

Stage of Emergency

*Theater and Public Performance
under the Greek Military
Dictatorship of 1967–1974*

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Introduction

εἰς κατάστασιν πολιορκίας

in a state of siege

(official proclamation of April 21, 1967, the *Government Gazette of the Kingdom of Greece*)

One doesn't care whether the owner [of a coffee shop] beats his wife so long as the coffee is good.

(Michael Balopoulos, Secretary-General of the Greek National Tourist Organization, quoted by Joe Alex Morris, Jr., 1970)

This study of Greek theater under the military dictatorship of 1967–1974 argues that the alternative Greek stage, in particular, constructed new cultural and political spheres and was conversing with Western and global trends in many more ways than has traditionally been assumed. It provides a framework for understanding, too, where this theater is situated within our thinking about Greek and Western culture. The book documents and analyzes a wide scope of performative acts, ranging from the Greek state's military and church-supported censorship to its own massive outdoor spectacles, to theater events that took place on newly founded experimental stages. Thus this book examines the Colonels' propagandistic use of performance at festivals "proving" that the Greek military had repeatedly saved the nation, but it focuses primarily on the innovative modern Greek plays created and performed by a new generation of playwrights, directors, and actors in alternative venues. It explores how the best of the radical new plays helped the Greeks understand the modus operandi of the repressive dictatorship and its long-lasting ramifications. These plays came to bear a tremendous local and contemporary relevance, paradoxically for tapping into currents

that dominated the international stage, such as Brecht's epic theater and the Theater of the Absurd. In focusing on new Greek plays and their role in raising critical awareness, this book privileges modes of discourse that highlight theater's kaleidoscopic value and seize upon many other threads in the fabric of Greek cultural life of the 1960s and 1970s. The chapters further illustrate how Greek actors and audience members assimilated their personal experiences to the 1960s cultural revolution and to the Western, participatory stage, and how they came to think of themselves as empowered and (globally) acting agents. Thus this study engages with theater reception as well as performance criticism and history and combines such facets with a cultural-study approach to one of the most controversial eras in the recent Greek past, perhaps the most important juncture in the interplay of stage and society that has distinguished Greek theater since the modern state's inception.

HOW TO STAGE A COUP: PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

In the early morning of April 21, 1967, "Prometheus" became unbound in Greece. This Prometheus was the code name of a top-secret contingency plan approved by NATO for Greece, a member state since 1952. It had been drawn up to protect the rear of the NATO alliance from subversion in case of a Warsaw Pact invasion. In the event of a war between Greece and a communist country, "Operation Prometheus" provided guidelines and measures to swiftly arrest communist leaders and "subversives" and, as insurance against sabotage, to occupy strategic points and key administrative and communications centers. As deputy chief of operations, Georgios Papadopoulos (1919–1999) implemented "Operation Prometheus" to counteract "disorder" in the domestic sphere, and he was backed by Gregorios Spantidakis, the chief of the Army General Staff in Athens.¹ Subsequently, however, Papadopoulos was never able to produce hard evidence of the supposedly imminent threat of a

¹ See Karakatsanis (2001: 38) and Woodhouse (1985: 12). Woodhouse (1985) provides an older but still standard introduction to the history of the military dictatorship of April 21, 1967. Regos, Sefheriades, and Chatzevasileiou (2008, in

communist coup that his military takeover had “forestalled.” He had activated the Prometheus Plan to cut off Greece’s “spring,” its liberal “intermission” of 1963–1965 under Georgios Papandreou’s government.² His intervention had been to avert a victory of Papandreou’s Center Union Party in the elections scheduled for late May 1967. For an immediate pretext, however, Papadopoulos and his “junta” collaborators, “Colonels” Stylianos Pattakos and Nikolaos Makarezos, exaggerated the threat of the communist bogey and proclaimed a “state of emergency”—in what was later aptly called “the last gasp of the mythmakers.”³ A related “justification” for the military’s takeover

Greek) offer up-to-date discussions on the historical, political, and cultural parameters of the junta period and the preceding “short” decade of the 1960s. Recent, specialized bibliographies can be found in the various chapters of this edited volume. For an earlier reevaluation of many of the era’s sociopolitical aspects, see Athanasatou, Regos, and Sepheriades (1999, in Greek). Alivizatos analyzes the legal apparatus of the Greek dictatorship (1983: 273–334, 601–695) while Sakellariopoulos probes the sociopolitical causes that led to the sudden regime change (1998, in Greek). Meletopoulos adds much-needed reflection on the new rulers’ ideology (1987 and 1996, in Greek). Meynaud, Merlopoulos, and Notaras detail the political developments of the two decades prior to the coup through the dictatorship (2002, in Greek). See also Richter (2013). The comprehensive study of Sotiris Walldén, entitled *Unseemly Partners* (2009), shows how and why, ironically, the anticommunist military regime entered into negotiations (often motivated by economic factors) with its Balkan communist neighbors. The anniversary dates of the coup or of the Colonels’ fall prompt Greek journals and newspapers to publish special issues on the dictatorship. See the special issues of *Anti*, April 17–23, 1987, entitled “April 21, 1967: Twenty Years Later”; *He Lexe* 63–64 (1987), “Intelligentsia and Dictatorship”; *ArcheioTaxio* 8 (2006), “April 21, 1967”; and *To dentro* 24, nos. 161–162 (spring 2008), “The Radio Is Playing Military Marches.” See also the special issues of *Eleutherotypia*, April 19, 2001, entitled “April 21, 1967: Works, Days, Consequences,” and April 20, 2007, “April 21: Forty Years after the Dictatorship.”

² Greek sources from the years leading up to the April 1967 putsch convey a sense of a society that remained socially divided and that was particularly vulnerable to authoritarian abuse. Telling are the writings of Giorgos Theotokas, a politically moderate intellectual who served for a short stint as a progressive general director of the National Theater (from February 1945 through May 1946). Theotokas’s collection of six newspaper articles (originally published in *To Vema*), entitled *The National Crisis* (1966, in Greek), tried to exorcise a Greek dictatorship by predicting how it would come into being. See Doulis (2011: 20, 39–40, 57–58, 62–63, 66–71, 81) and Van Steen (2011: 43).

³ Demetrios Lambrakes, owner of the newspaper group of *To Vema*, quoted by Mazower (1997: 138). The Colonels, as they became known, disliked being referred to as “fascists” or as a “junta,” a term that linked them to their brutal counterparts among Latin American dictators. In common parlance, however, “the junta” has been by far the most frequently used term to denote the political anomaly of 1967–1974. From the 1960s through the mid-1980s, many South and Central American countries witnessed dictatorships and state terrorism (among them Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile,

was the 1965–1967 crisis in constitutional government (under weak “caretaker” administrations) and the chronic lapses in public order (as manifested in rancorous strikes, street demonstrations, and pacifist youth activism, which the establishment denounced as a form of trafficking with the enemy). Far from hiding their antipathy for the Athenian political and social elite, the Colonels referred to the mid-1960s constitutional crisis and the many months of governmental paralysis as the years of the “*phaulokratia*” (φαυλοκρατία), the “corruptocracy,” or the politically corrupt state (Meletopoulos 1996: 156; Mikedakis 2007: 150, 160–164). They contended that Greece’s parliamentary democracy had become unworkable, especially after the mid-July 1965 standoff between Papandreou and King Constantine over the appointment and the powers of the country’s defense minister. The real issue was, however, whether the royal house would be allowed to interfere with the workings of the elected government. The crisis escalated when, in early April 1967, the king appointed Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, the leader of the right-wing opposition, to the post of prime minister charged with overseeing the May elections. Just when the Greek Right appeared to be on the political upswing, ultra-right-wingers turned to the Prometheus Plan as a blueprint for seizing power:⁴ in a matter of hours, army officers and troops

Honduras, Panama, Peru, and Uruguay). Their military regimes, which typically claimed to have intervened in a “state of emergency,” were commonly known as *juntas* and were largely products of the Cold War. Many of their left-wing opponents shared principles of a Marxist ideology, despite the vast domestic and regional diversity that characterized the dissident movements. Like the juntas of Latin America, the Greek military regime, too, made every effort to control information and to “manufactur[e] consent” (in the words of Herman and Chomsky, 2002). The Greek junta’s call for consent and unity in the press, literature, and the arts can thus be seen as part of its demand for approval from all levels of society “in a state of siege” (εις κατάσταση πολιορκίας, as per the official declaration in Decree No. 280, ΦΕΚ Α’ 58/21.04.1967, or the April 21, 1967 issue of the *Ephemeris tes Kyverneseos tou Vasileiou tes Hellados*, the *Government Gazette of the Kingdom of Greece*; also the epigraph to this Introduction). See also Alivizatos (1995: 323–331) and Meynaud, Merlopoulos, and Notaras (2002: 2:709–712). While fruitful, Stanley Cohen’s 1972 notion of a “moral panic” (2002) is less applicable in the Greek case, in that the Greek “state of emergency” was, rather, a contrived anticommunist panic. Avdela delineates the 1950s through early 1960s “moral panic” provoked by the impertinent “*tediboides*” (“Teddy boys”) (2005 and 2008). See also Kornetis (2013: 16–19, 55). Cf. Theodorou (2010).

⁴ This is not to say that the Colonels enjoyed the uncritical support of the Right. The reactionary dictators repelled a large portion of the traditional Greek Right, a socially diverse group of politicians and citizens with conservative sympathies or

rounded up hundreds of local opponents, leftists, communists, and others, whom, they suspected, would react or go underground.⁵ Later that day of April 21, King Constantine and the Greek populace were faced with the fait accompli of a military putsch. Papadopoulos made great play of the fact that the coup had been executed without bloodshed and called “Operation Prometheus” a resounding success.⁶

In quick succession, Papadopoulos had himself appointed minister to the prime minister, prime minister, regent, and finally president of the new “presidential parliamentary republic,” which was proclaimed in June 1973 (which meant that the Colonels deposed King

affiliations that underwent significant changes in terms of membership and ideology during the course of the twentieth century. The majority of the Right, however, had vested interests in preserving the political and social status quo. The Colonels rapidly lost support among the Right but still found followers among old-time royalists, traditionalists, and the military ranks. For a recent history of the Greek Left, in English, see Panourgia (2009: esp. 12–14 and 117–122, for her view on the historiography of the history of the Left; 15–16, for a definition of the Greek Left and Right; 22–23, 114, on the creation of the notion of the Left as the “internal enemy”; 23–29, on the Greek legal framework that made the decades-long persecution of the Left possible; and 218–219, for a long list of what the umbrella term, “the Greek Left,” can possibly cover).

⁵ Organized left-wing opposition against the military regime was slow to appear for various reasons. The Old Left had been defeated or driven abroad or pushed underground. The postwar years of anticommunist state persecution had decimated or fatigued the left-wing ranks. With the 1967 coup, a new wave of anticommunist terror and torture ensued. Anticommunism served to justify the coup, but it also provided a spurious, blanket justification for further oppression of the Left. Long-standing tensions led to the split of the Greek Communist Party in 1968. The party split into the Communist Party of Greece of the Interior and a second camp that remained loyal to the Soviet Union. See further Panourgia (2009: 265–266) and Voglis (2002: 230). The Colonels’ security forces intimidated members of the Right as well and caused them to pursue some of the interests that they shared with the Left. Kornetis (2006 and 2013) expands on the emergence of the young New Left, or the generational overhaul of the political class of the Greek Left (accompanied by a thorough rethinking of its international strategies). For an overly negative verdict on Greek student opposition in the international press, see Shuster in *The New York Times* (hereafter NYT), February 28, 1973. Cf. Kornetis (2006: 11, 21; 2013: 95, 96, 115–116, 123). The term “opposition” was, in the Greek case, again an umbrella term: it covered exponents of the political Left but also the Right that was not reactionary, liberal intellectuals, students, artists, workers, foreigners, and many others. There was always plenty of friction, flux, and diversity among the Greek leftist opposition against the Colonels, while decades of internal strife had already left undeniable demarcations. In the same way, the term “young” Greeks is meant to denote a broader group than that consisting merely of those who were young of age.

⁶ Papadopoulos (1968–1972: 1:11, on April 27, 1967); see also the April 21, 1967 statement quoted by Meletopoulos (1996: 155–157).

