmented, and ruptured, thus forming multiple sets and layers in the world’s consciousness. It is what Fredric Jameson calls “decentering” (202), in an attempt to coin a spatial term to describe this dispersion of events, meanings, and concepts.

In his work *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre also refers to the structural dynamic of space: “Space is social morphology: it is to lived experience what form itself is to the living organism, and just as intimately bound up with function and structure” (94). Lefebvre goes as far as trisecting the production of space: a) spatial practices, where space is perceived in its material dimensions and in the specific frame of social relations, b) representations of space, referring to the mental representations of space (which is the dominant dimension of space in any society), and, c) representational spaces, concerning the lived space as an unmediated experience allowing the symbolic use of its objects from the individual or collective imaginary (33, 38-39). According to Lefebvre, this trichotomy (perceived/conceived/lived space) transcends the dualities and contradictions that would lead to a logical and self-evident conception of social space—through “echoes, repercussions, mirror effects” (39), which would play the role of a mere deciphering, obscuring thus the fundamental dimension of lived experience (39-42).

The concept of lived space as structural principle applies to the whole theatrical field: the space of the stage becomes the vehicle of interaction among the actors, through which stage action is produced, the receptional processes of the spectators are activated, and, finally, the theatrical event is established in the consciousness of both actors and viewers. In the present interpretive approach, we will not deal with space as a structural feature of the theatrical phenomenon, but rather with its thematization within the dramatic discourse. In other words, we will explore how theatre space in the plays under investigation is problematized, thus revealing the shifts occurring in postmodern consciousness. Meanwhile, through this course we will be able to detect tendencies and perspectives of modern Greek drama production.

We will attempt a vertical analysis of dramaturgy, meaning that we will not limit ourselves to citing authors and works that construct the field of modern Greek theatrical production, but we will focus on a deeper analysis of specific plays. We will analyze the following: *The Road Passes from Within* [*Ο δρόμος περνά από μέσα*] by Iakovos Kambanellis (1990), *Hidden Wound* [*Κρυφή πληγή*] by Panayiotis Mentis (1995), *To Eleusis* [*Προς Ελευσίνα*] (1992), and *Guardian Angel for Rent* [*Ενοικιάζεται φύλακας άγγελος*] (1999) by Pavlos Matesis, *3-0-1 Moving Services* [*3-0-1 Μεταφορές*] by Elena Penga (2000), and *To You Who Are Listening to Me* [*Σ’ εσάς που με ακούτε*] by Loula Anagnostaki (2003). The selection criterion for these plays was the fact that they challenge the notions of house, hearth, and home, as well as the concepts of departing from or returning to these. Without always constituting the action stage (like, for example, in the two plays of Pavlos Matesis, or in Penga’s play, where the action takes place in
the entrance of an apartment building), the home becomes the place in which, or around which, issues of familiarity, belonging, and origin are raised, as well as issues of dislocation and decentering.

The space of the home is one of great importance and rich semantic and conceptual load. It has been the stage space of a great part of both global and modern Greek dramaturgy. Especially within the realistic writing of “bourgeois theatre,” the house, and especially the living room, has developed into a prevailing ideological code; it has identified itself with the passions of the middle-class, and, more often than not, it has reflected the desire to escape and disconnect from the imposed social norms of the bourgeois world. Una Chaudhuri describes as “geopathology” the problematic dimension of the stage space of the house in realistic drama. This theatre, according to Chaudhuri, unfolds on the axis of home-exile and triggers binary concepts, such as “in-out,” “open-closed,” “belonging-homelessness” (15, 55). The risk of this dramaturgy is to escape from the given stage reality, which is achieved either with getaway or with false methods of escapism, such as addictions or lies (57-58).

Looking at the evolution of the private space of home in modern Greek dramaturgy, we discover its conventional use in the entire period from the early twentieth century to the first post-war years. In this period, during which the Greek theatre experiments with all the European genres of the previous century, from boulevard to realistic drama and ethography, the space of the home constitutes a conventional frame for the unfolding of the action without putting at risk, in most cases, its main function. The private (onstage/mimetic) space is clearly separated from the public (offstage/narrative) space, which is recalled in the stage act through the dramatic characters. From the 1960s onward playwrights start putting the closed space into question, as is the case in Loula Anagnostaki’s trilogy *The City* (Η πόλη). In the dramaturgy of this period the distinction between private and public space continues to exist. However, certain elements manifest themselves in the private space challenging the sense of security and stability inherently embedded in it.3

