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Writing/Rewriting Hybrid Femininity: Understanding Greek-Australian Feminist Playwriting through an Intertextual Process

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Abstract

This thesis marks the beginning of articulating a hybrid form of feminist playwriting. Greek-Australian feminist playwriting is a niche category, but it is a category I inhabit, and though there are few of us currently in this space, our stories do matter and our stories need to be fostered through practice and research.

This thesis argues that Greek-Australian feminist playwriting can be understood through an intertextual process that articulates our feminine hybridity; in our plays, we reform cultural texts and empower the female body to express ourselves. Through creating and analysing my own practice (*The Debt*) as well as analysing the plays of Tes Lyssiotis (*A White Sports Coat*) and Koraly Dimitriadis (*KORALY "I say the wrong things all the time"*), I expose the fundamental link between hybridity and intertextuality in order to illustrate how Greek-Australian feminists write plays.

We exist between two cultures and capturing this diverse polyphony of voices through playwriting means bravely challenging ethnic and patriarchal assumptions. Questioning these stereotypical, cultural texts in our plays can be comprehended as intertextual: we *write* and then *rewrite* the texts that have *made* and *unmade* us.

This understanding of feminist playwriting, as a practice of critique and reworking, has been largely overlooked by manuals on playwriting. This thesis thus creates a space for hybrid feminist playwriting, capturing, through both practice and research, a significant aspect of our powerful playwriting that poses new questions and opens new possibilities of understanding how a play is made. I introduce our playwriting practice (Greek-Australian feminist), finally acknowledging the marginalised bi-cultural feminine hybridity in Australian playwriting. By doing what we do (practice) and analysing what we do (research), I aim to advance more of the

‘doing’ (written plays), which will not only expand understandings of playwriting, but contribute to the diversity of the Australian theatre landscape.

Declaration

This thesis is an original work of my research and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Publications During Enrolment

There have been two readings of my play, *The Debt*:

2014 La Mama Explorations

2015 Five.Point.One Theatre Reading Sessions

I have also published the following journal article:

Lambrianidis, Christine. ‘Objectification, Denial, and Transformation: A Feminist Approach to Harold Pinter’s *One for the Road*.’ *The Harold Pinter Review* 2.1 (2018): 97−107. Print

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you Rosaria and for the unborn children in my future; I have tried my best to articulate a part of who I am, but who you are and what you will become is in your hands.

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Introduction:
Introducing Greek-Australian Feminist Playwriting

The subject of this thesis

"You are Australian"

After all the Greek dancing lessons, Greek cultural marches, Greek school classes, Greek church visits as well as the daily consumption of Greek food and music and of course, the Greek weddings, baptisms and other cultural events, I apparently am an Australian, according to my father. I was born in Australia. I grew up in Australia. I have never left Newport, a western suburb of Melbourne. But to hear this man, my great patriarch, pronounce that I am an Australian was simply mind blowing.

This confused cultural sense of self is not uncommon to many children of migrants. Even Christos Tsiolkas' iconic Greek-Australian novel *Loaded* begins with a quote by Richard Rodriguez who describes "the immigrant child…liv[ing] in his own time"; "a life" that is not "identical with that of his mother or father" (1). Portraying this hybrid culture in a play thus already entails not only rethinking cultural upbringing, but challenging static labels like Australian or Greek through rethinking and re-reading cultural texts that have impacted my life. In this thesis, I examine the work of two current Greek-Australian playwrights as well as my own work to investigate the role of re-reading cultural texts in our plays. I argue that Greek-Australian feminist playwriting can be understood through an intertextual process: we express our hybridity through challenging ethnic assumptions, and we rework and reform patriarchal texts and powerfully utilise the female body. The connection between hybridity and intertextuality is integral in understanding Greek-Australian feminist playwriting. For our playwriting (Greek-Australian feminist playwriting) to be understood, we need to embrace and express our hybridity and begin discussing how we portray this hybridity in our plays.

We are a minority in the current Australian mainstream theatre industry. There are few Greek-Australians who write plays about Greek-Australians outside of their communities. There are fewer Greek-Australian women who write plays about Greek-Australian women.[1] There are even fewer who write plays and theses about how Greek-Australian feminist playwrights write plays. Kostandina Dounis explains why this is the case:

> Layer upon layer of engendered marginalisation – within the wider community, within their specific ethnic community – rendered them [Greek-Australian women writers] virtually invisible. (73)

For me, as a Greek-Australian feminist playwright, invisibility from the mainstream is a reality. For me, as a Greek-Australian scholar, this invisibility needs to be questioned. Like Michelle Arrow, who researched Australian female playwrights in the 20th century, I wonder "why are these women so poorly known?" (4). This niche category should not be ignored, but explored; why are there so few of us writing our stories for larger audiences? And why is there no literature about how we write plays? In order to diversify the Australian theatre landscape, niche groups must be researched.

In effect, I will use only the work of three playwrights because there are, unfortunately, so few of us still writing: Tes Lyssiotis (*A White Sports Coat*), Koraly Dimitriadis (*KORALY "I say the wrong things all the time"*) and me (Christine Lambrianidis, *The Debt*). I have also chosen Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis because I have personal access to them, as we are all feminist playwrights in Melbourne, and their work has inspired and influenced how I write plays. By writing academically about our style and expressing this research through practice (*The Debt*),

[1] Eleni Tsefala analyses plays by first- and second-generation Greek-Australian female playwrights, including Vasso Kalamaras and Angela Costi, but most of these plays were created within the community.

I hope to encourage not only more Greek-Australian feminist playwrights, but more hybrid playwrights, to start writing for larger audiences. Our stories are important. Our stories do matter. And if we want to create and share more of our stories with more people, we need to start considering the nature of our playwriting.

My response to my father should have been that I am and am not Australian; that I am and am not Greek. Greek-Australian femininity and feminism is ever-evolving, and its hybridity is powerful. In reality, I just screamed, and this thesis is a way of finding words to explain how this incessant scream, that should never be silenced, is portrayed on stage through playwriting.

In this chapter, I will introduce and define the initial key terms (Greek-Australian feminist playwriting) relevant to my central argument and explain my methodology. I will begin by defining Greek-Australian as a cultural hybrid identity. I will clarify my use of feminist playwriting, which will lead to an explanation of Greek-Australian feminist playwriting and summaries of the Greek-Australian feminist plays that will be analysed in this thesis. Finally, I will clarify and justify my use of practice-based research as well as reflective practice. These are the central methods I will be using to show how, through intertextuality, Greek-Australian feminist playwriting can be comprehended.

Cultural hybridity and Greek-Australian identity

Homi Bhabha uses the word hybridity to explain how marginalised minorities, who can be colonised people or people belonging to a diaspora, influence national cultural understandings. These people challenge "fixed identifications" and "open up the possibility of a cultural hybridity" (5). Hybridity is "where cultural differences 'contingently' and conflictually touch" (296). This then creates an "ambivalent world of the 'not quite/not white'" where people who are associated with two cultures are seen as "*almost the same but not whit*e"

(131, 128). Hybridity is about "borderline culture" and "cultural displacement" and it remains "'untranslatable'" (322). Even though Greek-Australians are not colonised people, they still share this sense of cultural hybridity where they are both included and excluded from the mainstream Anglo-Australian narrative. Eleni Tsefala describes the plays of Greek Australian woman as expressing a "hybrid" culture that "disturbs traditions" (339). The two playwrights that will be considered in this thesis share this understanding of our ambivalent position. Lyssiotis describes this as having an "Australian psyche", but still being connected to her "Greekness" (Personal Interview). Dimitriadis also explains how "just being" herself means "portray[ing] the hybrid" and, in effect, "telling" her "story" is about presenting this "hybrid...tug of war" that is "inside you" (Personal Interview).

To identify as Greek-Australian then means being both Greek and Australian. Historian Nicholas Doumanis states that "Greek Australians…feel they still belong to the *ethnos*; that they are *of* the Greek nation". At the same time, he does acknowledge how this "extension of Greece" has also "reinvented" Greek "traditions" (81, 79). This idea of reinvention is a prominent feature of Greek-Australian feminist plays.[2] The intertextuality in some Greek-Australian feminist playwriting is connected to this type of reworking; we are almost bound to reinvent the Greek culture we have inherited in our playwriting. While our parents migrated "to find work, build capital and raise families", we have become the storytellers who must *read* the past in order to *write* the present (Doumanis 58–9).

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[2] The daughter in Lyssiotis' *A White Sports Coat* is actually in the process of reinventing her mother's migrant story. In Dimitriadis' *KORALY: "I say the wrong things all the time"*, Koraly is continually reinventing these traditions through satire. In my play, *The Debt,* each cultural lesson is a Greek tradition that has been brutally reinvented.