Constantine, who had fled after the disastrous counter coup of December 13, 1967). Papadopoulos was elected president in a farcical referendum held under martial law: he was the only candidate. He did not hesitate to rig nationwide elections to give credibility to his regime (Clogg 2002: 162–163, 165; Close 2002: 117). Usurping military roles and political positions, Papadopoulos held absolute sway over Greece for more than six years. Buoyed by a sense of self-confidence, he abolished the relevant articles of the constitution that protected civil liberties and democratic rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom of association or assembly (Katephores 1975: 141–156), and declared a state of martial law for extended periods of time. Thorough purges took place in the Greek army, the civil service, the universities, and the judiciary. Papadopoulos employed with impunity all the methods of organized state persecution of dissidents, especially of communists. He found most of these methods still in place and revamped others, drawing on a more than thirty-year-long tradition of institutionalized anticommunism.⁷ The political “therapy” or “cure” to which the dictators and right-wing pietists clung

⁷ Voglis situates the emergence of the Greek Left as a new political player in the late 1920s. The first legislation that penalized communist activities, ideas, and intentions was issued in 1929. It marked the beginning of Greece’s excessive state and parastate anticommunism, complete with prosecutions and deportations of political exiles to prison islands in the Aegean sea (Voglis 2002: 34–36). The Right routinely typed political enemies as communists, regardless of their actual position within the political and ideological spectrum. General Ioannes Metaxas (who ruled 1936–1941) had not been the first—or last—Greek politician to play up the menace of a communist subversion. During his dictatorship, new definitions of Greek patriotism and nationalism set the Greeks apart along the lines of the polar opposites of Right versus Left. The nonnegotiable standard of patriotism, around which the Right solicited a consensus of a moral-religious nature, became a reality of threat and violence paired with blatant propaganda. Anticommunist harassment ran the gamut from buggery to outright assault with heavy-handed torture techniques. When prosecution ensued, it was often with insufficient regard to hard evidence. For more detailed discussions of the long political exclusion of the Greek Left, imposed by the right-wing establishment “in defense of the nation,” see Voglis (2002: 63–64, 66, 74–75, 102) and Voglis and Bournazos (2009: 51–54). See further Bregianne (1999); Carabott (2003); Mazower (1997: 129–132, 143–149; 2000); and Panourgia (2009). Mazower confirms that the interwar period saw a Greek state apparatus develop that aimed at the “surveillance and repression of large sections of the population in the name of anti-Communism.” These objectives, he claims, stayed the same for the following forty years (1997: 139; also Bournazos 2009: 9). From the 1920s through the mid-1970s, too, suspicion of engaged intellectual activity and of pluralist criticism ran deep within the Greek reactionary establishment. The domain of criminality included crimes of opinion and mental commitment, which was indicative of the long-lasting government frustration with the domestic and international support that communism enjoyed from

had to eliminate the dangerous “disease” or “virus” of communism with which the Greeks might still be “contaminated.”⁸ State anti-communism had long used a vacuous discourse to fill in for the ideological basis that it otherwise lacked, and this discourse was revived in full force by the Colonels. A new wave of the pathology of paranoia swept over Greece, in the name of a self-righteous *ethnikophrosyne*, “national conviction” or “national-mindedness.”⁹ This “high” ground of nationalist patriotism, upheld by the regime as the obverse of treason, proved, however, much more self-serving than patriotic. In the eyes of strongman Papadopoulos, the Greeks had to first acquire certified “patriotism,” ethical immunity against leftism, and cultural “maturity” (however vaguely defined) before they could be allowed to govern themselves. Equally self-seeking was the official demand that Greek individualism be curbed and

intellectuals, artists, and “fellow travelers.” Mazower notes, too, that the Colonels were quick to blame any discontent on the influence of leftist and communist agitators rather than on the long-overdue need for social and political reform. Georgios Georgalas, an ex-communist turned ideologue of the junta regime, published extensively on the topic of communism to help undermine it (1968 and 1971; Meletopoulos 1996: 211–234). Thus anticommunism became a facile rhetoric for the dictators to assert and retain legitimacy (Mazower 1997: 141). In his novel, *Usurpation of Authority* (in Greek: *Antipoiesis Arches*), the writer Alexandros Kotzias coined the phrase of the “Greek Thirty-Year War” (1979: back cover) to denote the long and repressive Civil War and post-Civil-War era (that is, 1944–1974). See also Kornetis (2006: 39; 2013: 11).

⁸ For as long as the Greek right-wing establishment had fought the “red menace,” reactionary opinion statements had reverberated with value judgments cast in pseudo-medical verdicts of illness and metaphors of sanitation: the “infection” of communism needed to be extirpated urgently to safeguard the “purity” of the privileged Greek nation. On this terminology of “cleansing” the “infected” or “polluted” in the national security discourse of the early Cold War period, see further Hamilakis (2007: 214, 232); Panourgia (2009: 10–11, 13, 32, 106, 160); Voglis and Bournazos (2009: 68–69); and Yannas (1994). King Constantine called communism a *miasma* or “infection” in his New Year’s address of January 1, 1966, raising a storm of protest. See Bournazos (2009: 19, 24); Doulis (2011: 96–97); and Lountemes (1972: 350).

⁹ On the charged notion of *ethnikophrosyne* and its use during and after the Greek Civil War, see Close (2002: 12); Papademetriou (2006: esp. pt. 3); Van Steen (2011: 9, 85, 142, 147); and Voglis (2002: 66, 101, 227–228). The postwar and Cold War right-wing governments of Greece continued their fight against communists as “anti-nationals” who lacked “patriotic spirit” and who were also branded as “internal enemies” and “anti-Greeks.” Poulantzas (1976 and 2000) contextualizes the term “antinationalists” for communists. Bournazos offers a detailed introduction to the Greek terms (linguistic as well as ideological) that defined this “antinationalism” in the decades prior to the dictatorship period (2009: 17–19, 21–22; also Voglis and Bournazos 2009: 65–69). Gregoriades (1975: 1:115) and especially Noutsos (2009) elaborate on the demand for *ethnikophrosyne* in postwar educational institutions.

that the quest for personal gain or pleasure yield to the national interest.¹⁰ Under the dictatorship, anti-leftist and anticommunist morality retrenched and strove hard to eradicate critical disagreement, seen as disloyalty. The Colonels were eager to document a “consensus” on Greece’s rediscovered ideological priorities, the ones that sustained the “Greece of Christian Greeks” (Ἑλλάς Ἑλλήνων Χριστιανῶν).¹¹ They claimed to defend the “eternal values of the Helleno-Christian civilization” against detrimental cultural and political influences. The loaded concept of “Helleno-Christian civilization” merged the—not necessarily complementary—pagan Greek and Orthodox-Christian traditions and thus vouched for the continuity of Greek culture from antiquity through Byzantium to the present.¹² The dictators filled the ideological void with a reactionary version of the long-exalted triptych of respect for the fatherland, religion, and family (πατρίς, θρησκεία, οικογένεια), or the paradigm of the Orthodox nation as a unified family.¹³ The revamped ideology was based on

¹⁰ Carabott analyzes Metaxas’s pre-WWII message of self-discipline and anti-individualism, on which he expounded for the sake of building the culturally and racially “superior” “Third Hellenic Civilization” (2003: 25–26). He speaks of Metaxas’s “collectivistic nationalism” (2003: 25). It was again Metaxas who first made aesthetic and moral persuasion part of anticommunist political and patriotic credentials. Metaxas’s rise to power did not rest on a military coup but on the backing of the Greek royal house. Koliopoulos and Veremis state that King George II “plunged Greece into dictatorship . . . by taking Metaxas’s advice to suspend a number of articles of the constitution” (2010: 103).

¹¹ On this infamous aspect of the junta’s “ideology” and its anticommunist motivations, see further Meletopoulos (1996: 160, 230, 243, 256, 336, 337, 338; 2010: 15); Roufos (1972: 152–153, 154); and Sakellariopoulos (1998: 160–161).

¹² The concept of the “Helleno-Christian idea” (Ελληνοχριστιανή ιδέα) may have been coined by the nationalist 19th-century Greek historian Spyridon Zambelios (1852: 464). I owe this reference to Mackridge (email communication of May 30–31, 2012; also recently Mackridge 2011–2012: 15, 19–20). After the coup, nation and Church entered into a relationship of mutual legitimation. On Easter Sunday 1967, which fell on April 30, signs went up in Athens proclaiming Greece’s “resurrection” along with that of Christ: «Χριστός ανέστη—Ελλάς ανέστη», “Christ is risen—Hellas is risen.” I thank Mackridge for sharing this testimony with me (email communication of May 30–31, 2012). The same propagandistic symbolism tainted Easter 1968, which coincided with the anniversary date of the coup (Gkolia 2011: 158).

¹³ Gazi (2011) has researched the history of the notorious triptych: since the 1880s, this ideology had captured official conservative values; it helped to legitimate the subsequent anticommunist campaign and codified the notion of “national-mindedness.” See also Phrankoudake [Frangoudaki] (2003: 206, 209). Hering (1996: 304–306), Kallis (2007: 237–238), and Petrakis (2006: 225 n. 172) remark on the power of those old ideals under Metaxas. For an analysis of how claims to “honor,”

an odd amalgam of slogans, ethical principles, secular as well as religious credos, public aversions, and myths, yet had to vouch for the infallibility of the “regime of truth” and cover up its corruption. The Colonels saw their tight control of power, not as a repressive measure, but as a “historical necessity” (*«ιστορική αναγκαιότητα»*, Spanos 1973: 364), and they substituted moral explanations for the political ones they owed. At any time, however, their skewed sense of Greek generational continuity, historical prefiguration, and religious sensibility could touch down in damaging condemnations of the victim-subject, typically a suspected leftist or communist.

In the 1950s, Papadopoulos had received thorough training in national security and counterintelligence and had served in the Greek Central Service of Information (KYP). Close connections linked this tool of state anticommunism to the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).¹⁴ For as long as the upstart Greek regime lasted,

“patriotism,” “democracy,” and “sacrifice” speciously covered up Argentina’s terror by the mid-1970s, see Feitlowitz (2011: p. ix), in her aptly named and seminal book, *A Lexicon of Terror*.

¹⁴ See Close (2002: 109–110, 114) and cf. Iatrides (2003: 92–95). Stefanidis studies the Greek political culture of the postwar period, which engendered a strong anti-American sentiment (2007: 27–54, or his ch. 1). My use of the term “American” in this book is confined to people in the United States. Research into the role of the CIA in Greece is ongoing and remains controversial, as more, though not all, US intelligence information has been declassified. I leave aside any unfruitful speculation and refer to the volume edited by Maragkou (2015) for a gamut of recent viewpoints (some more balanced than others). Maragkou (2009) situates NATO’s tolerant acceptance of the Greek unconstitutional regime within the context of the Cold War era, which raised the need for the organization to keep its southeastern flank as stable as possible. Maragkou (2010) discusses Britain’s passive acquiescence, which made the regime’s consolidation of power possible during the first few years after the coup. Wills (2010) concentrates on the reactions of British travelers and observers. Robert Keeley provides a US diplomat’s insider account and speaks of the United States’ initial “surprise” but subsequent “alliance with a repressive right-wing authoritarian regime” (2010: book cover). Keeley notes the CIA’s wonder at and subsequent support for a colonels’ coup (because it had been expecting a coup by higher-ranking Greek generals): “the American CIA station in Greece was filled with Greek American officers . . . who were right-wing in orientation and totally committed to the Papadopoulos coup once it occurred, and who have remained its ardent defenders ever since” (2010: 88, also 260–261 n. 2). It remains true, however, that the Colonels drew on a preexisting network of repressive institutions and security and police forces, and that some of these forces had established important connections with the United States (CIA) well before the coup (Mazower 1997: 147, 148). Besides, the dictators, who found it easier to inspire fear than to instill respect, welcomed some rumors of American-condoned brutalities, which would intimidate, they hoped, many more potential dissenters (Close 2002: 116). The belief in CIA involvement enjoys common

the Republican Nixon administration guardedly favored the Colonels and became their main supporter, apologist, and ally. US Vice-President Spiro Agnew (of Greek descent; born Anagnostopoulos) became the late-blooming Greek “expert.” As early as September 1968, Agnew delivered one of the strongest speeches by any US politician endorsing the Colonels and branding their opponents as communist conspirators (Iatrides 2003: 93). In 1971, he became one of the few foreign dignitaries to visit Greece; the days of his visit, October 16–23, saw elevated levels of political rhetoric (Vidalis 2009: 166–170). The intransigent regime was, nonetheless, popular in some circles that benefited from the populist reforms it pushed through. It remains a fact, however, that the junta transformed Greece into a military state that relied on a machinery of terror, control, and surveillance and whose practices recalled the repression of the Nazi German Occupation (1941–1944) and of the Greek Civil War (1946–1949).¹⁵ Reports of torture did not come out immediately

currency in Greece of the 21st century as well; the tenet holds, too, that Greek resistance against this interference was as necessary and as noble as resistance in Vietnam. See, for instance, Karavidas (2005). The “foreign finger” of disproportionate US interference was long perceived as a major factor that conditioned Greece’s sociopolitical order at the expense of the Left. See further Botsiou (2006); Maragkou (2006); Miller (2009); and the work of Neovi Karakatsanis and Jonathan Swarts (2008). The latter have embarked on a critical study of both popular and more scholarly sources that accept American complicity in the coup as a fact and that lament the apparent unwillingness of the US to subsequently dislodge the dictators from power. The “American Factor” pervaded theatrical and literary representations as well, along with a prevailing view of the United States as a predatory, capitalist, and imperialist power. See, for example, the 1967 book by Stephen Rousseas, entitled *The Death of a Democracy: Greece and the American Conscience*, and a Greek study published thirty years later by Alexis Papachelas with the telling title, *The Rape of Greek Democracy: The American Factor, 1947–1967* (1997). Kotanidis (2011) routinely suggests that the United States staged the coup and that the Greeks themselves had been reduced to mere pawns in the foreign game-playing. See further Meynaud, Merlopoulos, and Notaras (2002: 2:486–493).

