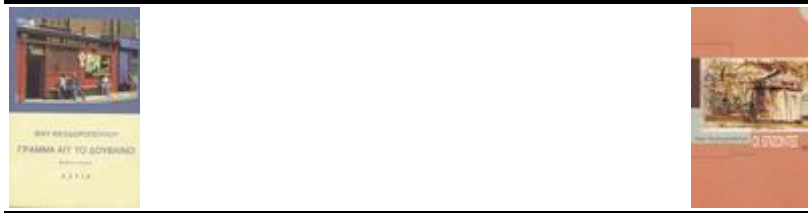

Love that Animates

NATIONAL BOOK CENTRE – MAGAZINE ITHACA, NO 15, MAY 2002. **BOOK REVIEW by Lina Pantaleon VIKI THEODOROPOULOU**, GAME WORTH THE CANDLE, (NOVEL) ATHENS, ESTIA, 2000, 268PP., ISBN:960-05-0928-X

In her first work, Letter from Dublin (1997), Viki Theodoropoulou displayed her ability to weave human stories with a fascinating plot and dramatic intensity, to create fully realised psychological portraits and to provoke powerful emotions in the reader. The main characteristic of her writing, apparent also in Game Worth the Candle, her second book, is the deep sensitivity with which she examines the psychological transitions that humans undergo. Theodoropoulou's heroes are wounded, psychically traumatised by painful memories, yet always optimistic and with a will to live.



In this novel, her most recent, we listen as Yorgos, the central hero, describes the ups and downs of his life in the first person. Yorgos, a psychoanalyst by profession, falls passionately in love with one of his patients, Emily. This is the usual sort of love story, which, thanks to the author's skilful handling of it, turns into a profound psychological study of two very different yet mutually complementary characters. Yorgos, over-charged by his professional obligations, finds through Emily the meaning of life for which he had been seeking, and she in turn is able to forget the sorrows which had led her to his consulting room. What unites these two lonely and inconsolable people is their grief for the loss of loved ones. Yorgos has to deal with his father's unexplained suicide, while Emily has not yet got over the recent death of a childhood friend.

The reversal of roles between doctor and patient is characteristic. The fragile and vulnerable Emily is the person who will support and heal Yorgos' wounds.



FOTO Kostas Tahiatis

Theodoropoulou records vividly the tumultuous and painful progress from inner turmoil to tranquillity; the title of the novel is apposite in describing its heroes as «survivors», since it stresses the psychic strength which survival often requires. The exactness and perspicuity of her writing allow us to understand her authorial aims and to follow the psychological progress of her heroes with unflagging interest.

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