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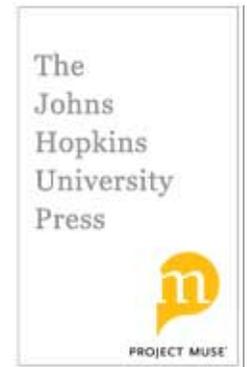
Forgotten Theater, Theater of the Forgotten: Classical  
Tragedy on Modern Greek Prison Islands

Van Steen, Gonda Aline Hector, 1964-

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referred to as traitors, suspects, or subjects of suspect values.<sup>1</sup> The Right's claim to a messianic nationalism that would set Greece "right" again, made any charge of anti-national sentiments or activity a very serious threat. The Right blurred the distinction between loving one's country and loving one's government. After the Second World War and the Civil War, the right-wing governments in Greece continued their fight against internal enemies, including those who exhibited a "dearth of patriotic spirit." The main goals of the Right from the 1940s to the early 1960s were to penalize those who had fought the communist-led Resistance against the Nazis and to arrest the broad sociopolitical changes that the communists had spearheaded.

While Joseph McCarthy's hatred of communism steered U.S. domestic and international policies, repressive right-wing Greek governments saw their anti-communism as their contribution to the global cold war to stop Soviet expansionism. They persecuted left-wingers—both Greek citizens and foreigners—in Greece in the name of patriotism and national security. For more than three decades, both the Greek Right and the Left acted out roles that were first scripted during the dictatorship of Metaxas and its anti-communist measures.<sup>2</sup> From the late 1940s on, the majority of the Greeks were reduced to the role of a spectator watching the struggle between the Right and the Left. On some occasions, both parties took a more aggressive, hard-nosed stance precisely because they were being watched. In this welter of destructive Greek politics, the Right was determined to maintain its power. It made every effort to control language and to monopolize the "glorious" Greek antiquity and consanguinity. It went as far as to accuse those who opposed its policies of attempting to undermine Greek civilization. The Left, on the other hand, posited its own claims to the Greek past and resorted to its own rhetoric. It sought to retain its hold on the classics and used them to oppose right-wing cultural and political hegemony (Hamilakis 2002; Van Steen 2000: *passim*).

This article discusses a few classical performances that became part of the intense struggle between the Left and the Right in Greece. They were produced on the prison islands of the Civil War and presented an alternative view on the internecine struggle. The Right and the Left alike saw classical Greek tragedy as the hallmark of antiquity. The revival of tragedy had played a charged role in nation-building throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Even though a return to the classical past revealed a conservative or traditionalist agenda, many interned leftists chose to celebrate their Greekness by producing Greek tragedies. While classical tragedy remained a domain contested between the two hostile camps, left-wing intellectuals started using it to challenge narrow right-wing definitions like patriotism. These left-wingers belong

to a literary movement, sometimes referred to as the “generation of defeat.” After they were vanquished in the Civil War, they tried to reinstate a secularist, culturally-focused patriotism with a broader social platform and to present it as virtue-laden without being densely moralistic.<sup>3</sup> One place where these tensions and compromises were acted out was the theaters on the prison islands of the Aegean Sea—such as Makronisos, Trikeri, and Aī Stratis—to which the Right had deported large numbers of its political opponents.

Makronisos (“Long Island”), situated just off the coast of Lavrio, was the most notorious of the prison islands. It stands as a symbol of oppression with its sad history (Bournazos 1998:206–207). Between 1947 and 1950, Makronisos functioned mainly as an internment camp for soldiers with alleged leftist or communist sympathies.<sup>4</sup> Up until the late 1970s, the memory of Makronisos was considered to be undesirable. Makronisos was effectively banned from the topography of the Right’s past. Nonetheless, a number of memoirs, testimonies, and literary works started to surface in later years, revealing the multi-layered experiences buried in Makronisos.

Today we may even speak of a Makronisos literature.<sup>5</sup> This literature partly makes up for the diminishing number of witnesses willing and able to provide testimonies. Works such as Apostolopoulou’s (1997) present themselves as collections of such oral and written testimonies. Without exception, memories and testimonies speak to the internees’ sense of belligerence and to the heavy-handedness of the Right’s retaliatory treatment. In recent decades, the Left has often gained from its former pariah status, if only because the experience of relentless duress and state-managed hostility appeared to legitimize some of its own coloring of the truth. The memories of theater on the prison islands, however, have not yet woven their way back through the history of Greek dramaturgy. None of the recent studies on Greek theater, which claim to be innovative or comprehensive, has filled in this gap in Greek collective memory. The theater of the prison islands may have fallen inside the boundaries of the state but it has certainly fallen outside the scope of the formal study of Greek drama.

This article is contributing to the study of the cultural aspects of the Civil War and to the analysis of ancient Greek drama in the modern Greek contexts of patriotism and memory. In general, the theater of the prison islands privileged political over aesthetic effects to highlight moments that redefined patriotism. Plays on the islands were staged in the open air and in any translation at hand. They occurred well before translations proliferated and before the Greek summer drama festivals, inaugurated in the mid-1950s, turned outdoor performances into regular spectacles of a mass culture. The various performance aspects of the

inmates' classical productions differed widely. To stage real productions, the detainees were in need of many things, but talent was not one of them. Their groups consisted of gifted artists and intellectuals, many of whom had played or went on to play an important part in Greek cultural life. It was their artistic inclination and left-wing intellectual curiosity and radical-mindedness that had raised the suspicion and provoked the retaliation of the repressive post-Civil War governments in the first place.<sup>6</sup>

Building links forward and backward in time is also essential for other reasons: the classicizing productions complemented other choices of plays, such as the interwar Greek patriotic tragedy and martyr-drama *Rigas Velestinlis* by Vasilis Rotas. In addition to Greek plays and foreign classics, the island prisoners selected, rehearsed, and performed Sophocles's *Philoctetes* and *Antigone* and Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound* and *Persians*.<sup>7</sup> Exiled writers, artists, and intellectuals often followed international leftist or Marxist literary preferences (e.g., Prometheus). Others, like Manos Katrakis, had shaped ideas of their own as actors in or contributors to the revival productions of the National Theater in the 1930s; or, more commonly, like Vasilis Rotas, as committed members of its institutional rival, the Resistance Theater of the Mountains (Myrsiades and Myrsiades 1999; Grammatas 2002:1:289–290).

For more than half a century in the history of modern Greek drama, classical tragedy had been housed in public, well-equipped, conventional locales—schools, academic stages, enclosed playhouses, Italian-style proscenium stages—and only occasionally in excavated and restored open-air ancient theaters. The National Theater embodied this evolution and continued to place revival tragedy on a pedestal. Before classical tragedy was introduced to the inmate theaters, many of the detainees might have seen this genre as a museum piece, an artifact from the past, which was not likely to make the general public gasp with emotion—and justifiably so, based on the traditionalist style that had, until then, conditioned the modern Greek reception of ancient drama with the exception of Aristophanes.

Unlike the National Theater, the partisans in the mountains did not preoccupy themselves with reviving tragedy. At the same time, the resistance nature of their itinerant theater left the important legacies of its rudimentary but well-organized stage practices and clearly-defined political objectives. It also left a body of experienced and amateur contributors, who found each other again and joined forces anew on the prison islands (testimony by K. S., 31 May 2005). The model of the tragic hero was a meaningful exemplum for all. They saw overwhelming forces vanquishing the body of the tragic heroes while they continued to assert personal and moral victory. Polymeris Voglis observed that, in their

personal and collective imaginings, political detainees gave meaning to their lives “along the lines of a drama: action in the past, hardship for the hero in the present, redemption in the future” (2002:174).

Even though inmate players and audiences found great satisfaction in identifying with Philoctetes, Antigone, Prometheus, and other victimized heroes, a cultural historian must not content herself with—ultimately reductive—interpretations and must probe into the much more complex ways in which their theater practice was interwoven with prison life, reality, and illusion. This theater examined long-standing burning issues, not as much of a theatrical nature as of the politics of nationalism and patriotism that steered the performances and their “performativity.” Performativity provides an entry point into the production of cultural and ideological meanings through performance, while it also allows for reflection on the complex, internal and external negotiation processes through which the staging of classical tragedies passed. Theater on the prison islands sheds a different, more expansive light on classical performances: the inmate productions of ancient drama brought out the aspects and parameters not only of actual theater (stagecraft; acting; audience profiles; textual, philological, and linguistic issues) but also of the metatheatrical or metaphorical nature of theater. The prison islands were theaters of operation—in multiple, sinister meanings of the word. The inmate stage framed theatrical illusion and large-scale delusion, unmasked rhetoric and lies, and retained the memory of the real values of the performances, to reapply them in later, receptive, contemplative, or theoretical contexts. In Makronisos, in particular, the prison authorities saw the classical performances as part of an experiment in “rehabilitation,” the nature of which lent itself best to metatheatrical reflection, or to a further examination of the dynamics of performativity and the workings of the gaze.<sup>8</sup>

This article will show how the prison authorities, too, contributed indirectly to constructing the meaning of the tragedies in question. They provided resources but also vetted the director, cast, and play, and they set strict parameters for performance. They monopolized—or thought that they monopolized—the performative setting and rhetorical potential of the tragedies. The Right’s repeated acts of framing and its moralizing rhetoric formed an important backdrop to the inmate performances. Some right-wing characterizations of internal exile, for example, amounted to false or offensive euphemisms, to make repressive practices sound reasonable or civilized: from pacification to immunity, exemption, excursion, or “having a good time in comfort” (Bournazos 1998:206, 218). Because this distorting rhetoric played into the broader and multi-faceted metatheatrical dynamics that ruled the prison islands, this article further discusses the performances’ links with reactionary

and indoctrinating ideological state apparatuses such as religion, education, and family. Orthodox morality, didacticism, and genealogy of the postwar era kept clinging to artificial constructs of Greekness, belabored the nationalist and state security themes, and turned patriotism into exclusive dogma—and property, too. Proper behavior in church, school, and family stood for proper patriotism: rhetorically, they were declared one and the same. They were expected to flow together in the performances of classical tragedy as well. The practical success and performative efficacy of the prisoners' counteracts showed in the symbolism and stage legacy of their small but deliberate selections from ancient drama. The selected tragedies lived on in productions, references, and analogies during the years of oppression inflicted by the military dictators (1967–1974), who, like the Right of the Civil War, took communism to be their nemesis and overstated, with the revamped repertory of anti-communist rhetoric, the threat of the enemy within. From the 1920s through the mid-1970s, suspicions of artistic and intellectual activity and of pluralist criticism ran deep within the Greek reactionary establishment; they were indicative of the long-standing frustration with the (domestic and international) support that communism enjoyed from students, intellectuals, artists, and “fellow travelers.”

For some professionals from the contemporary world of Greek theater and cinema, such as Nikos Koundouros, the experience of the inmate productions of the late 1940s through early 1950s shaped their thoughts on metatheater and memory theater, on their mood, language, methods, and techniques. Again, the record of these formative productions and their metatheatrical richness appears to have been expunged from formal theater history, as much as its actors and audiences were ostracized and exiled from Greek political life. Therefore, frustratingly little is known about the interpretation, staging style, or aesthetics of the classical performances, even after extensive perusal of the detainees' newspapers and records. There are very few informative evaluations of these shows and even fewer that are not framed by—partisan—ideology. In 1980 Periklis Grivas compiled a slim special journal issue (a total of twelve pages) on the theater in Makronisos, but his publishing project was never completed: to my knowledge, the scheduled second installment of his special issue of *Theatrika–Kinimatografika–Tileoptika* has not appeared. Petros Vrahiotis completed his Master's thesis in the summer of 2005, providing a long-overdue record of the productions staged in Makronisos. But it also draws on a dubious source—i.e., the Makronisos journal *Skapanefs*, which overflows with formulaic praises for the productions while giving only skimp information on dramaturgy and aesthetics (Vrahiotis 2005:4, 22–23). However, as Michael Patterson remarked in his study of drama productions and other performances staged by

prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps, “[g]iven the context in which these actors had to perform, it would be an impertinence to attempt to assess the aesthetic quality of their work” (1995:164).

The dearth of pickings on Greek prison theater has compelled me to adopt a more historical and sociological approach. It is crucial that the inmate performers marshaled a strong sense of the ideological benefits to be derived from mounting the classical plays. This approach does justice also to the self-conscious historicizing in prisoner testimonies: in later writings and recorded memories, the internees present their theater productions as if they belong to the documentary genre, to the record of survival in numbers and facts, and as if they themselves always wanted to document the performance practice and its politics more than its aesthetics. Often the names of the inmate actors in a given production are impossible to retrieve, as are the objective data on these actors’ standing with the authorities (especially relevant for the diverse groups of soldiers interned on Makronisos), which colored their experience of staging and attending performances differently. These lacunae, however, confirm that the prisoners perceived the classical plays as “collective property.” They reasserted their leftist patriotism on the stage of the various locations of internal exile: their rediscovery of classical theater was an act of coming out for oneself, for each other, and even for the outside view of observance and surveillance. Prisoners were not necessarily seeking to avenge or rectify particular wrongs, but to justify and come to terms with deeply felt convictions.

*Which plays did the prisoners perform, when and why?*

Polymeris Voglis, who has published the most extensive study (2002) on the political prisoners of the Greek Civil War, distinguishes three main cultural components of the inmate theater plays, songs, and musical events: 1) traditional Greek folk culture, such as folk songs, dances, and pastoral dramas; 2) “high” culture, such as the works of Shakespeare, Molière, ancient Greek tragedies, and classical music; and 3) the leftist or more broadly committed culture, under which category the plays of Vasilis Rotas fall and also those by Soviet playwrights (2002:207). Nikos Efthimiou, who acted as informal stage director of the troupe of the Second Battalion of Makronisos, kept a list of the plays and other show events performed from Easter 1948 through the end of 1949, the years of his own detention on the island (1980b). His catalogue fills in some of the titles of the playwrights mentioned above: Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* was performed in May of 1949; Molière’s *Miser* on 27 January 1951. Efthimiou’s list further reveals that the third component of Voglis’s more general data was barely represented under the harsh conditions

that reigned in Makronisos during 1948 and 1949. The *Makronisiotes* did have a chance, however, to enjoy many folksy Greek comedies, such as plays by Dimitris Psathas and Bambis Anninos, and some written by Efthimiou himself for the purpose of instant entertainment—pieces that passed into oblivion afterward (Vrahiotis 2005:53, 104, and *passim*). With the (often anonymous) skits included, about two thirds of the works on Efthimiou’s list belong to the lighter or escapist forms of entertainment.

The more extensive record that was recently compiled by Vrahiotis lists a large number of titles without providing any details, but it confirms the presence of a steady ratio between “high-brow” and “low-brow” shows (2005:102–113). Vrahiotis concluded that the Makronisiots staged one or two plays per month (2005:66). There is not a single ancient tragedy—or comedy—among the approximately fifty performance events catalogued by Efthimiou. As a director, Efthimiou may have chosen not to stage any. Vrahiotis claims that the productions of Sophocles’s *Philoctetes* and *Antigone* were perhaps the only ancient dramas staged in Makronisos (2005:47). Later oral and written sources, however, do mention classical tragedy and often do so by leaving out details about other Greek plays or foreign works. Their persistence may confirm that the prisoners, pushed into physical and political isolation, sought to prove that they maintained and valued “genuinely” Greek cultural ties, ideals, and legacies.