¹⁵ Recent studies in English on the Greek Civil War and its aftermath include Carabott and Sfikas (2004); Close (1993 and 1995); Danforth and Van Boeschoten (2012); Gerolymatos (2004); Hatzivassiliou (2006, with focus on the Cold War); Iatrides and Wrigley (1995); Kalyvas (2006: 246–329, with focus on the Argolid); Mazower (2000 and the edited volume of 2000); Panourgia (2009: 81–116, or her ch. 5); and Voglis (2002). Noteworthy is also Kalyvas’s “firebrand” chapter of 2000, titled “Red Terror: Leftist Violence during the Occupation,” which generated a lot of Greek reactions as well. In German, see Richter (2012). Recent sources in Greek include: Eliou (2004); Fleischer (2003); Koutsoukes and Sakkas (2000); Marantzides (2010); Margarites (2000–2001); Nikolakopoulos, Regos, and Psallidas (2002); and Van Boeschoten et al. (2008). Paschaloude (2010) studies the shaping of the Greek

after the coup and, when they did, they were often met with varying degrees of disbelief and rejection, or with futile comparisons with the violence of previous Greek regimes or of more brutal dictatorships elsewhere. In turn, the Colonels alleged that the “exaggerated” complaints about their “disciplinary actions” originated with leftist and communist elements in Greek society.¹⁶ They had some success, too, with their relentless propaganda (Meynaud, Merlopoulos, and Notaras 2002: 2:656–664). Some foreign papers declared that the Greek government was not unique in resorting to violent tactics and that, in the spectrum of global history, the terror in Greece was not as ruthless or widespread as, for instance, in Argentina. Others presented modern Greece as less deserving of a democratic state system simply because its

collective memory and political speech of the 1950s through mid-1960s. Sfikas and Mahera (2011) offer an example of the ongoing sharp critique of the “new wave” represented by Kalyvas and Marantzides. The junta authorities and its large apparatus of security and police forces doled out a range of familiar punishments that were based on the regime’s own interpretation of the law or on provisions of the special court-martial that then administered justice. Among the preventive and retaliatory acts were: round-ups; (nighttime) arrests; surprise attacks and torture during repeated interrogation sessions; internment without due process; sexual maltreatment, molestation, or rape (the Greek word for “rape,” *viasmos*, shares the same root as the word for “violence,” *via*); psychological intimidation, indoctrination, blackmail, and terror; solitary confinement; fatigue duty or forced labor; harassment of the prisoner’s spouse, children, or close relatives; and deprivation of sleep, food, or basic hygiene conditions. Show trials, too, were among the regime’s favorite strategies, demanding displays of compliance. Greek torturers tended to violently beat the soles of the victim’s (immobilized) feet with a stick or iron rod, following techniques practiced from the interwar years through the dictatorship. Panourgia describes this method known as “bastinado,” which has a much longer history in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (2009: 260–262). Under the Colonels, this favorite torture tactic was most often referred to as the *phalanga* (Koroveses [Korovessis] 2007; Kotanidis 2011: 329, 336–337). The advantage of this technique from the torturer’s perspective was that it caused excruciating pain to the victim but left only few traces afterward. Thus the torturer could later deny his (unlikely; her) acts, if challenged. As Voglis has observed, the physical mistreatment of men and women alike was a way for the tormentors to enhance their masculinity (2002: 137); some went in for acts of theater, psychological conceit, or the violent performative language of threats and promises. Taylor (1997), Theweleit (1989), and other scholars have opened up an important discourse on the subject of fascist and other torture practices and its relations to gender roles and patriarchal notions. The fascist patriarchal model is further discussed by De Grazia (1992), Martin (1993), and Spackman (1996).

¹⁶ See the statements by Greek officials printed in an (untitled) article in the leading newspaper *To Vema*, July 9, 1967. See also Corry (1969: 77); Doulis (2011: *passim*); and Wren (1969: 21).

people had failed too many times to keep up this tradition “inherited” from Golden Age Athens.¹⁷ In its own patronizing ways, the West expected the Greeks to draw on their classical past as a deep cultural resource for stabilizing their country—or regarded the classical past as the country’s only stable foundation.¹⁸ Thus many outsiders reduced the Greeks to the role of actors on a stage to be watched and barely let them be agents or authors in their own right.

Papadopoulos was ousted in late November 1973, after his government had faced an abortive naval mutiny as well as student uprisings. But the dictatorship was to last through July 23, 1974, under Brigadier Demetrios Ioannides, the sinister former head of the much-feared and much-resented Military Police (ESA).¹⁹ Then the military, faced

¹⁷ A controversial voice in this debate was David Holden, whose 1972 book, *Greece without Columns: The Making of the Modern Greeks*, pointed to flaws in the Greek national character to explain a history of social and political instability. Clogg (1973) criticized the book, as did Couloumbis (1972), who revisited the controversy in his 2004 collection of notes and interviews from the early 1970s. Robert Keeley elaborates on the question, “Was Greece ever a democracy?” (2010: 190–191).

¹⁸ Even Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman saw modern Greece mainly through the lens of ancient Greece, the latter being the only Greece they chose to mention in their 1979 book, *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism*. They did include modern Greece in their frontispiece map of countries using torture “on an [a]dministrative [b]asis in the 1970s” and traced a parent–client relationship between the United States and Greece. However, the only reference to Greece in the book’s actual text is to the naval empire of classical Athens (1979: 66–67). See also Faubion (1993: 132).

¹⁹ The last dictator, Ioannides, had been a torturer on Makronesos, the most notorious prison island of the Civil War (Anon., *He Auge*, August 17, 2010). Not coincidentally, brutalities were often enacted by the same cast of characters that had been terrorizing leftists long before. According to Close, at least twelve out of fifteen leading members of the junta had been through officers’ training academy under the anticommunist rule of Metaxas, that is, they had received formal training in the 1930s strategies of suppressing communism (2002: 116). The dreaded body named by the acronym ESA, or the Greek Military Police (*Hellenike Stratiotike Astynomia*), was the most barbaric one of three bodies that carried out the junta’s repressive functions. Its Special Interrogation Section (*Eidikon Anakritikon Tmema*, EAT-ESA) was feared as the equivalent of a torture chamber. The other two were the National Security Service (*Asphaleia*) and the Central Service of Information (KYP). See further Arvanitopoulos (1991: 101, 110, 113). More than in previous decades, however, the 1967 dictatorship was being watched and questioned by international civil rights groups and had to repeatedly justify its brutish treatment of dissidents and opponents as well as its reuse of some of the notorious prison camps and island detention centers. This explains, too, why the situation in Greece at first received global attention, which soon dwindled. Elaine Scarry’s seminal work of 1985, *The Body in Pain*, repeatedly remarks on the Colonels’ torture practices. Christopher S. Wren, senior editor of *Look Magazine*, featured the horror stories of actors

with imminent war with Turkey over its invasion of Northern Cyprus, turned over the reins of power to a civilian government under Konstantinos Karamanles.²⁰ The state of the post-1974 *metapoliteuse* (literally: “change of regime,” that is, the process of re-democratization) brought a renewed sense of liberation and appeased initial fears.²¹ With the gradual transition into a democracy, even the Colonels’ supporters embraced new political beliefs and chose not to dwell on their past. The first months and years of this *metapoliteuse* saw an (incomplete) process of “dejustification,” but they also saw a mass hysteria on the stage and, in particular, an explosion of haphazardly-made revue shows that no longer showed theater’s strength. Nonetheless, this period of exhilaration merits further study as well.

tortured by the security police (1969), including that of Perikles Koroveses, who wrote the widely known *La Filière: Témoignage sur les tortures en Grèce* (1969; translated as *The Method* in English and *Ανθρωποφύλακες* in Greek, literally: *Guards of the Humans*). The personal testimony of actress Kitty Arsene, who was also politically active, drew international attention as well (Anon., *Le Monde*, December 18, 1968). See Arsene (1975); Becket (1970); Benake (1999: 162, 164); Doulis (2011: 87–89); Gkiones (1999: 75); Kotanidis (2011: 85, 495); Minis (1973); and Schwab and Frangos (1970: 77–78, 95–96). See Giourgos et al. (2009) for a collection of pertinent older documents.

²⁰ Chatze-antoniou (2007) discusses the Colonels’ self-destructive interference in Cyprus, their coup against the Cypriot president, Archbishop Makarios, and the ensuing Turkish invasion that triggered the junta’s downfall. The regime was unable to handle the crisis it had provoked on Cyprus and its mobilization failed miserably. Greece reached a national impasse and the dictatorship folded. After the Colonels’ demise, Greece hastened to return to a state of political normality and appeasement. For more details on this transition period, see Kassimeris (2005) and Kornetis (2006: 350–387, or his ch. 5; 2013: 292–303). Diamandouros (1983) studies the societal dynamics and the role of new elites involved in the transitional processes of Greece to democracy. See further Diamandouros (1986); Featherstone and Katsoudas (1987); Fleischer (2006); and Voulgares (2002). See also the recent special issue of *Archeio-Taxio* 15 (2013). Samuel Huntington places Greece’s democratization process in a southern European and Eastern perspective (as part of a “third wave” of democratization) and stresses the stabilizing influence of the country’s 1981 accession to the European Economic Community (later European Union) (1991: 20, 21–22, 42, 88, 102–103, 191, 220–222).

²¹ Alivizatos compares the sense of liberation in 1974 to that of 1944, claiming that the Colonels set the clock back by several decades (2008: 11–12). Liakos underscores: “The year 1974 is not the other end of 1967 but the other end of the postwar period. The dictatorship does not simply end but, rather, the post-Civil-War period has come to an end” (2012: 5). See also Liakos (2010) and Meletopoulos (1996: 152).

STATE OF EXCEPTION, STAGE OF EMERGENCY:
“THE GREEKS REHEARSE THE UPRISING”

Λόγω της δημιουργηθείσης εκρύθμου καταστάσεως, από του μεσονυκτίου ο στρατός ανέλαβε την διακυβέρνηση της χώρας . . .

Due to the irregular situation that was created, from midnight on the army has taken up the governance of the country . . .

(Radio announcement by the Armed Forces, April 21, 1967, 6:30 a.m.)

You never want a serious crisis to go to waste.

(Rahm Emanuel, November 2008)²²

A Theoretical Positioning

The military coup of 1967 was only one in a long series of Greek crises in which the usurpers invoked a “state of emergency” and, on this particular occasion, even a “state of siege” (*«εἰς κατάστασιν πολιορκίας»*, “in a state of siege,” as per the official proclamation of April 21, 1967).²³ Whereas an emergency or crisis, however, is not immediately suggestive of conditions of *longue durée*, the “state of exception” becomes the permanent and normalized condition of power. The Colonels’ “state of exception” eroded the foundations of democracy and reduced Greece to a military state. The communist bogey of the late 1960s was, arguably, less frightening than the dictators’ disingenuous panic about a national security crisis. Concealed by a verbal and visual smokescreen, the Greek military coup must nonetheless be elucidated from a more theoretical perspective. I use Giorgio Agamben’s *State of Exception* (2005 [1st edn 2003]) as a roadmap for my positioning of the import of theater and cultural production engaged with the socioeconomic realities of a late

²² I owe this section’s apt subtitle to an anonymous referee of my book manuscript, and am very grateful for this and many other valuable suggestions that are reflected here. The subtitle plays off Günter Grass’s *The Plebeians Rehearse the Uprising*, a play that conveys the author’s fascination but also his disillusionment with Brecht.

²³ A “state-of-siege” law was not new to Greece, although the historical circumstances that generated previous versions of such a law were very different. From 1917 through 1920, the Greek government resorted to a “state-of-siege” law to combat security threats during and after WWI, but older instances of the law had been in existence prior to these dates. See further Mylonas (2012: 127).

capitalist dictatorship.²⁴ Agamben presents the “state of exception” as a contemporary paradigm of government characterized by the suspension of the normal juridical order and of the existing constitution (2005: 5), thus creating a space in which the rule of law has been lifted. He characterizes this legal void and makes further distinctions as follows:

The [post-Napoleonic] history of the state of siege is the history of its gradual emancipation from the wartime situation to which it was originally bound in order to be used as an extraordinary police measure to cope with internal sedition and disorder, thus changing from a real, or military, state of siege to a fictitious, or political one. In any case, it is important not to forget that the modern state of exception is a creation of the democratic-revolutionary tradition and not the absolutist one (2005: 5).