The first play that marked a shift in the way that space and home were dealt with and opened up new perspectives for the representation of “home” in drama is Iakovos Kambanellis’ *The Road Passes from Within* [Ο δρόμος περνά από μέσα]. At first sight, it appears to be a realistic play, which takes place in the living room of an old mansion. Antonakos, an aspiring antique trader approaches the owner of the mansion, old-Poriotis, in an attempt to convince him to convert

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3. At this point, let us recall the words of Gaston Bachelard: “The house is our corner in the world, our first universe” (24).
the mansion to an antique store. After old-Poriotis consents, the mansion is converted into a rather bizarre antique store, where the real antiques coexist with newer furniture—antique replicas which Antonakos brings in in order to increase his income. Three more characters appear in the play: Glykeria, the former housekeeper, Litsa, Antonakos’ wife, and Andreas, old-Poriotis’ nephew, each of whom embodies a different stance towards the present and the future of the house.

The more the theatre space of the play is haunted by the mansion’s old furniture and their bizarre coexistence with the patinated replicas after the third scene, the richer the discourse of the dramatic characters becomes in metaphors of space and furniture. The house in this play is depicted as a living organism: Antonakos “hears its voice” (Kambanellis 115) and claims that “this house is asking for them,” meaning himself and his wife (155). Andreas, in an attempt to deprecate the house, wishes that it “would die of pulmonary edema” (139), and wonders: “do we own the house, or does the house own us?” (142). Likewise, the furniture acts as though it has a soul and personality: the framed pictures are “wise beings” and “have an outstandingly good memory” (105), the china is “as frail as breath” (145), and the sideboard, which is infected with “woodworms,” could be cured with the right injections (110).

In this play, there is a creeping tendency towards object animation, which, ultimately, renders the play its dynamics. The objects in the house and the house itself, as living organisms, clarify the concept of lived space to the highest degree. Transferring the quality of memory to the house furniture—the moment when the playwright intentionally raises the ambiguity regarding the facts that have actually taken place inside the house in the past and have haunted the tenants’ memories—strengthens even more the sense of passing time in the space itself. In other words, this time is projected as “ironic,” “having been invested in objects and . . . passing by at the others’ expense and without their knowledge” (Pefanis, Iakovos Kambanellis 58). The dramatic characters, old-Poriotis and Glykeria, who have spent all their lives living in that house, seem to withdraw in the presence of the absolute authority of the space which they abide in, that is, the furniture. In this sense, “the house is not simply inhabited, but also dwells in the conscience of its tenants” (58).

One more element that contributes to the deterritorialization of the dramatic characters by the increasingly established presence of the furniture is the false coexistence of the authentic items with the patinated replicas, which represent not only tokens of folklorism (Puchner 632), but also a gradual penetration of the world of commodity to the world of authentic experience. As “typical material representations of the capitalist mode of production” (Appadurai 7), commo-

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4. This play was staged for the first time in the 1990-1991 theatre season by the City Experimental Theatre-Marietta Rialdi, directed by the playwright.
5. Nikos Chourmouziadis aptly points out the extension of this animism to other beings: the “corpse” of a cut-down elm tree, the ‘bibliophilia’ of cockroaches and the ‘wisdom’ of worms” (11).
dities suggest the advent of a new world perspective, which subsumes the authentic to the values of transaction and trade. At the end of the play, however, these forces are crashed rather than triumph. There is a breach in the relationship of the two business partners when Antonakos realizes that his wife is infatuated with Andreas. His outburst and delirium at the end are nothing more that his declaration of defeat against the worldview of the other side.

The future of the house remains uncertain after this plot twist. Kambanellis leaves us wondering in the end whether the house’s identity will change again, or even cease to exist (there is always the danger of expropriation—Andreas’ most fervent wish). In this way, in a play with linear development and realistic frame of action, with clear contradictions and clear intentions on the part of the characters, the ambiguity of the ending creates ruptures which threaten the stability of the edifice (both literally and metaphorically). The space of the house in Kambanellis’ work creaks on the inside, just like the furniture eaten by the woodworms, and it forecasts the successive, yet unformed, situation.