Efthimiou added a little more information (1980b). Some titles of his bare catalogue encourage tantalizing speculation: was the anonymously-listed comedy *Bandit from Washington* anti-American? Did Efthimiou’s own one-act play *No*, performed on Ohi Day of 1948, allow some tinkering around the edges of the official line on Greek patriotism? Aris Alexandrou, the left-wing writer and dissident, translated Eugene O’Neill’s ominous miracle play *Days without End* for the Easter performance of 1949. Was it a year of “good work” (from Easter 1948 to Easter 1949) that earned Efthimiou the privilege of being able to cast his wife, who had come to visit, in one of the female roles in the play? Efthimiou also chose to stage some plays with more traditional Christian subject matter such as his first and all-male production, *The Sacrifice of Abraham*, performed to celebrate Easter in 1948 (1980a:40–41). Voglis characterized this interest in Christian themes as part of the Greek communists’ professed respect for popular culture (2002:207, 221 n. 29). While I do not doubt this, I see the Easter production as a more deliberate choice on the part of the theater group to court the goodwill of the Christian prison authorities with a well-known, traditional Greek religious play from the Cretan Renaissance. This staging was the group’s first production, and it predated the staging of *Philoctetes* and *Antigone* performed by other *Makronisiotes* in 1948.

Religious and national holidays were perfect occasions for inmate performances of the commemorative type, as they had been for generations of traditionally-trained Greek school children and for the occasional amateur troupe or professional stage company: on 25 March 1941, the political prisoners on the island of Anafi (near Santorini) celebrated Greek Independence Day and the 120th anniversary of the proclamation of the Greek Revolution by staging an early production of *Rigas Velesinlis* (Kenna 2001:77, 91, 96; Myrsiades and Myrsiades 1999:115–116; Tzamaloukas 1975:72–76). They also directly responded to the threat of the impending German invasion in April of 1941. Takis Benas staged his *Rigas* on Independence Day in 1950 with the inmates of the Itzedin-Kalami prison in Crete (1996:159–162; Voglis 2002:170):

“Impossible,” I [Takis Benas] said to the others, “this play [*Rigas Velesinlis* by Vasilis Rotas] calls for more than fifty actors. Add the necessary technicians, and that makes for absolutely all the detainees of our wing. It remains to be seen whether there would be a good ten old guys left to act as the spectators.” We all laughed at this thought. Imagine, really, that we would play and that nobody would watch us . . . But . . . why not? Was it not for ourselves that we would stage the play, to take our minds off our worries and to escape from the unbearable weight of death? Whether they watched us play or not, we in any case would “live” it. At the end [of the actual performance] . . . Rigas raises his hands to the sky and envisions freedom, while he loudly cries out the phrase: “I see the walls of this dark prison fall and collapse.” . . . [T]he guard who, almost like a police organ of censorship, had been watching the play all along and even held a copy of the book in his hands, lost his cool. . . . [The] spectators . . . applauded the finale most passionately. (Benas 1996:160, 162)

Benas briefly mentioned another production of *Rigas* which women held at the Athenian Averof prison put on exactly one year later, on 25 March 1951 (1996:162). This modern Greek poetic tragedy of 1927, named after Rigas Velesinlis or Feraios, a precursor-champion of the struggle for independence and an advocate of radical-liberal nationalism, was written by Rotas (1889–1977), a staunch communist activist, journalist, playwright, and translator (Myrsiades 1999:82, 86, 115; Puchner 2000:220–224).

In 1944, following the disbanding of his Athenian drama school, Rotas had organized one of the small mobile troupes of the Resistance Theater of the Mountains, consisting of both guerrilla soldiers and recruits from among the local civilians (Myrsiades and Myrsiades 1999; Van Steen 2000:127). By the late 1940s, not only the play *Rigas* and its eponymous hero, but also its author and his itinerant mountain theater, had become “classics” of the Greek Resistance. Thus the choice of Rotas’s play *Rigas* provides a direct link between the prison plays and the

agit-prop performances staged in the mountains, a link that does not extend to the revivals of classical tragedy. In celebration of Independence Day in 1948, prisoners on the island of Hios produced *Hail to Mesolongi*, Rotas's play of 1928 that seized upon the emblematic value of the Turkish siege of Mesolongi in 1826 and the heroic defense of the Greeks (Myrsiades and Myrsiades 1999:82, 86; Puchner 2000:149, 167; Voglis 2002:170; Constantinidis 2001:7, 41–43, 44–47, 51, 60, and *passim*). Unequaled in its success as a patriotic school play or anniversary play, Rotas's *Hail to Mesolongi* was manipulated by the 1930s governments of the Right and again by the military dictators of 1967–1974 (Puchner 2000:215, 217–220). It was first adopted and performed by the Greek National Theater (under the directorship of Fotos Politis) for the 25 March celebration in 1933 (Damianakou n.d.:10, 57–59, cf. official endorsements on 60–62). For the Resistance fighters of the 1940s, Rotas's *Hail to Mesolongi* symbolized their struggle and self-sacrifice compared to that of the martyrs of the Greek Revolution. This explains why some prison administrations banned productions of Rotas's 1928 play, which by the late 1940s solidly belonged to the popular subconscious (Apostolopoulou 1984:31, 32–33, 34, and 43, on an emotional production with which the women of Trikeri celebrated 28 October 1950).

Rotas's plays were valuable to both the Left and the Right because they reflected an accessible and attractive conception of the War of Independence, its nation-driven patriotism, and its victories. Rotas himself saw the Greek popular Resistance against the Nazis effectively repeat the heroic revolutionary struggle for autonomy fought before and throughout the 1820s. This was a common leftist and communist viewpoint that the Right tried hard to stump. Through theater, Rotas and those inspired by his work gave a new, highly-charged meaning to the national holidays, and their celebratory performances appropriated the Greek Revolution and its heroes for leftist uses. Their initiatives replayed Greek theater's crucial, historical role in raising a broad patriotic and militant awareness (Van Steen 2000:46). Rotas also translated many of Shakespeare's plays and adapted several comedies by Aristophanes, in whose work he identified a "leftist revolutionary spirit" (Van Steen 2000:chapter 4, *passim*). Imprisoned during the Civil War, he was a prime example of the cultural profile that the Greek Communist Party—which was outlawed in 1947 but remained active underground—promoted. That was directly reflected in the three main components of the internees' collective cultural activities, as outlined by Voglis. The ideal cultural profile of a Greek intellectual integrated Greek folk and popular culture, a broad interest in books, plays, and music, as well as the products of an international leftist or committed intelligentsia.

Why did theater work on the prison islands? Quality theater

“flourished” on the islands of Makronisos, Trikeri, and Aī Stratis for a variety of reasons, which unified psychological, entertainment, educational, and physical concerns. The initiative to stage plays came from detainees with a background in literature and the arts (Vrahiotis 2005:11, 36, 66, crediting actor Lakis Skelas and playwright Vangelis Kamberos; Margaris 1980:38). For them, this type of theater had the appeal of a political theater, even though performances could not be straightforward, because the administration forbade works with an outspoken political content. Efthimiou recalled a few brushes with the censors in Makronisos (1980a:42). Telling is Benas’s snapshot of the guard who followed the lines of the *Rigas* performance in a book copy of the play. Nonetheless, this theater exhibited elements of a more subtle political resistance (Vrahiotis 2005:3, 69–70). Even the officers and guards, who were bent on censoring anything subversive, missed some cues, nudges, gestures, double meanings, or sting messages. They knew that the audience sat in rapt attention to receive them with prompt and loud applause (Margaris 1980:38; Raftopoulos 1995:44; Vrahiotis 2005:66–67). Performance is as unpredictable as the reaction of large audiences, especially repressed audiences. Performance freed the politically-silenced actors and spectators, if only to a limited extent. In Makronisos, the inmates’ unforeseen political satire and unscripted applause at visual or auditory cues undermined the tight official control on leftist politics or sympathies. Theater became a zone of symbolic combat, a political arena, not of defeat or submission, but of relentless struggle, after the model of the tragic hero. Grivas concluded that the battle of the stage was ultimately won by the prisoners and not by the government bureaucracy (Grivas 1980:33; Vrahiotis 2005:66).

A second reason why theater worked in Makronisos and other prison islands was that it functioned as a platform for education, enlightenment, and—timid or intimidated—entertainment (Vrahiotis 2005:11–14, 66). The list of plays performed in Makronisos (however incomplete) rules out the possibility that the authorities managed to turn this theater into an instrument of anti-communist propaganda: anti-communist productions, or productions driven by the regime’s hostility, were the exception, not the rule (Efthimiou 1980b). In addition to some moralistic historical and patriotic plays,<sup>9</sup> Vrahiotis found one full-blown anti-communist play produced by Efthimiou: *The Storm (I Bora)*, written by Kostas Velmiras and the brothers Aimilios and Theodoros Velimezis (Vrahiotis 2005:41–43, 67, 107). Tasos Zografos, the set designer, hastened to state that the play had been imposed by the administration (testimony quoted in Vrahiotis 2005:42 n. 11). More telling, perhaps, is the anonymous review in the *Skapanefs* which complained that the production of this otherwise “true diamond of

modern Greek dramaturgy” on 23 October 1949 was not of the same high caliber as Efthimiou’s earlier work for the stage of the Second Battalion (*Skapanefs* 7, November 1949, 29). Was this show boycotted by the one hundred actors who were mobilized by Efthimiou when he staged his production?

Prisoner-organized education that addressed practical and psychological needs was the direct expression of a vision of cultural renewal that the Resistance movement had fostered (Apostolopoulou 1997: *passim*; Efthimiou 1980a:40, 42; Margaris 1980:38). It was truly uplifting for internees to display their talent in lessons or at events to which their fellow-inmates looked forward and that were far from makeshift affairs: it restored dignity, individuality, and self-assertion, no matter what the conditions or outcomes were. Didactic and even escapist theater helped to dispel the internees’ institutionalized isolation and segregation, however briefly. It offered ideals and reasons to survive, and it forged a collective identity of pride and resilience among the political detainees. It trained them in dramatic literature and production and deepened the process of their self-discovery. Worn down by brutal treatments and wretched living conditions, some inmates felt that they needed to preserve their sanity by selecting and preparing quality plays, preferably with a sizeable dose of Greek history, myth, or mythified tradition, ancient or modern (testimony by Zoi Petropoulou, 22 June 2005; and by Nitsa Gavriilidou, 24 June 2005).

These dramatic works allowed the prisoners to construct a memory of themselves as active and creative individuals, as sensitive and accessible intellectuals, and as brave and morally superior former combatants of the Resistance. They could begin to deconstruct their negative image as anti-patriots, losers, or defeated. In Makronisos, they could do so before a public partly made up of right-wing power-holders and visiting opinion-makers. Their performances were effective examples of when theatrical activism and theatrical work converge—in the double meaning of work as committed play and of working a production through together. Grivas explained their goals:

It will be a struggle to preserve their most basic dignity and self-respect, a struggle for the preservation of their memory, which equals a people’s memory of its most recent battles. . . . The theater becomes a prop they can use to defend themselves. (1980:33)

Theater, Grivas asserted, is what kept the flame of the struggle of and about the Resistance alive. His characterization typified the Left’s concerted effort to equate the recent battle of the Civil War with the celebrated old struggle of the “people’s fighters.” Repeatedly, left-wingers and communists reclaimed the glory of the widely supported

Resistance but remained reticent about their Civil War activities, which entailed the leftist “crimes” committed then (some alleged, some well-documented, all contested). The memory of Civil War atrocities threw long shadows over that of the Resistance. Grivas transferred the struggle and the memories of old to the new arena of the prison islands, realizing full well what an insular stage it was.<sup>10</sup>

A third reason contributed to theater’s popularity on the Greek prison islands and has often been overlooked. Rehearsing a performance, training a cast and/or a chorus, designing and sewing costumes, building sets, all these activities took up a great deal of time. If, for different reasons, the stage directors and the prison authorities had come to a mutual understanding that producing a play was a good investment of some volunteers’ time and energy, then the many hours spent would be hassle-free and torture-free. The volunteers were given a daily break from the excessive or aimless manual labor. Detention in Makronisos, in particular, was notorious for its methods of Sisyphean toil that had to break the victims’ morale. A play production, in contrast, was an exercise in collaboration on a worthwhile project. No wonder, then, that theater productions and also music, dance, and choral performances grew so popular among the inmates. Escapist shows, too, delivered practical as well as psychological benefits under the harsh circumstances. The more time, training, and people they required, the better. Efthimiou, who directed the troupe of the Second Battalion of Makronisos, testified that his troupe, in its heyday, had over fifty people who were granted time off from pointless forced labor duties. He recalled how some inmates, lured by the promise of time-off, came to beg him for a part, no matter how minor, in any of his shows (Efthimiou 1980a:40–41; Raftopoulos 1995:44–45). If rehearsal and preparation time spent would still not safeguard the prisoners from torture, then they must have felt empowered by being able—at the very least—to reveal to an attuned public the violence done to their bodies. Actors and spectators make physical contact with a play and exploit messages that sting. Theater feeds off corporeality: it displays bodies. For the prison authorities, these bodies had better be free of bruises or injuries, especially before the eyes of official visitors.

In the context of the various (island) prison locations, the didactic and consciousness-raising mission of theater adapted itself to new external conditions: the constituencies of the audience, space, and time became relatively fixed. The repertory, however, changed rapidly. The chance for a troupe to stage repeat performances was slim: where the audience remained fixed, there was no need for a repeat performance. Some players continued to live life on the edge: detection of incendiary messages could, at any time, lead to instant and brutal victimization.

Performers of radicalized classical tragedy could hide, as much as necessary, behind the screen of “sacrosanct” antiquity and passed relevant messages of protest or resistance. They did so in ways similar to their use of the bipartisan celebrated Greek War of Independence.

*Makronisos: “Aren’t we enough of a tragedy perhaps?”*<sup>11</sup>

The inmates built a total of four large outdoor theaters on two of the hillslopes of Makronisos, on the model of the ancient Greek open-air theaters. They used stone for building the theaters where the official shows were performed, and the construction was done with the approval and assistance of the authorities (Vrahiotis 2005:13, 16–21, 53, 66, 69–70). They used mud-brick, however, for building the theater where they performed their “own” shows. Stone was, after all, laden with associations of the prisoners’ forced labor (Hamilakis 2002:314, 315, 321–322, 328). Tasos Daniil said that he was the architect of the outdoor theater constructed in mud-brick. He emphasized that only volunteer labor was used and that his theater was an “expression of us” (testimony in Bournazos and Sakellaropoulos 2000:265). Daniil further reflected on how drama production fulfilled a basic need:

It indicated that, at the worst moments, the Greek people also brought their cultural needs along. . . . And, of course, the plays we staged in this little theater had no connection at all with the administration’s wishes or programs or with its oppressive violation of our personal dignity. On the contrary, they were a manifestation of resistance and elevation. (2000:265)

The detainees of Makronisos performed as much for and with each other as those on the islands of Trikeri or Aī Stratis, to find purpose, strength, and solace in play producing, regardless of who or how many would watch. Given the large numbers held at Makronisos, the audiences there were substantial (up to six thousand *Makronisiotes*, according to Efthimiou 1980a:40). The steady flow of exiles to Makronisos gives a new meaning to the Modern Greek word for “the public” (“*to koino*” meaning literally “the common” people), in the sense that both performing and watching shows were part of a “shared” mass experience. The detainees’ desire to play and to be recognized for their act’s performativity manifested itself in ways that were not simply definitive but generative—theatrically spoken. As subjects of the guards’ gaze, the internees suffered various kinds of psychological and physical humiliations offstage. Meanwhile, the authorities duped the visiting audiences from Athens and abroad: they were trumped into seeing the illusion of stage freedom as a measure of the real inter-action between inmates and prison personnel. During performances, the stage was as much the site

of the exiles' coerced erasure of their actual common experience and living memory as it was the platform on which they could reveal at least some reality behind the veil of theatrical make-believe.