The post-1970 Greek stage problematized the degraded status of Greece, southern Europe, and other countries held by juntas; it looked for explanations to the discourse of Third Worldism, focusing on the United States’ disproportionate power that allowed these juntas to continue to exist.²⁵ From the lens of Third Worldism, Greece was another exploited country held by a US-backed military regime, whose dismal conditions pressed or should have pressed the global citizen’s intellectual and moral credentials. The following chapters discuss relevant plays and their contexts inspired by the theoretical possibilities and challenges that Agamben’s theory opens up. They reconnect with the absolutist but no less “created” tradition of Greece’s “temporary” dictatorship, which provided its citizens with the illusion of a valid explanation and solution for the crisis that had “necessitated” the coup. These plays attest to an early 1970s outburst of creativity and audacity that led to a drastic reshaping of the Greek

²⁴ Fredric Jameson elucidates the term “late capitalism” and its origins and suggests as appropriate synonyms “multinational capitalism” and “spectacle or image society” (1991: p. xviii). See also Kornetis (2013: 316).

²⁵ The term “Third Worldism” expresses the belief that developing nations’ interests are at variance with the economic and political priorities of the wealthy West. This thriving ideology pointed up the Third World’s emancipation and the crisis of European nationalisms, and appealed to youth’s desire to identify with the struggles of the weak and the exploited worldwide. The movement defined the global New Left and spurred radical social rebellion during the third quarter of the 20th century, the time span in which the Greek dictatorship was situated. See recently Garavini (2012: 33, 92, 98–109) and Kornetis (2013: 24, 47–48, 133–134, 139–140, 248–249, and *passim*).

theatrical landscape, whose effects are still felt today. The stage offers a new perspective on Greek cultural politics, one that changes our appreciation of cultural activities under the junta and offers more general insights into the workings of censorship; the strongmen's appropriation of the classical patrimony; the impulse to make history part of the stage dynamics; the impact of Brecht's theories in Greece; and the expression of absurdist trends through an aesthetics of (Third Worldist) marginality.

Agamben (1942–), the Italian political philosopher, is widely known for his critique of illegitimate authority through the usurpation of extra-constitutional powers and for his analysis of the “logic of sovereignty,” itself drawn from Carl Schmitt, the prolific Nazi jurist and political theorist of the interwar period. Agamben's 2005 book also reflects his involvement with Walter Benjamin, the liberal German philosopher and literary critic of the same era, whose interest in drama (and especially Brecht's epic theater) ran much deeper than that of Schmitt.²⁶ The post-9/11 climate has rendered Agamben even more influential as a guide explaining “emergency powers” and as an admonitory voice against the repression of civil liberties. His *State of Exception* reconstructs contemporary sovereignty using a range of critical and interdisciplinary methods, and is the culmination of his earlier work on the “bare life” or the “naked life” created in a state of siege (symbolized by the refugee camp, the prison camp, the concentration or extermination camp, which he has called defining characteristics of twentieth-century modernity; *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 1998: 181). Usurpers in Greece, as elsewhere, have claimed that the 1967 state of exception was a pragmatic and provisional response to a perceived but exaggerated or “willed” emergency, to allow themselves more leeway in attacking their enemies. In alliance with Agamben, this book shows that the Greek dictators tried hard, for at least six years, to transform their state of emergency into a state of “normality” (despite the obvious paradoxes inherent in the development of a prolonged state of exception), replete with rhetorical and theatrical underpinnings, and even an awareness of the

²⁶ Agamben's 2005 book is very short at 91 pages, but it encapsulates a complex tradition of politico-philosophical thinking. The rich web of connections with and influences from Schmitt and Benjamin (and Hegel) has been unraveled by Kisner (2007) and McQuillan (2011), among others. For introductions to the philosophies of Schmitt and Benjamin, see Hooker (2009) and Gilloch (2002) respectively.

humiliating force of the “bare life.” As head of the Military Police, Colonel Ioannides threatened one of his torture victims thus:

In 1967, many people didn't believe that we'd last more than six months, and . . . here we are in our sixth year. And do you know why? Do you know where our strength lies? In the fact that we give only second or third priority to the human element.

(Quoted and translated by Anastassios Minis 1973: 30)

Agamben has devoted relatively little attention to youth's global aspirations or protest acts of the 1960s in general. The recent book of Kostis Kornetis, however, does justice to those topics and deservedly places Greece in the spotlight (*Children of the Dictatorship: Student Resistance, Cultural Politics, and the “Long 1960s” in Greece*, 2013). I largely follow Kornetis on the topics of direct action tactics or the revolutionary recipes that Greek students borrowed from Western countercultural youth movements, but I additionally stress the importance of theater in consolidating youth's resistance profile. My exposure to Kornetis's book came late in the research and writing process. On many occasions, I therefore returned to specific plays and circumstances and followed the gravity points, not of the Greek student movement, but of the performances marked by my source materials. I am aware that I cannot let theory encroach excessively upon my analysis of Greek theater's counteroffensive, that is, of the “stage of emergency,” precisely because theatrical life under the junta demands further archival and new-historicist study. Therefore, many of the themes raised here will receive further clarification and proper illustration in my close examination of plays and conditions.

The Greek military dictatorship offers a particularly apt context or case study with which to rethink Agamben's theory: the sense of “extreme necessity” of late April 1967 was, notably, a sense of déjà vu as well. The post-coup situation was not, however, one of lesser urgency for the opposition to address. After a full thirty years of leftist oppression, which disproportionally targeted the younger generations, the students and actors living under the Colonels' thumb perceived a unique kind of emergency: they wanted to finally turn the tide for good, not only the tide of the recent military overhaul, but also that of three decades of unfreedom sometimes of a literal, sometimes of a symbolic order. With their sharpened consciousness of being denizens of an international world in turmoil, the Greek

student and youth movement developed modes of direct communication with this global world and availed itself of the foreign attention that had turned to the country. This movement thus reappropriated the latest sense of urgency and folded it into its dissident language by conversing with the realm of the stage. Thus, too, the movement delivered the “other” side of the sociopolitical confrontation that resulted from the emergency or state of exception (which, in Agamben’s articulation, represents only the one side of the usurpers). Greek theater, too, sought liberation after decades of curtailment, not just after the most recent crackdown, even though the latest crisis was the one to trigger the public awareness of an emergency. The resistance staged by students and youth of the first three years, however, appeared as a kind of slow-release opposition (a reality that has since been contested by the subsequently lionized generation of the 1970s). Against this backdrop, I argue that the new Greek plays of the early 1970s were, therefore, catalytic tools that put rediscovered Greece-in-crisis on display through performance (a trend, incidentally, reinvented in the post-2008 Greek world of economic woes). The panoply of reinvigorated Greek theater was able to combat or subvert the “state of exception” in modes that proved to be more successful than those of any other genre or medium. When Greek youth, students, and actors desperately wanted to keep pace with the rest of the West, and when they wanted to finally achieve the moment and momentum of change, stage performance proved to be the fastest, most outspoken, and most effective way to reach, and especially to grow, a critical audience.

Agamben’s Theory: Possibilities, Challenges, “Better Scripts”

The works of Agamben and Kornetis equip me with valuable tools to frame my thinking about the Greek dictatorship. They challenge me to advance Agamben’s conclusions and to speak to a twenty-first-century international readership. Agamben wrote the first history of the state of exception in its various national contexts throughout Western Europe and the United States. His 2005 book represents a series of post-9/11 crisis and cultural studies (and the fear of the rise of states of exception), but is short on older historical examples. Unfortunately, Greece is not on this critic’s radar screen. In the

past, however, Agamben has often drawn on Greek language terms (*zoe* and *bios*, or the simple fact of living versus a way of life, in *Homo Sacer*, 1998: 1) and on Greek law and political philosophy (Aristotle and Plato), but these borrowings have been limited to concepts from ancient Greece (in addition to those from ancient Rome). Regrettably, Agamben has misapprehended his theory's significance for Greece as a modern nation that has been innately performative. This trend, too, is a scholarly inclination that the following chapters acknowledge but do try to subvert.

Agamben's 2005 book steers toward an essentialist definition of the state of exception, but eschews standard evidentiary accounts and empirical research. Contemporary incarnations of the public law phenomena he describes merit further and especially interdisciplinary investigation. My archival study of theater under the Greek dictatorship may furnish an example of the kind of documented empirical reading that is wanting in Agamben. The Greek case cannot but assert the need for thorough archival research and for a comprehensive analysis of the disparate finds. Moreover, while Agamben's legal and philosophical discussion rests on solid ground, the critic neglects to interpret the state of exception from the perspective of cultural studies and from social structures intersecting with legalities. *The State of Exception* and *Homo Sacer* do not engage with sociological explanations. The Greek case advances Agamben's conceptions by delivering examples that foster a better understanding of the larger symbolic and societal import of the state's emergency measures. Agamben does not sift through the minutiae of legal procedures and developments. This approach certainly augments the bigger picture he projects, but begs the question about the nature and repercussions of concrete legislation. Chapter 2 of this book delves into the legal and practical dimensions of the censorship rules and the general climate of normativity instituted by the Colonels. It shows what a state of exception looks like when it trickles down to the stage and to life through laws and punitive measures.

Pre-2003 studies of the Greek dictatorship have not had the benefit of interacting with Agamben's *State of Exception*. Since the book's publication in English, however, it has generated lively debate in Modern Greek Studies. The very few earlier studies focused on other areas of cultural production, distinct from theater. Karen Van Dyck's book, *Kassandra and the Censors: Greek Poetry since 1967* (1998), has affirmed the value of a cultural studies approach to

modern Greek literature, and has admirably engaged with matters of censorship, self-censorship and sexuality, novel writing strategies, youth's favorite music, and so on. To discuss censorship and its gendered colorations, Van Dyck has drawn on the Foucauldian argument about power imbalances as an incitement to discourse and its implications for sexual politics (Van Dyck 1998: 4–5, 15, 56; Foucault 1990: 27). She also deftly redeploys Lyotard's legitimating principle and neologism of the "paralogy" of instabilities, anomalies, or paradoxes, which reinstitute the game-playing or imaginative-performative aspects of language (Van Dyck 1998: 28, 29–30, 31–33; Lyotard 1984). "Paralogy" or the "paralogical" "destabilizes the capacity for explanation" (Lyotard 1984: 61) and goes "beyond" or "against" a fixed, immutable way of "reasoning," which, in the Greek case, was the regime's stifling *logos* or its nationalistic metanarrative, which served to boost (the myth of) political and social harmony. Thus the paralogical rehabilitates the heterogeneous-performative dimensions of language, which are distinct from the straightforwardly productive sides of scientific or economic performance. Van Dyck positions Greek poetry since 1967 as a literary and activist movement, whose paralogy acted in concert with the poets' ideological orientation, their use of the page as a heterotopia, their careful selection of texts to translate and adapt, and their publishing agenda. I propose that Lyotard's principle pertains a priori to the creative, unpredictable world of the stage, where "just gaming" (Lyotard and Thébaud's 1985 book title) can always transform into "just playing."²⁷ To Lyotard's and Van Dyck's readings, however, I add that Greek theater's alternative *paralógos*, in concert with 1960s political premises, plays off the meanings of the sinister *parakrátos* (the "parastate" or secretive "parallel state," stressing the unseen actions and the hidden ground shared with Agamben's state of exception), while invoking theater's turn to the absurd (*parálogo*) to be able to do so publicly (see Chapter I, pp. 55, 59).²⁸

²⁷ For further analysis of the theories of the French philosopher and author of *The Postmodern Condition* (1984 [1st edn 1979]), see Malpas (2003: esp. 31–32, 33, on paralogy).

²⁸ Van Dyck takes into account the "local specificity" of the term "paralogy" in Greece. Introducing the connotative sense of "paralogical," she clarifies that this sense "emphasizes the discursive process of undoing logic, rather than the absurd effect itself" (1998: 31).

Diana Taylor (1997 and 2000) has expanded the study of Western political theater to include Latin American drama that mobilized against Argentina's military regime (1976–1983), and she has addressed the Argentine actors' and producers' deployment of Brecht to stage opposition and rebellion. Her pioneering book of 1997, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War,"* discusses the seven-year period that began when Greece had started to recover from its traumatic "*heptaetia*."²⁹ Taylor has reconceptualized terror and performance offstage under a US-condoned regime, and has highlighted the role of actual theater affirming itself during crises. She also shows herself passionately committed to constructing "better scripts" as "better politics" (1997: p. xi). With comparative references to Taylor, I deploy performance and crisis studies and demonstrate how the new Greek plays strengthened a grassroots movement that expressed or reinvented ideas about leadership, mobilization, and strength in numbers—and that, similarly, used many of its own military metaphors. I see theater, then, not just as a tool to detect trauma and to fight problems, but also as a "weapon" meant to weaken or overthrow oppressive regimes (Taylor 2000: 176). "Revolutionary theatre," claims Taylor, "was conceived as a pragmatic, educational, useful theatre, a practical exercise in learning about the revolutionary process" (176). Theater under Greece's junta pushed the limits of official tolerance by modeling a dissident ideology.