Stuart Hall describes children of migrants as “speak[ing] from the ‘in-between’”; we “negotiate and translate between cultures” (206). Tsefala similarly defines Greek-Australian plays by women as portraying “‘in-between’ experiences” (333). Melissa Butcher and Mandy Thomas also explain this hybrid process as “selecting and adopting aspects of two cultures”, which leads to a “bi-cultural identity” (17). Ghassan Hage describes “the migrant in the liminal space of the ‘not too excluded, but not too included’”, but the children of migrants inhabit this space more meaning they can never fully identify with only one culture (243). A leading sociologist in Greek-Australian culture, J.J. Smolicz, discusses how Greek-Australians continually negotiate between Greek and Australian values and through this “cultural co-existence” find “some new synthesis” (“Greek Australians” 20). It is this “new synthesis” that is presented in some Greek-Australian feminist plays. In this thesis, I am explaining how this synthesis between Greek and Australian culture is presented in our playwriting.

We, children of migrants, are also responsible for preserving the mainland Greek culture in Australia. As Smolicz describes, “the survival of cultural heritage of a group depends upon its constant modification into a living tradition that meets the needs of the current generation of members”. It is thus essential to both protect and change cultural traditions (“Tradition” 147).

This is not unlike how Greek identity, in general, has been defined. Irad Malkin states that classical “Greek ethnicity appears to have been something that was always both traditional and negotiable” (6). Carla Antonaccio also emphasises this ancient diversity in Greek identity: there are “multiple concepts and categories of Greekness, articulated within overlapping and intersecting contexts of time, space, and power” (114). Anthony Kaldellis even highlights how later Byzantium “Greek identity…changed and evolved” (13). It seems then that, like any cultural identity, Greek identity is, as John Lynton Myers describes, continually “in the process of becoming” (538). Some Greek-Australian feminist playwrights present this process: there

are no finite conclusions about identity except that it changes and evolves, and it is this process of change that Lyssiotis, Dimitriadis and I are trying to portray in our writing for the stage.

Even though I refer to all of us (Lyssiotis, Dimitriadis and me) as Greek-Australian, we come from different parts of the world. The parents of Lyssiotis are from the island of Kythira; Dimitriadis' parents are from Cyprus; my grandparents are from Pontus. Even though our cultural heritage is diverse, we have a sense of belonging to the Greek ethnicity. Lyssiotis describes how she "draws on her Greekness" and how this is her "strength" when she writes (Personal Interview). Dimitriadis also explains how her writing is "very influenced by her Cypriot culture" and most of her work draws inspiration from "Greek music first and foremost" (Personal Interview).

Here, I use the term Greek-Australian to refer to Australian children of Greek migrants who are "retaining aspects of Greek culture and identity" (Smolicz, "Greek-Australians" 18). These migrants do not necessarily come from mainland Greece but do identify as being ethnically Greek. Greek-Australian is thus a culturally hybrid identity as it not only exists between two cultures (Greek and Australian), but also encompasses diverse cultural groups from different parts of the world that identify as Greek ethnically.

However, the portrayal of Greek-Australian culture on stage is not the only conversation. This portrayal is not only about being Greek-Australian – it is also about being a Greek-Australian woman. Understanding feminist playwriting is integral to this project as I am contributing a description of how my hybrid identity (Greek-Australian) has been portrayed on stage and this broadens our understandings of feminist playwriting.

Feminist playwriting

Playwriting about women and their experiences can be defined as feminist

playwriting. It is integral, however, to acknowledge that there are and will always be women expressing themselves through performance writing. As Judith Butler states:

> There is, in my view, nothing about femaleness that is waiting to be expressed; there is, on the other hand, a good deal about the diverse experiences of women that is being expressed and still needs to be expressed (Butler, "Performative Acts" 530–1).

Feminist playwriting means writing for the stage that is about or told through the perspectives of women. These perspectives are varied and endless. Therefore, I use "some", not "all", Greek-Australian feminist playwriting. By using "some", I want to emphasise that the process of understanding Greek-Australian feminist playwriting should never cease.

As Rose Weitz asserts, even though there are "differences among feminists in ideology", all feminists strive to challenge "accepted ideas about women's bodies and social position" (8). The plays I will be analysing in this thesis (*A White Sports Coat*, *KORALY "I say the wrong things all the time"* and *The Debt*) challenge traditional gender characterisations through an intertextual process, showing the hybridity of Greek-Australian women. It is thus crucial to view feminist theatre in this thesis as all-encompassing; gender and culture work together to portray the hybridity of Greek-Australian women.

Even though the term *feminist* has various meanings in a western context, many feminist theatre critics do concur that *feminist theatre* is about inclusiveness, representing women and their experiences and challenging conventional gender portrayals. These critics include Lizbeth Goodman, who uses the terms "flexible" and "broadly" to define feminist theatre, ensuring no one is marginalised in their efforts "to achieve positive re-evaluation of women's roles and/or to effect social change" (199). Similarly, Jill Dolan describes how feminist critics analyse images of women that are repeated in performance and bring attention

to what remains unarticulated. This is “an activist project of culture-making”: questioning what is there as well as what is not there (*Feminist Spectator in Action* 2). Elaine Aston and Geraldine Harris also aim to change understandings of gender and states “feminist poetics” should contest “the theatrical apparatus” (5). This cultural need for change is echoed further by Janet Brown, who believes feminist theatre needs to be about “telling stories of silenced and marginalized women” that highlight “the moral concerns and societal criticisms that arise from women’s experience” (155). Dolan even expands feminism to include “sexuality, race, and class” and sees it as “an analytical system” concerned with “how power circulates” and, in this way, she expects that “it offers a transformative politics of hope” (*Feminist Spectator in Action* 1). This need to encompass many understandings of feminism and embrace social change when considering feminist theatre is the result of second wave feminist exclusivity. Aston and Harris explain this as when “feminism generated a ‘we’ that failed to take account of how it might be simultaneously inscribed through discourses of class (middle), sexuality (hetero) and above all ‘race’ (white)” (6). In effect, today intersectional feminism considers more than just the category of female.

Intersectional feminism, as defined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is about the “intersecting patterns of racism and sexism” (1243). Even though my research is considering a niche group that has been marginalised from the mainstream because of its gender and culture, it is doing so in terms of playwriting, not in terms of creating better social rights for Greek-Australian women. We are not statistically recognised as being in a position of institutional disadvantage; and yet, so few of us write plays. This type of marginalisation in the mainstream Australian theatre industry is common to hybrid cultures and, because of this, needs to be considered. Hybridity explains our “not quite” white position as we are neither insiders, nor outsiders of white Australian culture. My position, and the position of my fellow playwrights Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis, is as heterosexual, Greek-Australian, cisgendered women. I am researching and

playwriting from this specific position. This does not mean that these ideas are not relevant to other hybrid cultures or genders.

Despite our differences and past oppressive definitions as well as divisive popular cultural beliefs in feminist divisions, it is profoundly clear that feminist theatre critics are united in their belief that *feminist theatre* strives to be an all-inclusive theatrical style that is about women and challenging traditional understandings of women. As Aston, Harris and Šimić express, "feminism is there to be used, abused, abducted, changed, born again, personalized" (175).

This feminist project considers gender and culture concurrently when Greek-Australian feminist playwriting is explored; however, the intertextual nature of our work is also relevant to *écriture feminine* as I am arguing that there is a unique way Greek-Australian women express stories for the stage. Helene Cixous defines *écriture feminine* as "women's writing" where women "physically materialize what" they are "thinking" and this "signifies" meaning "with" the "body". She urges women to "write through their bodies" and let their "bod[ies] be heard". This style of "female-sexed texts" that "inscribe femininity", like the *genotext*, is driven physically by the female form ("Laugh" 875, 881, 886, 880, 877, 878).

As Julia Kristeva states, the *genotext* is an "instinctual", "corporeal" "process"; "language's underlying foundation". It exists within the *phenotext* that is described as "language that serves to communicate"; it is "a structure" driven by culture. In order to express one's self, both are required: "the signifying process therefore includes both the *genotext* and the *phenotext"* (*Revolution* 86–8). Writers and readers are influenced by both and do not merely select or put together cultural texts to create their own text. The *genotext* and *phenotext* are in constant dialogue and form the basis of how we create and understand texts. This thesis shows how Greek-Australian feminist playwriting utilises the *genotext* to challenge cultural certainties; the unpredictability of the female body in the plays serves to reform our

understandings of the story itself. In *A White Sports Coat*, The Daughter's pregnant body continually interrupts the narrative, reminding audiences of the power and nature of gestation and how this is part of the way women tell their stories. In *KORALY: "I say the wrong things all the time"*, how she treats her body is indicative of her mental state and this controls the narrative. Like *The Debt*, it portrays the female body in pain and this gives the female body prominence on stage working as powerfully as the written dialogue. The torture scenes in *The Debt* centralise the female body, showing both its strengths and vulnerabilities. These usages of the *genotext*, explored in further detail in the proceeding chapters, question the stability of traditional, patriarchal narratives and in effect, reform stereotypical understandings of Greek-Australian women. Using this type of feminist category, where writing is driven by the female body, portraying the female experience through the *genotext* does have its challenges.