This play raises particular issues around the status of the home. Not having yet moved away from the clear distinction of “outside” and “inside,” this “inside” seems to be undermined from within. The sense of lived space, which should be working in a centripetal manner, bringing the tenants together in the space of the home, is transferred to the furniture and house objects. So, while the latter start assuming human properties, they claim their own part in the housing, thus replacing the real tenants. At the same time, the world of selling off, which creeps inside the house through the two “entrepreneurs,” poses one more threat to the preservation of memory and lived experience of space, which finally seems to be prevented—for how long though? Essentially it is all about “the requiem of the lived space just before the commercialization of the experience” (Pefanis, Iakovos Kambanellis 44).

The sense of space tinged with past memories emerges from the work of Panayiotis Mentis Hidden Wound [Κρυφή πληγή].6 The house, a pre-war bungalow, is in transition. Because of her son’s death/suicide, Athina, the old lady of the house, decides to leave her house and packs up her belongings. She tells her friends that she has already put it up for mortgage to pay off the family’s debts. However, the house will not fall into a stranger’s hands, since her husband’s cousin Andreas decides to buy it. In fact, he eventually marries the widow of Athina’s son, Marina. So, the house, with its heavy past, will continue to be the vital space of the family and to haunt its daily routine with the memories it brings, hosting new passions. The issue of its sale comes up again and again in the play, with only Andreas opposing it. In the last scene of the play, Marina and her husband seem to have abandoned the house. Marina insists on selling it and calls it: “uninhabitable” (275, 279), while, at the same time, Andreas tries to talk her out of it: “This is where the solution lies: the history of the family” (276).

The evolution of space follows a reciprocating course in the play: in the

6. This play was read in Alecton theatre in January 2007, directed by Yiannis Anastasakis.
scenes of the first part the house is gradually cleared from furniture and objects, whereas in the second part it is refilled with new small items brought by the new tenants, Andreas and Marina. The old antiques are replaced by objects that “make the space more friendly,” according to the stage directions (Mentis 254). However, even this transformation of the house is not enough to resolve the family conflicts. On the contrary, many characters express their fear of the house (Spyros, Marina, Beba) and recall its heavy past (it seems that a murder had taken place there, before Athina bought it), while they talk about it in terms of being “cursed” (249, 263), having become their personal hell (221), and being a place where “shadows” (262) and “vampires” (223) reside.

All the above references are linked to the family’s sinful past. The playwright allows us to trace this past only through hints and ambiguity. Andreas was once in love with Athina, but he also had a secret affair with Beba, the housekeeper, whereas it is hinted that there is a slight chance that he is also the father of Socrates, one of Athina’s sons. Finally, Panagiotis’ suicide is connected by some dramatic characters to Andreas. In the distant past lies also the dysfunctional relationship of Athina with her father. All the above are summarized in Socrates’ phrase in the last scene, where Socrates falls into a delirium and ends up strangling Andreas. In his delirium, Socrates tragically exclaims: “This is where our home’s human sacrifices have always been taking place” (Mentis 287).

In Mentis’ work, which, according to the playwright himself, simply pretends to be a realistic one (204), we witness the tragic fall of a house. The scenic space of the house functions as a metaphor for the family’s passions, thus excellently assuming the property of lived space. The house itself is subjected to changes of owners, of appearance, but it never manages to wipe off the memories engraved in it. In the same way, the family itself attempts a new start: Athina leaves home, and so does Beba, and Andreas moves on and marries Marina. Nevertheless, the past keeps haunting every aspect of their everyday reality and surrounds them as a tight noose. The end of the house is signalled by the assassination of the one who was the catalyst of everything that had happened in the family and the only person who wanted the house to stay in the family’s hands. The strangling of Andreas might bring about the clearance of the house but it is unlikely whether it will be able to host the family members ever again.

In the play of Elena Penga, 3-0-1 Moving Services [3-0-1 Μεταφορές],7 we enter a limbic stage space, which is neither purely private, nor purely public. The action unfolds in the entrance of an apartment building, and so, in this sense, the scenic space could be described as a threshold. Two removals are taking place: a newly-wed couple is moving to an old man’s house and a single-parent family of Russian immigrants is about to settle in a house once owned by a private investigator. The whole process is overlooked by the building’s concierge and the two

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7. The play was staged by the Experimental Stage of the National Theatre on March 3, 2000, directed by the playwright herself.
carriers, brothers Feng and Shui—an ironical reference to the lifestyle addiction of moving things about to increase space’s positive energy.