Under the Greek dictatorship, which prefigured conditions and reactions subsequently observed in Argentina, the early 1970s stage distinguished itself from cinema, music, and literature by laying bare the greater porosity of performance and politics, and by representing a hybrid discourse drawing on both art and ideology: theater and politics appeared to have been made of the same raw material, which the stage did not hesitate to disclose. Greek theater was intricately interwoven with the realm of political and social crises to an extent unattained or unattainable by any other artistic medium. The long tradition of nationalist-philological burdens that constrained Greek poetry and prose did not weigh down on new plays. Theater could go

²⁹ Argentina's military regime instituted a state of siege that went by the name of *Proceso* or the "National Reorganization Process," which similarly paid lip service to order and legitimate procedure while enacting a regime of terror for full seven years. Feitlowitz (2011) delivers a searing account of Argentina's Dirty War. See also Graham-Jones (2000: 60, 75–76, 128–130).

right to the heart of what it meant to act; it let play-acting become acting per se or acting politically. Theater posited a voice in a public forum, letting actors and audiences inhabit a multivocal stage. The script put history and the sociopolitical relations it contained out in the open. Additionally, theater presented a collective statement that responded to the need for the kind of moral clarity that students and youth were urgently seeking. True acting, *hypokritike* (υποκριτική), had to replace hypocrisy, *hypokrisia* (υποκρισία). To this end, theater took a performative rather than a descriptive, let alone normative approach. Amid censorship and with only prerecorded broadcasts and/or vetted publications on offer, theater was still the quintessentially live show, capable of making the unpredictable and the “invisible visible once again” (Taylor 1997: 137). Acting on stage was far more than a pastime or a side activity; it was about promoting a new worldview, about transforming stage language into real action, about fighting for the power to create and represent, thereby providing an antidote to the many prohibitions of real life. Actors expected more from language and from their interaction with the spectators (and vice versa) than writers could ever have asked of their readers: key was the unabashed demand that, together, they bring a new world vision to life. Greek theater boosted the process of critical subject formation: it enacted the identity transformation of the subject as subordinate into the subject of co-actor. Through the mid-1970s, Greek performance broke cross-cultural ground and remained substantially different from other fields of cultural production for various reasons: rehearsing and negotiating performance before an audience, new plays became stage events that aimed to grow both the theater and resistance community. These plays rehearsed and reperformed revolution, turning the regime’s proclaimed “revolution” on its head and linking the local term to its complex global context. Reperformance became a process of constant reevaluation and polyphonic critique, an interactive and self-reflexive praxis, and ultimately a daunting force. Greek literature, which had traditionally been more contemplative, shared oppositional inclinations, but its community-growing functions were far more limited. When literature was raising awareness about the junta’s oppression, its success was replicated by the issuing of (slightly revised) new editions or sequels. When theater was mobilizing a growing public, it challenged with new, bolder reperformances and productions of provocative scripts defined by countercultural spaces,

both literally novel spaces and intellectually “other” realms, as when theater went exploring absurdist and Brechtian drama.

The junta’s “spectacular politics” resorted to censorship as another means of confining its public to a (mentally) more restricted space and of curtailing its ability to act. Significantly, early 1970s Greek plays preferred not to fall back on the locales of old, where space was legally restricted or most visibly conditioned (as in the productions of classical Greek tragedy mounted in prestigious outdoor settings). For many young Greek actors, absurdist and Brechtian theater was symbolic, not only of different aesthetics, but of an altogether different intellectual space. This path of innovation led to an artistic and mental heterotopia, which could, however, be transplanted to, or rewritten for, an informed Greek stage and be given concrete shape in new physical sites. These spaces, both literal and psychological, were of the utmost importance because they countered the Greek regime’s deliberate elimination or “disappearance” of the regular locales associated with civil society (an idea provocatively launched by Taylor’s 1997 title, *Disappearing Acts*; also 1997: 72, 99). In turn, Agamben’s state of exception marked out a space in which, once the rule of law had been annulled or “disappeared,” the citizens themselves disappeared into a “bare life.” Moreover, the upstart Greek government established its own, charged “spaces of exception,” in which normal, legitimate audiences were “disappeared” (Taylor 1997: 72), and where the remaining attendees instinctively displayed consent or “disappeared” their critical thinking skills. Theater, on the contrary, “presenced” its audiences and committed to a “reappearing” act (Taylor 1997: 61, 221). Therefore, Greek theater’s counteroffensive extended to the creation of its own augmented or “exceptional spaces,” where new ideas, heuristic guidelines, and production methods could be tested out and shared with actors and viewers. In its turn to new sites and modalities, alternative performance reorganized social space as political space in—literal and metaphorical—ways that literature could not possibly emulate. When the Colonels reassigned space as propaganda, theater rewrote it for socializing, mobilizing, and resisting. These oppositional thoughts, strategies, and relocations find meaning and expression in a theater of liberation (partly in the sense of a political theater from the developing world).

Especially in junta-held countries like Greece and Argentina, theater and literature have done some of the work that more stable societies would expect history-writing to accomplish. Under the Greek

dictatorship, when heavy prepublication censorship constrained literary works and histories, and when most literati and scholars chose not to publish, theater began to do more and more of historiography's work. Penelope Papailias has remarked that Greek fiction has often stepped in for Greek history-writing. She makes important observations about the "reality-effect of Greek war literature," or Greek readers' openness to accept literature as history, especially when it pertains to periods such as the Civil War that have suffered from a lack of both public debate and historiographical critique. This perceived duty of Greek literature to supply history-writing with additional evidence also explains why novelists could face exclusion as if they were the writers of an unwanted history of a contested period (Papailias 2005: 144–145; also Taylor 1997: 211–212). The first years of the junta regime, however, must be excepted from Papailias's elongated perspective on the postwar decades, not because the dynamics between literature and history changed, but because theater displaced fiction in the equation. This book argues that, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Greek theater assumed the role of fiction and offered itself up as a site of cultural and political renewal.

Agamben and Taylor have provided me with an overarching theoretical framework with which to address the Colonels' power-grab, their unrelenting attempts to extend their reach, their emergency measures and censorship legislation. These critics' works also enrich my thinking about anti-Americanism, anticapitalism, and (Third Worldist) dissidence. With Taylor and Kornetis, I reconsider the formative impact of the worldwide counterculture cum performance culture of rebellion by looking beyond Greece to the stage dynamics created under other juntas and to Brecht's centrality in grassroots political theater. While these concepts and terms now have global validity and reach, many of them were new to late 1960s Greece. Significantly, the Greek stage afforded the experience of speaking these charged terms, practicing them, and embodying them through rehearsal, (curtailed) performance, and ever-changing "final" performance. It also showed how internal conflicts and even ostensible failures—normally regarded as negative qualities—could still be constructive on the road from process to product. Taylor's work helps me to better articulate how experimental resistance strategies may overlap with experimental theater strategies, and what is important about both for the international scholarly dialogue on performance studies. Focusing also on Brechtian theory and its implications for discussions

about rehearsing and enacting uprisings, Taylor's research urges me to posit the comparative value of early 1970s Greek theater for crisis and cultural studies with a global outlook. With Van Dyck and Papailias, I value the relevance of the specifics of Greek cultural production, the burdens placed on evolving performances, youth's counterculture, anticonsumerism, fiction, film, music, and activism's growth by way of paralogy. I reassert, however, theater's dynamic grasp beyond poetry or prose for being (in) a stage that was always merely the process of the developing production, that was always only as good as its next performance. Unlike what mainstream theater has come to signify in the West, I define theater in early 1970s Greece as follows: an act of performing that was forever a rehearsal, that performed extrovertly (to reach beyond the stage, the city, the country), that did not pursue perfection but was only a step in the process of enacting revolution. Thus Greece developed its own version of 1970s political theater, admittedly a theater of local liberation but one that also deployed an international discourse. Whereas cinema, literature, and the publishing world of the time still delivered finished products, arbitrarily perfected by a fixed point in time, the stage, unencumbered by pressure for finality, tried out ideas in group settings, bounced them off on its first, somewhat random audiences, then aimed to grow these audiences and to cultivate more committed groups of critical theater-goers. By taking its energy to the new spaces before attentive urban and cosmopolitan spectators, Greek theater also made clear that it did not intend to rehash "old" controversies, but sought, rather, a cross-fertilization between art and politics. Thus my study establishes the central role of theater in opposing the dictatorship, but widens into a study of Greek visual culture and cultural politics of the junta years, with references to cinema, the literary scene, and the publishing world.

THE SCOPE OF THIS BOOK

Is it true that your great Greek tragedies and tragi-comedies
are now being performed daily in police stations?

(Lawrence Ferlinghetti, "Forty Odd Questions for the Greek
Regime and One Cry for Freedom," 1973)

Much has been written about the rule of the Colonels that pertains to the military, institutional, and political dimensions of the regime. The floundering economy of the early 1970s has frequently been noted, as have the junta's disastrous foreign policy decisions. Diverse genres of literature and art have been discussed productively, but the domain of theater leaves ample room for expansion. The need to study Greek drama of the dictatorship period is all the more urgent since, arguably, the early 1970s flourishing of drama counterbalanced the absence of leftist prose fiction, up until a more subjective type of fiction started to proliferate in the late 1970s. Under the pressures of censorship and self-censorship, progressive writers gave up on publishing prose fiction for the first three years of the junta rule, while modern Greek playwriting evolved and thrived.³⁰ By late 1972, a new "generation of the 1970s" had begun to emerge in poetry at least, with representatives such as Giannes Kontos and Giannes Patiles.³¹ Roderrick Beaton identifies an important characteristic of this poetry that applied to many plays as well: they explored the "contemporary meeting of traditional Greek culture, including language, with the internationalism of pop culture and the electronic age" (1999: 265). As mentioned earlier, Van Dyck's *Kassandra and the Censors* (1998) examines the poets of the 1970s generation, women's writing, literary resistance, and the making of a feminist protest poetics. Van Dyck also shows how the mythical Cassandra, Aristophanes' Lysistrata, and other female figures were adopted by the discourse of the opposition

³⁰ Loukas Axelos reiterates that, until 1973, writers and publishers representing the Old Left did not take, or were not able to take, any significant initiatives to bring out new Greek books (1984: 44–46, 48, 52–53; 2008: 55). An exception was the 1972 book *Plague* (*Λοιμός*), which Andreas Phrankias wrote and published on his own account on the taboo subject of the prison camps of the Civil War. Ares Alexandrou began writing his best known work, the novel *The Mission Box* (*Το κιβώτιο*), in 1966, but he only published it in 1974. The second, commercial edition of the insubordinate novel *The Third Wedding Wreath* (*Το τρίτο στεφάνι*), by Kostas Tachtses (Hermes, 1970 [1st edn 1962]), became a success (Papanikolaou 2010b: 185). Giorgos Ioannou's collection of short stories entitled *The Sarcophagus* (1971) struck a chord as well. The censors, however, were less likely to frown on short stories and one-act plays, which were deemed more "innocuous." Beaton (1999: 274–276), Katsan (2013: 2), and Kotzia (2006: *passim*) discuss the general impasse in the realm of prose fiction under the junta. See also the special issue of *ArcheioTaxio* 14 (2012); Argyriou (1988); Chatze-ioannou, *To Vema*, April 26, 1987; and Mackridge and Yannakakis (2004: 9–10). Delegiannes (2008) focuses on post-1974 literary reflections of the 1960s.

³¹ See Alexiou (2001) and Beaton (1999: 264–269). Calotychos states that the phrase was coined by the poet Vasiles Steriades (Calotychos 2003: 227, 235 n. 38).

(1998: 100–139). She stresses that the Colonels, with their entrenched ideas about cultural unity and ideological clarity, could not cope with the ambiguities of allusion, allegory, or uncertain meaning—a weakness that the opposition was quick to exploit with the countertools of complexity and heterogeneity. Stage practitioners soon found ways to redeploy the very premises or constituents of theater: action, contrast or conflict, and disparateness. Literature, drama, music, and cinema muddled the tidy categories that the dictators and their censors imposed on Greece. Dimitris Papanikolaou investigates popular music and literature in his 2007 study, *Singing Poets: Literature and Popular Music in France and Greece*. Maria Oikonomou (2008) studies the intellectual exchanges and the aesthetic debates between French and (expatriate) Greek artists in the formative decades of 1950–1970. The topic of the antidictatorial struggle has only recently been integrated into standard scholarly narratives of the Greek past. Research in this area is, however, still heavily dependent on mixed memoirs and dispersed archival collections.³² Scholars have also scrutinized the state-determined value system or the single cultural vision that the Colonels imposed and that continued to hold sway (Meletopoulos 1996). Kornetis (2006 and 2013) has researched the student movement and youth culture of the junta years with great scholarly precision. Earlier academic studies on these subjects were lacking, with the exception of the thorough analysis by Olympios Daphermos, *The Antidictatorial Student Movement, 1972–1973* (1999, in Greek), who downplays, however, the students' cultural life.³³ Kornetis and also Katsapes (2013, in Greek) rightly place the

³² Brief descriptions of archival collections have been presented by the contributors to *Dromoi tes Historias* (issue 62 of April 22, 2011), the historical section of the Greek newspaper *Dromos*. See also issue 61 of April 16, 2011. The 1970s saw a spate of books in English that took the form of personal or political memoirs and that cast infamy on the Colonels. Some of these books bear dramatic titles: *Greece in the Dark*, by Kevin Andrews (1980); *A Piece of Truth*, by Amalia Fleming (1972); *Eyewitness in Greece*, by John Katris (1971); *I Was Born Greek*, by Melina Mercouri (1971); *Escape from Amorgos*, by George Mylonas (1974); Andreas Papandreou's *Democracy at Gunpoint* (1970); Margaret Papandreou's *Nightmare in Athens* (1970); and Helen Vlachos's *House Arrest* (1970). Bayard Stockton's *Phoenix with a Bayonet* (1971) offers a contemporary view that is sympathetic to the dictators. Princeton University's library copy of the latter has the Greek word for "fascist" written all over it.