In the remaining sections, this article will tackle the wider issues of the inmates' theater and theatricality. In Makronisos, the staging of the classics cultivated an active public. The actors watched those who were watching them and watched themselves. The inmate spectators followed the action on stage, kept an eye out for the guards, and scrutinized the overall turnout of detainees, most of who were obliged to attend the performances. The impassioned cheering of certain words was an active instrument of audience participation, as were whispers, rumblings, or gestures. The public's seating area was packed but it was not entirely regimented. The more engaged or unruly the spectators became, the more the guards needed to keep an eye on them. The guards also watched the cast while they controlled the detainees; they saw in these performers and spectators firebrands and possible wire-pullers. They observed especially those who were "too talented for their own good" and whose reciprocal gaze had more of an agent's surveillance of the guard.

Benas's testimony captured the image of a guard who could not bear the pressure of the gaze that the actors (re)turned on him when they *made* a powerful line strike home. Showtime reminded the guards that they, too, were imprisoned on the island and were not shielded from their subjects' watchful gaze—or from acts of harassment or sabotage against the much-hated apparatus of enforcement. The top administrators were triply viewed: by the actors on stage, by the audience from the seating areas, and by the guards worried about retaliation from above against their moments of weakness. Theater was the one place where inmates could momentarily fluster their supervisors, and where prison personnel and top officials might find themselves temporarily powerless. But all parties knew that challenging the authorities, especially before an audience of visitors, could have the direst of consequences (testimony by P. T., 2 June 2005; and by Nikos Koundouros, 25 June 2005).

What then did the prison warden have to gain from granting permission for the production of plays? Of course, entertaining one's subjects to distract them from injustice and terror has been a strategy employed by many power-holders. More purposefully, however, the theater in Makronisos and, occasionally, in other prison locations had to function as a showcase theater. The officials allowed it to exist and encouraged the production of quality works, even though they had no plan for a general repertory of classics, in order to then show off the inmates' "progress" on the path to "enlightenment," "conversion,"

“reeducation,” and “rebirth” (Grivas 1980:32–33; Avdoulos 1998:195–196; Vrahiotis 2005:13, 15, 61, 66–67, and *passim*). When this type of controlled theater was successful, it invested the prison administrators with gravitas and authority and made them look good to outsiders.

Ancient Greek tragedy helped to paint the picture of cultural unanimity and newfound patriotic loyalty that the government wanted to disseminate. Thus both the Right and the Left agreed on producing tragedies even though their views were different on the way they interpreted them. Depending on the circumstances, the official call or support for classical plays created a moral dilemma for some detainees who worried that they might compromise their integrity (Koundouros 1980:36–37). But if individual directors or actors needed to engage in a modest degree of collaboration to survive, their act of saving themselves through performance was the one that was the least morally offensive: they could mount highly-valued tragedy, balance or alternate it with much-desired entertainment, and thus reach out to so many fellow-prisoners who stood to gain from the practice. However, even those who had the support of the prison warden could not afford to cross him. Unlike the spectators, who could somehow disappear in the crowd or seek strength in numbers, the actors were face to face with the guards and the administrators (Vrahiotis 2005:66, 70; testimony by P. T., 2 June 2005; and by Nikos Koundouros, 25 June 2005).

The authorities’ spatial focus on the classical stage, too, differed from the democratizing effect associated with the architecture and natural setting of large outdoor ancient theaters. In the official conception, or the bird’s eye perspective of spatial hierarchy, the theater stage was to enact top-down power relations: the guards held a secure and superior position above or on the sides of the hollow seating area; the special reserved seats had the best, undistracted view and were themselves clearly visible; the actors on stage appeared small, indeed (testimony by P. T., 2 June 2005). The physical space and its configuration at show time helped the authorities to display where victor and victim ranked—always a useful exercise in discipline. The spatial order and the exact time were fixed by those who feared that any protest might escalate at the first occasion. The officials hoped to turn theater into a theater of reassurance and affirmation of conservative patriotism, morality, and religion, not of disturbance. The condemned became protagonists in their own public and publicized drama when the administration turned them into live advertisement.

The Greek government frequently invited an outside public of Greek and foreign opinion-makers to visit Makronisos. Such visits were announced and publicized as “inspection” visits. The advance notice the prison guards received, of course, defeated the purpose of a real

inspection. The local prison authorities tried hard to reassure the visitors of the humanity of camp life and took the opportunity to honor them by inviting them to an inmate performance of, preferably, a classical play or concert.<sup>12</sup> Stavros Avdoulos called the administrators of Makronisos “the most talented theater directors,” who took days to prepare the showcase events (1998:197). Thus conservative Greek intellectuals and artists, high-ranking politicians and military personnel, academics, journalists, clergymen, students and their teachers, delegates, and also foreign correspondents made the one-day trip to the island. In reality, however, they went as political voyeurs whose return trip was always securely booked. As planned, they left very satisfied, both morally and intellectually, because they had seen, with their own eyes, that the “national reeducation project” on Makronisos was working. Most uncritically, they sang the praises of the authorities’ “admirable” and “Christian” work with their “unruly” human material. They noted the “success” of Makronisos in bolstering patriotism—a patriotism that, they knew well, was made of pro-government and pro-Western sympathies.<sup>13</sup>

Nikos Koundouros spent three years (1949–1952) as a political prisoner in Makronisos. He later became one of Greece’s renowned new wave filmmakers. When Nikos Efthimiou was released in 1950, Koundouros took over as stage director of the Second Battalion (testimony by Koundouros, 27 June 2005). The Makronisos administration banned Koundouros’s production of *The Poor Man’s Sheep*, a political tragicomedy written by Stefan Zweig (Vrahiotis 2005:43). Koundouros managed to see through, however, some productions of lesser known Greek satirical plays: *The Trojan War*, written by Yiannakopoulos and Sakellarios, and *The Capital-Dweller* by Yiorgos Roussos were both performed in 1950 (Vrahiotis 2005:43, 108). More important than the actual productions, however, was Koundouros’s discovery of the lead comic actor, Thanasis Vengos. The theater of Makronisos forged a lasting bond between him and Vengos and catapulted the latter into a long career as one of Greece’s most beloved comic actors (Kersanidis 2004; testimony by Koundouros, 25 June 2005). Koundouros dubbed the government’s favorite island for public relations a “stage of eleven kilometer long” and used this poignant characterization to entitle the article that he contributed to Grivas’s special issue (1980). With a keen eye for hypocrisy, Koundouros described the political metatheater on Makronisos as follows:

In reality, there were two Makronisos islands. The one was hell and the other looked like a strange, well-kept camp of happy people. . . . Silently, they watched the visitors with their eyes red and puffy from the dust. From time to time, a voice shouted something like a slogan and the silent mass reacted with three loud cries, “hail, hail, hail,” which the ravines echoed for a while. The visitors applauded. This was the stage of a theater in its own

right, which no theater history has ever recorded: harsh, direct, political, absurd, surrealist, each genre separately and all together in a climate of paranoia that tied actors and spectators together in a mystical understanding. All knew what “play” was being performed and all pretended not to know. Following the rules of the stage direction, both parties had to act as if they were improvising and reacting spontaneously. . . . Among them [the visitors] were inspectors of the Red Cross, foreign ambassadors, journalists, and other select observers of the worldwide public opinion. The deception was organized perfectly; the production ended with applause, and . . . the happy camping returned to its role of an indoctrination camp. The one and only true role of the theater in Makronisos was to make the outside world see this image of the “modern school for reeducation,” the “font of Siloam,” the “new Parthenon,” as Panayiotis Kanellopoulos had baptized the camp of the Devil. (1980:35, 36)

Koundouros conveyed not only his cynicism, but also his profound understanding of the metatheatrical, rhetorical, and highly political complexities of the various acts and illusions that played on the stage that was Makronisos. He mentioned three of the island’s common titles that tied together its moral-didactic, religious, and ultra-nationalist connotations. Conservative officials referred to Makronisos as a “school” or even a “university” (testimonies in Voglis 2002:84, 104, 185). Stratis Bournazos saw the didactic imagery as the one dominating the propaganda and symbolic statements regarding Makronisos (1998:208–210; Gavriilidou 2004:19–20, 67, 77, 79; Vrahiotis 2005:9–10), and accordingly titled his article, “The Great National School of Makronisos.” The right-wing government of the early 1950s took “appeasement measures” and decongested the prisons, partly because they had become schools but, ironically, schools of “subversive ideas” (official testimony quoted by Voglis 2002:224). Panayiotis Kanellopoulos, Minister for Military Affairs, called Makronisos the “new Parthenon” but later denied having used that term (Apostolopoulou 1984:42; Avdoulos 1998:195; Bournazos 1998:214–216; Gavriilidou 2004:77; Hamilakis 2002:308, 313). Conservatives further promoted Makronisos with the title of the “National Baptismal Font” (Leontis 1995:221). One of the clergymen who regularly preached on the island compared the camp to the Pool of Siloam, in which young “misguided” Greeks would be absolved from their political sins and would be [re]baptized into the “right” Christian and patriotic values (Voglis 2002:77). The reference is a Biblical one, to John 9:7, in which Jesus tells a blind man to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. Like the blind man who returns cleansed and with his eyesight restored, the detainees will be “cleansed” and “see the light” again. As much as Koundouros understood the theater of Makronisos to be an “instrument of deception and propaganda,” he saw it function also as a

“legitimate” platform on which the prisoners could voice at least some protest and elicit some response (1980:36, 37). He observed that the prisoners, in turn, devised their own, “second” language, which was also the language in which they signaled messages to each other when performing on stage under the gaze of officials (1980:37). “Thus,” he continued, “very slowly, we developed a technique that would allow us to perform two plays simultaneously: the one loud and clear, direct, entertaining; the other furtive, indirect, and full of hints” (1980:37; Margaritis 1980:38).

Marika Kotopouli (1887–1954), the renowned Greek actress and entrepreneurial stage manager, was one of the visitors and delegates who came to praise the government’s work in Makronisos. Koundouros described how she took to the stage to deliver a laudatory speech and how she acted and was drawn into the official act at the same time (1980:36–37). For all her knowledge of tragedy, the older actress failed to recognize the tragedy that was Makronisos. Kotopouli was, however, a monarchist and staunch conservative. Her public appreciation of the government’s “exemplary” work was not the kind of praise that would have insinuated that the opposite held true. Kotopouli may have been all too willing to be fooled, Koundouros pondered: when all eyes were on her, she may have chosen to *pretend* that she failed to see the truth, so that she would not have to show any colors or face up to the ugly reality (1980:36). The experienced actress was probably better than anyone else at feigning the total absence of doubt, at hiding what she was really thinking. She may have opted for the safety of the stage mask or persona when the metaphorical spotlight threatened to reveal wrinkles in her reputation, expertise, or conscience.

Reflecting back on Kotopouli’s performance before an audience of about four thousand male prisoners dressed in dirty clothes on a wind-swept island, Koundouros concluded: “Who knows where the actress in her stopped and where the *ethnikófron* prevailed at that very moment” (1980:36; Grivas 1980:32). The term *ethnikofrosíni* (ἔθνικοφροσύνη) captured the Right’s paranoia about communism, but it translated it into nationalist patriotism. For the purposes of moral self-justification, state anti-communism cleverly used terms derived from Classical Greek, such as *ethnikofrosíni*, which was modeled after the word for the ancient virtue of *sofrosíni* (σωφροσύνη). The classical terms were intellectual in origin but developed moral connotations already in antiquity: therefore, the lack of “sound sense,” and any concomitant error, could denote “shameful” behavior that was also morally reprehensible. Thus the Right conceptualized leftist dissidence as a crime, not only against the state, but also against tradition and the “family” or *genos* of the nation (Voglis 2002:24–26). In light of the government’s exclusive

claim to *sofrosíni* and the nationalist patriotism of the *ethnikófron*, Koundouros cynically called the prison camp of Makronisos a *sofronistírio* (1980:35), in a pun on the Greek *frondistírio*, or (privately-run) cramming school, and on the island's title of *anamorfotírio*, or school of "reform" or "rehabilitation" (Bournazos 1997).

Koundouros's record of Kotopouli's visit to Makronisos is corroborated by an article in the conservative Greek newspaper *Kathimerini*, 17 May 1949, entitled "The Inauguration of the Theater of Makronisos," signed "K. S." According to this journalist, Kotopouli gave a speech at the invitation of the soldiers, to inaugurate the Second Battalion's outdoor theater, built on the island's "most picturesque" spot, in the words of the *Kathimerini* (Vrahiotis 2005:17–18, 21, 38, 68; Margaris 1966:2:200). Kotopouli praised the "great national work of Makronisos" and addressed "warm patriotic words" to the detainees, with which she sent "shivers of emotion" down the spines of her "enraptured" audience. Her speech was received with a long, "riveting applause." The centerpiece of the celebration, however, was a classical music concert given by inmate soldiers and also the recitation of poetry "inspired by life in Makronisos." Eftimiou's list noted the performance of classical music on 15 May 1949 but made no mention of the poetry recitation (1980b). Considering the weight of the occasion, the aura of the visitor, and the fixed non-topic, this event must have been highly rhetorical. The May 1949 article is featured in a newspaper column adjacent to an official report on the Greek government's military advances against the communists: "Battles that Left Many Dead on the Mainland and in Vitsi." The majority of the casualties, the report emphasizes, fell on the communist side.

The government was keen on attracting influential foreign supporters and, in particular, the British and the Americans. It scored big hits when the B.B.C. came out to film the camps in April of 1949 and again when the *National Geographic* devoted a December 1949 photo-reportage to postwar Greece and Makronisos. Author of the article and reportage was Maynard Owen Williams, who waxed in lyrical terms and Biblical allusions about the "Greek experiment in regeneration" and local army officers "play[ing] the role of the good shepherd" (1949:711). There was certainly more to that "role-playing" than Williams could have known—or wanted to see. He also lectured, in the most paternalistic yet interventionist fashion: "[W]ithin this favorable environment, each individual is encouraged to 'find himself' and develop his talents to the full" (1949:712). Williams had bought into the Greek government's propaganda, which was now concealed behind the illusionary objectivity of documentary photo-reporting. Because the right-wing Greek government had been courting U.S. goodwill and aid, it was especially pleased

when Americans, too, were sold on the Makronisos “phenomenon” and heralded far and wide its success in “converting” its communist political opponents (Bournazos 1998:223; Hamilakis 2002:326; Avdoulos 1998:196–197, 200–202; *Kathimerini*, 16 November 2003, 20).

*Ancient tragedies staged on the prison island of Makronisos*

1. *Sophocles’s Philoctetes on Makronisos, Summer 1948.* Lefteris Raftopoulos recalled how moved he was when he heard the Makronisos Philoctetes lament that fellow-Greeks had abandoned him to the loneliness of an inhospitable island (Lemnos) (1995:46). The Third Battalion’s production of Sophocles’s *Philoctetes*, staged in the summer of 1948, conveyed a strong sense of the theater group’s cohesiveness and appealed to inmate solidarity to break the curse of imposed desolation:

And it stirred in you an extraordinary emotion to hear Philoctetes speak about his martyr’s life on the island of his involuntary exile, as if he was speaking precisely about this island:

No sailor comes here of his own free will:  
there is no harbor . . . [Sophocles, *Philoctetes*, 301–302]

Would you say, however, that it was only the words of Philoctetes that moved you? Or rather also your comrade, the soul and the mind of the troupe, who interpreted the role of Philoctetes? (1995:46)

The more the abandoned hero Philoctetes insisted on his stage identity, the more powerful his protest became for his fellow-internees. The protagonist mastered the art of saying things without actually saying them. The public before him instinctively understood and responded with a show of appreciation, which alleviated the anxiety of the actor. The metatheatrical applicability of Philoctetes’s words and fate led Raftopoulos to posit the protagonist’s uninhibited identification with the tragic hero, the “realness” of his emotions, and the belief that Lemnos/Makronisos was a stage fit for a hero, who would find an accepting audience—an audience in the know (testimony by K. S., 31 May 2005; and by Nikos Koundouros, 25 June 2005; Vrahiotis 2005:3, 4, 7, 69). The essence of the selected text remained ingrained in the life and imagination of participants and audience members. Nonetheless, Raftopoulos did not name the lead actor and was not entirely sure whether the modern Greek translation used for this *Philoctetes* was the one written and published in 1913 by Aristos Kambanis (Raftopoulos 1995:46 n. 30). He expressed some doubt also as to whether the production saw an actual performance beyond the dress rehearsal. The formal opening may have been cancelled by the prison authorities

(1995:45, 46; Hamilakis 2002:321; Vrahiotis 2005:47, cf. 69 n. 6). That Raftopoulos could no longer be sure may prove that the performance experience was more important and more memorable to him than proper attribution or precise wording.

