

## *Ketevan Nadareishvili (Tbilisi)*

### THE CONCEPTION OF WOMAN IN GREEK TRAGEDY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BINARY OPPOSITIONS OF SEX ROLES

In my opinion among the questions related to the study of women in antiquity the discussion concerning the social status of women in classical Athens appears to be the most polemical. The problem of "status" has never been neglected and from XIX century on it has been much accentuated and studied. Up to certain period the prevailing suggestion supposed that women's position in the 5th century Athens was subjugated and restricted. She was secluded and almost neglected by the masculine part of society was treated with great contempt. In 1925 Gomme challenged this orthodox doctrine and with his famous essay initiated the beginning of the notorious debate "over status".<sup>1</sup> Setting forth the evidences mainly from tragedy and Vc. Attic art, he suggested that women presented there were utmostly prominent, important and studied carefully and with great interest. Thus, according to Gomme's logic if women hadn't held a high, dignified position in society, it would have turned out, that Greek drama and art in this very important respect would have been remote from life, which was considered by the scholar to be paradox and a unique phenomenon<sup>2</sup>. Gomme's view acquired its supporters, traditional viewpoint had its own adherents, the debate was going on, still the problem remained unsolved.<sup>3</sup>

My point is, that scholar's attempts to discuss the social practice relying on literal sources and to solve women's "status problem" by this means quite naturally raised a difficult question – relation between life and literature.

As it is agreed upon, that each genre of literature has its own specific features in their way of representing life, it must also be agreed, that the depiction of women then varies from genre to genre. The Attic drama tends to be most complex in this respect.<sup>4</sup>

The analysis of the debate proved, that scholars encountered many problems especially when they tried to consider literature as a document of real life. In my opinion the most fundamental error of the by gone stage lay in the attempt of the equation.

Since 1973 (with publishing of *Arethusa* v.6 n.1 devoted to the women in antiquity) a qualitatively new stage of the debate over "women's status" began. Scholars applied new methodological sophistication and new types of structuralistic analysis to their research.

On modern stage of the research, when discussing the relation between drama and its contemporary society, the suggestion not to consider this relation in any way as a straightforward one prevails among scholars.

Before discussing one of the most popular modern approaches, we must turn to the two most important studies, as they are major contributions towards this new stage of the research. Gould arguing, that the issue of direct reflection of life by drama is wholly out of the question, tried to show how these aspects stand in relation to each other. His attempt to explain so called paradox – the discrepancy between women in actual society and literature is considered to be useful judgement and requires some attention here. He believed, that in law, custom and mythical imagination of Greece "the roles that they

<sup>1</sup> Gomme A.W., "The Position of Women in Athens in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries," CPh 20, 1925,1-25 =Essays in Greek History and Literature, Oxford, 1937, 89-115.

<sup>2</sup> Gomme, 1937,115.

<sup>3</sup> Richter D.C., "The Position of Women in Classical Athens," CJ 67, 1971, 1-8. Pomeroy S.B., *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves, Women in Classical Antiquity*, 1975, New York, 94. n.1. Pomeroy S.B., "Selected Bibliography of Women in Classical Antiquity", *Arethusa* 6,1973,127-157=(ed.) J.Peradotto, J.P.Sullivan, *The Arethusa Papers*, 1984, Albany, 313-342.

<sup>4</sup> Among other genres the tragedy has a long tradition to connect female characters of drama with reality, F. Schlegel already in 1794 called into attention this question. Schlegel F., "Über die weiblichen Charactere in den griechischen Dichtern", (1794) *Studien des klassischen Altertums*. (hrsg.) E. Behler, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe, Erster Band*, 45-69, Paderborn.