³³ See also Angeles and Daphermos (2005). Kretikos (1996) discusses a range of student and resistance organizations. Liakos (1988) and Zapheires (2000 and 2011) describe the formation of youth organizations in Thessaloniki. Papadogiannis (2009) presents youth movements of the mid- to late 1970s.

Greek student movement in the paradigm of the international “Long Sixties” and argue for an intricate global network of cultural and intellectual communication. The Greek students, in effect, prolonged the 1960s by staging their most conspicuous protests in 1973.

Overall, cultural life under the Colonels has received minimal attention, whether in the regular historical studies, in personal memoirs, or in the current press coverage. Even though the theater culture has been recognized for its importance, it remains to be studied in all its complexity and particularity.³⁴ Most general histories of the dictatorship have little to say about the nature and development of contemporary dramaturgy. Studies intent on producing the facts of this era shy away from its sustained engagement with theater, with the result that the odd play is at best reduced to the role of documenting a given historical or political specificity. The topic of theater under the Colonels has only recently found its way into doctoral dissertations, namely those of Philip Hager (2008) and Antonia Karaoglou (2009, in Greek).³⁵ I share the objectives of these two young scholars to provide

³⁴ Typical articles such as the one by Georgios Anastasiades, entitled “The ‘Culture’ of the Junta” and included in the 2001 special issue of *Eleutherotypia*, barely mention theater life. The same is true of the special section of *Ho Polites* 99 (April 2002), entitled “Culture during the Years of the Dictatorship: Interruptions and Continuation.” Exceptions are Loverdou, *To Vema*, April 20, 1997, and Papanikolaou, *Ta Nea*, April 17–18, 2010 (2010a; expanded in 2010b). The recent work of Thomas Doulis (2011) focuses mainly on the dissident print culture and on the resistance enacted by Greek intellectuals at home and abroad, but leaves the domain of theater unexplored.

³⁵ Before the completion of Hager’s dissertation, no monograph in English had even tried to address the evolution of Greek theater under the junta and its literary, theatrical, and cultural significance. Hager’s dissertation is the first full-length study in English and is entitled “From the Margin to the Mainstream: The Production of Politically-engaged Theatre in Greece during the Dictatorship of the Colonels (1967–1974)” (Royal Holloway, University of London, 2008). The Greek dissertation of Antonia Karaoglou sheds—long-overdue—light on Thessaloniki’s theater life: “Theater in Thessaloniki during the Years of the Seven-Year Dictatorship” (2009). Hager analyzed seven plays, which were performed between February 1970 and July 1973: Giorgos Skourtes, *The Nannies*; Iakovos Kambanelles, *The Penal Colony* (an adaptation of Kafka’s short story, *In the Penal Colony*; original title: *In der Strafkolonie*, 1919); Paulos Matesis, *Biochemistry*; Petros Markares, *The Story of Ali Retzo*; Loula Anagnostaki, *Antonio or The Message*; Kambanelles, *Our Grand Circus*; and Kostas Mourselas, *Oh Dad, What a World!*. All these plays premiered in Athens, except for Mourselas’s play which opened in Thessaloniki. Hager’s dissertation is informed by Pierre Bourdieu’s theory (to postulate fields of power as well as a resistance field in light of Bourdieu’s concept of cultural production) and by the notion of *Hellenikoteta*, which Vangelis Calotychos succinctly defines as “a marriage of Hellenism and aestheticism” (2003: 161). Roilou (2009) offers a comprehensive reflection on *Hellenikoteta* and Greek performances of ancient drama. Bourdieu’s

an in-depth perspective on the theater history of the junta years and add my own study as a complementary one. I have deliberately looked beyond the analytical categories and selections of plays and stage companies that they have adopted. Also, I aim to balance the critical demands of reconstructing theatrical experiments with my attempt to draw up an appropriate cultural-historical framework that relates Greece to the late 1960s youth revolution. At times, however, my efforts intersect with those of Hager and Karaoglou.

This book analyzes important stage productions whose broader sociopolitical themes manifest themselves in a variety of contexts that, against the Colonels' wishes, connected Greece to the counter-culture of the Western world. Chapter 1 provides a concise political and theater-historical overview, to then discuss the turn to the New Greek Theater and the role of youth and student activism of the 1960s through early 1970s. It defines New Greek Theater as a performative movement that opened up oppositional platforms or "free" spaces fostering a radical critique. The alternative stages allowed young playwrights, directors, and actors to perform democracy in a state of tyranny. Thus Chapter 1 argues that early 1970s Greek theater was situated at the confluence of four factors, some of which overlap: its dialogue with absurdist and Brechtian drama, the function of emerging Greek plays as sites of cultural and political renewal, international youth's dissidence, and the movement to "occupy" alternative, liberated spaces of rebellion. It is, however, nearly impossible to

theory on the importance of symbolic and cultural capital in the field of cultural production can be conveniently accessed in English through the edition and introduction by Randal Johnson (Bourdieu 1993).

Karaoglou examines the full repertoire produced by Thessaloniki's two leading theater companies during the dictatorship years (or a total of some eighty productions): the State Theater of Northern Greece (its main stage and also its Experimental Stage and New Stage) and the Theatrical Workshop (Theatriko Ergasteri) of "Techne" (founded in January 1970). In their own choices of plays to discuss, both scholars prove that diverse narratives can be told and a variety of plays can be adduced to illustrate Greek theater activity under the Colonels. There is a wealth of theater plays to choose from, and I have tried to avoid, as much as possible, examining the same plays as my predecessors. Also, it is important that this remain a short book that can be both analytical and informative about an otherwise very large and multifaceted subject. Konstantza Georgakake (2009) supplies a long list of the production data on the approximately 350 modern Greek plays that were staged during the dictatorship years, but the overwhelming majority of these are comedies and musicals. Similarly useful is the *Guide to Modern Greek Dramaturgy* by Georgakake and Puchner (2009, in Greek).

determine which factor or factors contributed most to the appearance of New Greek Theater. If, however, Greek dramaturgy's subsequent decades and also other geographical locales (such as Argentina's sites of performance studied by Taylor 1997) offer any indications, the second and the related fourth factor may, arguably, best explain the long-term impact and appeal of this theater and its allied counter-culture. Chapter 1 further prepares for the key themes developed in the subsequent chapters and reiterated in the Conclusion, defining the path of the New Greek Theater as the growth of a political movement. It fleshes out the dynamics of this theater's production methods and experiences and also its relations to the new mobilizing structures of student and youth groups. These relations define independent, radical performance as a vector for a totalizing experience: student audiences did not passively watch plays but took the energy of revolutionary performances back into the streets, thus abetting the formation of a resistance movement.

Chapter 2 contextualizes the phenomenon of the military regime's censorship legislation and opens up new and unexpected entry-points into the world of the alternative stage. Because this legislation was seen as a direct affront to the freedoms of speech and expression, it drew ample attention in the foreign press (allowing me to incorporate references to articles from *The New York Times*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, and *Le Monde*). Theater of the dictatorship era had to serve a variety of sociopolitical purposes that determined how past history and contemporary conditions could be portrayed. Run-ins with the junta censors became a fact of life for many playwrights, directors, and actors. Chapter 2, therefore, examines the specific constraints of the censorship rule under which the Greek stage had to operate. It debates the paired issues of censorship and self-censorship and shows how the regime's control mechanisms also affected the performance of the press, television, cinema, literature, and criticism of the arts. It further addresses the paradoxical mixtures of the uses of the classics and contemporary concerns, noting ancient tragedy's resonance under the junta. A historically layered reflection follows, treating the pervasive reappropriations of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, the longest classical attack of a lone but defiantly suffering hero against an abusive superpower. Tensions and clashes over the function of art and over who controlled the ancient legacy marked the dictatorship era perhaps more than any other period in Greek history. By the early 1970s, however, productions of modern Greek plays

managed to better negotiate the performative realm in which the relationship between state and subject was constructed—and contested: the stage favored greater dissemination of information and enhanced cultural and political alertness. The public role of modern Greek theater became more pronounced as the regime somewhat loosened the grip of censorship. To argue this, the latter half of Chapter 2 adduces specific examples of plays and also analyzes the case study of *The Trombone* by Marios Pontikas.

The Greek military rulers constrained Greek theater but wanted to be seen cultivating other and related forms of the arts. Seeking validation, they stage-managed their own performances and festivals (giving new meaning to the many connections that the Greek language makes between performance, calculated pretense, and conspiracy plot, starting with “Operation Prometheus”).³⁶ Those who did not collaborate when asked found themselves in what Taylor has called “bad scripts” or political scenarios (1997: 183). The first half of Chapter 3 analyzes the regime’s contentious efforts to perform its legitimacy: it presents a detailed picture of the state-sponsored, nationalist spectacles that brokered Greek history through the ages for citizens whose role was limited to that of applauding spectators. It discusses the “Festivals of the Martial Virtue of the Greeks” and focuses the longer cultural-historical perspective of the preceding chapter on an event of regular recurrence in a similar, stultifying form. Fusing theater and the nation’s rituals, these festivals constituted identity-forging acts of performance and were the fascist equivalent of classicizing, historicizing, or patriotic drama in its reactionary definition.³⁷ They gave a fixed form, content, and space

³⁶ The historian Konstantinos Tsoukalas promptly responded with his book by the aptly chosen title of *The Greek Tragedy* (originally published in English in 1969, to reach an international reading public).

³⁷ I do not label either the Colonels’ dictatorship or Metaxas’s rule as strictly “fascist” but prefer to characterize both regimes as ultra-right-wing, reactionary in their ideology (a partly secular, partly religious fundamentalism), violently anti-communist, authoritarian and brutal in their methods, but populist in their rhetoric. Voglis notes that Metaxas tried hard to mobilize a mass fascist movement but did not succeed (2002: 39); also Kallis (2007: 234). Bregianne (1999: 171–172) and Carabott (2003) discuss the theatrical qualities of Metaxas’s rhetoric. See Clogg for a respected historian’s positioning of the Greek junta within a political spectrum that incorporates fascism (1972: 51–53). On p. 53, Clogg calls the definition of “pseudo-fascist paternalist dictatorship” perhaps the most apposite label for the junta rule. He notes obvious parallels, too, with what has been dubbed “clerical-military semi-fascism.”

to the otherwise diffuse workings of the military government's ideology. Thus Chapter 3 allows insight into the dictators' official attempts to regenerate the nation and to redefine their own takeover against a backdrop of spectacularity: the usurpers imposed their own "society of the spectacle,"³⁸ which, aided by the mechanisms of terror and torture, conditioned their audiences, telling them when, where, and especially how to respond. The chapter unmasks the hegemonic side of a theater industry that shaped public and national culture from the perspective of the regime itself. In short, both Chapter 2 and the first half of Chapter 3 show what Greek theater was up against.

The second half of Chapter 3 analyzes *Our Grand Circus* (*To μεγάλο μας τσίρκο*) by Iakovos Kambanelles. This landmark play presented a revisionist inversion of the primary motifs of the junta spectacles: it entered into an *agon* with the regime's nationalist conception of the past and demythified the official grand narrative. The chapter assesses the play's production process and illustrates its carnivalesque authority against the backdrop of the tightening censorship restrictions of late 1973. *Our Grand Circus* is a good example of a play that qualifies for that rather overworked label of "political play": it exposed tragic tensions in Greek history and delivered incriminating truths about the current rulers. The production's arresting take on Greek history and, through history, on contemporary circumstances, raised important questions about performance

Kallis assesses the Metaxas regime in light of these terms (2007). Roger Griffin has isolated "palingenetic ultra-nationalism" or "palingenetic populist ultra-nationalism" as the fundamental ideological element of fascism (1998: 13). This definition of an ultra-nationalism that looks to the past in its quest for regeneration while also craving popular support applies to the Greek dictatorship as well. For a US diplomat's perspective, see Robert Keeley (2010: 172–173).