Raftopoulos cited lines from Philoctetes's explanation to Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, on his lonely condition: because of the stench of a festering wound in the foot, the hero was left behind in Lemnos by the Greek troops, including his own, who continued on their voyage to Troy. Philoctetes was a fighter, whose life was held in abeyance and who fell victim to betrayal and desertion because of a gangrenous and foul-smelling "infection." But *miasma* was precisely the term that the Right and the monarchy used for the mind's dangerous "infection" by communism (King Constantine called communism a *miasma* in his New Year's address of 1 January 1966, raising a storm of protest). Verbal and visual references to Philoctetes's physical condition acquired symbolic proportions for the inmate audience and reverberated with the prevailing value-judgments cast in pseudo-medical verdicts on illness versus health.

The myth of Philoctetes, however, is about physical sickness that exposes the opposing side's state of moral rot and, ultimately, about the healing of bodily and psychological wounds, of relationships, and of the community at large. The actors and their public together took a long and in-depth view of the experience of detention and oppression. For them, the play also touched on the more difficult subjects of internal confusion, festering self-doubt, the need to rein in anger, and the hope for outside recognition, as the marooned prisoners worried about their present and future position in Greek society (testimony by K. S., 31 May 2005). Philoctetes is "reeducating" himself and Neoptolemus and achieves one of the most potent reconciliations in all of Greek myth. Significantly, however, in the tense standoff between the Greeks and Philoctetes, Neoptolemus, who represents the younger and more principled generation, makes the first move toward reconciliation and recognition on behalf of the "establishment." With its web of dramatic rebounds and turning points, the play held out the exiles' hope that some day in modern Greece, reconciliation or at least sanity would prevail and that the Resistance movement would be properly acknowledged. On the scale of the nation, dramatic changes of course promised national redemption in addition to the redemption of the formerly rejected individual. For the finale, however, Sophocles resorted to the divine intervention of Heracles to bring his tragedy to a rapid, positive conclusion: Philoctetes at last agrees to leave for the glory and healing that await him at Troy. The right-wing authorities might have accepted the play initially, because they saw this *deus ex machina* symbolically lead

the reformed troops back to the battlefields of the Civil War: it was crucial for the nationalist cause that every leftist Philoctetes rejoin the ranks of the embattled government forces. From a modern dramaturgical and critical point of view, however, the recourse to a *deus ex machina* is a semi-satisfactory solution. The device undermines logical and psychological agency: it derails the cause-and-effect sequence of the protagonists' actions and unnerves the inherent strength of tight character development. Some of these dimensions, however, probably remained opaque to the prison supervisors and censors.

Sophocles's *Philoctetes* gave its performers plenty of opportunities to pass political and personal comments, including the possibility to display a body in pain or anguish and to signify the torture or mutilation and malnourishment that inmates endured on Makronisos. The tragedy depicts the hero wracked with pain in the foot or leg (the same word denotes "foot" and "leg" both in ancient and in Modern Greek). Greek torturers tended to beat a victim's feet violently, with techniques practiced from the interwar years through the colonels' dictatorship. The performers could use their prison rags, tattered clothes, or ripped shoes, the ultimate manifestations of the terror they suffered offstage, to make a reality statement through the filter of dramatic illusion. For lack of any other outlet, illusion helped to project the realities of camp life—and death—which the administration deemed inappropriate for public consumption and argued away as if they belonged to the internees' anti-tyrannical clichés. With all the prisoners' world becoming a stage, corporeality was part and parcel of their eminent production of acute visual representation and wrenching performative language (testimony by K. S., 31 May 2005).

2. *Sophocles's Antigone in Makronisos, Summer–Fall 1948.* Some of the same actors from the Third Battalion in Makronisos who were rehearsing Sophocles's *Philoctetes* in the summer of 1948 managed to stage his *Antigone*, the easily-politicized classic with the ultimate tragic heroine (Vrahiotis 2005:45–47, 49–50, 69, 109). A photograph (Figure 1) from a performance of the *Antigone* in 1948 was included by Mihalis Katsiyeras in a two-volume collection of images that capture the essence of Greece in the twentieth century (2000–2001:2:68). This photograph shows a beaux-arts classicizing set and a carefully posed scene, in which two guards lead Antigone before Creon. The symmetry of the architecture of the set, the blocking of the guards, and the grouping of the chorus of elders is obvious. The all-male cast is wearing lavish, "ancient-style" costumes, which match the highly stylized but not too sturdy-looking backdrop. There is an exotic or outlandish quality to this *tableau vivant*. Exaggerated, too, is Antigone's anguished expression. The elders of the



Figure 1. Sophocles's *Antigone*, Makronisos, 1948.

chorus strike baroque poses and try hard to look and act their age. Nonetheless, the photograph conveys something of the prisoners' self-conscious excitement. They were eager to reveal their own personalities in otherwise set roles and to claim political validity for their individual and collective interpretations. They did not spare any effort or time—especially time—to come up with fancy sets, costumes, make-up, and accessories.

Given the meager resources that the *Makronisiotes* had at their disposal, their investment in elaborate sets and costumes was an act both of resistance and escapism: their work to cover the *opsis* of the production defied the difficulties they faced and opened up new worlds for them (testimony by P. T., 2 June 2005; and by Nikos Koundouros, 25 June 2005). Ex-detainees boasted that their shows, even though they lacked advanced technological aids, measured up to the standards set by the professional theater companies of Athens and Thessaloniki (e.g., Avdoulos 1998:300, 302; Efthimiou 1980a:40). They overcompensated with external details because they were not allowed to use liberal adaptations of classical drama. Given the conditions of emotional and physical hardship for which Makronisos was notorious, the resources applied here seem to indicate that the prison authorities looked relatively favorably upon the *Antigone* production (Vrahiotis 2005:45 but cf. 46).

Grivas characterized the staging as a protest statement that carried “symbolic” political meaning (1980:33). He implied that, like the performance of Sophocles's *Philoctetes*, the *Antigone* production lent

itself to a theater of ideological complicity, in which actors and audiences took chances and seized upon lines to spark off shows of support and solidarity. The prisoners' reading of the tragedy brought out the "democratic" political elements of a—common but not necessarily justified—interpretation hostile to the "tyrant" Creon. Creon's edict, for instance, was seen as a test of true patriotism: failing the test signified treason for the Right, but moral victory for the Left (testimony by P. T., 2 June 2005). Conservatives could find their own measure of ideological satisfaction in a firm, consistent Creon, devoted to the state and to law and order. Colonel Bairaktaris, a much-hated prison official, saw actor Yiannis Nouhakis play the role of Creon. For the colonel and his colleagues, the show was an "extraordinary success," worthy to be granted a repeat performance (*Skapanefs* 10, October 1948, 27; *Skapanefs* 16, April 1949, 31; Vrahiotis 2005:47, 49). According to the reviews in the *Skapanefs*, Nouhakis's Creon was the father figure "who is torn between paternal love and duty" and "whose tragedy we're all made to feel" (*Skapanefs* 12, December 1948, 27). The author of this brief commentary was also impressed by the conflict between Creon and his son, Haemon, the fiancé of Antigone. The performance depicted an ideological and generational clash but brought the male-to-male collision into sharper focus. This struggle, which, according to Vrahiotis, captured the essence of the Civil War conflict (2005:50), redefined the play and the war as a male-only business. It left an uneasy contradiction between the Left's emancipation rhetoric and their reinstating of a masculine agonistic model.

This production reportedly cultivated some sympathy for Creon—which is not absent from the ancient text—even as it endorsed Antigone's act. A similar stage dynamic has often been invoked to explain why Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* appealed to the Nazi occupiers and collaborationists as well as to the French subjects and Resistance-fighters when it was first performed in wartime Paris on 4 February 1944 (cf. Witt 1993). While the official and publicized interpretation focused on the men in the mythical collision and on one's right over another, leftist acts of (re)reading Sophocles's *Antigone*, situated on other prison islands, reasserted a modern political interpretation but kept focused on the title character. The long-detained author Aris Alexandrou wrote his *Antigone* on Aï Stratis in 1951. It is perhaps the only example of creative playwriting on the islands later to be published (1977). Alexandrou gave the play, set in the warscape of the Occupation and its aftermath, an expressly democratic and anti-Nazi subtext, which, however, managed to steer clear from leftist dogmatism.

The exiles made left-wing heroes out of Philoctetes, Antigone, and also Prometheus. Philoctetes and Prometheus hold the promise of a

future victory that they will live to enjoy, complete with the rewards of recognition, exoneration, rehabilitation, and restored memory. But Antigone's death—or that of the “martyr” Rigas Velestinlis—was an alternative fate looming over the detainees. All three tragic personae made a more or less valid defense by claiming that they did nothing wrong—based on modern sensibilities and selective interpretations of “democratic” or “dissident” passages in the classical Greek texts. All three, too, lend themselves to contestatory interaction on stage as they take back heroic personhood and human dignity. They allowed the political prisoners to play at rebellion under the guise of the forms and conventions and the presumed degree of acceptance of ancient drama. Classical theater was a distancing device—a means to bypass the censors by avoiding frontal assaults—and a vehicle of the Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*. At the same time, however, the tragic heroes and their myths offered multiple emotional and ideological entry points into the minds of the detainees, who recognized their political voice but had to muzzle many of their reactions. In general, the Left shared in a broader movement to transform the (mainly nineteenth-century) Romanticist heroine Antigone into a radical idealist and, with an undeniable degree of determinism, defined her as oppositional in character: Antigone's function is to oppose, even if the opponent is not always clearly delineated. The target of her opposition then becomes subject to many more changes, as does the nature of the causes that she is seen to fight: Antigone no longer fights for the right to bury her dead brother; at stake is her struggle against power abuse and terror that stifle resistance. Such readings, which fail to do justice to the richness of Sophocles's original, lay bare the perils of reducing this and other ancient tragedies to paradigmatically categorized protagonists and to slogan-like messages.

*What's playing on the island of Trikeri?*

Many left-wing women and former Resistance-fighters suffered exile, detention, and torture along with their male counterparts.<sup>14</sup> In addition, they had to endure the sexism of virulent anti-communism and acts of violence that took on gendered forms. As Voglis commented, the physical mistreatment of men and women alike was a way for the tormentors to enhance their masculinity (2002:137); some even went in for acts of theater, psychological conceit, or the violent performative language of threats and promises (Gavrillidou 2004:41–57, 73; Vrahiotis 2005:18, 64 n. 6). In this context, the female exiles on the prison island of Trikeri (off the tip of the Pelion peninsula) organized a reading of Sophocles's *Antigone* and a stage production of Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*. The interned actress Aleka Païzi was responsible for the reading,

about which very little is known. However, today's testimonies that reflect on this *Antigone* as a vehicle of empathic bonding and interpret her action as a metaphor for youthful rebellion do so after five decades and with the conviction of hindsight (testimony by Zoi Petropoulou, 22 June 2005; and by Nitsa Gavriilidou, 24 June 2005). If anything, the women's productions seem to have been silenced all the more in critical commentary and historiography. Even when written by female authors, the slim sources hardly elaborate on the sex-gender configurations. The reason was not that these women exhibited a mild form of the Marxist blindness toward gender relations; rather, they took for granted that violence, nationalism, and sexuality were tied up together and that they manifested themselves in paternalistic and sexist modes of maltreatment, even in its more lenient forms (testimony by A. N., 3 June 2005; Zoi Petropoulou, 22 June 2005; and by Nitsa Gavriilidou, 24 June 2005).

Païzi's own brief personal testimony about her exile in Trikeri (which began in late April 1949) was printed in a collection of pictures published by the Association of Female Political Exiles (1996:63). She testified that, because of the tight restrictions, the reading of Sophocles's *Antigone* substituted for a real performance. She was keenly aware that the tragedy might not be accessible to all women, "from scientists to illiterate ones," as she explained. She expected some of the "illiterate ones" to become bored and leave, and she had told them in advance of the play-reading that they could do so. Much to her surprise none left (1996:63). This frank sociological comment by a female member of the educated classes, that lower degrees of literacy and literary interest were to be expected among her counterparts from underprivileged strata, reflected the doubly disadvantaged status of many Greek women. Païzi did not contemplate how an actual performance would either have enhanced the text read aloud or the group experience. As a gendered portrayal of violence inflicted by the establishment, *Antigone* was, for her, still the best choice given the women's current situation and common leftist ideological background.

The tragedy, a rediscovery for some, had the impact of a first-time discovery on others, especially on younger women, who recognized a metonymic experience of their own predicament. In Païzi's idealist conception, the play could still serve purposes of enlightening the broader population, even in a remote location and before a relatively small audience, which was, however, a cross-section of Greece's female population. For her, too, Sophocles's play never validated but consistently undermined the legitimacy of Creon, the "victor." Any of the male guards or officials attending the reading would have seen himself cast as a Creon: he would be observed observing an—unvaryingly—negative enactment of himself, be it only an audible one (testimony by A. N., 3

June 2005). Often Antigone's archetypal value becomes so forceful that the figure of Creon no longer needs to stand opposed to her. A reading can function even without Creon's physical stage character, because his shadow or the repressive system that he embodies is ever-present.

The lack of sources renders it difficult for me to define certain acts or lines as specific acts of resistance or as any other form of protest. Because we know so little about the actors' intentions and about the ways in which the audience and the prison administration interpreted the *Antigone's* richly-layered meanings, we need to turn to additional, more general reflections of detained women on performance. They disclose modes of playing that entail showing and hiding at the same time and that have young and old participating in a subculture that constantly performed the dance of avoidance. They also reveal how women who did not read or act themselves found empowerment in the strategies of counter-surveillance. Maria, one of the informants interviewed by Janet Hart, described how some of the shows or mere skits could be staged only in secret performances at the Athenian Averof prison—as, occasionally, in Trikeri, depending on the broader political climate. Maria stressed the dynamics of watching, watchfulness, and surveillance on all sides and conveyed the women's exhilaration as they organized lookouts to defy the—rather dumb and disorganized—prison patrol:

Some of the inmates wrote plays, and we would put on performances. They [the authorities] would watch us closely. We did it with “watchguards.” We would go to the “deepest chamber” in the prison. We had a large chamber up on an upper floor. . . . We would post guards, and they would keep a lookout. And the old women would be given such duties. And what a thrill it was for them to be given that kind of work! . . . [W]e didn't have time to get depressed. . . . We had rehearsals. We wrote our own plays; we didn't have books or scripts to go by; we had to write our sketches right there. And that's what kept us going, it kept up our strength. (Hart 1996:255–256)

Conspiratorial plot and theater plot became one. The women's clandestine performance practice, based on solid collaboration and tight solidarity, gave new meaning to the many connections that exist in the Greek language between theater metaphors and calculated pretense or conspiracy theories (Apostolopoulou 1997:54; 1984:40; Gavriilidou 2004: 71–72).