There is no action in the play other than the constant relocation of furniture, in and out, up and down. The elevator and the stairs play the role attributed to the doors in classic closed-space plays. Whereas the doors allow passage between the inside and the outside, thus limiting the space of the totally visible (that is, the stage) and the space of the invisible (that is, the narrative); in Penga’s play the elevator and the stairs move the function of space to the vertical axis. This means that the typical function of the stage space in modern theatre, having relied on hiding and showing up, in other words on a play between the visible, the invisible and the partially visible, is abolished (McAuley 75). Penga’s postmodern theatre forms a “topographic theater . . . that posits a new kind of placement, not in any one circumscribed and clearly defined place but in the crossroads, pathways, and junctions between places” (Chaudhuri 138). The entrance of the building is such a space, since the only “constant” characteristic is a perpetual fluidness that marks the tenants’ crossing daily routes.

The axis that occupies this dispersed space is mostly the discourse of the dramatic characters and not the action which takes place in it. This happens because, in Penga’s play, space does not serve the linear and deterministic unfolding of a specific plot, but is rather interspersed with pieces of personal accounts which unfold in various time layers. The dramatic characters randomly narrate past events, which are registered in the present of the stage act, complemented by recorded narrations projected in various time points of the play. In fact, the last narrations in the show are performed not by actors, but by ordinary people who talk about their lives, as in a documentary. In this way, in 3-0-1 Moving Services, we witness an interplay between the theatrical time and the real-historical one, “a strange game of layering time and space which turns the stage into a palimpsest” (Tsatsoulis, Signs 111).

In this light, we could describe the time of the play as ironical, in the sense that the individual time frames overlap without hierarchical structure, ex-centering the meaning produced. This sense grows stronger with the paradoxical end of the play. When the concierge remains alone in the building’s entrance, and after having decided that “time’s up” (Penga 88), she moves the concierge booth, which now resembles a cockpit, and launches the building into the infinity. At first, it is suggested that the booth moves in space, because the elevator numbers are lit one after the other. However, when the numbers stop in the “infinity”

8. Gay McAuley extensively refers to the importance of the doors in theatre, describing them as “such a powerfully expressive tool in terms of the fictional worlds constructed through performance” (87). She goes as far as claiming that the whole history of Western theatre could be mapped through “the story of doors that link the on to the off, of the outside/inside relationships that are thus created, of the position of the characters and of the spectators vis-à-vis these interiors and exteriors” (87).
button, time and space seem to be zeroed. The transport in the play’s title is proved to have no final destination and so it remains vague in scope and termination.

The sense of an ironic organization of time is also induced by the stage objects. The objects that are carried during the removal end up losing the character of experience and the memories engraved within. This is vividly reflected in the children’s toys and things that march up and down the entrance during the removals. Christos talks about the useless toys of his daughter, which he very easily gives away to Ellie (Penga 44); Ily carries two children’s chairs and a small table, which he considers junk and kicks them around (55), while the two carriers pull out a big box with children’s things, which they throw into the trash bin, following Christos’ orders (60). This is an example of ironic use of lived space: the children’s things, like mnemonic sites, disclaim the heavy load of childhood memories linked to innocence, comprising a constant point of reference to which people keep coming back in their lifetime.

Penga’s play dwells in the realm of postmodernism. It casts an ironic light on time, while merging fictional/fantastic with realistic/historical time and undermining the constant points of reference of memory and identity. In addition, space, even though originally presented as solid and concrete, is eventually fluidified and ejected into an undefined and timeless infinity. Therefore, space and time are working together to decompose human experience. As Dimitris Tsatsoulis points out, “[i]f space is the temporal layering retrieved by memory, the launch of the whole building into the time and space infinity abolishes every sense of future memory” (“Theatre on Book” 816). This off-center (where “center” can be both the entrance of the building and the space in which memory condenses and the subjectivity is formed) becomes the main theme in Penga’s work, just like it does in most works falling under the field of postmodern drama.