play are shot through with implications of antagonism and ambivalence",<sup>5</sup> that is at the same time women were essential for society and outsiders, were praised for fulfilling their main functions and feared as destructive forces. As far as this ambiguity is found in all three spaces, these spaces can be considered as homogeneous and related to each other by this very likeness. Another scholar, who instead of "position of women" offered "conception of women" as a more corresponding term to our subject, also stated, that above-mentioned spaces were homologueous in their articulation of the concept of women. Drama presented women not as they were in real life, "but as society imagined they must be."<sup>6</sup>

The most popular modern theories today discussing the "status problem" analyse not the connection of female characters to real life women, but relation of whole gender system of drama and conception of women in this context with the social tensions taking place in Vc. Athens' reality.<sup>7</sup> They try to investigate the kind of relations between gender system of drama and the social tensions, the way how opposition of sexes in drama reflect the contradictions of reality. According to Foley, drama doesn't reflect directly crisis of reality, what is more, it gives a distorted picture of reality. Drama consciously and precisely obscures its structural polarities. She promotes scholars to establish "a methodology to read sex roles conflicts in tragedy in relation to the larger social and philosophical issues".<sup>8</sup> According to their theory drama quite intentionally presents the crossings of boundaries attributed to sex roles, exploits and subverts a set of cultural assumption in order to reassert the cultural norm. This is the drama's method to present the complex picture of different tensions, stresses and conflicts of the 5th century Athens' social system.

One of the main oppositions of the 5th century Athens socio-political system was the opposition taking place between *polis*-state and *oikos*-family. The relationship between two spaces appeared to be complex, as in one and the same time these spheres were complementary and antithetical to each other.

On one hand we have to speak about similarities existing between them and their continuity, on the other hand their conflict of interests is to be accentuated.<sup>9</sup>

Starting from VIII century the aristocratic form of governing in Greece was transformed into the more egalitarian form of the government-democracy. This transition "was not merely one in a series of historical advances, but a stage in which the character of society altered".<sup>10</sup> Step by step in the aristo-

<sup>5</sup> Gould, J., "Law, Custom and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens", JHS 100, 1980, 39-59.

<sup>6</sup> Just R., "Conception of Women in Classical Athens", Journal of the Anthropol. Society of Oxford 6, nr. 3, 153-170.

<sup>7</sup> See Shaw, who argues, that treatment of female characters must be viewed within the broader context of their construction of gender relations. Shaw M., "The Female Intruder: Women in the Fifth-Century Drama", CPh 70, 1975, 255-266. It will be convenient to separate these scholars in one group, conventionally of course. See Bouvrie, who unites these authors in one group assuming, that they all tend to argue, that drama mirrors some social conflicts. Des Bouvrie Synnore, Women in Greek Tragedy, an anthropological approach, Symb. Oscl. Fasc. Supplement 27, 1990. The "list of conflicts" of these scholars: Arthur – In the 5th century B.C. the private and the political realms get into opposition to each other. The stage was treating this conflict. Arthur M. B., Review Essay: Classics, Signs 2 1976, 382-403. Vernant – There was the conflict between the heroic world and classical democracy, between competitive and cooperative values. Theatre reflected this cultural clash. Vernant J.P., "Tensions et ambiguïtés dans la tragédie grecque" in J.-P. Vernant, P. Vidal – Naquet, Mythe et tragédie en Grèce antique, 1973, Paris, 19-40. Segal – The world is dominated by sexual dichotomization. The drama "Bacchae" is a dramatization of this thesis. Segal C. P., "Menace of Dionysus: Sex Roles and Reversals in Euripides' "Bacchae", Arethusa 11, 1978, 185-202. Zeitlin – Drama calls into question the established order, the narrowness of masculine identity. It is because "the woman is assigned the role of the radical other", that she can be used in this way to examine male behavior. The notions of difference from masculinity are projected in drama's female characters. Zeitlin F. I., "Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality and the Feminine in Greek drama" in (edd.) Winkler J. J. Zeitlin F. I., Nothing to do with Dionysus: Athenian Drama in its Social Context, 1990, Princeton University Press, 63-96. Thomson, Rockwell – Theatre presents history partly as "morale debate". "Oresteia" is ritual narrative of the changes in society and presents the ritual of change from female to male dominance. Thomson G., Aeschylus in Athens. A Study in the Social Origins of Drama, 1966<sup>2</sup>, London. Rockwell J., "Some Speculations of the Possible Existence of a Matriarchal Society in Greece, Based on the Oresteia of Aeschylus", in Fact in Fiction. The Use of Literature in the Systematic Study of Society 1974, London, 135-171. Shaw – Opposition between the sexes can be equated with a conflict between the public and the private spheres. With this opposition drama presents limitation of the "civic virtues". Shaw, 1975. While classifying and defining the theses of these scholars, we base on the judgments of Bouvrie 1989 cited above and Blundell S., Women in Ancient Greece, London, 1995.