³⁸ The reference pertains to *The Society of the Spectacle* (Paris, 1967), written by the French critic and activist Guy Debord, which was translated into Greek in 1972. This neo-Marxist critique of capitalist culture attacked modern society's alienating spectacularity and explained, more specifically, that society had turned into (nefarious, capitalist-driven) spectacle that co-opted and commodified all else. Because life had become spectacle, it had started to annihilate human dignity. Greek state politics, too, had become an ongoing spectacle, presenting endless photo opportunities for the dictators—as a look at the television news blurbs or the journal *Epikaira* of the time confirms. Debord's theory influenced radical youth movements of the late 1960s through 1970s and still proves its usefulness to Hager's analysis (2008) and to my own notion of the authoritarian nature of the Colonels' spectacle: the normative spectacle state enacted the power of representation by staging its self-congratulatory festivals and by manipulating the mass media and surveillance practices. Theater and public life necessarily overlapped.

and the past, that is, about the former's ability to construct alternative histories and thus to spawn radicalism. In the immediate aftermath of the student uprising at the Polytechnic University of Athens (November 1973), the immensely popular production delivered an acute sense of theater reflecting (on) history repeating itself. This continuous unfolding of repressive history further demystified the past and posited its performative demands for a revolution in the present. Revolutions tend to assess the past anew, and modern Greek theater was a catalyst to that process. Other plays, too, started to subvert canonical representations of Greek history to extend rebellious gestures and youthful optimism. Public mobilization around theater plays or issues of stage censorship engendered a political culture that fueled dissidence: events onstage and offstage spilled over into the public's new reality. Plays such as *Our Grand Circus* rallied activist forces, even though other, external factors (among them the 1974 Cyprus crisis) provoked the regime's final overthrow.

Chapter 4 digs deeper into the problem and the solution of foreign influences shaping modern Greek dramaturgy. It argues that Greek playwrights creatively rewrote, rather than imitated, foreign material for the target culture of a state in emergency. The chapter first focuses on *The Nannies* of Giorgos Skourtes, which was produced by Karolos Koun's Art Theater in February and March of 1970. The play is a compelling specimen of the New Greek Theater that raised consciousness among different groups (Koun's older as well as younger audiences) and across various genres (integrating echoes from Beckett but also from the Karaghiozis shadow theater). The play's analysis centers on the themes of capitalism, money, and materialism, which Skourtes aptly defined as scourges of the time exacerbating human alienation and the tyrannical subjugation of one person by another. Other modern Greek plays discussed in Chapter 4 deliver, with more absurdist methods, satirical or near-existentialist onslaughts on capitalist oppression, social conformism, and moral complacency. No discussion about modern Greek theater, however, can be complete without at least a brief introduction to the indelible impact of Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956). Many performers and writers of the junta era sought to produce revolutionary art and literature after the model of Brecht. The second half of Chapter 4 discusses a Brechtian play of Greek make: *The Story of Ali Retzo* of 1965, which became the signature play of the young Petros Markares and was staged by the Free Theater in 1971 and again in 1972. Markares had been among

the first to introduce 1960s Greece to Brecht's theories of a socially responsible and historically grounded theater. Up until the year of its stage premiere, however, *The Story of Ali Retzo* had not received the attention it deserved. Distancing itself from the stilted Greek cultural establishment (with the National Theater as an iconic body), the—not coincidentally named—Free Theater (Eleuthero Theatro) made an auspicious debut. It challenged the orthodoxies that limited the canonical Greek repertoire (whether through commercial priorities or traditionalism) and deconstructed the old hierarchies of the stage world, and it did so with a play that was called more Brechtian than Greek. One could therefore turn the criticism of young playwrights, directors, and actors losing themselves in foreign fashions inside out: because the closed Greek theater world had, up until 1970, extended very few opportunities to young playwrights and producers and had become even more exclusive under the junta's censorship, the young actors' turn to the foreign and non-indigenous was the only available way to break with the bleak domestic past. The production of *The Story of Ali Retzo* exposed tales of exploitation and treated this dramatic material in a novel, less recognizable or "distanced" mode. It conveyed a sense of the urgent issues pertaining to politics, society, and performance that needed to be re-evaluated under the dictatorship. Marginalization, therefore, transformed itself into radical empowerment when the Free Theater creatively adopted the foreign, or the realm in which radicalization had already been able to prove itself. Conversing with foreign dramaturgy was a viable way, too, to transcend the ideological antitheses between the (Old) Left and the Right, in which Greek cultural life had been mired for decades and which persisted in the government's Cold War rhetoric.

This section of Chapter 4 analyzes the Free Theater's performance experiment as a collaborative act and countercultural intervention. The young stage troupe's practice of "collective directorship" modeled a new ethos of citizenship, privileging issues of social ethics and political morality: it engaged with questions of civic responsibility and undermined the absolutist assertions and capitalist motivations of the state.³⁹ The section follows how personal and collective histories

³⁹ Bradby and Sparks present Ariane Mnouchkine's experimental Théâtre du Soleil (founded 1963) as a "model collective" that exerted a profound influence (1997: 21). In 1968, members of this theater group agreed to take an equal salary. Bradby traces the method of collaborative creation, or *création collective*, which reduces the power of the playwright and the producer, via Mnouchkine (especially her production of 1789)

entered into the laborious creative process that became the trademark of the Free Theater, which developed into a *thiasos* that initiated its actors into a common cause and engaged them totally as people. This *thiasos* or committed theater group stood at the forefront of Greek theater's blossoming of the early 1970s. The study of its operations, strategies, and choices opens a unique window onto the internal world of student and actor communities. The Free Theater invented novel acting codes, infused traditional dramatic paradigms with new contents, and elicited the kind of debate that bridged aesthetics and politics. Masters of consciousness-raising, its performers challenged spectators to extend their critical look not just to the process of play production but also to their own society and their individual role within it. They negotiated issues of personal freedom and insisted on expanding political rights while fostering Greek youth's dialogue with the global movements of the 1960s. The Free Theater's practice of collective directorship, therefore, functions as an interpretive key that invites detailed analysis but that also raises further questions, especially about the actors' roles as activists and about the methods of Brechtian theater versus Greek dramaturgical traditions. The choice of one Brechtian-style production, however, does not alleviate the need to illuminate the Greek reception of Brecht's experimental productions, dissident poems, and theoretical writings as a whole.⁴⁰ However, given the recurring and wide-ranging discussions about foreign influences in Greek dramaturgy, it seemed worthwhile to attempt to hang such theoretical debates on a more concrete case study.

SOURCES AND RESEARCH CHALLENGES

The plays singled out here show the value of studying theater on the margins of Europe. The modern Greek works presented in Chapters 3

back to Brecht at the Berliner Ensemble (1991: 142, 191, 195). See also Karaoglou (2009: 295–297); Nitsos (1973b); and Soldatos (1974).

⁴⁰ This need, however, has been admirably addressed by Dimitris Asimakoulas, whose multiple studies provide a robust analysis of Brecht's reception in Greece during the dictatorship period, with emphasis on the opposition's deployment of Brecht to voice dissidence and to stage rebellion. Asimakoulas pays ample attention also to the important role that publishers and bookshops played in the dissemination of foreign-imported reading material among young people growing up under the regime.

and 4 are not exclusive preoccupations but operate more like conduits leading to a gamut of cultural and intellectual issues. My preference has gone to high-quality independent plays, which appealed most to the younger generations of the time. These works have been published and some (such as Skourtes's *Nannies*) have even been translated into English. The detailed discussions provide the reader with a chance to vicariously sit in the audience and to experience the plays' time-specific dimension. My quotations from these works, too, are motivated by my intent to make them better known to English-speaking audiences.⁴¹ This general strategy, however, should not

⁴¹ The standard introductions to modern Greek literature have only minimally treated the subject of 19th- and 20th-century Greek theater. The sections on theater under the junta are woefully short (Vitti 2001: 394). Beaton pays regrettably little attention to Greek drama in his standard study of modern Greek literature. His argument is based on the lack of quality in pre-1940s theater (1999: 17). Borghart invokes a similar rationale (2012). The number of book-length studies in English on (aspects of) modern Greek dramaturgy is small but growing. In *Modern Greek Theater: Roots and Blossoms* (1982), Aliki Bacopoulou-Halls places her analysis of contemporary Greek drama next to those periods that have received much more scholarly attention: Renaissance and Cretan drama, the revivals of classical Greek tragedy, the Karaghiozis shadow theater, and the plays of Kostas Palamas and Nikos Kazantzakis. In the view of Bacopoulou-Halls, too, contemporary Greek dramaturgy was the product of the fervor of the 1960s through early 1970s. Her own work shows that the study of this drama began to be valued only when 1980s postmodernism belatedly caught up with trendsetting modern Greek theater itself. For balanced surveys of Greek dramaturgy geared toward an international reading public, see the chapters by Bacopoulou-Halls: "Greece," in the first volume of Don Rubin's *The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre* (1994: 401–426), and "The Theatre System of Greece" (1998). In 1999, Linda and Kostas Myrsiades published *Cultural Representation in Historical Resistance: Complexity and Construction in Greek Guerrilla Theater*. This book unearths the facts and even some of the texts of the leftist guerrilla theater "of the mountains." This stage thrived in the 1940s but had since been neglected by nearly all Greek theater historians. My own *Theatre of the Condemned* (2011) examines the forgotten productions of classical tragedies that were staged by political prisoners of the Greek Civil War. The last two books approach contemporary Greek dramaturgy from an oblique angle, to unravel the negotiation processes that the modernist canon underwent in mid-century. Some special issues of journals treat modern Greek theater: *Acteurs Auteurs* 81–82 (1990); the recent *L'Annuaire théâtral* (2010); an anthology of plays in *The Charioteer* 26 (1984); and two issues of the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 14, no. 1 (1996) and 25, no. 2 (2007), both initiatives of Stratos Constantinidis. Constantinidis's concise book-length study, entitled *Modern Greek Theatre: A Quest for Hellenism* (2001), offers a very readable analysis of modern Greek drama leading up to the 1970s. The author makes a convincing case for the importance of this theater to Greek and international audiences. He approaches the emerging drama of the modern Greek nation-state from the purview of a feminist and multiculturalist inquiry. Constantinidis's study again reminds us that more work remains to be done, particularly on the past five decades of Greek play production.

obscure modern Greek theater's enormous expansion and decentralization in the early 1970s, the burdens of which were shouldered by new troupes working at great risk and without sufficient resources. The quantitative wealth of Greek drama of the 1960s through mid-1970s complicates the selection of plays analyzed in this book. The chapters, therefore, make concise references to many more stage companies and works, which responded to the call for sociopolitical relevance in more oblique ways but still strengthened theater's part in raising awareness. Many of these plays, however, have not yet been published, let alone studied in depth, limiting the options for perspicacious readers to return to the original scripts and sources.⁴² Thus the chapters document the state of Greek dramaturgy at pivotal moments in its rapid, post-1968 evolution, as it was mustering its forces to become a legitimate, broader forum of exchange about history, society, and politics.⁴³

⁴² Publication of modern Greek plays was often long delayed. Published plays are not readily available in the United States or remain relatively unknown outside of Greece. Even fewer revues or *epitheoreseis* were ever published. Some revues have only recently met with new interest (and plans for publication). Many more original Greek plays deserve translation in full because they hold the keys to an era during which the world of the stage deeply impacted on society. Also, when more published texts and translations of these plays will be available, they will make it possible for younger scholars to engage in their own analyses of theater and culture under the junta.

⁴³ Recent books in English on modern Greek drama of the 1960s through 1970s are few and far between. A comprehensive, theoretically-informed study devoted exclusively to this, perhaps the most formative period in 20th-century Greek theater history, remains lacking. Still missing, too, are English-language monographs that shed a truly aesthetic light on key figures among Greek stage directors and playwrights, such as Karolos Koun and Iakovos Kambanelles. On the latter, see the Greek-language studies by Giorgos Pephane, entitled *Iakovos Kambanelles: Explorations and Approaches to His Theatrical Work* (2000), and Walter Puchner, *Landscapes of the Soul and Myths of Polity: The Theatrical Universe of Iakovos Kambanelles* (2010a). See also Chryschoos and Reniere (2006); Horton (1984b); and Pephane (2005). Delveroude provides a concise but richly illustrated history of the Greek theater from 1922 through 1940 in the multi-volume series *History of Greece in the Twentieth Century* (2003, in Greek). Kangelare follows up by covering the years 1941–1953 in the same series (2007, in Greek). Useful, too, is the chapter that deals directly with the stage of the 1950s and 1960s: Spathes's "Theater: Reconstruction and Heyday of the Greek Stage" (2003b, in Greek, but the theater of the dictatorship is treated in only two pages, 255–256; also Spathes 2010). On the interwar period, see also Vasileiou (2004). Glykeria Kalaitze's comprehensive PhD dissertation (2001, in Greek) places 1940s dramaturgy in its artistic and historical contexts and devotes entire chapters and chapter sections to the revue spectacle of the war years and of the euphoria of the liberation, the Theater of the Mountains, the 1942 foundation of Koun's Art Theater, the 1940s history of the National Theater, and the progressive initiatives that newly founded stage companies took by the mid- to later 1940s. N. Papandreou (2002)