Roza Imvrioti, a vocal intellectual, a born organizer, and gifted teacher, prepared to mount *Prometheus* in Trikeri. The prison warden, however, unwilling to take chances with the power of theater, intervened and banned the actual opening of the production (Apostolopoulou 1984:60). To my knowledge, the most extensive record of the final

rehearsals is that of Hariati-Sismani (1975:xi, 24–25). It contains a list of the six actresses who played the lead roles of Prometheus, Kratos, Bia, Oceanus, Hermes, and Io—and a list of the twenty-four members of the chorus of Oceanids.<sup>15</sup> Hariati-Sismani played the role of Oceanus, but also designed the sets and costumes. The energetic Elli Nikolaïdou taught the choral passages (Apostolopoulou 1984:61–65). Prometheus’s rock consisted of large blocks of colored marble: the women had carried them up from the shore of Trikeri to the area on a hillside they had designated for their theater (Hariati-Sismani 1975:24–25). These rocks symbolized their labor and isolation on this island. At the same time, any one of the tragedy’s many verbal references to harsh rocks or mountains in the North could denote the Left’s final and losing battle in the mountain regions of Northern Greece. This play with a male protagonist offered the advantage of having a large female chorus. Invrioti’s group of women had started to study the parts on Hios, their prior location of exile. The women’s work survived the disruptive transfer from Hios to Trikeri and the group’s partial reconfiguration. This was not to be taken for granted, but the inmates understood well that these and other communal activities “kept the spirits high” (Apostolopoulou 1984:58, 64; Hariati-Sismani 1975:24).

This performance practice against all odds was the internees’ homage to theater itself, both as a classical art form and as a witness of contemporary history and personal experience. Even though the *Prometheus* production did not go beyond the dress rehearsal stage, the tragedy itself warrants a closer look in light of its modern Greek reception by the Left. It was no coincidence that the prison authorities, hostile to unfettered inquiry or expression, silenced *the* “leftist” champion of ideological protest: Prometheus, who, for his well-intentioned actions on behalf of the human race, suffered the punishments of torture and confinement in isolation at the hands of a tyrannical Zeus. Hariati-Sismani left no doubt as to how she and her fellow-inmates read Prometheus’s character and condition:

For us, Prometheus was he who does not sign a “declaration” [of repentance], who accepts to stay nailed to his rock and to remain in his martyrdom, just like us, rather than yield to violence. . . . Prometheus was us and all the words of the drama fit us like a glove. We called Hermes “the errand-boy.” Hephaestus was the worker who forges his bonds. And Oceanus? That was my uncle, who had written to me, a few days earlier, to urge me to repent. (1975:24)

This Prometheus (in his deep-red chiton, 1975:25) does not succumb to the pressure to sign a “declaration of repentance.” The hero holds on to his proud convictions which his oppressors try to destroy,

reacting with excessive violence to his proud denial (Apostolopoulou 1984:60). For the detainees who saw the refusal to sign as a powerful weapon, the myths of Philoctetes and Antigone also gained relevance. In the first tragedy, the dishonest Odysseus, taking advantage of Philoctetes's physical condition and utter isolation, tries to obtain his unfailing bow of Heracles, which will seal the Greeks' triumphant victory in the Trojan War. In the second tragedy, a paternalistic Creon attempts to convince the naively idealist Antigone and Haemon to join the side of the state. Successive right-wing governments coaxed or terrorized Greek political prisoners into signing a recantation or renunciation of their ideological beliefs, called a *dilosí metanoías* (δήλωση μετανοίας) or, short, a *dilosí*. Often, the mechanics of social and religious control joined in the assault on the internees' psychological strength. Pressure on them was exacerbated by the unrelenting urgings of parents, children, or relatives, local priests, and village or small town authorities, all pressed into special or routine service as dutiful minions of the Right. Many detainees caved in under psychic and/or bodily torture to sign such a "declaration" and became "*dilosíes*." Those inmates who did not succumb were labeled "incurrigibles," or the "stubborn" ones. Most declarations of repentance were used by the authorities to deal psychological blows to the remaining dissenters.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, the identification with Prometheus across gender boundaries opened a way for the female prisoner to claim the identity of the interned intellectual (testimony by A. N., 3 June 2005). In its contemporary Marxist and leftist readings, Aeschylus's play voiced a sense of belonging to an international intellectual community in spite of bodily constraints. The symbolism of its hero Prometheus, the mythical, battered educator and culture-bringer, applied on a very "literal" level, as did the play's intimations of the abusive tyrant's downfall. It struck home in Trikeri, where many detained female teachers and intellectuals gave formal and informal lessons to illiterate inmates or to those whose school education had been interrupted or terminated by the war years. Some women acquired in exile the basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic that they had never had a chance to learn back home; others studied history, literature, law, and foreign languages, or learned geography, math, physics, and chemistry. The political prisoners held education and the classes that they themselves organized in very high esteem (Voglis 2002:164–167). Gaining an education—conquering schooling—was for many Greek women a meaningful way to stage resistance against a patriarchal and repressive system. Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, 460–461, states that the hero bestowed on the human race the skill of writing and thus the gift of Memory (feminine and mother) and increased cultural awareness:

. . . the combining of letters,  
Memory of all things, dutiful mother of the Muses.

Those interned in Trikeri had to conduct many of their lessons and some of the occasional readings in secret. Restrictions, however, were relaxed in the early years of the 1950s (Apostolopoulou 1997:203; Gavriilidou 2004:70, 73–74, 79, but cf. 75–76). The teacher Natalia Apostolopoulou compared the practice with the “secret school” (*krifó scholeió*, *κρυφό σχολειό* 1997:148–149, 203), which has traditionally (but romantically) been credited with sustaining Greek language and education through the adversities of the Ottoman occupation. Her references also took a stab at the Greek establishment for acting like the quintessential foreign host, long vilified as uncivilized. Like Sophocles’s *Philoctetes*, Aeschylus’s tragedy, too, projects the vision (although it is less explicitly stated) that the long-lasting struggle between the old and the new order will end in reconciliation.

The exemplum of the Aeschylean Prometheus (as opposed to Hesiod’s trickster Prometheus) was established in the 1920s and affirmed by successive generations of left-wing, male political detainees. The hero was the icon of the leftist “committed” culture and, in particular, of the Marxist European literature of the 1950s and 1960s (Ziolkowski 2000a:562). Precisely during the years that the German Democratic Republic (1949–1989) experienced its “*Antikewelle*,” or the intense presence of ancient (Greek) themes in East German literature and thought, Greek radicals, too, made many returns to this male archetype from their “own” legacy.<sup>17</sup> Kostas Varnalis, the well-known Demotic poet and translator, created the most important early Marxist and Russian-imported Prometheus to appear in Greek literature, when, in Alexandria of 1922, he published the first version of *The Burning Light* (*To fos pou kaei*). The “burning light” of his title is the revolutionary firebrand of Reason; its hero, Prometheus the fire-bringer, is in the vanguard of an unstoppable Marxist drive. By 1933, the Prometheus of Varnalis projected a “new and totally anthropocentric vision, both iconoclastic and belligerent,” in the words of Yorgis Yatromanolakis (1996:157).<sup>18</sup> The image of the strong revolutionary leader-ideologue that Varnalis broadcast through Prometheus influenced many Greek writers, including Nikos Kazantzakis, whose trilogy *Prometheus* dates back to 1944.<sup>19</sup>

In 1936, Dimitris Glinos, the professed leftist Greek activist, fell victim to the anti-communism of Metaxas and became “another *desmotes*” in Anafi. He identified with Prometheus and moved George Thomson, the British Marxist scholar. Thomson quoted an excerpt from Glinos’s letter of the same year in which he voiced his hope for liberation

through the symbolism of Prometheus's myth, a tool for his mental and physical survival:

I keep my soul vigilant and my body straight. And I await . . . And what I await will certainly come. Sooner or later it will come. Read the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus and you must know that Heracles will come—he *will* come. (quoted in 1964:89)

A victim of the tyrannical Zeus (Metaxas), Prometheus (Glinos) cried out against brutal and unjust power. But Aeschylus's original offered up a bitter reminder along with relief and consolation: Heracles, who kills Zeus's eagle and stops it from devouring Prometheus's liver, does come, but only after many generations. Glinos in the image of Prometheus declared himself ready to bear bodily and psychological sufferings until the time of liberation, no matter how long the wait.

The effective and persistent leftist-communist identification with Prometheus troubled the administrators of Makronisos: they resorted to publishing their own reading on the mythical hero in the *Skapanefs*, through the penmanship of an unnamed "repenter." The officially-approved interpretation is a grab-bag of oddly dogmatic statements: they counter Nietzschean views on Aeschylus's Prometheus and unabashedly call for the detainee's compliance with or submission to "invisible," superior, or even "divine" forces:

They say that Prometheus was the "first revolutionary," a divinity on a par with the suffering Christ. That is incorrect. Prometheus is the expression of religious awe. The Titan's rebellious words, his passion, etc., are mere ornamentation, not the core of the tragedy. . . . Prometheus is the first encounter of mankind with the gods, the first act of becoming aware of an invisible power that brings you to submission. (*Skapanefs* 12, December 1948, 20)

*Aeschylus's Persians in Aï Stratis: staging defeat and patriotic s(t)imulation*

Off the shores of Lemnos and Lesvos lies the small island of Ayios Efstratios (Aï Stratis for short). In the early 1950s, it functioned as one of the prison islands first for men and, from 1953 on, for a mixed group of "incorrigibles" (Apostolopoulou 1997:203–204; Hart 1996:259). Some of the exiles there who had passed through Makronisos (Voglis 2002:92) brought with them their theatrical know-how (Apostolopoulou 1997:203–204), and they prepared a full-blown all-male theater production of Aeschylus's *Persians*, to lead the way from triumphant Greek military action to contemplation and soul-searching in an act of group solidarity and yet solitary patriotism.<sup>20</sup> They had no interest or capability to engineer (more) hostility or to channel aggressive feelings toward the

traditional enemy, but they were able to revise the contested categories of “winners” and “losers” (testimony by Y. S., 30 May 2005; and by Aris Tsouknidas, 22 June 2005). In September of 1951, the production opened at a rudimentary theater built on the island, which marked a practical victory in its own right.

The Thiasos of the Exiles of Aï Stratis (Mahairas 1999:331), responsible for the production of the *Persians*, counted the following artists and actors among its ranks: the life-long ardent leftist Tzavalas Karousos directed the tragedy and opted for the modern Greek translation of the (then deceased) Demotic poet Ioannis Griparis. He also acted the part of the chorus leader of the Persian elders. The role of the Persian Queen Atossa was played by a male actor, Fanis Kambanis. Figure 2 most likely shows Queen Atossa making her first stately appearance before the larger than normal number of chorus members (only twelve in Aeschylus’s time). The famous communist poet Yiannis Ritsos taught the choreography. Stathis Alimisis, a writer and scholar of music, composed the musical score. Hristos Danglis, the painter and graphic artist, created the playbill, built the sets, and designed the costumes. Especially the actors’ wigs made out of sheep’s wool left the audience of inmates, guards, and islanders impressed (actor Y. Yiolasis, quoted by Karousou 2003:146). The costumes were made of sacks and rough cotton and were dyed dark brown. Dark cloth, too, was draped over the sidewalls of the stage area. The main backdrop, however, represented the Persian palace with the fortified but decorated central gate elevated onto four low steps. Figure 2 shows that the backstage was built into or in front of a hillside and looks more imposing as a result. The overall effect is one of enclosure despite the outdoor setting, reminiscent of the conventional proscenium stages in the enclosed urban playhouses that focused all attention.

Manos Katrakis (1908–1984), the avowed leftist actor-director, appeared in the weighty role of the Persian messenger. Figure 3, of poorer quality, shows Katrakis on the spectators’ far left side, as he is (probably) reporting on the naval battle that Xerxes waged in far-away Greece. Katrakis knew the play in Griparis’s translation inside out: he had played the messenger role and later the part of Xerxes in the National Theater’s wartime production of the *Persians*, directed by Dimitris Rondiris, during and occasionally after the term of his professional appointment there from 1935 to 1942 (Exarhos 1995–1996: 2.1:193). Thus Katrakis could assist Karousos in teaching the smaller parts. The shared experience fostered abiding bonds as important as the performance itself. For years after his detention, Katrakis continued to work with artists and friends whom he had met in exile.



Figure 2. Aeschylus's *Persians*, *Aï Stratis*, 1951.

In *Aï Stratis*, the actors transformed the *Persians* from the conservative but “rich” production of the National Theater into a truly “poor” theater, not by choice, but by necessity: they used every material means available and asked for the fullest degree of collaboration, also from their audience. The unusual public of *Aï Stratis* made for “poor” or *Lumpen* theater, too, but the inmate spectators, along with the actors, proudly clothed themselves in the aura of heroes (testimony by Y. S., 30 May 2005; and by Titos Patrikios, 26 June 2005). Both figures 2 and 3 reveal that the production’s performance style and dramatic exposition were, nonetheless, still rather conservative. The director and the actors may have kept to classicizing in aspects of external *opsis* for various reasons: some of them had been trained only in that tradition; many associated classicizing with professionalism and hoped that the production would be considered a serious match for the National Theater (testimony by Y. S., 30 May 2005).

The 1951 production of the *Persians* staged by the inmates of *Aï Stratis* tried to unnerve the negative, antagonizing impact of Rondiris’s performance of the same play on Rhodes four years earlier. Stratis Mirivilis, the well-known novelist and then vice-president of the National Theater’s board, had turned the latter production by the National Theater into a militant tract against Greek and Russian communists, whom he shrewdly equated with the Persian enemy of old. He had stepped to the front of the stage and had introduced the performance



Figure 3. Manos Katrakis in Aeschylus's *Persians*, *Ai Stratis*, 1951.

with attacks on the Left. “In the face of every Persian,” he insinuated, “the spectators should see that of a Greek partisan or of a Russian invader.”<sup>21</sup> The incident made newspaper headlines back in Athens. Moreover, the state’s manipulation of Aeschylus’s *Persians* and of the Persian Wars in general for anti-communist propaganda was not an isolated occurrence (Bournazos 1998:216). Most likely, Katrakis participated in that performance of 1947, which the establishment—more than the director himself—had turned into a blatantly aggressive one, not through the play’s subject matter, but by its calculated act of framing.<sup>22</sup> Katrakis is our most valuable link to an expressly different interpretation of the *Persians* that tried to shake off old enmities and anti-leftist prejudices as well as dogmatic definitions of patriotism. He may also have been the one to realize that, because the *Persians* loomed so large as a nationalist-patriotic play that did not stray from the path prescribed by the official right-wing ideology, the Thiasos of the Exiles did well to mount it as the perfect “celebratory,” inaugural production: the prison authorities were more likely to allow it, because they expected theater as indoctrination rather than theater as a critique of tyranny, victory, and victimization, which they would not have permitted. For the administration, the *Persians* was a Greek victory celebration over the Persian adversary crushed in the naval battle of Salamis (480 B.C.E.),

which Aeschylus had rendered all the more powerful for having the enemy side dramatically admit to its defeat. Given a long history of reception which saw the *Persians* affirming the military triumph of the Greeks, this play was the safer bet for the troupe's first performance.