As previously described, in the works of Kambanellis and Mentis, the issue of time emerges mostly from the dramatic discourse; in Penga’s work, it is reflected in the decenterings of space and time; whereas, in Loula Anagnostaki’s work, To You Who Are Listening to Me [Σ’ εσάς που με ακούτε], it is incorporated into the action itself. The stage space of the play is a house in Berlin, which is sublet, giving thus the sense of a common area upon which everybody seems to have rights: old and new tenants, landlords, as well as any visitor. The house hosts Greeks (Maria, Sofia, Agis) and a German (Hans), whereas in the midst of the play Sofia’s family arrive (her mother, Elsa and her brother, Nikos) together with Nikos’ Italian friend, Gino. The multicultural terrain is completed with the

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10. According to Linda Hutcheon: “The center may not hold, but it is still an attractive fiction of order and unity that postmodern art and theory continue to exploit and subvert” (60).
young German lady Trudel and the Belgian Ivan, who has involved Sofia in a drug ring.

The element of diversity does not just stem from the composition of the stage population, but also from other stage elements. This is the case of the banners, which the audience sees on stage in the beginning of the play. According to the stage directions, “there are enormous banners with all sorts of slogans, even contradicting ones, making reference to the diversity of people taking part in festivals. The slogans range from tough anti-authoritarian to peace-loving ones. Environmentalists, paleocommunists, liberals, even neo-fascists” (Anagnostaki 89). This image is connected to the upcoming peace rally on the streets of Berlin, for which Agis feverishly prepares. Lost among the complicated sound reproducing pieces of equipment he has installed in the house, Agis prepares his speech for the rally the following day. Thus, from the very beginning, we are given the sense that the public has already invaded the stage space, foreshadowing a much distorted unfolding of events within the private space of the home.

However, even the public space of the city itself appears to be problematic. While we seem to be watching the apotheosis of the peaceful coexistence of a crowd of mixed ethnicities and ideologies, the racist outbreaks against Turkish immigrants in the neighborhood and the menacing throwing of stones at the house windows undermine this feeling. In this way, Berlin is not treated by the playwright as a realistic space (Tsatsoulis, Signs 288). On the contrary, it is depicted as a place, which, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, appeared to be open to tolerating diversity only for this image to be reversed. The city violently bursts into the private space of the home and breaks the core of its stability.

The menacing atmosphere of the play is enhanced by the elliptical nature of the characters’ narration. In addition, every dramatic character adopts a different perspective for what is going on in the city, thus causing constant shifts in the points of reference, which result in continuous renegotiations of the stage reality. These mutually exclusive perspectives are complemented with the monologues in the second part of the play. There, every character is given the floor to speak and make public their own personal stories. It is an opportunity for coherent speeches to be presented and for solid identities of the dramatic characters to be constructed. Even in this case, however, the paratactic setting forth of monologues without the subsequent activation of the listeners’ “community” decomposes the use of the monologue.

The highlight of this decomposition is to be seen in the face of Agis, who, in his final monologue/rehearsal of his speech for the following day’s rally, mixes up Rosa Luxemburg with his wife Sofia, who happens to be a common drug trafficker. This happens at exactly the same time when Sofia drops dead outside the house, in the public space of the city, having fallen into an ambush. In this way, the face of Agis reflects “the disqualification of political discourse” (Tsatsoulis, Signs 292), whereas, at the same time, the recordings of his ambi-
tious upcoming speech contribute to its over-exposure and over-consumption in the present of the stage action, finally deactivating it as a fact (293).  

With this work we enter the world of amphi (“both sides”) (Pefanis, Place, Memory and Drama 238), where every certainty is overturned and every move and action is presented ambiguous and ambivalent. Contrary to Penga’s play, which places us from the beginning in a limbic space, Anagnostaki’s play undermines from within, little by little, the concept of home as the heart of safety and stability. This is manifested not only at the level of the stage space, where we witness the “intrusions” of the menacing outdoors in tangible terms (throwing stones at the windows), but it also appears to be creeping up at the level of the dramatic discourse. Through the mutually exclusive narrations of the dramatic characters about the “outdoors,” a problematic situation is formed for the “indoors.” Therefore, this “indoors” is proved to be unable to protect the characters and lets them fall prey to historical time.

At this point, let us circumvent the time sequence of the plays and focus on a play written in 1992. Resisting any attempt to classify it in terms of either genre or style, the play of Pavlos Matesis To Eleusis [Προς Ελευσίνα] initiates us into a whole different genre of topiography, distinct from any other play we have discussed so far. The play is based on William Faulkner’s novel As I Lay Dying (1930). The action consists of the linear course of an archetypical family (the characters have no names) on their way to the sea to bury their dead Mother. Mother’s body lies in a coffin which is transported on a carriage. This carriage is the wandering “house” of the family. Their course, which begins with putting Mother’s body on the carriage in scene one, lasts for eight days, during which the characters walk through various landscapes and stops. We could describe this journey as a “rite de passage” (Puchner 145), that is, an initiation ceremony of transition from life to death and vice versa.