There are dangers in creating any feminist category.[3] Aston and Harris have, however, used Butler's idea of a "contingent essentialism" to justify the need for a feminist category; having a category means having "an identity" that can politically challenge (9; *Bodies that Matter* 221–2). It is therefore important to consider both our gender and culture in order to begin understanding our playwriting. Gender and culture are not the only aspects of our playwriting but provide a beginning for comprehending our playwriting form. This thesis uses the terms "hybrid" and "feminist" in order to frame a playwriting process that is about the experiences of Greek-Australian women.

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[3] According to Judith Butler, creating a feminist "category" to combat "the invisibility of women" alienates women who do not fit into this "category" ("Performative Acts and Gender" 523). She exposes how feminist criticism was "produced and restrained by the very stricture of power through which emancipation" was actually "sought" (*Gender Trouble* 5).

My process is reflective and evolves through two bodies: research and practice. Both parts tell the story of our playwriting style in different ways. In order to begin building an understanding of how a hybrid feminist may write a play, something that has not been fully considered by the current playwriting manuals (see Chapter Two), actually playwriting and then reflecting on this playwriting is integral.

This process is about key aspects of feminist theatre and criticism: the reworking and critiquing inherent in intertextuality is a convention of feminist writing or *rewriting*. My intertextual approach, described in the next chapter, is about viewing Greek-Australian feminist playwriting as a practice of critique and reworking. This is what Dolan describes as uncovering "ideological meanings that…perpetuate cultural assumptions that are oppressive to women and other disenfranchised social groups". To Dolan, "feminist criticism" is about viewing all "representation as inherently ideological" (*Feminist Spectator as Critic* 18, 41). Our feminist playwriting style is about responding to ideological representations of ourselves. In this thesis, our style is presented and analysed through this intertextual approach where we begin deconstructing and challenging patriarchal texts. This analytical and creative exploration creates a position and begins a discussion about the experiences of Greek-Australian women and how these experiences can be represented on stage.

Greek-Australian feminist playwriting

As established, feminist analysis is fundamentally about, as Gayle Austin insists, "paying attention to women as writers and as readers" (136). To then pay attention to particular types of female writers, namely Greek-Australian feminist playwrights, means understanding and clarifying their unique position as hybrid feminists. We, Greek-Australian feminist playwrights, are not only responding to the patriarchy within Australia at large, but also the patriarchy within our own community; our experiences are not just about being women, but

about being Greek-Australian women and this specificity is essential in order to carve out a place for our work, which should never be dismissed as simply multicultural.[4] Caroline Pickett's analysis of Lyssiotis' plays explains this as "[t]he specificities of…two sub-categories"; the "duality" of "an Australian citizen born of migrant parents". This is also accompanied by "another strategy of resistance": the fact that "women…occupy the subject position" in Lyssiotis' plays and "men become objectified and become the object of a female gaze" (8–9). Tsefala describes Greek-Australian plays by women as being about "cultural self-definition" and how this "is linked to unequal power relations". She asserts that these "women playwrights…challenge authority, patriarchal power, discrimination and exploitation" in their work (339, 333). Being a Greek-Australian feminist playwright therefore acknowledges both culture and gender. Even though there is an intersection between culture and gender, and this causes different levels of discrimination, this intersection is not associated with systemic disadvantage. We portray these old and new Greek and Australian feminine worlds on stage. Our work is feminist because the central concerns of our plays are women and their experiences living between two cultures (Greek and Australian). I therefore refer to Greek-Australian feminist playwriting as a form of hybrid feminist playwriting; we are writing between two cultures as women.

In *A White Sports Coat* Lyssiotis transforms the Greek-Australian home by placing the pregnant playwright, known only as Daughter, at its centre. Her use of texts, specifically the

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[4] Lyssiotis states she does not "want to be labelled a 'multicultural'" ("'Going to the Source'"). Dimitriadis expresses how she does not want to be judged merely "through the lens of…culture" ("Comment: Hey, White People").

song *A White Sports Coat and a Pink Carnation* and poem *The Patriarchal House*, works like historical sources: they are fragmentedly expressed by female voices that travel through both time and cultures and yet, are performed and remain in the Daughter's playwriting. The polyphony of voices – from her mother, father to herself – that this daughter is attempting to encompass in her playwriting captures an aspect of the experiences of Greek-Australian women who are guided by and challenge these parental voices. Performative language can encompass these voices, working intertextually by challenging the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype, reframing texts and prominently portraying the *genotext* to present the cultural hybridity of our femininity.

KORALY: "I say the wrong things all the time" also places the female writer central and weaves her own poems, film and Greek music into her play. She is continually in dialogue with her community, vying to carve out a position that can encompass both her rage and love of multicultural Melbourne. Her satirical portrayals of ethnic traditions are varied: the innocent girl learning to folk dance; the beaming bride waiting to get married; older ladies from the Greek community, expressing the importance of settling down and starting a family. The play form gives Dimitriadis the opportunity to bring these voices together, exposing the darkly comical and engagingly complex world of a Greek-Australian, divorced, single mother. This highly personal perspective portrays, through other texts and other voices, the frustrations many Greek-Australian women experience who exist within old and new worlds and sometimes struggle and even refuse to find their place within these worlds. Her reworking of the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype and traditional Greek texts as well as her use of the *genotext* presents our hybridity.

My practice research component, *The Debt,* lacks the powerful authorial female voice, but through this lack of strong narrative structure, I am conveying the chaos experienced by some Greek-Australian women who are torn between tradition and modernity. I use satire and

allegory to tell the story of how liberal feminism has failed second generation Greek-Australian women who are forced to function in a system that is not of their own making. The intertextuality is clear through my reworking of Sophocles' *Antigone* and Harold Pinter's *One for the Road.* The ethnic traditions that Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis embed in their work are expressed like labour camp lessons or acts of torture in my play. The strangeness and sparseness of my style is still vying to bring together old and new worlds. It does this through a dystopian frame: the essentialism of our hybridity is questioned and all that remains are the traditions we perform. Like Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis, I reimagine the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype and rework Sophocles and Pinter as well as give the *genotext* a prominent position in order to express our feminine hybridity.

In order to comprehend Greek-Australian feminist playwriting, I will be using two methods: practice research and reflective practice. I have written a play about Greek-Australian female identity (practice) and this play not only expresses what our style entails, but has also guided me in understanding our style of playwriting. I have also reflected critically about my own play and other Greek-Australian feminist plays (reflective practice). These are the components that will be used to express how Greek-Australian feminist playwriting can be understood.

Practice-led research and research-led practice

As stated, in order to begin to understand a type of feminist playwriting, practice research is applied in this thesis I have written a play (*The Debt*) that illustrates the connection between intertextuality and hybridity, a key aspect of Greek-Australian feminist playwriting. Through practice, actual knowledge *about* practice can be experientially exemplified. This is especially pertinent to playwrights who are feminists and understand that writing is not always monological and can be dialogical. Practice research gives some playwrights the freedom to

define, discuss and develop their own work. Bella Merlin calls this an empowering method of research where "self-transformation" is achieved through an "advancement of learning": (39, 41). Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt also acknowledge how this "subjective approach to research" recognises those who remain outside of the "established social practices and discourses" (3). Practice research allows new knowledge to be gained about playwriting as it is an individualised, contemporary method that does not aim to meet established qualitative or quantitative outcomes. The outcome of this research is thus an artistic product (*The Debt*) and academic thesis, both diversely outlining a hybrid feminist playwriting style.