Katrakis is quoted to have said "Passion! Expression! We must graft life onto tradition if we want our contemporaries to feel that the tradition is theirs!" (Farsakidis 1994:54). His group did not exhaust the subject of the tragedy and its tradition but steered it into new directions. The cast took the occasion of the public performance and of the many rehearsals beforehand to question what it meant to be on the other—opposite and still opposing—side of the winners of (recent) Greek victories. The actors reinvested the play that had been appropriated by the victors with its altogether different meaning for the vanquished. They turned it from a celebration into a tragedy again (in Rhodes, the 1947 production celebrated the unification of the Dodecanese with Greece). They took a critical look—and shared this look—at the contemporary Greek society that was resorting to *hybris* against the enemy, whom it had defined on the inside as well as externally. Thus they understood and presented the *Persians* as a premonition against the dangers posed by excessive *Greek* power-lust (testimony by Y. S., 30 May 2005; and by Titos Patrikios, 26 June 2005). The overreaching Xerxes gained self-knowledge, whereas the victorious ancient Greeks turned from defending democracy to installing unrestrained expansionism and imperialism. Unrealistic aspirations like those of the Persian despot and, in turn, of the Athenians in their "heyday" rendered the (always temporary) "winner" delusional: they led him to believe, wrongly, that he was firmly in charge, that he had moral right on his side, and that he could afford to mistreat or dispose of the "losers." The inmate production's introspective themes, of the sufferings inflicted by brash "victors" but also of the pain of defeat after the overambitious Left's failure to conquer "brave new worlds," went well beyond the scope of the traditional modern Greek reception history of Aeschylus's tragedy.

Many Greeks read the *Persians* as the symbol of unified Greek resistance against Eastern oppression (e.g., Iliadi 1991:124). The exile stage opened up the subject of defensive resistance and its value to revisionist doubt. The right-wing Greek establishment was convinced that the Resistance had been a "foolhardy" attempt to install a new communist state once it had removed the Nazi occupiers. The winning conservative camp not only had contributed less to thwart or defeat the foreign enemy, but then had denied this Resistance its due recognition. This predicament drove the inmate troupe of Aï Stratis to cast itself in the part of those defeated, not only by war and ambition, but also by history and memory. Thus the detainees' efforts pointed up more

insidious forms of the struggle of the defeated against defeat. They themselves revealed an acute awareness and fear that their marginal territorial space and forgotten political place might push them further back also in forgotten, past time (testimony by Y. S., 30 May 2005). Michael Walton noted the potential of Greek tragedy to place victory and defeat in the starkest of perspectives when he spoke of “Greek tragedy with . . . its losers who are losers and its winners who are losers” (2002:11).

When Katrakis, who moved us in his role of messenger, had come to [the line], “On, sons of the Greeks . . .” [*Persians*, 402], we brimmed with tears, we, the generation of the Resistance, and we relived events and passions two and a half thousand years old as if they were our own. (Farsakidis 1994:54)

Thus Yiorgos Farsakidis recalled his own and others’ personal experience of watching the *Persians* in Aī Stratis (1994:54). In the act, the prisoners accorded classical proportions to their status of the vanquished. They took on the stature of tragic heroes, who derived self-knowledge, not shame, from their defeat. Like Philoctetes, Antigone, and Prometheus, the former fighters of the Resistance and their intellectual partisans could not defend their actions and ideals on the basis of their immediate outcome or result (which appeared as failure); they could, however, try to justify at least part of their course of action as the “right thing to do,” even as the properly Greek thing to do. The *Persians* and other plays represented, therefore, a continued act of grappling with what was, for them, far from orderly or logical. The prisoners’ authorial take on Aeschylus’s *Persians*—their taking back the play—transformed their stage and personal performance into an act of scrutinizing common definitions of “patriotism,” “victory,” and “resistance.” They organized themselves, their fellow-inmates, their work, and their production according to an alternative vision of the troublesome past, which would, they hoped, lead to better and deserved results in the future.

The 1951 stage performance of the *Persians* was a source of diversion, attention, and possible friction for its extraordinary and semi-improvised public (when compared to the “regular” theater public of *Makronisiotes*). According to eyewitness Nikos Margaritis, two thousand five hundred exiles were present, and scores of inhabitants from the village of Aī Stratis attended as well (1994:20). Many of the members of this unusual audience were seeing a production of ancient drama for the first time in their lives. However, a group of official representatives of the International Red Cross was visiting Aī Stratis for its own surveillance purposes. The officials had come to inspect the prisoners’ living

conditions and to check on the conduct of the guards and administrators. They sat down in the rough theater as an *ad hoc* public that, accustomed to the fancy settings that urban centers reserved for the classics, may have called this production of the *Persians* most peculiar or oddly out of place. These formal representatives watched also for signs of the mood of the inmate population. They were, in turn, guarded, guided, and watched by the nervous Greek prison guards who chose to have as little unscripted communication with the inmates as possible (Avdoulos 1998:195–202). The same troupe (*thiasos*) of Aï Stratis, give or take a few new members as some prisoners were released or had died and others were newly arrived, went on to mount other plays as well, mostly classics of the modern international repertoire (Apostolopoulou 1997: 203–204). But Aeschylus's *Persians* became its signature play, or the play that captured the ultimate anomaly of transposing a tragedy that firmly belonged to the National Theater to the prison island of Aï Stratis.

*Fascist-style propaganda on display*

The authorities patted themselves on the back when a well-mounted production by the inmates made the prison camps more acceptable to the world beyond the islands (Vrahiotis 2005:1, 12, 13, 15, 51, 52, 61). The *Skapanefs* lists the names of officials and visitors who attended these performances in Makronisos and reports how satisfied they were (Vrahiotis 2005:25, 26, 40, 47, 53, 57, 62, 63). The authorities gave talks especially after a repeat performance such as Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* on 21 August 1949 (Vrahiotis 2005:40, 61). Visitors, who were prone to be particularly impressed with the production of anything classic, were eager to spread the word about the success of the Greek authorities in reforming communists. The classicizing artwork that some detainees in Makronisos spontaneously produced and exhibited for the many visitors to the prison camp also served the agenda of the authorities. A few prisoners built a miniature Parthenon; another constructed a mini-Erechtheion. Some of this artwork, along with photographs of a few theater performances staged in Makronisos, was featured in a special public exhibition that was held at the Zappeion in Athens in April of 1949.<sup>23</sup> The slogans, too, with which the internees had to adorn the hills of Makronisos were for external more than for internal consumption. Many were of classical origin or were written in English so that the foreign visitors could understand them (Avdoulos 1998:198). The scheme worked: in his *National Geographic* article, Williams, for one, mentioned some patriotic slogans plastered in white-wash, which he had immediately noticed on disembarking in the little

harbor of Makronisos (1949:711, 744; Gavriilidou 2004:31, 86). Many “redeemed” inmates were expected to write pieces for publication in the Makronisos newspapers: they dished out the same slogans, confessions of political betrayal, tracts repudiating communism, and other articles echoing the official line. Copies of the *Skapanefs* (*skapanefts* means “sapper”) were shipped off to the outside world as well. This journal was issued by inmates who, after they had “repented,” became the voice of the regime (Bournazos 1998:223–224, and *passim*; Hamilakis 2002:314). The Makronisos radio station was used for indoctrination, and it featured, for instance, short skits written by some of the contributors to the *Skapanefs* (Vrahiotis 2005:14, 22, 53, 71). Several of these skits taught that the reformed who would distinguish themselves by killing many Greek communists in the battlefield, would get the girl of their dreams (*Skapanefs* 7 July 1948, 12–13; 9 September 1948, 13; 10 October 1948, 13; 13 January 1949, 13). The stigma attached to engaging in hideous acts of self-flagellation and to playing along in the inexhaustible show of anti-communist rhetoric must have left a huge psychological burden on the detainee’s mind. It also resulted in confused or hostile social dynamics in Makronisos, in particular, because political allegiances among its extremely diverse body of internees tended to slip or shift (testimony by Hamilakis, 20 February 2005).

The government used the “repented” in its degrading and demoralizing propaganda, part of which was scripted on the classics: it paraded them as “the misguided who had seen the truth”—the truth of the Right, that is, that charged communism with anti-patriotic conniving and anti-religious maneuvering and vilified it as the handmaiden of Russia, the godless cold war arch-enemy (Voglis 2002:76). The state’s rhetoric on these issues, laden with moralizing value-judgments expressed by the ubiquitous Greek prefix *anti*, drew on the language and imagery of a religious confession or (re)conversion that, like a (re)baptism, had to be a public spectacle. It fit the narrative of the individual’s fall-and-rise perfectly and added the coda of a possible future “happy ending.” These lies allowed for the rituals of state anti-communism to assume a didactic pretense as well: the “right,” top-down guidance would turn a person’s “moral decline” around and have him or her achieve “true knowledge.” The alleged lack of “moral worthiness” further affected the prisoners’ genealogical and political worthiness as Greeks. Again, the conversion narrative transformed so-called “non-Greeks” into “born-again,” “truly patriotic Greeks.” The government constantly exalted its own “Truth,” which smacked of the pulpit but also of the autocratic classroom or family. It attempted to render its theory and practice as well as its language sacred by referring to “natural” truths, articulated in the name of the “right-minded” fatherland. The administration tried hard, too, to

normalize or naturalize the dominant discourse and to establish it as the paradigm of objectivity and common sense. In Foucauldian terms, truth kept engaging with fault in a binary opposition (Voglis 2002:78, 83–84, 102–103, 104–105, 184–185).

The Greek Right did not hesitate to borrow its patriotic and propagandistic slogans from the classical repertoire and to place its own battles squarely within time-hallowed ancient history, with a predilection for the Persian Wars. Right-wing rhetoric frequently referred to the famous historical battlegrounds of the Persian Wars, in order to stir up militant anti-communist fervor (Bournazos 1998:216). The prison administrators of Makronisos used the last line of the Greeks' battle-cry from Aeschylus's *Persians* (405), "Now the struggle is for all," as a motto to call on all conservative, "patriotic" Greeks to join the fight against communism (Bournazos 1998:228). They forced the inmates to paint this slogan, too, in giant letters on the rocky hills of the island. The classical motto was, however, contested between the Greek Right and the former Resistance-fighters. Both camps appropriated the slogans and historical events that could underpin their ideology, reaffirm their legitimacy, and harness their patriotism. In a *Skapanefs* article of 1948 entitled "How I Spent My Time in Makronisos," one of the "redeemed" described how he read the slogans and was moved by them—purportedly—from the moment he first set foot in Makronisos:

I immediately came to my senses when I saw the "Parthenon" [the island's propagandistic title], and, painted on the rocks with big letters, "Now the struggle is for all," "The feats of our ancestors lead us," "Hellas is an ideal, that is why it does not die." (*Skapanefs* 11:20; quoted and translated by Hamilakis 2002:315)

The author signed with his real name: initials would not have been good enough for the editors and supervisors of the *Skapanefs*. Yannis Hamilakis, however, protected his anonymity by referring to him by the initials "L. K." He suspected that L. K.'s article might draw on the irony of resistance "from within," to covertly undermine the ultra-nationalist master narrative (2002:319–323, 331 n. 5). The author selected three slogans that invoked history and tradition and that had been appropriated by the establishment. He chose mottos, however, with which left-wingers could hardly disagree, which is not to say that they would accede to the Right's interpretation of the words. The author's inverted commas might have served multiple purposes: to distinguish the slogans as such but also to set them apart as ostentatious markers of the verbal and visual rhetoric of Makronisos; to associate them firmly with the government or to denote the different meanings that they could convey

for the opposition (Hamilakis 2002:315). This ambiguity, one of many, proves just how vulnerable and unstable moralizing language and traditionalist phraseology became in the turmoil of the Civil War and its aftermath. The *Skapanefs* was certainly not an inmate forum of unedited testimony. A prison censor on the lookout for counter-propaganda material, however, would have been inclined to pass these slogans that virtually belonged to the Right. Like actors in a controlled or censored performance, authors, too, could slip messages that communicated one thing to the censors, another to a sympathetic public.

The *Skapanefs* contained other references and statements that invoked the Persian Wars more explicitly but only slightly less ambiguously. “[F]rom here the new Leonidas will emerge” (Hamilakis 2002:318). Makis Donkas, the first editor-in-chief of the *Skapanefs* (Vrahiotis 2005:22), asserted:

Here are the Persians who come to enslave us. Only this time they come from the North. Here are the Plataeae, the Marathons, and the Thermopylae. Here are Miltiades, Themistocles, Leonidas. It does not matter that they have different names. . . . They are the same. The same continuity of the history of our fatherland. The same Greece with its children. (quoted and translated by Hamilakis 2002:318)

Invocations of history and destiny, topped with claims of continuity and consanguinity, resorted to the favorite sites and heroes of the Persian Wars, sacred *topoi* of Greek patriotism and nationalism, which stemmed from an earlier and less dogmatic (not necessarily anti-communist) tradition. These *topoi* and slogans generated cultural surprises and political paradoxes that revealed that the Right and the Left were influenced by each other’s rhetoric—and by the common reflex to frame sociopolitical ills in terms of “self” versus “other,” or “good” versus “evil.” That *topoi* and slogans could conceivably yield diametrically opposed interpretations betrayed some of the difficulties that both camps faced when they tried to institute and/or institutionalize differentiation from their evil twin.

Koundouros recalled that Kotopouli, on her visit to Makronisos, had “stirringly” recited “some lines from tragedy”: a carefully chosen passage that was “some appeal of the fatherland (*patrída*, *πατρίδα*) to its sons/children (*paidiá*, *παιδιά*),” “something about the joy of being killed in battle” (1980:36). Because he wanted to forget about the entire episode, he did not provide any further details to help us identify the passage with certainty. He only hinted that Kotopouli delivered the ancient Greek lines in a modern Greek translation in fifteen-syllable verse. Regardless of its ancient pedigree, an appeal to Greek men of age

as “sons/children” to defend their fatherland (as in Aeschylus’s *Persians*, 402–405) and, if needed, to lay down their lives rang true for ultra-conservatives during the decades of fascist and postwar rhetoric. Metaxas, the interwar monarchist dictator, had first cultivated fascist rhetoric on a grand scale in Greece and had made moral and aesthetic persuasion part of anti-communist political and patriotic credentials. Even after the Italian-fascist and German-Nazi Occupation of Greece, when the Greek ultra-Right actively rejected the label of “monarcho-fascist,” the impact of fascist rhetoric still showed when politics was about reactionary aesthetics, as in Kotopouli’s performance of tragic lines turned classic exhortations to war. Aestheticized politics in this moralizing conception (in Walter Benjamin’s definition), or political predominance transformed into art, was supposed to “better” or “heal” the “individualistic,” “child-like” Greeks, who had grown “estranged” from their own rich past. Patronizing politics conflated cultural, ethical, and social rectitude with patriotic righteousness and this political self-righteousness with ground for cruelty.