The journey starts with the decomposition of the home which happens rather ironically. When Mother dies, Father exclaims: “There, there goes our home” (Matesis, To Eleusis 33). Then, Father and Younger Son start disassembling the dead woman’s bed/house. They take the roof/canopy and the footboard and convert it into a carriage, tying the ropes and turning it round so that the audience sees it from the side. The “house,” in Father’s words, has the meaning of the hearth, the core around which the family is brought together. Mother is the incarnation of the home and her death signifies the loss of the sense of “home” for the family. With the act of disassembling the house and converting it into a cof-

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11. At this point, we come across the concept of Jean Baudrillard’s “hyperreality.” In the modern society of consumerism and globalized culture, a hyperreality is being formed, according to Baudrillard, which hampers the historical perspective as it creates false depictions of reality through new technologies and means of reproduction. For further analysis, see Simulacra and Simulation (2006).

12. The play was staged for the first time in the Central Stage of the National Theatre in the theatre season 1994-1995 directed by Korais Damatis.
fin/carriage we have the visualization of this loss and the transitional stage that follows: the stage of transporting Mother’s body/house to the burial ground, where the family will reassume its point of reference.

When the journey begins, Mother exclaims: “Time to get back home. I’m so tired of this country” (Matesis, To Eleusis 38). The home and the country are not identical. The “home” is the real country and the “home country” is a euphemism for exile. Therefore, for Mother the journey that begins is essentially a journey of returning home, rather than one of departing from it. To mark the beginning of this journey, Mother brings forward a “house,” “about one meter high,” “with an arched roof, a door, and two front windows, one storey high, just like the ones that the children draw” (40). Holding the house in her arms, Mother defines her situation—“I’m travelling,” she says, (41)—and in an exquisite metaphor she condenses the entire meaning of her archetypical existence. “From today on, I’ll be wearing clothes of stone” (41). Mother “puts on” the house and, with the status of the Mother/hearth, she will now walk towards the continuation of the drama.

From the second scene onwards, the house is placed in an alcove on the left of the stage. And every now and then the members of the family wonder how far they have gone in relation to it. The end of the course is signaled by the arrival at the burial ground. There, the family is disrupted: Older Son is led to a mental hospital by Male Nurses, Younger Son is arrested by the Police Officer for murder, and Father goes away looking for a job, leaving Daughter behind to dig Mother’s grave. Meanwhile, Mother has assumed her place in the templum of a little church brought in by an altar boy. Daughter, having been left alone, marries herself in front of the church. Then, the altar boy brings the “house” to her and dresses her in a gown. She comes forward and holds the house up, crying. The play ends here with the Daughter having replaced Mother/hearth in her role: “Essentially, the women are family and home, from one generation to the next” (Puchner 162).

The final destination of the trip to Eleusis is Mother’s burial ground, close to the sea. This liquid element is another field where archetypical images emerge. According to Pefanis, “It refers to the premordial chaos and the primeval waters, to the amorphous material power that perpetually moves the world and creates life” (Themes 220). Thus, the sea is connected with Mother’s form and together they symbolize “the origin of being” (220). The return of Mother to the sea marks the end of one life-cycle and the beginning of a new one, which is now reflected in the Daughter’s form. So, Matesis’ world becomes a pre-ethics one, in which the tragedy of human existence is visualized even before it gets substantiated by Logos (213).

We can discern a similar depiction of “being” in Matesis’ subsequent play.

13. According to Walter Puchner “In the entire Matesis’ play, the concepts of ‘home’-’country’ conflict with each other; the real country of the people is their home; the other one is an abstract concept that is repeatedly subjected to sarcasm by the playwright” (160-61).
Guardian Angel to Rent [Ενοικιάζεται φύλακας άγγελος]. The beginning of the action is again marked by the destruction of a house. Once more, the house of the two protagonists, Mrs and Mr (again archetypical figures), is a tiny one, as tall as a man, with an entrance door and two windows (9). This time the house is literally destroyed by the Mother herself: pulling a huge razor out of her sack, and after sharpening it thoroughly, Mother starts cutting the house to pieces, which collapses on stage with a thud (9-10). Meanwhile, behind the roof of the house which is being torn to pieces, Young Man has appeared who turns out to be the son of the two protagonists. When the house collapses and Garbage Man has taken the ruins away, Young Man turns to the house’s base from where it has been cut off and places a white scarf. The scarf turns red (10)—a token of blood of a living house/being—and then Young Man withdraws.