Robin Nelson challenges our binary understandings of practice and theory by considering what he calls "praxis (theory imbricated within practice)". This is "the 'performative turn'" where we do not "just think" what we know, but actually "'do' what we know". This "doing–thinking" is "dialogic" as it considers the relation "between theory and practice" (5, 66, 19). Barrett and Bolt also describe the "critical" and "creative" aspects of a project as having "a dialogic relationship" (5). *The Debt* illustrates a significant aspect of Greek-Australian feminist playwriting; doing and critically reflecting on my own work and the work of others also confirms this aspect. Individualised practice and the critical analysis of this practice leads to an understanding of Greek-Australian feminist playwriting. This reflective approach is practised in the following chapters, where I analyse three Greek-Australian feminist plays, showing how our hybridity is presented on stage. This reflective analysis is also an enactment of intertextuality, where the theories of stereotyping and intertextuality create

understandings of Greek-Australian feminist playwriting (see Chapter One). Reflective learning can clarify practice, and this is explained further in the next section of this chapter.[5]

The link between practice and research is described by Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, who promote a complex approach that links "practice-led research and research-led practice". They call this methodology the "iterative cyclic web" (2). Following Smith and Dean, my research is practice-led as it is using practice to exemplify a hybrid feminist playwriting style, but it is also research-led practice as my own knowledge of theatre and subsequent research has thoroughly affected my practice and my understanding of practice. This is what Barbara Bolt defines as "double articulation between theory and practice, whereby theory emerges from a reflexive practice at the same time that practice is informed by theory" (29). Out of practice comes a new theory and out of theory comes a new practice and a new understanding of practice. This is demonstrated through my usage of different linguistic modes of expression in this thesis: creative, academic and personal reflective. Each mode contributes in different ways to demonstrate how Greek-Australian feminist playwrights express their hybridity in their playwriting.

This study exposes how other texts (what I call the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype as well as other cultural texts, such as poems, songs and plays) play a significant role in the work of some Greek-Australian feminist playwrights. It articulates my reflections on how the academic concept of intertextuality can be used to understand the style of some Greek-Australian feminist plays. The practice itself exemplifies this style (practice-led research),

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[5] Nelson explains how "the know-what of PaR resides in knowing what 'works', in teasing out the methods by which 'what works' is achieved, and the compositional principles involved" (44). Reflection then is essential in understanding effective practice.

while the thesis uses an academic structure to express how the research affected my enactment and understanding of practice (research-led practice). In this way, it becomes profoundly clear how Greek-Australian feminist playwriting can be understood.

Reflective learning

Researchers of practice research continually emphasise the importance of reflective methods in their capacity to articulate new knowledge from or within practice (Smith and Dean 5; Sullivan 51). Bolt suggests that after "handling" the practice itself, "praxical knowledge" emerges out of "reflexive knowledge"; through reflection, the artist articulates their position and communicates their findings (34). Brad Haseman and Daniel Mafe describe this as a "position of enunciation" (219). Reflection allows the practitioner to express themselves, which also shapes their practice and how they understand their practice.

This is quite a significant, galvanising opportunity for emerging playwrights who have very few opportunities to subjectively express what their practice is about, and who struggle to express it when most playwriting models are limiting (see Chapter Two).[6] Haseman believes in the power of "reflective practice" as it allows "practice-led researchers" to develop their "understandings of practice" (153). Nelson also believes "reflection" allows "embodied" knowledge to be clearly expressed (40). This thesis uses reflective methodologies to articulate the nature of a type of feminist playwriting (Greek-Australian feminist playwriting).

Jennifer A. Moon concludes that "the process" of "reflection" is similarly described in the major works of John Dewey, Jürgen Habermas and Donald Schön. This process is about how in-depth contemplation leads to "re-represent[ation]"; reflection, regardless of discipline,

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[6] Stephen Goddard writes that "it is possible for a reflective practitioner engaged in a reflexive practice to generate a dialogue and to address this discourse towards a community of peers" (121).

is about expressing and developing knowledge and understanding.[7] It is a process with a "purpose" that "leads to a useful outcome" (*Reflection* 10, 4). She describes it in greater depth as follows:

> [R]eflection is itself a mental process with purpose and/or outcome. It is applied in situations where material is ill-structured or uncertain in that it has no obvious solutions, a mental process that seems to be related to thinking and to learning (*Reflection* 5).

By reflecting on how a variety of cultural texts are reworked in Greek-Australian feminist plays, I am presenting a different way of understanding playwriting. Reflecting on Greek-Australian feminist playwriting allows me to articulate one way that these plays function, offering a new perspective on feminist playwriting.

This thesis specifically follows Moon's process method in terms of "reflective learning": my "intention" is to "learn as a result of reflection". She states that academic reflection has "a conscious and stated purpose". My purpose is to exemplify how a feminist playwriting style can be understood through intertextuality. Moon also writes that academic reflection has an "outcome specified in terms of learning, action or clarification" (*Handbook* 82, 80, 83).

The outcomes of this reflection are that intertextuality can clarify a feminist playwriting style (clarification) and articulating this approach can lead to an enlightened understanding of a feminist playwriting practice (learning), as well as more diverse discussion and work on hybrid feminist playwriting (action).

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[7] Moon states that the literature on reflection is "cross-disciplinary" and relevant "across professions" (*Reflection* vii; *Handbook* 80).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have defined "Greek-Australian", concluding that it is a hybrid identity. I have also explored the significant aspects of feminist playwriting in order to explain where Greek-Australian feminist playwriting is positioned. I concluded by defining practice research and reflective practice as these are the central methodologies for this thesis.

Overall, the structure of this thesis follows Barthes' "weaving of voices". A text is "not unitary" but an "interweaving" of "voices". This "convergence" is later described as a "braid" (*S/Z* 20, 21, 160):

> The grouping of codes, as they enter into the work, into the movement of the reading, constitute a braid (text, fabric, braid: the same thing); each thread, each code, is a voice; these braided – or braiding – voices form the writing (*S/Z* 160).

This thesis braids together my creative, academic and personal voices; it is a unity between my academic thesis and creative play.

In the body of this thesis, Chapter One begins by exposing how the concept of intertextuality is connected to our – Greek-Australian feminist playwrights – hybridity. I then define a key text, the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype, in order to describe how this is reworked in our plays. Like the stereotypical character of Effie, we subvert this stereotype to portray our complex feminine hybridity. We also show the reading-writing process in our plays and this unbounds the cultural texts that strives to define in a static manner. This reworking is furthered by our use of the *genotext*, where the ambiguity of the female form challenges normative, stable understandings of our identity. Overall, our plays can be understood through this intertextual process where the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype is challenged and the reading-writing process – as well as the powerful portrayal of the *genotext* – deconstructs repressive cultural texts.

In Chapter Two, I argue that current manuals on playwriting ignore this type of feminist playwriting. Most of these manuals promote a traditional, phallic narrative structure that is anti-theoretical and anti-reflective, but still contradictorily offer restrictive rules for playwriting. These manuals are also characterised by a conspicuous absence of feminist playwriting, which is unsurprising considering female representation in plays generally needs to improve. This thesis thus redresses this theoretical and creative inadequacy by practising doing and analysing how Greek-Australian feminist playwrights intertextually critique cultural texts that make and unmake our identity.

This intertextual process is then used to analyse Tes Lyssiotis' play *A White Sports Coat* in Chapter Three. Lyssiotis merges languages and texts to show her ever-changing feminine hybridity. She also portrays the reading-writing process by explicitly performing writing a play where she consults and deconstructs a variety of cultural texts. Through these texts, she is able to confirm and challenge the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype, illustrating the complexities of Greek-Australian women. The *genotext* also takes prominence, interrupting and defeating the cultural texts she attempts to perform. Lyssiotis' play overall shows how hybridity is portrayed through intertextuality.

Similar to Lyssiotis' play, Koraly Dimitriadis' *KORALY "I say the wrong things all the time"* challenges the sexual expectations of Greek-Australian women through mixing mother and daughter roles as well as performing the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype to explicitly reveal these cultural hypocrisies. Dimitriadis embodies this stereotype and then challenges it, as well as performing the reading-writing process to show how through reading, she is able to write. This illustrates the importance of intertextuality and how this concept can be used to understand her style of playwriting that strives, through diverse voices, to portray hybrid femininity. This intertextuality is also prominent in her use of the *genotext*, where the power of the female form can challenge narrative cohesion, but a consensus between word and body leads to liberation.

Her rebellious, angry and hilarious voice embraces and reforms diverse texts to present our hybridity, which refuses to be repressed.

Chapter Five is about my practice research submission, *The Debt*, and how I use Sophocles' *Antigone* and Harold Pinter's *One for the Road* to express my feminine hybridity. I begin by explaining how I challenge the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype through a dystopian frame: the constant repetition of traditions creates both a sense of purpose and anxiety. Like Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis, I show in my play how these cultural assumptions define us, but also how we define them through reworking. I then explain how the torture scenes in my play, where the violence as well as the *genotext* are prominent, can be seen as reforming and combining Sophocles and Pinter. Through this synthesis, I portray our feminine hybridity, which exists between these two major literary and cultural traditions.

A synopsis and copy of my written play, *The Debt*, is included in Chapter Six. This play shows this intertextual process in action and the ways this process demonstrates feminine hybridity.

I then conclude by summarising how Greek-Australian feminist plays function, emphasising the importance of critical reflection and practice research in their capacity to empower individuals though knowledge acquisition. I review each chapter, and I use my personal and academic voices to explain the knowledge that has been gained through this research.