<sup>8</sup> Foley H. P., "The Conception of Women in Athenian Drama" in (edd.) H. P. Foley, Reflections of Women in Antiquity, 1986<sup>3</sup>, New York, 136.

<sup>9</sup> Goldhill S., Reading Greek Tragedy, Cambridge, 1986, 144..., also Arthur 1976, 190

<sup>10</sup> Arthur M. B., "Early Greece: The Origins of the Western Attitude toward Women", Aretusa, 1973, 6, 7-58 also hers "Liberated Women: The classical Era" in (edd.) R. Bridenthal, C. Koonz, Becoming visible: Women in European History, 1977, Boston, 60-89, also our article: "The Main Tendencies of the Attitude toward Women in Greek Consciousness", Literature and Art, 1992, 5, 5-23.

cratic society a new class had emerged – The class of middle farmers. This change entailed foundation of the new type of family-so called nuclear family. The new type of family in contrast to a large household of past was now composed of a husband, a wife, children and slaves. For a certain period this type of family became a productive unit of society and *oikos* acquired specific importance in the life of the *polis*<sup>11</sup>. As Aristotle puts it, the *oikos* became central to the *polis*. For the proper functioning the state has to be the sum of individual families and Aristotle warns, that the attempt to make the one from a state, is wrong as in that case a state will become a family, which means either the destruction of a state or making a state worse, than it was before. (Politics 1261 a 20; 1263 b32). The kind of relation existing between *oikos* and *polis* is discussed by Aristotle at a certain length as well. *Oikos* is the part of *polis*, that is of the whole. Out of the two *polis* being initial, as the whole is initial to the part. (Politics 1253 a18). While studying the continuity of *polis* and *oikos*, scholars' suggestions are based on Aristotle as well.<sup>12</sup>

The parallel ways of construction both of *oikos* and *polis* is argued by Aristotle in the passage, where he discusses the three types of family government and compares these three types to the ways of state government. The types of family government are: ruling of a master over slaves, of a father over children and of a husband over a wife. The government of a father over children can be equated to a monarchy, while a husband's governing of a wife is much like the power of the political leader, who conducts his ruling over equal and free people (Politics, 1259 b 2).

Proceeding from the increased importance of *oikos*, protecting and maintaining of a family became the special concern of the state.

The new form of society caused the establishment of the new legal system, as well as of the new type of property holding. The overwhelming importance of *oikos* to *polis* entailed a new distribution of sex roles in a family. The latter primarily concerned women. Women had to perform two main obligations – to ensure the legitimacy of heirs for family and to transfer the property with a reserved right to the transferor.<sup>13</sup>

These very regulations ensured the maintenance and the inviolability of the individual families, as well as of the middle class in the whole, what according to Aristotle was obligatory condition for the functioning of this type of *polis*. As a result, woman-performer of above-mentioned functions became of an essential importance for the state. It was this increased importance of her functions that caused the necessity of special control and protection of her (through all her life woman was under the custody of her male relatives and she had no right to dispose her property). This new distribution of sex roles in family resulted in her subordination and it became norm both in the state as well as in the family. Her activities in *polis* were restricted and confined mainly to conducting of various religious services. These transformations were accompanied by establishing of the new ideology, which displayed negative attitude toward women and at the same time demanded strict moral norms for her. In my opinion, the controversies of woman's function – her role as essential and as outsider for society and family at one and the same time caused a clash in her personality, which in some cases was the reason of a kind of alienation from the very sphere, she was confined to.