Makronisos was the most striking theater of operation for a residual fascist predilection for binary ideological oppositions and antagonizing dualistic rhetoric of the visual as well as of the verbal kind. The island was a stage watched worldwide on which right-wing rhetoric spoke with theatricality as well as authority—with an attitude. Kotopouli spoke as the consummate actress who knew her classics and did not mince her words when putting antiquity on display. She played the role of an ancient priestess who officiated at a mystery, the Makronisos “phenomenon,” and demanded sacrifice—enough to leave Koundouros apprehensive for many years. Kotopouli had few qualms about acting as the conscience of the established Greek theater world: for her, what served the interests of the Greek government served the interests of the fatherland. Her own testimony confirmed her traditionalist and nationalist conception of ancient drama, the staging of which she regarded as a “national cause.” In an interview dating back to August of 1949, Kotopouli affirmed that, for her, there was only “fatherland and theater,” that classical tragedy inspired justifiable national Greek pride, and that the “present-day Greek exploits, the spiritual and the war-related exploits” should proudly be displayed to the Greek people (quoted from an interview by Petros Haris; reprinted in Georgousopoulou 2001:54–55). Kotopouli gave the interview at the momentous time when the Civil War was drawing to a close. The immediate occasion, however, was the upcoming *Oresteia* production of 7 September 1949. Kotopouli saw the “proper” reading of Aeschylus’s acclaimed trilogy as incompatible with left-wing ideologies. Confidently, she helped to reinforce this reception through rather obtuse propaganda. She played the part of Clytemnestra,

one of the last major roles of her career (Exarhos 1995–1996:1:153). Some called it the “personal triumph” of Kotopouli, who performed in the presence of King Paul at the Herodes Atticus Theater.<sup>24</sup> The trilogy was staged by the National Theater (in Griparis’s translation) and directed by Dimitris Rondiris, who had mounted the anti-communist *Persians* on Rhodes two years earlier. A powerful strain of anti-modernism surfaced in the skirmishes over the proper reading of Aeschylus’s *Persians* and *Oresteia*, which the National Theater performed to impress the sense of right, lawful order and to publicly support the forces of state-managed patriotism. The substantial number of newspaper comments and journal records on Rondiris’s *Persians* and *Oresteia*, compared with the paucity of sources on inmate productions, exposes the divide between the documented or sanctioned and the unofficial history of Civil War theater. Spiros Melas, author, playwright, stage producer, and editor of the conservative journal *Elliniki Dimiourgia* (“Greek Creation”), read and introduced the immediate post-Civil War *Oresteia* as a prophetic expression of nationalist-patriotic victory or the triumph of established law and order:

[A]s if the administration of the National Theater had foreseen the great victory of the Nation, it could not have chosen a better work than the *Oresteia* with which to celebrate that victory. There is nothing that conveys in more depth that victory’s meaning than Aeschylus’s immortal poetic creation. In essence, the *Oresteia* superbly celebrates the high superiority of the Law over blood revenge—an ardent hymn to the meaning of Justice and to its divine origin . . . . [I]t is the great legacy of the Athenian citizen . . . . [I]t is today ten times more timely . . . . (1949:389; capitalization as in the original)

Right-wing rhetoric of the fascist stamp was bound to lose some of its effect through tireless overuse and inconsistency and to ring hollow or “acted” in the ears of its opponents. Koundouros spoke of words that had been tainted or “corrupted”: “fatherland,” “debt,” and “Greeks” (1980:37). When Queen Frederica made her well-publicized visit to Makronisos, she was hailed as the “mother” of the “stray children,” the once “lost” but now “redeemed sons” of Greece, who had partaken of their country’s “mercy” and “forgiveness” and had been “pardoned,” “saved,” or brought back to the “fold,” to the “bosom” of the “motherland.”<sup>25</sup> The reactionary rhetoric placed a tremendous burden even on common words and older images and again pointed up the ideologically and religiously-charged conflation of state, tradition, and family. Moral impulses in the guise of invocations of the classical legacy and historical continuity permeated public debate—for as much as there could be debate. The “higher” goal of anti-communist “patriotism” in the name

of the fatherland, religion, and the family, the “ideological triptych” of *patris, thriskeia, oikoyeneia* (πατρίς, θρησκεία, οίκογένεια) made the Right near-immune to objections.

The prison administration of Makronisos contributed its share of “loud and direct,” fascist-style performances, not to entertain the prisoners, only to brainwash them (Koundouros 1980:37). Officers made stately appearances on platforms and delivered moralizing speeches, recited nationalist poems and songs, and made ostentatious patriotic announcements. These performances seized ceremonial space and time for the government’s competitive dramaturgy. Highly charged, they were meant to give the detainees a moral uplift. Most inmates, however, resented the pretense. As part of the production of patriotic overload, the prison staff also read out recantations or “declarations of repentance” signed by the “redeemed,” and exhorted, threatened, or intimidated the “sinners.” By signing such recantations the repented were symbolically purging themselves of political sin described in religious terms. As *ananiψandes* (ἀνανήψαντες), the “repenters” or “redeemed” had “awakened” to the “right,” anti-communist brand of patriotism and could rejoin the “good” and the “deserving.” The government considered them to be “reborn” into the Greek family of the nation and its Orthodox religion. Rebirth also brought renewed assurance of the continuation of one’s line (as codified in the system of Orthodox baptismal names), which held special meaning in the Greeks’ thinking about genealogical survival.

The declaration of repentance or the litmus test of loyalty provided officials with the perfect opportunity to demand public confessions from repentants, and they made the recusants watch. In Makronisos, some repentants were made to ask for mercy from the stage before they were granted political absolution. This theater that would “wash” or “cleans” souls and instill “patriotic” ideas and ideals was promoted by the Office for Moral Education (Margaris 1980:38, 39; 1966:1:227–228, 239; Avdoulos 1998:197; Bournazos 1998:223–224). The rightist demand for forms of ritual absolution implied that it was “pollution” that resulted from leftist sympathizing. The “cleansed” made public denunciations and delivered diatribes against communism, many of which were published in the *Skapanefs*, to demonstrate how well they had learned their lesson (Voglis 2002:102, 105). The morality-play structure of such humiliating events showed the triumph of “good” over “evil” that the administration desired. With more than a few hints of theater, the enemy within was exposed as the unreliable or treacherous communist who now had recanted. Many must have recognized such performances of recantation as patently false. But even disingenuous or mere illusionary acts were acceptable to the authorities as long as they held up in

public. James Scott made the following general observation, which captures the attitude of the Right:

Institutions for which doctrine is central to identity are thus often less concerned with the genuineness of confessions of heresy and recantations than with the public show of unanimity they afford. (1990:205)

The repentants' display of compliance, the "posing of the powerless," was more important and more beneficial to an autocratic administration that regarded the ritual humbling of sinners as a necessary and effective part of its "public show of unanimity."<sup>26</sup> Refusing to sign a declaration was, therefore, refusing to perform submission or—much more offensive—showing off defiance. The prisoner's negation dangerously subverted the "theater arts of subordination" that the officiating masters had "choreographed" so as to avert any unpleasant surprises (Scott 1990:35, 47). The overwhelming necessity to underwrite and perform a declaration placed intolerable burdens on inmates to show the colors of their patriotism. The resented practice proved just how dangerous, demonstrative, and unreasonably personal the demand to define the patriotism of a person, family, or group had become. By defining patriotism through visual as well as verbal manifestations of right-wing domination, the state situated its rhetoric and histrionics at the active center of political life, which was a non-life for those exiled to the prison islands.

Theater and theater spaces were regularly drawn into the official discourse on pollution and purity, sin and absolution, and redemption through penance or sacrifice. The historian Nikos Margaris and other critics denounced the sanctimonious aura of this metatheater with disdain. Margaris exposed the pretense behind the theater-related titles that the administration reserved for the Makronisos "phenomenon," such as the "theater of rehabilitation" (*théatron ananipseos*, θέατρον ἀνανήψεως) or the "theater of absolution" (*théatron apolimánseos*, θέατρον ἀπολυμάνσεως) (1980:38; 1966: *passim*). In Makronisos, the moral, religious, and didactic overtones that colored the official rhetoric and ironic references to it were intensified by physical and topical connections between theater-like displays and actual theater spaces: Sunday church services were held at the camp theater (Voglis 2002:148–149). The prison administration used Sundays and holidays to persuade the internees that their fate and punishment were part and parcel of the long, quasi-evangelical struggle against "godless" communism. Great play was made of the liturgy of the right-wing dispensation of power through religion: during the liturgy, guards held strategic positions and studied the behavior and reactions of the inmate audience. This involuntary congregation was often herded into the actual theater,

where it was compelled to watch any type of ceremony and to respond with “enthusiasm” (testimony by P. T., 2 June 2005). A British officer, Lieutenant Colonel D. I. Strangeways, who visited Makronisos in January of 1950, saw through the sham. He stated that he was “*not* struck by the enthusiasm of the audience.” He described an ordinary camp ritual: a parade of choir members chanting their battalion song, which was broadcast over loudspeakers. The other detainees sang along in a “somewhat half-hearted and mechanical” manner. Then a series of talks followed, which were interrupted by “well-disciplined clapping.” “I felt,” he averred, “that the actual number of claps had been laid down as they commenced and finished with remarkable precision” (quotations in Voglis 2002:185–186). The unexcited public of inmates, whose acts of singing and clapping were command performances, was trapped in a stream of rituals that ranged from natural to highly artificial. As an audience, it was an illusion, because it performed and was performed upon by “plants.” These “cheerleaders” acted on behalf of the prison officials and were motivated by the promised reward of preferential treatment for sustaining the pretense about what really happened in Makronisos (testimony by P. T., 2 June 2005; and by Nikos Koundouros, 27 June 2005; Avdoulos 1998:199). Again, the administration did not deem silence to be enough of a show of support.

Hamilakis noted that some display acts or deliberate spectacles took place beyond the confines of Makronisos (2002:312). In the decisive year of 1949, entire uniformed formations of “redeemed” inmates marched and paraded in central Athens in front of the royal couple and thousands of spectators. They were on public display in the theater-like setting of the Panathenaic or “old” Olympic Stadium, where shows of manly athletic and military prowess had merged before and would see numerous reruns under the military dictatorship of 1967–1974 (again after fascist prototypes; see Katsiyeras 2000–2001:2:70, 286, 298). Some “redeemed” also had to deliver public declarations and renunciations, anti-communist lectures, or propaganda speeches in various parts of Greece. Often, the priest of their church read out their “declarations of repentance” before the congregation. Many of these declarations were published in newspapers and filed with local authorities. Thus the watching, surveillance, and pretense did not stop once the former prisoner had left the island. The pervasive control took the new form of the collective watchful eye of the national body. The redeemed had become a collective spectacle. Surveillance over it had to deter the former dissidents from any further “anti-national” activities (Hamilakis 2002:312, 326). For as long as the Civil War lasted, the “redeemed” continued to play a practical and symbolic role in converting their fellow-inmates, supporters, or sympathizers through displays of submis-

sion as well as by fighting the communists on the frontlines (Bournazos 1998:212–214, 223–224).

### *Conclusion*

In late June 1998, fifty years after the opening of the Civil War camps, a group of actors and artists made the special boat trip to the deserted island of Makronisos to mount there a commemorative production of Aeschylus's *Prometheus*. By then the island had been declared a national "historical site" (by ministerial decree of 1989), a site of political memory worthy of preservation and protection. Director Nikitas Tsakiroglou interpreted Aeschylus's tragedy as a call to endure and defy oppression.<sup>27</sup> For those in the small audience who had once not just watched but also deeply felt the play, this *Prometheus* delivered visual as well as verbal proof that spirits had not been broken—which was what the practice of playing inmate theater had been about. The readings, rehearsals, and performances by those interned during the late 1940s through early 1950s strove to articulate and instill political values, learn and share lessons, and deduce modes for survival. This performance practice was also preoccupied with overcoming mental and physical obstacles so that the truth of the detainees' past and present experiences might come to light. Here the model of Prometheus was more than an exemplum: the tragic hero delivered a stimulus to defy the constant threats meant to preclude open opposition and also dissidence in isolation.

Select classics became the reliable spine of individuals and groups exiled to the prison islands. Even though a panoply of performance genres was technically available in the mind and (professional or other) experience of the accomplished inmate casts, directors and actors preferred certain ancient plays for the distinct ideological advantages they offered. They selected tragedies that brought into focus a unity of purpose based on shared suffering, proud resilience, and perceived moral superiority: the myths of the fettered and tortured, "intellectual" Prometheus, of the besieged, radical Antigone, and of the castaway Philoctetes helped the detainees to comprehend their own predicament within the framework of heroic tragedy and to reclaim the power of knowledge and judgment. Prisoner actors and audiences savored those passages in the plays in which representation collided with the reality of their detention. The inmate public felt empowered when it seized upon such high-voltage moments to act and thus to exchange its role as audience for that of actors. Prometheus, Antigone, and Philoctetes joined the ranks of the modern Greek martyrs and stalwart heroes of 1821, in which the prisoners recognized all the notions of patriotic national

character as they themselves professed it. The detainees derived renewed strength and vitality from the tragic heroes turned secular martyrs. It was, however, the stubborn Prometheus who, from the mid-1930s through the mid-1970s, provided the stronger thematic focus for personal identification and leftist dissidence. In the categories of the modern Greek history of reception, this meant that Aeschylus had stayed influential (since the 1903 landmark production of the *Oresteia* in Modern Greek), whereas Sophocles was rediscovered. In the second half of the nineteenth century Sophocles's *Antigone* had been performed as the quintessential school play or celebratory production (Grammatas 2002:2:11–14). Now Sophocles reappeared, not as the traditional, romanticized “patriot,” but as the committed dramatist whose tragic heroes Antigone and Philoctetes redefined such concepts as “treason,” “loyalty,” and “patriotism” and embodied these notions in the highly-valued classical legacy and in a convincing secular context. Ancient drama opened up ways for exile casts and audiences to play with and within the surrounding system of political charade and its judgmental religious, moral, didactic, and family rhetoric. It stirred inmates to bring some of their concerns and criticisms into public view, which, otherwise, they had to keep safely out of sight. Whereas classical theater did not present ready-made solutions to serious problems, its familiar strangeness helped political prisoners to face problems head-on or to contemplate alternative modes of perception.

Many inmate actors were driven by a sense of mission so strong that their heroic-patriotic play production reflected communal thinking about personal sacrifice, torture, death, history, and resistance. On the prison islands, levels of dramatic pretense and genuine self-identification with the tragic heroes merged and drove the potent need for recognition and testimony, for eyewitnesses to remember, and for subsequent readers to bear witness. Inmate actors and their audiences of a kindred spirit laid claim to a quiet but profound patriotism, without any of the state-orchestrated devotional rites: this patriotism refused to equate loyalty to the country with loyalty to the then government or to its long-ruling establishment. Prison theater had deeper roots in the common Resistance activity than in the maelstrom of the Civil War. The trail led back to the rudimentary, partisan Theater of the Mountains and, in particular, to several of the plays by Vasilis Rotas. The historical Left glorified the Resistance and tapped inmates' collective but older consciousness to reaffirm cultural and political ideals. It co-opted the classics in this process as a key to the exiles' survival in dignity and continued mental and intellectual resistance. Performing ancient drama proved a useful, time-honored vehicle for dissidents who strove to move beyond the obligatory official language on Greek patriotism and shows

of military and ethnic superiority. Against this backdrop, Aeschylus's *Persians* could finally play a new role as a tragedy of introspection rather than of nationalist triumph or anti-communist propaganda.

The prisoner theater was intensely political for reasons of the real-life ideological perspectives of directors, actors, and audiences. Performance as a platform for political involvement reached its apogee here by becoming performance of and for political beings again. The measure of commitment that inmate actors brought to the stage was far more important to the group than their level of expertise, because plays had become a matter of urgent political relevance again. Even though their productions had little to be embarrassed about, the majority of the prisoners cared *that* the plays were done, not as much about *how* they were done. It mattered that their theater spoke and that it spoke in accessible ideological cadences. Emphasizing political and material result more than performance style was a way for the inmate cast to present itself as an organized and disciplined group that was still engaged in resistance and that, every so often, managed to push the inefficient, dark, and dense administration back into the spectator seat. Also, the prisoner theater beckoned the beginning of a redefinition of the classics as a more popular type of drama. Actors and fellow-detainees grew excited when, for example, the Left took back the *Persians* from the—then—reactionary ranks of the National Theater.