This weaving of theory and practice epitomises how some feminist play texts can be understood through intertextuality, and how both research and reflection lead to knowledge that improves our understandings of a hybrid feminist playwriting style.

Chapter One:
Greek-Australian Feminist Playwriting portrays Hybridity through Intertextuality

Introduction

"You sound like Effie".

Since I was six years old people have referred to me, either intentionally or mistakenly, as "Effie": Effie, the stereotypical Greek-Australian woman; Effie, the comedic character played by Mary Coustas on stage in various theatrical productions (*Wogs out of Work*; *Effie the Virgin Bride*; *Star Wogs*) as well as the hit Australian television program *Acropolis Now* (1989–1992). It is because of this character that I literally became conscious of my own voice. I realised I had a Greek-Australian accent that made people laugh. I embraced this voice and started to *perform* Effie without even realising it. Through this character, I was able to express myself and forge a social identity.

My performance of, and transformation into, this stereotype shows the power of texts and how they form us. My accent became stronger as a result because I knew, even then, that it was a voice people would listen to or at least laugh at. As Lynne Pearce writes, "reading was something texts could 'do' to us", and my 'reading' of Effie *did* something to me (2). The commercial consumption of this character in Australia, especially in the 1990s, meant that I had a voice people felt they knew. Sue-Ellen Case discusses how "signs create reality rather than reflect it" (*Feminism and Theatre* 132). The "sign" of Effie created the persona of the Greek-Australian woman for some, as she was the only prominent Greek-Australian woman on stage and television at the time. We were not completely invisible; we were the butt of a joke that we created.

This clearly exemplifies how a stereotypical text (the character of Effie) can play a major role in one's life. Some hybrid playwrights reform these stereotypes in their playwriting. In this chapter, I merge my academic and personal voices and through this merging reveal the significant synthesis between hybridity and intertextuality. This is about how our two cultural selves are expressed through challenging different texts. The intertextual process I will use to describe our playwriting is firstly about subverting stereotypical texts, in particular the stereotype of the "Good Greek Girl", and then challenging other cultural texts and powerfully using the *genotext*. Contributing this knowledge to feminist playwriting is about creating a space for hybrid feminist playwrights.

I will begin this chapter by defining intertextuality as a practice of "reading-writing" that can portray our hybridity and challenge stereotypical and other cultural texts (Kristeva *Desire* 56). The "Good Greek Girl" stereotype will then be explained, and also how the character of Effie subverts this stereotype. This is similar to how Lyssiotis, Dimitriadis and I challenge this stereotype in our plays. I will then clarify the intertextual process I will use to describe our playwriting by explaining how, through reworking texts and the *genotext,* a portrayal of our hybrid identity is formed.

Intertextuality and hybridity

The concept of intertextuality has changed throughout the centuries, but the term was not directly used until Julia Kristeva reworked Bakhtin's dialogism.[8] In her essay "The Bounded Text", she writes the following about the text:

[8] See María Jesús Martínez Alfaro for the history of the concept of intertextuality.

> it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in a space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another (*Desire* 36).

This idea of texts coming together and overlapping is reminiscent of our hybridity: we are made and re-made by diverse cultural texts, striving to find synthesis between cultures. Our way of storytelling for the stage can be understood intertextually because we, as Greek-Australian women, are intertextual: diverse cultural texts are taught and imbedded within us and for us to express ourselves, we need to subvert these texts. In this sense, cultural hybridity equals intertextuality.

As hybrids, we know another language and other cultural texts, such as Greek songs, dances and rituals. In Lyssiotis' play, the Daughter describes being "taught" "Greek" by her "mum" and this entailed reciting cultural texts, such as the poem *The Patriarchal House* and the Greek National Anthem (26). Similar to the Daughter, Koraly is also performing; she is "dancing to [a] traditional Cypriot folk song" for "her father and the Cypriot crowd" (2). She then seamlessly recites her poem about Melbourne to her audience. Like Lyssiotis, Dimitriadis shows her audience how seamless this transition between cultures seems. In *The Debt* each scene is a lesson where Maria is taught a cultural ritual. It is only in the end, when we see her go from cleaning a gun to helping her son that a new and absurd transition is prominent; she encompasses the role of a man and woman and this works as a metaphor for our lives that are both Greek and Australian.

Intertextuality is a way of explaining this transition from one culture to another; it is a way of encapsulating this in-betweenness.[9] It is a way of describing what we do in our plays

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[9] The in-between identity, as defined by Homi Bhabha, is discussed in the Introduction.

and clearly there is a connection between our cultural hybridity and the intertextual way we tell stories for the stage. We understand stories through reading them and the reading of stories should not be underestimated when considering how we write.

As Kristeva's theory of intertextuality asserts, evaluative or definitive meanings only exist within "a bounded (cultural) text" (*Desire* 59). This thesis makes no definitive conclusions about my own or other Greek-Australian feminist playwriting; it is a reflective intertextual exploration and its enactment – through the academic thesis and the imaginative play – demonstrates the importance of intertextuality in understanding how some feminist plays are formed.

Discussing the reworking of cultural and patriarchal texts opens a play's text to the possibility of many voices and many meanings, allowing new and diverse playwrights to find a language that describes their individual meaning – a meaning that exists among many. Bakhtin's notions of heteroglossia and polyphony can explain this further. He writes how heteroglossia is about how "languages do not exclude each other, but rather intersect with each other in many different ways" (*Dialogic* 291). He also describes "polyglossia" (many voices) as freeing "consciousness from the tyranny of its own language and its own myth of language" (*Dialogic* 61). Through diverse languages and cultural texts, some Greek-Australian playwrights find a way of writing themselves in their plays.

Both Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis use Greek and English in their plays concurrently, further illustrating how this polyphony is a reality: multilingual voices are a part of our experiences. In my play, I have intentionally avoided using Greek in order to create an absence and these silenced voices in the margins create a foreboding atmosphere that mourns the loss of culture that comes with migration. Stylistically, however, the voices resonate in the mongrel

merging of Greek tragedy with the Pinteresque.[10] Being Greek and Australian means encompassing two literary traditions. Classical Greek texts and Pinter are the main texts that have influenced my playwriting; however, through this project, I have discovered that they more than influence. These diverse texts (*Antigone* and *One for the Road*), like my diverse identity (Greek and Australian), come together in my performance writing and, through this merging (which will be explored further in Chapter Five), my hybridity is expressed.

This intertextuality in Greek-Australian feminist playwriting is defined in this thesis as a process where the prominent stereotype of the "Good Greek Girl" is challenged, cultural texts are reworked and the *genotext* is evocatively embraced. It is important now to begin to understand the prominent ethnic presumptions of the audience, as represented by the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype, as this initially explains not only the position we begin playwriting from, but what we then challenge in our playwriting.

The "Good Greek Girl" stereotype

Impossible black

Amid the impudence of summer thighs

Long arms and painted toenails

And the voices

Impossibly obscure (127)

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[10] Pinteresque is the term used to describe the style of Harold Pinter's plays. This word was first used by "an anonymous critic" who was referring to "Pinter's manipulation of colloquial language" (Peacock 75). Even in its original usage, it is clear that the Pinteresque is about the elevation of realistic, everyday language to a powerful status where the mere words that are performed have the capacity to control an individual. See also Margaret Atwood 5; Mark Batty 39; Drew Milne 233; Suzanne Harris Smith 103.

Jennifer Strauss' famous Australian poem "Migrant Woman on a Melbourne Tram" is about a Greek grandmother, or *yiayia*, navigating her way through the streets of Melbourne. This *yiayia* wearing her black clothes is staunchly an image that remains prominent in our understandings of Greek migrant women.

Accompanying this image of the strong and traditional *yiayia*, is the dutiful Greek-Australian daughter. Maria Katsabanis describes this stereotype as "the conservative Greek girl: a passive, submissive creature victimised by the dictates of a particularly virulent form of patriarchy – the Greek Family" (72). This is the innocent, virginal image of the Greek-Australian girl who has been sheltered from Anglo-Australian culture.

In this thesis, I will refer to the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype, and this encompasses both the *yiayia* and virginal young woman. The "Good Greek Girl" stereotype is about the ideal Greek-Australian woman who takes on a traditional female role, either as a dutiful daughter or maternal figure (daughter, mother and *yiayia*).