All too often, theater's political function is assumed to be self-evident, but it remains to be demonstrated and theorized. The theory and also the praxis of Western European political theater have been subjected to extensive analysis by, for instance, Michael Patterson (2003). A similar study that places modern Greek playwrights in the context of concurring international artistic and political developments remains lacking. Such a study must necessarily navigate the fluid concept of "political theater" (a term that often connotes a theater of agitation and propaganda, or "agitprop") and must cover the supporting roles of television programs, daily newspapers, periodicals, public and scholarly lectures, revival productions of ancient drama, or academia and the media and print culture at large. Most of the articles and book chapters in Greek fail to consider the stagings that were contemporary with the production that they discuss, or the range of reviews generated by the production, or the historical and political conditions that shaped those reviews. Often, too, information deduced from later-in-life interviews with playwrights, directors, actors, and artists has not entered the discussion of the historical productions. Under the usual circumstances, written and especially visual source materials from the time of the productions remain scarce, and the steps of the censors' interference are sometimes hard to retrace. With news reportage severely limited and controlled by the regime, the quality of the theater critiques of the period leaves a lot to be desired. Whereas some older reviews unabashedly displaced aesthetic analysis with political discussion, critics laboring under

studies the 1950s Greek "alternative theater" (his characterization in the chapter's title). With her chapter, "Theater 1974–2000: A Contemporary Artistic Achievement," Helene Varopoulou provides a succinct overview of Greek dramaturgy of the last quarter of the 20th century (2003, in Greek). Mauromoustakos surveys modern Greek theater of the 1940s through the end of the century (2005, in Greek, with very detailed bibliography), but devotes relatively few pages to the plays of the junta period. Grammatas's survey of 20th-century Greek drama focuses almost exclusively on playwrights (Loula Anagnostaki and Strates Karras) representing the Theater of the Absurd (2002: 1:203–207, 401–410, in Greek) but leaves underexplored other trends of the formative decade 1964–1974 (in his section "Transcending Greekness"). While fully engaged with playwriting and directing himself, Michaelides wrote one of the earliest studies of the emerging dramatists, but he never updated his "prosopographic" work (1975). See further Kotzamani (2001); Lygizos (1987); Puchner (1990 and 2010b); and Velissariou (1996–1997). Readers seeking additional information about Greek theater logistics, its modalities, records, and archives may now consult Anna Mauroleon's handy manual, *Research in Theater: Questions of Methodology* (2010, in Greek).

junta censorship resorted to various levels of double-speak to convey political viewpoints that they hoped to pass by the censors.⁴⁴

My study aims to evoke the visual culture of theater, pairing it with an examination of the military regime's own production of public spectacle. Such an approach requires reading techniques and strategies that differ substantially from those developed for analyzing written documents (Postlewait 2009). The reader will, hopefully, bear with me as I introduce newspaper reports and theater reviews, references to scripts, pamphlets, playbills, photographs, posters, and other promotional materials, television blurbs, audio cassettes, and videotapes. I also carefully draw from popular anecdotes, good and bad poetry, speeches and official reports, memoirs, personal accounts, and oral testimonies and microhistories. For an in-depth study of the responses of the contemporary press, I extensively used Greek newspaper archives and the holdings of the Athens Theater Museum and Archive. The recent documentary directed by Panteles Voulgares, *The Chronicle of the Dictatorship (1967–1974)* (2013, in Greek), proved to be helpful as well. The thirteen-part Greek television series produced by Photos Lambrinos, with the parodic title of *It's a Junta: Will It Pass?* (2011–2012), consists of restored state news bulletins or *Epikaira* of the dictatorship era and shows how the regime touted its achievements (also Lambrinos 2011). These *Epikaira* or “‘educational’ film journals” were prepared and distributed by the General Secretariat of Press and Information, which featured them prominently on television and also pressured movie theater owners to play them before regularly scheduled films (Botsiou 2006: 292). Sources such as Lambrinos's series let us deepen our understanding based on

⁴⁴ Many of the research problems and complications that I noted in my book of 2000 apply a priori to the context of theater under the junta and they, therefore, bear summarizing: the lack of substantive reviews (or the sheer loss of records), the power and partisanship of some theater critics, the convoluted institutional structures and hierarchies, the politicized nature of the summer drama festivals, the commercialization of the print culture of popular plays and translations, the allocation of state prizes, the favoritism that determined the selection of actors, artists, or plays and that guided subsidy policies, etc. Hager discusses Greek critics' role as gatekeepers of the hegemonic tradition (2008: 84–88). Karaoglou notes the discrepancy between the large numbers of reviews that speak to productions staged by the State Theater of Northern Greece and the very few that focus on the accomplishments of the Theatrical Workshop (2009: 299). Demetriades (2010) and Hadjikyriacou (2013: 87–91) have recently probed the Greek star system.

multi-archival research in written records with a finer-grained study of (sanitized) images from daily life.

For me, the time of the Colonels is an object of study but I hasten to acknowledge that many of my informants have actually lived it—and that there is a difference. Today's interviewees remember the circumstances in which they first discovered the radical modern Greek plays and started to follow their actors and authors; they nostalgically recall the defiant spirit of youth's assertion that they and their friends found in alternative theaters. Theater-going with one's *parea* became something of a cult activity, and it entailed trying to spot and skirt the junta agents, who might ask for names and papers. Nonetheless, questions about the dictatorship era still raise suspicions about the questioner, especially about the interviewer with an American affiliation and with an obvious interest in the political realm. This realm includes American foreign relations, the history of the Greek mass media and their assimilation of Western ideas and cultural goods, and Greek politics and culture of the twentieth century at large. My conversations with playwrights, directors, actors, artists, and audience members aim to provide insight into Greek dramaturgy from a variety of vantage points, which may enrich future scholarly work as well. Also, they help us comprehend how individual as well as collective responses to certain productions are to be measured and evaluated. A few transcripts of interviews conducted by contemporaries of the 1960s and 1970s were published in journals and periodicals of the time, and they constitute a valued resource. The popular journal *Theatro*, issued by leftist editor and theater aficionado Kostas Nitsos, was a front runner when it came to publishing interviews, reviews of experimental plays, and progressive commentaries and essays. It also made important contemporary scripts available in print, with the playwrights' permissions, and devoted regular, constructive articles to the new troupes' ideology and praxis.⁴⁵ This lively forum reflects far better than the

⁴⁵ Gerasimidou (1997) and Kotanidis (2011: 88, 150). In addition to Markares's play, *The Story of Ali Retzo* (published in the March–April issue of 1965), Nitsos published the full text of a classicizing but antiroyalist modern Greek play, *When the Atreids...* (*Όταν οι Ατρείδες...*), written by the young Vangelis Katsanes (in the May–June issue of 1964). Markares and Katsanes appeared at a time when Greek cultural life allotted young playwrights hardly any space to earn recognition. Nitsos's influential *Theatro* ran from 1961 through spring 1967 and, in a second series, from 1973 to 1981. He was forced to suspend the journal's circulation immediately after the coup (testimony by Nitsos, July 7, 2000). Nitsos's *Theatro* must be distinguished from

newspaper press that plays were debated not only for their artistic and aesthetic strengths but also as expressions of political and philosophical questioning. The annual volumes of the broadly conceived chronicle of cultural life, *Chroniko*, issued from 1970 onward by the dynamic group of artists and writers associated with the Cultural Center “Hora” (“Time” or “Hour”) of Asantour Bacharian, confirm that the arts, and theater no less, were steeped in the ideological and political ferment of the dictatorship years. These volumes strike home, too, how many cultural events were still happening and how varied in nature they were. As was the case with *Theatro*, several of *Chroniko*’s issues were banned by the junta censors. But these two venues left an important message: among the ways to express dissidence was the commitment to printing quality articles and scripts.

Many sources sustain the ironizing tone in which the retelling of the history of the junta years has been conducted, in personal memoirs and literary works alike. Historian Antonis Liakos has identified the pervasive irony of the “historiographical” record as an ongoing problem.⁴⁶ I cannot do justice to all the (strong) opinions, tall stories, popular poems, telltale songs, skits, jokes, or gems of street wisdom that countless Greek informants have shared with me. What they do prove, however, is that the Greeks kept up a sense of humor and an attitude of resilience even through the worst days of the repression. The anecdotal evidence provides me with a means to occasionally describe the world of unofficial politics or the micro-rebellions of the Greeks’ daily lives: more than one informant insisted that the Colonels were essentially “laughed out of office.” Laughing at

the periodical by the same title published by Theodoros Kritas (from 1957 through 1969), which took a more guarded stance and presented less criticism and analysis but more raw production data and pictures of performances. The periodical *Theatrika*, launched by Giorgos Chatzedakes and Helene Papasoteriou in 1971 (monthly from 1972 on), provided information on contemporary Western European dramaturgy and on modern Greek productions of representative plays.

⁴⁶ Liakos (2012: 3); also Liakos (2010: 89) and Liakos and Papatheodorou (2002). Examples are the humorous and self-critical political memoirs of Nikos Bistes such as his *Moving on and Reassessing* (2010, in Greek); the semi-fictional and self-ironizing work of Tasos Darveres, *A (His)story of the Night, 1967–1974* (2002, in Greek); and the memoirs/novels of Chrones Missios, *Well, You Were Killed Early on* (1985, in Greek), which expresses the author’s disenchantment with the communist leadership and takes the form of a correspondence with a dead comrade, and its sequel, *Smile, Man . . . What’s So Damn Hard?* (1988, in Greek). Liakos (2011: 391–392) shares further thoughts on the work of Darveres, who coined the ironic self-reference of “*dramatis personae* in the *thiasos* of History” (2002: 393).

the dictators was a form of asserting collective superiority on the psychological and spiritual level: the display act of people ridiculing the strongmen and withholding their support was a reaffirmation of the Greeks' insistence on democratic-style public criticism (Van Steen 2001: 171–172).

Research into theater of the dictatorship years is most hindered, however, when its exponents memorialize their own personal history and broadcast their resistance “credentials.” Many historicizing and autobiographical works present the author’s “heroic” commitment to revolution as his (less commonly: her) main motivation for writing and recording, against the backdrop of “true” and “false” political axioms rather than of complex cultural and ideological conditions. Many obviously wave the banner of opposition after the fact.⁴⁷ Some all-too-boisterous modes of dissent simply provided an alibi for not taking real action. We cannot posit a black-and-white antithesis of junta supporters versus junta opponents, or the binary polarity of conformity versus dissidence. We necessarily have to accept that fetishization of the resistance set in with the regime’s decline, and that this trend did not bring out the best in people. When resistance became the expected norm, it also became the mold in which personal narratives were being forged.

Another noticeable tendency, which has not yet received any scholarly attention, was the masculinization of the opposition against the junta. This tendency, which perpetuated hegemonic patterns it claimed to subvert, deeply affected the ways in which this era was represented and continues to be misrepresented: Loula Anagnostaki becomes the token female playwright; Marietta Rialde is the *enfant terrible* of the theater world; and Athena (Nana) Kallianese, the director of the leftist publishing house Kedros who coordinated important dissident publications, vanishes behind the large majority of male contributors to the famous protest volume *Eighteen Texts* (1970). Kay Cicellis, Anny Koltsidopoulou, Magia Lymberopoulou, and Anna Phrankoudake are too often seen as translators in auxiliary capacities, not as the authors of creative literary and/or critical

⁴⁷ «Πώς γίναμε τόσοι πολλοί οι αντιστασιακοί, βρε παιδιά;» Kotanidis wonders caustically, pressing the legitimate question of how, over the years and decades past, the numbers of those who resisted the Colonels grew so large (2011: 493). See also Kornetis (2013: 298–299, 301, 327) and Papageorgiou (2001b: 258). Rialde has sharply criticized this pseudo-heroic behavior in the world of theater (1974: 39).

contributions. In fact, all four belonged to a larger group of female activists and writers (including Nora Anagnostaki, Katerina Anghelaki-Rooke, Maro Douka, Rea Galanake, Lina Kasdagle, Margarita Lymberake, Jenny Mastoraki, and Alke Zee), who left their mark on (1970s and later) poetry, prose, and other genres and art forms that were perceived to be less public, less male-dominated, and therefore more inclusive (Van Steen 2000: 214–215; also Van Dyck 1998). Only very few of these talented women, however, ventured into the world of the stage, and then typically did so after the fall of the Colonels. The female actors and co-founders of the Free Theater, the Theatrical Workshop of “Techne,” the Contemporary Greek Theater, and the Stoa Theater are not the ones who are being asked for interviews, memoirs, or any other contributions to conferences or media projects, but their male counterparts are and make frequent appearances. When in 1970 Giorgos Pelichos conducted a survey for the newspaper *Ta Nea* and interviewed about a dozen representatives of the Greek theater world on the subject of “Does the Modern Greek Play Exist?,” all the interviewees were male. Anagnostaki, who would go on to establish one of the longest and most productive careers in playwriting (now approaching half a century), is referred to in the third person, in a caption underneath her picture (January 5, 1970). Scholars subsequently remarked on the absence of a Greek feminist theater during the critical decades of the 1960s and 1970s (Sakellaridou 2006: 312–318, 331–332). Van Dyck has noted that the Colonels “feminized” the Greek people with methods of restraint that have been more characteristic of the private male abuse of women, such as enforced silence and physical mistreatment (1998: 121). This book, then, adds a warning that the resistance against the junta has subsequently been read and shaped in a male-gendered key.