Performances of ancient drama and, in particular, of the *Persians* virtually conformed to the coercive requirements of the prison officials, whom the government pressured to put on a show of stability, confidence, and respectability and thus to boost its conceited claim to a higher moral and patriotic ground. Prison administrators camouflaged the ugly truth by parading ancient-style illusion and the falsity of a “consensus” on time-hallowed tradition, even when the detainees’ interpretation of the classical plays contravened theirs. They broadcast pretended objectives and “successful” outcomes and advertised, above all else, a “reeducation” effort that promised (the fantasy of) a “happy ending” for all parties involved. Because the inmate productions were eye-openers on theater and political metatheater, they acted as counter-rituals to rituals of forced conversion, whose transformative power they drained. They also diffused the “normalizing” drive behind the government’s fascist-style reduction of language and imagery to sterile, black-versus-white rigidity. Prisoner theater tried to reclaim the power of “patriotism,” “resistance,” and “victory.” While the ravaged language and rites of state anti-communism deepened the divide between the “winners” and the “losers” of the Civil War, the detainees explored the forum of ancient drama to enact the tragedy of their own predicament beyond that of “defeat.” Actors on any conventional stage do not normally

undergo the consequences of the deeds that they portray. The public, when aware, finds psychological relief in that certainty. But this truism did not apply in the case of the Greek inmate theater. Actors performed under strict surveillance and under stern sanctions—even on pain of death. They had to fear retaliation, which, at times, drove them to act that they acted: they played while balancing the demands for dramatic illusion and metatheatrical delusion. Prisoner casts could only secure an (ambivalent) legitimacy for their productions if they were willing to meet the authorities halfway on the road between showing and showing off. Thus performances of classical tragedies by political detainees occasionally entered the gray area between resistance and compromise.

Makronisos, *the* non-place of island confinement (or a heterotopia, according to Hamilakis 2002), was most instrumental in shaping the symbolic behavior that was expected from players and spectators alike, who acted under unrelenting constraint. The Makronisos “phenomenon” placed a full retinue of influential outsiders in the position of super-spectators of the act mounted by the local prison authorities, masters of ceremonies and masters of *mise-en-scène*. For the inmates who watched themselves being watched onstage or in the audience, it was particularly painful to see the “expert inspectors” fail—or hide behind the pretense of failing—to see through the act, or the public relations stunt, that the officials were putting on. Such complex situations of double and crossed discourses reoccurred under the Greek military dictatorship of 1967–1974. The stage of Makronisos, however, had first broken the new ground between theater and political metatheater, with choices and techniques that helped performers to maintain a sense of cultural belonging and integrity, to take stock of their personal and communal lives, and to explore various strategies for resistance. In a far from haphazard or lukewarm fashion, it selected a basic repertoire of choice classics for mainly thematic purposes and it turned the always-monitoring political system in on itself. When during the junta years the consolation of ancient drama was needed and appreciated again, actors and directors could fall back on the same choices of radical classics and on the intense grassroots experience of those classics that stemmed from the prison islands.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Voglis has situated 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 anti-communism (Voglis 2002:34–36). The Right regularly typed political enemies as communists, regardless of their actual position within the political and ideological spectrum. Anti-communist harassment ran the gamut from buggery to outright assault with heavy-handed torture techniques (some of these methods were exacted by "converts," with the notorious vigor of converts). When prosecution ensued, it was often with insufficient regard to hard evidence. For a more detailed discussion of the Greek Left's political exclusion, imposed by the right-wing establishment of the Civil War "in defense of the nation," see Voglis (2002:63–64, 66, 74–75, 102). Most of the ideological categories and terms in this article (many, though not all, set off in inverted commas) are drawn from the various studies by Bournazos (1997, 1998, and 2000), in which they appear on multiple occasions. More specific references to Bournazos's studies follow below. See further Breyianni (1999) and Carabott (2003).

<sup>2</sup> Mark Mazower has confirmed 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 states, stayed the same for the following forty years (1997:139).

<sup>3</sup> During and after the Civil War, Greek communists tried hard to eradicate attitudes of defeatism and passivity from among its cadres and rank and file. Being called "the defeated" was therefore a particularly emotive issue (Voglis 2002:174, 214, 217, 218, 227–231, 232–233, 234).

<sup>4</sup> According to numbers given in September 1949, Makronisos then held about 12,000 detainees (Voglis 2002:92, 100–101, 105, 223, 224). Voglis discusses the division of the soldier inmates in three battalions, which was based on the perceived extent to which they "deserved" certain measures of reform and methods of reeducation. From March 1949 on, detained civilians, too, were shipped off to Makronisos and held in another two camps, the "Special Rehabilitation Schools for Civilians" (2002:101–102, 104).

<sup>5</sup> See the section on literature related to Makronisos (which contains nothing on theater) in Bournazos and Sakellaropoulos (2000:225–270) and, in particular, the articles by Yiannis Papatheodorou and Alexandros Argiriou.

<sup>6</sup> Avdoulos 1998:299–300. See the personal testimony of Nikos Efthimiou on his talented theater troupe, which was active on Makronisos (1980a:40). The playwright Iakovos Kambanellis made a tragicomic joke about the large numbers of artists and

intellectuals who were detained on the infamous prison islands during the Metaxas dictatorship, the Nazi Occupation through the aftermath of the Civil War, and again under the dictatorship of the colonels. At the same time, the joke highlights women's underprivileged position in the contemporary Greek educational system—a recurring theme in the oral and written testimonies of female internees (see, in particular, Apostolopoulou 1997: *passim*). Kambanellis's play, *The Woman and the Wrong Man* (*I Yinaika kai o Lathos*, 1981:44) featured the following satirical exchange:

Police Sergeant: They should . . . have . . . locked *you* up!  
 Mother: I wish they had! It would have given me a little education, seeing I didn't even go to school. . . .  
 Police Sergeant: I see! You think of prison as a secret training ground!  
 Mother: All the educated people were "inside" (*mesa*)! (Kambanellis 1984:21)

Robert Miner, a U.S. Embassy representative who visited Makronisos in 1949, testified:

Some of the decorations, such as scale models of the Parthenon and some of the paintings in the church, are very well done. When I remarked on the apparent wealth of artistic talent on Makronisos, Colonel Bairaktaris said, only half humorously, that all the young intellectuals in Greece had passed through this camp. (quoted by Voglis 2002:114 n. 38)

<sup>7</sup> The prisoners would have called it a futile academic exercise to worry about the Aeschylean authorship of *Prometheus Bound*, as classicists now do. Contesting the play's authenticity would damage its prestige, that of Aeschylus, and the personal and collective stakes vested in the tragic hero. For the purposes of this analysis, I will honor the Greek theater world's firmly held belief that nobody other than Aeschylus wrote the *Prometheus*. Contestation originated in the Anglo-Saxon scholarly domain: some interpreters have posited dating problems based on observations on content and dramatic form, which seem to fit a post-Aeschylean author better. Mark Griffith maintained that Aeschylus might have written the tragedy late in his career. He pointed out that most scholars, however, have dated the play to the 440s or 430s B.C.E. (1983:31–35; and 1977; Taplin 1977:240, 460–469, and *passim*).

<sup>8</sup> On Makronisos in light of the dynamics of Foucauldian power and knowledge, control, surveillance, and the spectacle of bodily punishment, see Hamilakis (2002:326–328, 329) and Voglis (2002:6–7). For Foucault's chapter on panopticism, see Foucault (1995:195–228).

<sup>9</sup> Among the patriotic plays performed are those by Spiros Melas and Dimitris Bogris. In 1951, the latter published his collection of patriotic school plays and acts, which included one-act plays, skits, folk songs, and ideas for *tableaux vivants*. See further Puchner (2000:215–216); Vrahiotis (2005: *passim*).

<sup>10</sup> Koundouros expressly preferred the term "revenge" to "prisoners' resistance," because, in his view, the inmates marooned on the islands had first been "abandoned" and "betrayed" and their wartime Resistance had been robbed of its meaning (1980:36, 37; Voglis 2002:66, 170). Voglis drew attention to the prisoners' claim to the title of "people's fighters" or "fighters of the National Resistance," which would validate their demand that the government bestow on them the status and rights of political detainees and thus distinguish them from the category of criminal prisoners. Voglis explained that, for the regime of postwar containment of communism, the category of political detainees did not exist: it repeatedly denied that Greece had any political detainees. It took many years

(until 1982) and much heated dispute for the communist Resistance (E.A.M., or the National Liberation Front) to gain formal recognition. After that, work on national reconciliation could begin in earnest. Since then, however, the political pendulum of the debate on the Civil War has swung perhaps too far in the direction of giving leftist histories liberal credence. Along with the prisoners and later historians of the Civil War, I have used the classification of political detainees as one that legitimately applies to the inmates of islands such as Makronisos, Trikeri, and Ai Stratis (Voglis 2002:5, 8, 11, 54, 64–68, 188–189, 202–203, 219, 231; Close 2002:19, 142–143).

<sup>11</sup> Spoken by the character Angelos in the novel *Twice Greek* by Menis Koumandareas (2001:78).

<sup>12</sup> Michael Patterson studied the “model camps” of the Third Reich, to which representatives of the Red Cross were invited and where they could attend “even operas.” These productions, he concurred, were staged “as a reassurance to the outside world that the quality of life was being maintained.” For the same purpose, reports about the weekend “variety shows” staged in the camp of Malines in Belgium appeared in the Belgian press “to present a better picture of camp life and to diminish rumours of German atrocities” (1995:159).

<sup>13</sup> See further Avdoulos (1998:199–202) and Bournazos (1998:206, 207, 219, 220, 223, 228, 229, and *passim*). Bournazos quoted some of the approving visitors’ laudatory statements, which reached the point of blind stupefaction (1998:207–208). These eulogies were eagerly published by the official Greek press, the right-wing propaganda mill, and also by the editors of the *Skapanefs*, the journal of the “redeemed” *Makronisiotes* (see below).

<sup>14</sup> On the camps for female detainees, Hios and Trikeri, see Voglis (2002:106–108). Some female exiles were accompanied by their small children. Many women were transferred from Trikeri to Makronisos in early 1950 but were later returned to Trikeri. In 1953, those who remained “incorrigible” were imprisoned with the men on Ai Stratis (Apostolopoulou 1997:203–204; Hart 1996:259, 264–265). For a woman’s testimony on her experience of the persecution of the Left during the postwar period and the dictatorship years, see Pagona Stefanou, *Of the Invisible* (1998). Her title draws attention to the terror’s effacing, obliterating nature. Natalia Apostolopoulou (1997) collected the testimonies of many women and described the experiences of other female prisoners whom she met on Hios, Trikeri, Makronisos, and again Trikeri, during her years of exile, from 1948 to 1952.

<sup>15</sup> For brief references, see also Apostolopoulou (1997:157, with mention of the teacher Liza Kottou as Imvrioti’s “co-director”; 1984:58–60), Georgopoulou (1999:323), and Voglis (2002:207). On Imvrioti’s activities, see further Apostolopoulou (1997:148–149, 154, 155–156, 157, 190; 1984:42). Hariati-Sismani reproduced a rare and faint picture of some of the Oceanids, dressed in light-colored robes (1975:25).

<sup>16</sup> The enforcement of ideological conformity by police measures and prohibition dated back to the era of growing Greek nationalism of the early 1930s and lasted through the dictatorship years (1967–1974). Voglis traced the roots of the “declaration of repentance” back to Greek anti-communist measures of 1933 (2002:36). This era generated also the “loyalty certificate,” which anyone who applied for a job or already worked in the public sector had to submit and which testified to the employee’s “sound” social and political convictions. Anyone found “disloyal” could not stay in his or her job. On these mechanisms, see Voglis (2002:40, 62, 68, 74–88, 224); Close (2002:90, 142); and Mazower (1997:146). Even though political *cum* religious repentance held the promise of salvation of the entire person, both physically and spiritually, this hope was misleading. The acts of public humiliation or charade and the disapproval from fellow-inmates broke the backbone of many of those who signed, whose reputation was tarnished for the rest of their

lives. The signing of a declaration has been a particularly sensitive subject for Greek leftists. See further Voglis (2002:8).

<sup>17</sup> Among the best-known exponents of this *Antikewelle* were Heiner Müller and Christa Wolf. Some of the works by Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956) predated the founding of the G.D.R., such as his *Antigone* of 1948. Müller became known for his critiques of contemporary East German society by way of ancient drama and myth. Wolf's name stands for feminist revisions of classical female figures (Cassandra and Medea). On Wolf's *Cassandra*, see further Van Dyck (1998:118–120, 138–139).

<sup>18</sup> The evaluation by Yatromanolakis pertains to the second and thoroughly revised version of *The Burning Light* (Athens, 1933), to which we now generally refer. On the similarities and differences between the two versions, see Yatromanolakis (1996:156–159). Nietzsche, who identified with the Aeschylean Prometheus, influenced Varnalis and Kazantzakis. See further Yatromanolakis (1996:154).

<sup>19</sup> The impact of Varnalis's Prometheus did not displace, however, the potent influence that Nietzsche exerted on Kazantzakis. In the ninth chapter of his *Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Nietzsche compared the myths of Prometheus and Adam. He concluded that the human race might achieve its loftiest goal only by actively committing sacrilege and then bearing all the consequences, including the misery inflicted by offended deities (Ziolkowski 2000b:116–117). Nietzsche famously called Aeschylus's tragedy a "hymn to impiety" and its hero's "offense" the "virtue" of "active sin," which, for him, commanded pride and dignity (ch. 9).

<sup>20</sup> Iliadi did not include this performance in her chronological list of modern Greek productions of Aeschylus's *Persians* (1991). The production data are based on Avdoulos (1998:300–301); Georgopoulou (1999:320, 322); Mahairas (1999:330–331); Farsakidis (1994:54); and the oral testimony of Y. S. (30 May 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Mirivilis is quoted—and chided—in the Cypriot newspaper *Dimokratias* of 20 July 1947, cited in Ahilleas Mamakis's column, "Illustrated Theater News," of the Athenian paper *Ethnos* of 1 August 1947.

<sup>22</sup> In late October through early November of 1946, Katrakis was still acting in the performances of the *Persians* that Rondiris and the National Theater presented in Athens. See the review by Karagatsis (1999:50). Rondiris's 1939 production of the *Persians* saw many repeat performances in the postwar years until 1955, also with his own Piraeus Theater.

<sup>23</sup> "Photo Exhibition 'Makronisos,'" *Kathimerini*, 16 November 2003, 20. See also Bournazos (1998:216 n. 27); Grivas (1980:34 n. 3); Hamilakis (2002:312, 314–315; figures 2 and 3, 316–317; and *passim*); Leontis (1995:221–222); Williams (1949:712–713); and Yalouri (2001:43–44, 195). Dimitris Raftopoulos refused to call the miniature specimens "art" and, instead, referred to them as the "kitsch of horror" (1984:86–87). I concur with Voglis who saw these models primarily as display items, as art and crafts objects with which the detainees decorated the camp for the eyes of visitors (2002:102, 114 n. 38).

<sup>24</sup> See Kondoyiorgi (2000:79); the review by Karagatsis (1999:144); and also Kanakis, especially on the conservative, old-fashioned effect of Kotopouli's lead as Clytemnestra (1999:104–107, 171, 289–290).

<sup>25</sup> On Frederica's visit, see Clogg (1992:142–143). Clogg reproduced a famous picture of the royal couple, King Paul and Queen Frederica, being carried on the shoulders of "reformed" inmates (1992:142; Hart 1996:260).

<sup>26</sup> Scott (1990:224 and 205, resp.). Scott wrote of the "gold of willing, even enthusiastic, consent" that the dominant might hope to extract from their subjects (1990:93). Scott saw this logic as one of the motivations for a regime to stage show trials (1990:57–58). He stated: "Ritual subservience reliably extracted from inferiors signals quite literally that there is no realistic choice other than compliance" (1990:66). See further Scott's key concepts of "public" and "hidden transcripts" (1990) and also Hamilakis (2002:322).

<sup>27</sup> For further comments on this production and its context, see Nikitas Tsakiroglou, interview by Makis Delipetros, *Apogevmatini*, 1 June 1998; Dimitra Pavlakou, “*Prometheus Bound*—Makronisos 1998,” *I Avyi*, 30 June 1998 (both in Greek).

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