The phrase "Good Greek Girl" has most often been used ironically in Greek-Australian work. As part of Koraly Dimitriadis' Good Greek Girl Film Project, her short film *Best Friends* (2013) melancholically presents the breakdown of a family, exploring the stereotype of the "Good Greek Girl" and brutally presenting the psychological effects of transgressing this stereotype. Similarly, Maria Katsonis' memoir *Good Greek Girl* also exposes the mental health issues that come with challenging stringent and unrealistic cultural expectations, as represented by the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype. She bravely describes her own experiences, challenging this stereotype and coming to terms with her own family and culture as well as her own self. In both texts, the stereotype is used ironically: there is no "Good Greek Girl", but there is a cultural expectation encompassed in this stereotype, which represents cultural values that have affected our lives in many ways. This stereotype of the "Good Greek Girl" is characterised and

satirised in our plays and it is this stereotype I will explore further in terms of each play in the proceeding chapters.

References to the "Good Greek Girl" appear in Lyssiotis' *A White Sports Coat* when the Daughter describes how a fall into a broad bean patch led to her shoe buckles getting stuck in her vagina and her "mother was absolutely beside herself" and "kept saying, 'Still good girl?' 'Still good girl?'" (33). Dimitriadis similarly expresses the following in her play:

> I have never wanted to suck cock
>
> because it's so wrong
>
> and I'm a good Greek girl
>
> meant to fuck only a husband
>
> or sit tight-legged in church (10)

In both instances, the playwrights are intertextually referring, indirectly and directly, to this "Good Greek Girl" stereotype that is essentially about female sexuality. Katsabanis concludes that this stereotype assumes that "Greek girls' attitudes to sexuality are a direct product of the traditionalism of Greek patriarchy" (72). These playwrights strive to both acknowledge and challenge these assumptions. They are both brutally owning these strong signifiers of patriarchy, but they are also exposing the anachronism: how the *yiayia* in black is both real and performative. In our plays, we shine a light on the "impossibly black" migrant woman who is sitting on that tram in order for us to represent our own experiences (Strauss 127).

In *The Debt*, the Widow is a trained *yiayia* who is there to teach Maria how to "be a real woman" (8). Even though it is revealed to Maria in the end that the Widow is not real, Maria still wants to play sometimes with the Widow. As playwrights we know culture is a constructed entity, but this constructed thing is critical in understanding ourselves. My *yiayia* was more than just a woman wearing black and confronting this stereotype, and exposing its constructed and significant nature, is empowering.

Challenging this “Good Greek Girl” stereotype is also about understanding the Effie stereotype. Effie is a stereotype of a stereotype; she challenges the “Good Greek Girl” stereotype to disturb feminine cultural certainties. Effie has also played a major role in my own cultural identity.

The Effie stereotype

Effie is the most prominent stereotype of a Greek-Australian woman. Georgina Tsolidis and Vikki Pollard, in their research about how the word “wog” is used by young Greek-Australians, define Effie as “a critical character in this [wog] brand of comedy” and describe the character as follows:

> She speaks with a Greek-Australian, working-class accent and much of the humour associated with her role relies on mispronunciation and grammatical error. Her gestures are exaggerated and she often chews gum. Her hairstyle and clothing are extravagant in a manner that would not be associated with the stylish or the elegant. She is a familiar stereotype of the children of southern European immigrants, including North American, where the “gino” is reminiscent of the “wog” (436).

This popular ethnic stereotype is still dominant in Australian society. This means that my loud voice and big hair are associated with Effie whether I like it or not. Being a cultural hybrid (Greek-Australian) can mean existing alongside a prominent ethnic stereotype. In this sense, my cultural hybridity seems intertextual; I am bound to consider Effie as a stereotypical text and, in effect, writing a play about my experiences as a Greek-Australian woman is bound to be understood intertextually. Both my audience and I will refer to other texts, like the Effie stereotype, in order to comprehend and articulate my hybridity. The hybridity is portrayed

through the subversion of stereotypical texts, showing how my work reflects this connection between hybridity and intertextuality.

Articulating how the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype works in some Greek-Australian feminist plays is therefore crucial in understanding how our hybridity is expressed on stage. Comprehending the function of stereotypes is vital to this intertextual process where the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype is challenged.

Subverting stereotypes

Effie is not just a stereotype of a dumb Greek-Australian girl who only has superficial ambitions. She is also a subversion of this same stereotype. Katsabanis and Adele Murdolo articulate the nature of this subversion. Katsabanis firstly states that she rebels against "patriarchal values about heterosexual relationships" and then concludes by exemplifying how Effie is financially independent (73, 78). Murdolo references Judith Butler's work on drag in *Gender Trouble* to explain how the "comedy" created by Effie is an "exaggeration and parody of femininity" that is "potentially subversive" because it recognises "that gender needs to be performed" and in effect, "challenges common sense understanding of the binary opposites, male and female" (74, 76). For me, performing this stereotype was not just giving into repressive cultural expectations, but about challenging these same expectations. I was confirming that Effie was real as well as challenging people's expectations of her.

Both Effie and I also share a very important purpose: to eradicate the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype. The loudness of our voices and our bouffant hair are there for others to hear and to notice. This stereotype is steeped in the anger we have inherited from our migrant grandmothers and mothers whose stories about misogyny are just as brutal as their stories about poverty.

In the plays of Lyssiotis, Dimitriadis and me, this submissive stereotype of the "Good Greek Girl" is being challenged. Just like Effie, we are transforming stereotypical understandings in order to show the angry complexity of our feminine hybridity. We confront the already-written texts that are vying to tell our stories.

Tes Lyssiotis does this through sarcastic remarks about multicultural research and conferences in her play *A White Sports Coat*. The Daughter is firstly bored by "another" multicultural conference and then angered by "another" multicultural residency as it is further *othering* and academically theorising her actual life. Koraly Dimitriadis begins her play *KORALY "I say the wrong things all the time"* in "traditional Cypriot costume" and attempts to dance, but "trips and falls" (2). It is a sadly humorous introduction – her adult-self acting like a child and attempting to follow dance steps and fit in. There is a sense of relief and anxiety once the music "cuts out" and she begins to take off her costume and recite her poem (2). In my play *The Debt,* I begin with stereotypical images of Greece – the islands and white Parthenon marbles – that become strange once audiences realise that these things as well as actual people are being sold to the highest bidder in this totalitarian world. In these plays, we acknowledge the texts that are vying to define us in different ways, but we also subvert them and show our audiences the strangeness of them. Through this, we capture a part of our hybridity and, more specifically, how we are incapable of ever completely encompassing one stereotypical cultural position. This will be justified and shown further in the proceeding chapters about each play.

These already-written texts are further challenged through our exploration of this stereotypical ethnic woman. Like Anne Bogart, who uses the director Tadashi Suzuki's "notion of putting a fire under a stereotype", we confront the stereotype by embracing it (93–4). In these plays, the female protagonists perform ethnic female roles explicitly showing the performativity of gender and, more specifically, how being a Greek woman in Australia is a

taught, not an innate role. This both confirms and challenges the “Good Greek Girl” stereotype: stereotypical feminine attributes do indeed exist, but they are also challenged.

This intertextual process, where our hybridity is demonstrated through challenging the “Good Greek Girl” stereotype, is also about reworking other patriarchal texts. This reworking can be understood as intertextual.

Unbounding the text by showing the reading-writing process

Our plays show this Kristevan “process of reading-writing” (*Desire* 56). Kristeva is celebrating and embracing the subjectivity of the writing process by acknowledging how writers are also readers; intertextuality is about the merging of these two roles and thus texts and meanings of texts are liberated through this acknowledgement of the mosaic nature of both reading and writing. *A White Sports Coat* begins with the Daughter firstly singing *A White Sports Coat and a Pink Carnation* while she is typing her play, and then we see her read “notes” and then the poem *The Patriarchal House* (23). After reading the notes and poem to herself, she directly addresses the audience and the play begins. It is clear that what we are actually hearing is her story, but her story is framed as a type of reading of these significant texts (song, notes and poem). Similarly, in *KORALY “I say the wrong things all the time”*, the character Koraly performs her poem *How to get a fuck* and then after this performance, we see her writing. Clearly her reading of the poem inspires her to write and it only through this reading that we then see her conclude the poem. In *The Debt*, the final line is from Pinter’s *The Birthday Party* (“Don’t let them tell you what to do!”) and this recontextualises Pinter in a hybrid feminist perspective; my reading of Pinter is how I conclude the play (“The Birthday” 80).

Our plays contain a dramatic exploration of reading and writing. This illustrates how intertextuality, as a reading-writing process, can explain theatrical portrays of Greek-Australian femininity. Michael Payne states that writers are “born into structures of significance that they

have the power to disrupt, just as those structures have the power to undermine any sense of static identity or individuality". By showing how we rework already written cultural and patriarchal texts, we create a place for our stories. Payne explains how "acts of reading have the power to transform and to liberate human beings" (ix). In our plays, by explicitly showing how we read as we write, this profound connection between hybridity and intertextuality becomes clear. We are reading ourselves through diverse cultural and patriarchal texts, reworking and reshaping what the story entails but also, more importantly, how the story is told.