This play also develops in a linear fashion, displaying the process towards the canonization of the two protagonists. This process starts the moment Mr and Mrs recognize the loss of two very important elements in their life: their child and their house, which they first assume it has run away (Matesis, Guardian Angel to Rent 13) and later that “it [the house] has been kidnapped” (18). Therefore, based on these two losses, the two spouses rightfully deserve “to be called Saints, or, at least, martyrs,” while they hope that with one more loss they will gain a halo (20-21). What we realize, then, is that in this play too the destruction of the home triggers a new course of action, under the watchful eye of the Mother (who, however, turns out to be nobody’s real mother). The difference between the previously discussed play and the one currently under scrutiny is that in the latter the journey does not begin with death, but rather ends in death with the hope of canonization for the two protagonists.

One more link to the previous play is the sea: Mr discovers fish and seashells in the foundation of the house (Matesis, Guardian Angel to Rent 22), and much later, in the second part of the play, pulls out of his shirt urchins and seashells (91, 97, 104, 110). Then, the two spouses simultaneously discover that they always knew that they had both lived underwater, in “Acherousia Sea” (116). From then on, the stage lights turn blue, so that they are gradually coming to an end. The couple put on the two halos, Mother exclaims “The End” (124) and the two protagonists find themselves wrapped up in two plastic bags. When Mother re-enters the stage she carries two small plastic bags filled with water, which, according to her, contain the souls of the two protagonists. Garbage Man throws the bags/souls into the trash can and the play ends with the ambivalent sensation of the canonization of the two. Have they returned to the primeval material, the water, thus triumphantly closing the life-circle, or have they been reduced to inorganic matter only to be thrown away into the trash can?

14. The play was staged for the first time in Simeio Theatre, in the theatre season 2002-2003, directed by Nikos Diamantis.
Pavlos Matesis creates peculiar situations in his plays, which surpass not only realistic representations, but also human experience itself. “His characters are defined by their deeper need for exaltation, for going beyond themselves and transcending their boundaries” (Pefanis, Themes 224). In that sense he builds poetic spaces,15 or “existential territories” (328), which contain both the dramatic space and the acts of the dramatic characters, which become meaningful by the infiltration in these territories. In this respect, the space of the home in Matesis’ drama does not constitute a dramatic space or a stage action frame, but it becomes an element which defines certain dimensions of the writer’s existential territories. The home in Matesis’ works is deconstructed as a place of collective memory and human experience, as if unable to meet the character’s needs, driving them to the journey which will conclude their life cycle.

The above analysis has, on a first level, revealed the importance of dramatic space and its function in drama. On a second level, it has illustrated the problematization of space in modern Greek dramaturgy, which has made it possible for us to trace its stylistic and generic shifts.16 The space of the home, in particular, has turned out to be invaluable in observing the multiple stages of the construction of subjectivity in the modern world, as they are reflected in dramatic discourse. From the concrete, albeit ruptured, lived space of Kambanellis and Mentis, we moved to the frontier space of Penga, where space and time merge into a fluid and uncertain present. And from the ever changing and ill placed historical time of Anagnostaki we moved towards the existential and archetypical form related to the territory of Matesis. We have witnessed successive centralizations emanating from the space of the home which quickly spread out to all levels of the dramatic text. All the above are not meant to confirm the importance of the “home” in the constitution of the self, but to emphasize the potential subjective fields that open up through every small or big ruptures of this space.

PhD candidate
University of Athens
Greece

15. According to Gaston Bachelard, poetic space does not enclose us in affectivity, but because it is expressed, assumes values of expansion. It belongs to the phenomenology of those words that begin with “ex-” (183).
16. Patrice Pavis, in his definition of theatre space, argues: “Space is no longer conceived as a shell within which certain arrangements are allowed, but as a dynamic element of the entire dramaturgical conception. It ceases to be a problem of packaging and becomes the visible place where meaning is produced and made manifest” (544).
Works Cited

Anagnostaki, Loula. “To You Who Are Listening to Me.” [«Σ’ εσάς που με ακούτε».]