The relations between *polis* and *oikos* discussed above that spoke about similar organization and continuity, seems to correspond to the cultural ideal. It looks like, that in reality the relationship between two spheres caused more problems and was of much complex character. The socio-political system of the state sharply distinguished the spaces – one was public, another private.<sup>14</sup> Besides, the newly established *polis* demanded, that its interests should have priority over the interests of a family. It was accompanied by extensive public demands posed on male.<sup>15</sup> Man was the ruler both of *polis* and *oikos*. In past times this concurrence of obligations functioned well, but “the fifth century ironically saw in this concurrence of duties, the conflict of interests.”<sup>16</sup> This conflict of interests in male is well ex-

<sup>11</sup> For the socio-political structure of the 5<sup>th</sup> century Athens see Gordeziani R., Greek Civilization, v.2. p.1, Classical Era, Tbilisi, 1977, 84-105.

<sup>12</sup> For, inasmuch as every family is part of a state, and these relationships are part of a family, and the virtue of the part must have regard to the virtue of the whole, woman and children must be trained by education with an eye to the constitution, if the virtues of either of them are supposed to make any difference in the virtues of the state. And they must make a difference; for the children grow up to be citizens, and half of the free persons in the state are women (Politics 1260 b, 10-20).

<sup>13</sup> Arthur assumes, that function of women was to ensure legitimacy of heirs. Arthur, 1977, 79, while Gould attributes a great importance to the transmission of the property conducted by women, Gould, 1980.

<sup>14</sup> Foley, 1986<sup>3</sup>, 149.

<sup>15</sup> Foley, 1986<sup>3</sup>, 151

<sup>16</sup> Arthur, 1976, 390. Scholars often discuss the consequences of the demands of *polis*. Man's activities, which sprang out of

explored in drama.<sup>17</sup> I think, they somehow reflect the historical fact of this difficult demand imposed on man that in some cases resulted in abusing their responsibilities towards the family as well as towards the state.

The scholars discussing the complex interrelation between *oikos* and *polis* and connecting them with gender system of drama, usually operate by types of the binary oppositions explored in anthropology, though the case can be, that they don't name these oppositions in their studies. The above discussed historical opposition between *oikos* and *polis* seems to be best treated by the binary opposition – female: domestic as male: public. This opposition is frequently used to investigate the conflict of the sex roles in drama. But Foley's examples of sex roles boundary crossing occurred in drama tend to prove, that we can't speak about sharp division between these oppositional spheres in drama, even more, we have to take into account the dialectical relationships existing between household and state.<sup>18</sup> The prevailing suggestion among scholars, that there isn't unified, static assumption of male and female sex roles even in a single drama not to speak about the whole dramatic corpus, seems to be objective and argumentative.

To clarify the theoretical suggestions we came to while analysing gender system of drama for the purpose of exposing and explaining various tensions of social reality, we offer a brief scheme here. The tragedies of three dramatists were chosen as they can be considered to be clear examples of dramatists' manipulating of gender system in the broader context of their outlook. We assume, that the advantage of the scheme is in showing the functioning of gender system in dynamics. This can be considered as the methodological principle of the research.

#### "Oresteia"

**Agamemnon** (abandoning family interests in favor of public interests) is confronted by **Clytemnestra** (taking revenge on husband for abandoning family interests) / The opposition is ended with the murder of **Agamemnon**. Acting like this, **Clytemnestra** (neglects family interest – murders her husband and at the same time usurps the political space).