In *A White Sports Coat* the same actor plays both the Daughter and the Mother and after initially reading the notes and poem, as described above, she starts to not only give her perspective on her mother, explaining how a Greek-Australian woman sees a Greek migrant woman's patriotism, but then becomes her mother, powerfully speaking in the matriarch's broken English and Greek. The migrant story is expressed through the Daughter who not only interrupts but also embodies her mother's story. The hybridity is then clear not only in the different cultural and generational voices, but in the texts themselves: the Daughter playwriting; the Mother speaking to the Daughter; the Daughter performing the poem.

Dimitriadis also encompasses the powerful migrant matriarch's position, satirically expressing the patriarchal hypocrisies of the migrant matriarch's values, and this then leads to her clarifying their expectations, but in her angry, poetic voice: "Fulfil your womanly duties…and we will love you" (23–24). By presenting a reading of these women that then leads to a poem, Dimitriadis combines the intertextuality inherent in the different languages and texts (colloquially addressing the audience then a poem) to portray the position of Greek-Australian women, existing between these traditional expectations and the need to rebel against these same expectations. The traditional, monological and chronological narrative is thus transformed into a colloquial, poetic matrix where Koraly as the actor embodies a plethora of voices. My reading

of the female torture in Pinter's *One for the Road* is presented in *The Debt*, specifically in the torture scenes. Even though these scenes utilise the sparseness of Pinter's dialogue, each scene is centred around the female body and by the final torture scene Maria succeeds in withstanding the pain, exposing the power of the female form (36–7). Unlike Pinter, who portrays the power of the male torturer's language, I present the supremacy of the female body, revealing how, as a hybrid feminist playwright, I not only read the classic Anglo texts but rework them by positioning the Greek-Australian woman as the subject, instead of the object, of torture.

As Greek-Australian feminist playwrights, Lyssiotis, Dimitriadis and I combine texts in different ways on the stage in order to tell our hybrid stories. Kristeva's reworking of Bakhtin explores, among other things, how texts are formed through other texts. She expresses that there is no original text or "fixed meaning".[11] The diachronic gives way to the synchronic and "*linear* history appears as abstraction". This "poetic word", which is "polyvalent and multi-determined" is liberating (*Desire* 65). For Greek-Australian female playwrights, we experience the world not only through two languages and cultures, but through two different time periods, and intertextualising – transforming texts to portray our experiences – is one way of understanding how we capture our hybridity.

This "process of reading-writing" where we are "in relation or opposition to another structure" embraces "a permutation of texts" (*Desire* 36). The lack of authorship, the lack of naming allows us to not give in to the binary of either being Greek or English; the intertextual is one way of explaining how we express the *Greeklish*, this in-between hybridity where our feminine cultural selves are braided together.

[11] This is similar to Barthes, who states that a text is "without origin" and "multi-dimensional" (*Image* 146).

This does not reduce us to playwrights who put different cultural texts together.[12] As Kristeva's *genotext* and *phenotext* show, there are both primal and symbolic structures that create meaning. This distinction encompasses and acknowledges feminist writing. Mick Wallis' discussion of performing sexuality states that any action can be "a *citation*" as it is "the mobilization of something already inscribed in…psychic and bodily apparatus or the culture" (259). The emphasis on the body as well as the mind highlights the importance of the corporeal in both understanding and creating texts. By describing understanding as citational, he shows how this bodily comprehension and expression is connected and responding to culture in an intertextual way.

In Pearce's book, *Feminism and the Politics of Reading*, she shows the implicit connection between reading and writing, arguing that a feminist reader is in conflict with cognitive and affective modes of reading. She states that "emotion and politics appear to tear apart from one another in most reading events" (132). This binary division between body and mind is united in this thesis through my intertextual writing. I not only combine my personal and theoretical voices in these theoretical chapters, where creative and academic sources are imbedded in the writing, but I also embody these same theories in my practice (Chapter Six), illustrating how ways of understanding should not be limited to the academic mind but felt, through the imaginative language, by the body. By uniting these ways of knowing through intertextuality, the significance of *genotext* within the *phenotext* is both analysed and presented. The intertextuality in Greek-Australian feminist playwriting is therefore not only about

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[12] Alvin B. Kernan suggests that writers have become "mere assembler[s] of various bits of language and culture" (2).

transforming other texts – such as poems, songs and plays – but also about portraying the *genotext*, which ensures that hierarchical structures of understanding are impossible.

Unbounding the text through the body

Intertextuality is about fighting the tyranny of a stable, normative text. It is one way of understanding the cultural hybridity in our plays. We unbound texts through the body; we embrace the *genotext* and this disrupts the bounded, cultural text. Lyssiotis' narrative is interrupted by the Daughter's labour pains; Dimitriadis transitions from one scene to the other through Koraly changing clothes, presenting how the body introduces the concerns of each scene; and I, in every second scene, show Maria's body in pain – the cultural lesson is always followed by cultural punishment to the body. However, our plays do not just use, mix together, critique and reframe other texts; the interruptions of the body form our plays, demonstrating the significance of the *genotext* in expressing the experiences of Greek-Australian women. The body, just as much as the cultural texts, thus creates this understanding of our experiences.

Intertextuality is about unbounding texts; disrupting the mosaic image of *Greeklish*. All of our plays present the female body as a type of *genotext*: its instinctual, unpredictable nature is viscerally portrayed, and this works to further show how we, as Greek-Australian female playwrights, challenge the notion of an authoritarian way of telling stories. We transform other texts, such as poems and songs, and know that our own form is continually changing, both culturally and physically. The Daughter's body changes continually in *A White Sports Coat*, ending with her going into labour. Koraly, in Dimitriadis' play, changes her clothes continually to show how her body transforms from childhood innocence and fear to womanhood anger and rebellion. Even Maria's torture in *The Debt* challenges her body in different ways. Through the female body, we show this profound aspect of ourselves: we are Greek, Australian, both and neither all at the same time. The transformative power of the female form on stage captures the

core of who we are: bodies changing – gestating and in some cases, barely surviving – and it this *genotext* that breaks, creates and re-creates the play text itself.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the cultural hybridity expressed in Greek-Australian feminist plays can be understood through a process of intertextuality that challenges stereotypes, unbounds cultural texts and disintegrates these texts through the *genotext*. Articulating Greek-Australian feminist playwriting through intertextuality gives culturally hybrid female playwrights an understanding of an alternative way of storytelling and empowers them to contribute to the body of knowledge on playwriting, which should always be forming and reforming.

In the next chapter, I will show how this type of hybrid feminist playwriting has not been considered by current playwriting manuals.

Chapter Two:
Proceeding beyond the Paradigm of Phallocentric Playwriting

Introduction

As I argued in Chapter One, Greek-Australian feminist playwriting can be understood through a process of intertextuality, where the “Good Greek Girl” stereotype is challenged, as well as other cultural texts, through portrayals of reading-writing and the *genotext*.

In this chapter, I will argue that our understandings of how plays are written fail to acknowledge this intertextuality, working instead through a logocentric and phallocentric paradigm. Traditional playwriting manuals ignore feminist playwriting and a hybrid feminist approach is not even imagined. This omission presents an opportunity for me, as a Greek-Australian feminist playwright, to begin the conversation about our plays. As discussed in the Introduction, reflective practice is empowering: by beginning to express what we do, new ways of describing playwriting are possible; through this we are freed from repressive stereotypical assumptions.

The problem with playwriting manuals

The literature on the process of playwriting (i.e., how to write a play) is yet to discuss thoroughly the intertextuality inherent in some forms of feminist playwriting. Unlike scholarly works on drama that philosophically consider form, rather than process, these books and manuals promote an Aristotelian, linear play structure where different parts are ordered from most important (plot and character) to least (song and reasoning) (Aristotle, 4.2–4.4).[13] To

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[13] See Eric Bentley for a discussion on modern dramatic style, specifically naturalism.

feminist critics, these structures are phallocentric.[14] Sue-Ellen Case states that this "broader organisation of plot – complication, crisis and resolution – is…tied to…phallic experience". This means that "theatrical conventions" actually suppress "real women" (129, 7). Heidi Stephenson and Natasha Langridge's 1997 book *Rage and Reason: Women Playwrights on Playwriting* begins by highlighting this masculine centrality: "theatre is still predominantly run by men and commented on by men" (ix). It is then the feminist critic's aim, as Jill Dolan states, to bring attention to what is being repeated on stage and what is being ignored (*Feminist Spectator in Action* 2). In this thesis, I analyse a hybrid feminist playwriting style by theoretically reflecting on and creatively enacting it in my practice.

