

GONDA VAN STEEN

STAGE OF EMERGENCY

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

...και συ χτενιζεσαι



ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟ ΘΕΑΤΡΟ

ΑΛΣΟΣ ΠΑΓΚΡΑΤΙΟΥ

CLASSICAL PRESENCES

OXFORD

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CLASSICAL PRESENCES

Attempts to receive the texts, images, and material culture of ancient Greece and Rome inevitably run the risk of appropriating the past in order to authenticate the present. Exploring the ways in which the classical past has been mapped over the centuries allows us to trace the avowal and disavowal of values and identities, old and new. *Classical Presences* brings the latest scholarship to bear on the contexts, theory, and practice of such use, and abuse, of the classical past.

Stage of Emergency

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

GONDA VAN STEEN

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*To my students, past, present, and future,
To Rosemary Donnelly*

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A Note on Translations and Transliterations

All translations or paraphrases from the original modern or ancient Greek sources are my own, unless otherwise noted. I generally follow the monotonic system for sources published after 1982 but also in some older phrases that the context might not otherwise reveal to be in modern Greek. I have also translated the original titles of modern Greek primary and secondary sources. On the vexed problem of transliterating from the Greek, I have adopted a more conservative spelling unless a Greek name has a well-established form of its own in English. In the continued absence of organized bibliographical tools and databases covering sources written in modern Greek, this conservative system, while not phonetic, is still the best way to guide non-Greek readers/researchers to a critical reexamination of the materials presented here, when they rely on collection catalogues following the principles issued by the Library of Congress. For ancient Greek proper names, I adhere to the conventional Latinized forms broadly used in the English language. For the names of Greek scholars publishing in languages other than Greek, I maintain the preferences of the authors (therefore, for instance, Yorgos Kotanidis and not Giorgos Kotanides).

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*” (φαιλοκρατία), 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 κατάστασιν 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 countercoup 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: *Antipoesis 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—Ἑλλάς 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 Alexes 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 Coulombis (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 *Archaeo-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” («*εις 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 disproportionately 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 1, 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).