Afterwards **Clytemnestra** (neglector of family interests) is opposed by **Orestes** (simultaneously the defender of family interests – in his attempt to restore legitimate inheritance line, and the defender of public interests as he aims at reconstructing lawful power / confrontation culminates in **Clytemnestra's** murder. Afterwards **Orestes** (the outrager of domestic interests) is opposed by **Furies** (the defenders of family interests) /the confrontation is resolved as **Furies** are confined to domestic space, while **Orestes** restores the patriarchal government.

Hence, here is presented female, who crosses her sex role boundaries, that is expressed by two-fold destruction of the norm. On the other side stands male, who fulfills the obligation assigned by his sex role in two ways.

The clash of interests in **Orestes's** person occurs in one and the same sphere- in domestic realm. Simultaneously he acts to defend family interests-to restore legitimate inheritance line and for this he has to abuse the interest of same space – family and kill his mother. Aeschylus offers his own conception of resolving the dilemma when in defense of the two aspects of family interests, he chooses one to give priority.

It is obvious, that by sex roles opposition drama reflects the complex interrelation between public and private space. **Clytemnestra** crosses the boundaries between these realms, which, I think, reflects the antithetical relations between them, at the same time **Orestes**, who is representing the interests of both spaces, is a clear example of the continuous and complementary relation existing between two spaces.

male's conviction, that public demands have priority over private ones, causes opposition, which exposes the clash of interests. Goldhill, 1986, 114... The new demands of polis are expressed by the conflict, which had occurred between political claims and institutes of culture-of marriage, agriculture, sacrifice. It is discussed in full length in Foley's essay 1986<sup>3</sup>, 146-147, for the modern treatment of relation between domestic and public space in Greek culture the scholar advises us to see P. Bourdieu, Outline of a Theory of Practice, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge, 1977.

<sup>17</sup> eg. Agamemnon in "Iphigenia in Aulis" is confronted with the dilemma what to put first-private or public interest. The priority of public interests, chosen by him, causes tragic outcomes.

<sup>18</sup> Drama's female characters don't confine themselves to domestic and religious spaces, they frequently intrude into public realm and even more seldom defend the interests of household. On the other hand, man also acts according to private interests and even puts them before the interests of polis. We can also see in drama, that women act for polis and their activity is beneficial for the latter, Foley 1986<sup>3</sup>, 151, 153, 155.

### “Antigone”

**Antigone** (the representative of family interests in her defense of the highest religious obligations and intruder into political space by breaking the law) confronts **Creon** (the abuser of family interests for serving political one) / the tragedy closes in putting penalties on Antigone after which she commits a suicide. **Creon** is also destructed (morally, his son and wife commit a suicide) and finally by the act of Polinice's burial he takes the family interests into account as well.

The tragedy portrays the female, who doesn't confine herself to her sex role and takes part in the political sphere, on the other side there is depicted the male, who also abuses cultural norm, as is acting only in the interest of public realm. But the fact, that Creon, the abuser of family interests, at the end becomes the executor of this interest must be taken into consideration.

Both sides end with the catastrophe.

The sex roles opposition presented in the drama, in my opinion, mirrors the necessity of the continuity of *oikos* and *polis* indirectly. The ideal is confirmed by the final episode, when the violators of the norm acting in defense of the single space, are severely punished.

The reading of the tragedy “Medea” in this context confronts with more complexities, one of them being Euripides himself, who isn't altogether interested in the public nature of the private tragedy.

**Medea** (standing for the continuance of her marriage, and being wholly aside from *polis*) opposes **Jason** (the abuser of family interest – destroyer of the marriage and at the same time wishing public acknowledgement and welfare by making political bonds). To take vengeance on **Jason Medea** kills her children (and thus becomes herself the abuser of family interests).

Hence the tragedy by the opposition of sexes depicts the clash between private and public reality, but this time it isn't carried out by the direct intrusion in others' space. Transmission of the behavioral rules from one sphere into another, causes the destruction of this sphere. This transference is expressed by the mode of Medea's behavior. It is argued in most convincing way, that Medea in the private realm acts in accordance with archetypal moral codex characteristic of a male hero.<sup>19</sup>

Up to this point we have been dealing with the opposition private versus public, but it seems, that the tragedy “Medea” maybe on the deeper level exposes the second binary opposition – female: wild x male: culture. At least the first part of the opposition female: wild is broadly explored in the drama. Medea is associated with irrational, wild forces and also presented as an alien, barbarian princess standing wholly apart from the world of polis. (Jason in the tragedy can't be equated with the cultural phenomenon, although in myth he was regarded equal to the archetype of the cultural hero).

Other Euripidean tragedies reflect the tension between wild / irrational and culture as well. In “Hippolytus” both Pheadra and Hippolytus violate the norms of the marriage institution, one of the main institutions of cultural world. Pheadra rejects the norm as she being in love with her stepson and willing him is apt to betray her husband. The fruitful Eros necessary for the continuity of society is presented in her personage excessively. On the other hand Hippolytus by his action and speech arguing for asexuality and sterility stands in opposition to the marriage institution altogether. And even more than that, he is against *polis* as the form of civilization and tries to find shelter in the midst of wildness, nature and in hunting.

The tragedy “Bacchae” can be clearly read in the context of this binary opposition.<sup>20</sup> Woman here stands against culture, civilization, *polis*, *oikos* and in the civilized order of world bring ecstatic and irrational forces. They are driven in frenzy to the mountains, where at the same time they act as innocent creatures of the wild nature and as the embodiments of savagery, hunting like wild animals. In every aspect they deny their sex role. In contrast to them Pentheus tries to defend the interests of polis – in the broader sense the interests of culture and civilization, but he abandons nature altogether. The tragedy culminates in the destruction of both parts as far as they appear to be entirely onesided.<sup>21</sup>

Greek Drama also presents the cases when women's acting for *polis* can be considered as beneficial to its interests. Iphigenia in “Iphigenia in Aulis” is one example. She acts in support of public sphere, but her action isn't considered as intrusion in other realm or crossing her sex role boundaries.

<sup>19</sup> Knox B. M. W., “The Medea of Euripides” in (ed.). T. F. Gould, C. J. Herington, Greek Tragedy, YCLS, 1979, Cambridge, Mass. 193-225, In arguing for Medea's sphere of interests Foley stands on the opposite point. She believes, that Medea is one example of feminine rejection of marriage, that she declares her lack of feminine *sophrosyne* and makes political alliances for herself with Athens. Foley 1986<sup>3</sup>, 155-156. Blundell at this point is in agreement with me, when she writes “these reverberations involve the denial of a woman's maternity, and hence the betrayal of the very values which she was seeking to defend. Both Medea and Agave murder their sons ... Blundell, 1990, 178.

<sup>20</sup> Together with others see especially Just, 1989, 252-263, Zeitlin, 1990, Segal, 1984.

<sup>21</sup> It is another question, that what women are arguing for in the final analysis is believed to be the necessary element. Culture must absorb nature in itself, Just, 1989, 258.

Her patriotism expressed in a sacrifice is activity within the religious space, the only space of *polis*, which is not forbidden for women<sup>22</sup>.

Hence, we can assume, that the gender system of drama tends to expose the complexity of the historical relationship between *oikos* and *polis* in an extremely interesting way. The examples drawn offer the ways of violation sex role norms, they also show how the conflicts between these institutions can be presented in one personage. It seems, that in social reality each sex failed to fulfil the obligations accorded to them and the rejections of sex norms carried out in drama reflected this hard tension (see our page 7). I tend to think, that the brief analysis carried out shows, that in presenting the sex opposition three dramatists are quite different. Aeschylus and Sophocles assign to the interfamilial conflicts a public nature. While it is quite apparent, that Euripides is much more interested in personality and private realm and advances the problems of personal morality. From this point of view the behavioral code good in public sphere fails to function, when it is transmitted into the sphere of personal experience. In cases when Euripides seeks to investigate the relationship between a person and society, he does it in the way, that these patterns from the start are presented as separate entities.

The rejection of the sex roles (coming from one sex or another) in drama reflects the conflict between public and private interests. The violation of the norm can be of several types. a) the personage can abandon the norm in two ways. b) the neglect of the norm can be one sided. c) the character can transmit the norms of behaviour assigned for one space from one sphere to another resulting in the destruction of this sphere.

The violation of the sex role norm is in all cases culminated in the destruction of the hero.

Drama, then, demonstrates not only the conflicts of these institutions, it affirms the cultural ideal – the continuity and complementary relation of these spheres. The latter is marked by victory of the hero. Orestes gains victory because in his person the interests of both spaces are presented at one and the same time. Lysistrata of Aristophanes is also victorious as she acts to save both realms.

In addition, it can be argued, that gender system of drama explored another binary opposition. We agree here with Zeitlin's opinion, that the gender conflicts cannot be reduced to a simple clash between private and public.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand Foley's suggestion about difficulties, which occur when we try to make sharp distinction between private and public are valuable and are to be marked out specially.<sup>24</sup>

But in broader context both *polis* and *oikos* are assigned to the space of culture. And the interesting opposition marked between culture and politics<sup>25</sup>, in my opinion can be considered as opposition of various institutions in one realm (marriage, agriculture, sacrifice against political interests). At the same time it is doubtless as well, that female isn't always associated with wild, destructive forces. Both sexes are presented in Greek consciousness ambiguously and in connection with both culture and nature.<sup>26</sup>

In the ideology of the transitional period from aristocracy to democracy is expressed general, controversial, but still specific attitude towards women-it is her association with wild, natural, sacral.<sup>27</sup> I tend to think, that the models of Just and Zeitlin of women and the relationship between sexes, suppose the existence of both binary oppositions at one and the same time. So called middle space, according to Just, to which woman is connected from both spaces – from inside *oikos* and from outside – natural, wild, sacral – is *polis*. Danger from *oikos* comes, because woman as guarantee of continuity of *oikos* by this very function is connected with nature and hence feared. It is necessary to separate her from nature and for this aim she has to be incorporated in this institute (*oikos*), to say so be culturized (This reduces, but doesn't altogether vanish the fear of women's uncontrolled sexuality).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Foley argues, that women's acting for polis tends to be beneficial when she is connected with public religious sphere – Foley, 1986<sup>3</sup>, 155-156.

<sup>23</sup> Zeitlin, 1990.

<sup>24</sup> Foley suggests, that there exists dialectical relationship between domestic and public spaces. As for the second binary opposition, she assumes, that in working out this opposition there are many difficulties-male cannot always be equated with culture, that culture, nature are themselves relatively cultural conceptions and are defined variously according to the definite socio – cultural context. Foley, 1986<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Foley, 1986<sup>3</sup>, 142-145.

<sup>26</sup> Gould, 1980.

<sup>27</sup> In applying the methods of structural analysis to ancient Greek culture French scholars - J.-P. Vernant, M. Detienne and P. Vidal-Vaquet's contributions are very important.

<sup>28</sup> Walcot P., "Greek Attitudes towards Women: The Mythological Evidence", G&R 31, 1984, 37-47.

“Savage without” exists outside the boundaries of *polis* – both cultural and geographic boundaries – these are ecstatic cults, barbaric world, sacral space. Women are associated with these spheres and they threaten *polis* with destruction.

My point is, that in broad context of the existing ideology both *oikos* and *polis* can be considered as cultural phenomena, who are in danger on the one hand because of female uncontrolled sexuality and their connection with the forces of continuity, and on the other hand she is feared because of women’s association with natural, wild, irrational world. This is at this point, that we can speak about the coincidence of these binary oppositions and about conception of women in this context.