This literature on playwriting also emphasises how playwriting is a type of Platonic "natural magic" that cannot and should not be explained theoretically (Plato, 601a). It is, as Steve Waters finds in his survey of twentieth and twenty-first century criticism on playwriting, an "entirely experiential endeavour" (137). This is demonstrated in John Russell Taylor's introduction to the interviews Walter Wagner conducted with twentieth century, Western, male playwrights, from Arthur Miller to Arnold Wesker. He found that most of these playwrights discussed their practice in terms of "mystery" and avoided "think[ing] too 'critically' about their work" (xiv). This mysterious aspect of playwriting is unlike the "feminist critic", according to Dolan, who does not "buy culture, but pull[s] apart the threads of meaning it produces" (*Feminist Spectator in Action* 3). A playwriting process and style that is feminist thus entails questioning this mystery. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick expresses, "knowledge *does* rather than simply *is*" (124). The knowledge expressed about playwriting in these manuals *does*

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[14] Phallocentric refers to how meaning is linked to the father/Phallus (see Jacques Lacan's "Significance of the Phallus"). Luce Irigaray argues that the feminine is only understood philosophically through the masculine. She states that "the female sexuality has always been conceptualized on the basis of masculine parameters" (23).

affect how we write and understand plays. The playwriting structures and formulas are masculine in these manuals and the anti-analytical silence ensures that this patriarchal process seems universal, alienating women as along with any other cultural or social groups that are not Western and male. In contrast, this thesis engenders knowledge on Greek-Australian feminist playwriting by changing this patriarchal paradigm through an analysis of Greek-Australian feminist plays (*A White Sports Coat*, *KORALY "I say the wrong things all the time"* and *The Debt)* as well as embodying this new knowledge about our playwriting through practice (*The Debt*).

In order to explain this patriarchal exclusivity, in this chapter I will firstly discuss the essentialism and restrictive structures in the playwriting literature and then I will demonstrate how feminist playwriting and female playwrights have been ignored. Once this problem with playwriting manuals has been established, I will further analyse feminist playwriting and how theories on stereotyping and intertextuality can contribute to our knowledge of hybrid feminist playwriting. An intertextual process where stereotypes are challenged and texts reformed is then used to analyse the three Greek-Australian feminist plays (*A White Sports Coat*, *KORALY "I say the wrong things all the time"* and *The Debt)* in the proceeding chapters. I examine how these plays challenge the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype and then rework and fragment patriarchal texts through the reading-writing process and the *genotext*. This thesis strives to question essentialist norms about playwriting and expose how these conventions overlook hybrid feminist playwriting and playwrights.

The essentialism and restrictive structures in the playwriting literature

The essentialisation of the practice of playwriting appears in the first modern works on playwriting, dating back to the early twentieth century with Archibald Henderson in 1909. He was sceptical of "criticism" that attempted to explain "dramatic art", advocating against

"authoritative critics" (428, 428). Like Plato, he viewed playwriting in an essentialist, humanistic manner.[15] Henderson uses terms such as "genius", "true", "inner essential necessity" and "human nature", which position the playwright as the Creator that possesses a Platonic form of perfection (428, 429, 430). Most later critics and playwrights discuss this innate talent a playwright must possess. Kenneth Thorpe Rowe (1939) describes how the playwright uses "the powers of his intellect and imagination" to create "the characters, the words, and the events" (38). John Gassner (1957) directly states that playwriting can be taught only if "the student *starts* with talent" and he defines talent as an "elusive commodity" (167, 169). David Hare (1991) defines "good writing" as coming "from some spontaneous source inside ourselves" (46). To David Edgar (2009, 2013), this emphasis on possessing an intrinsic gift causes playwrights to avoid formally learning their craft (*Playwriting* 102). It also creates a type of elitism that silences playwrights who exist in the margins.

The literature in this period is more contradictive when considering that most critics and some playwrights also assert that playwriting can be taught and offer their own formulas on how to write a play.[16] These critics and playwrights, however, still stressed the impossibility of ever explaining the mysterious process of playwriting. An emerging playwright can find this contradiction confusing because on the one hand, it encourages one to be instinctive and find one's own structure and on the other hand, it encourages one to follow specific rules, regardless of one's story or style. This contradiction is exemplified by William Archer (1923) who states that there are "no rules" to playwriting and then lists these rules (3). Even in the next century, Stuart Spencer (2002) similarly refers continually to the "ur-play" within each playwright and

[15] Even though Plato exiled playwrights from his ideal republic, he still described playwriting as a type of "natural magic" that cannot and should not be explained theoretically (601a).

[16] See Edgar, *How plays* xii; David Campton 10; Rib Davis xiv, 1; George Pierce Baker 1; Louise E. Catron xiii.

uses psychoanalytical concepts, such as Jung's definition of dreams, to emphasise that a play is discovered and not made, but still offers his readers the standard Aristotelian structure with each chapter a particular play convention (26, 147, 195).

These style guides highlight how the act of playwriting is both an unexplainable, visceral and explainable, practical activity. This is how Alan Ayckbourn (2004) views playwriting: an instinctual process that is also defined by particular rules (94). Steve Gooch (1988) also describes it as "neither a purely rational nor a purely instinctive process" (1). These amalgamations of instinctual and rational truths strive to teach us how to write plays; they become a part of how we express our stories for the stage. These texts teach a particular way of writing that may not cater to all playwrights and certainly not to women and feminist playwrights. Dolan believes "the traditional representational theatre apparatus constitutes the subjectivity of male spectators and leaves women unarticulated within its discourse" (*Feminist Spectator as Critic* 99). In the same way, playwriting literature does not consider feminist playwriting to a great extent. Even though these works are useful in giving students and playwrights a conventional Western understanding of how *some* plays are constructed by *some* playwrights, their lack of subjectivity is dangerous because it makes *other* plays and *other* playwrights seem non-existent. It is thus integral to discuss (as I have in this thesis) and embody in practice (as I have in my play) how some culturally hybrid female playwrights write plays, because it makes the literature on playwriting more diverse and inclusive.

The absence of feminist playwriting and female playwrights

It is time to create a culturally hybrid feminist way of discussing how some plays are written. It is time to express and embrace a polyphony of styles and voices and move beyond the dominance of male playwrights and male playwriting forms. Reforming conventional playwriting structures is an important part of feminist playwriting. Phyllis Nagy states that

"many women have moved away from the traditional and are writing plays which are an open-ended examination and employ sophisticated new structures, far from the linear, limited parameters of the 'well-made play'". Sarah Kane even declares that "there's been a failure by the critical establishment to develop an adequate language with which to discuss drama" (Stephenson and Langridge xvi, xvii, 131). As a feminist playwright, I can see this male dominance in the critical literature, and this motivates me to discuss an alternative way of creating a play that is more gender-inclusive than previous studies.

The consistent use of the masculine pronoun, as well as masculine references used to describe dramatic writing, is hard to ignore in several texts about playwriting (Rowe 53–62; Hare 26). Gassner states that "the playwright" must "know he is a man" (171). Similarly, Taylor states "the dramatist" is "the perfect type of man" (xiv). Rowe describes "imaginative perception" as "someone [who] penetrates to the origin of the conflict" and this is clearly a male dominating sexual image (171, 38). David Mamet, in his books about playwriting (1986-2010), continually uses masculine analogies for playwriting, such as the "closely fought match", "the instincts of the hunt" and "poker" (*Three* 8; *Theatre* 18; *Writing* 118, 43–9). In his chapter entitled *True Stories of Bitches*, he describes, from his perspective, how arguments are caused between a husband and wife through anecdotal examples of how women manipulate men. He states that during an argument a man wants to respond "of course" with "physical violence" (*Writing* 44). The overt misogyny is disturbing, but it also further exposes how playwriting is seen as a masculine craft that vies to violently dominate. This illustrates how the universal truths of playwriting are masculine and encourage all playwrights to write in a masculine manner.

This becomes even more apparent when considering how some critics define women in theatre. David Campton expresses the following about female characters:

> Many all-female storylines seem to revolve in some way around the opposite sex. This is not surprising because nature has organized one half of the human race to find the other half of absorbing interest, which can present problems when writing a play with only women in the cast (139).

This was surprisingly written in 1992, not 1902. Campton, however, is unfortunately reflecting the views of the majority in his lifespan (1924–2006) who viewed plays through a patriarchal and heteronormative lens. This shows how some of the literature on playwriting has an issue with female representation.

The "Bechdel Test" is now a commonly used way of considering women's roles in fiction. The test asks the audience to consider the following when viewing a fictional text: are there "at least two women in it"? Do they "talk to each other"? Are they talking about "something besides a man"? (Bechdel). These types of "tests" assist audiences in being more conscious of how most narratives are male dominated. Reports by the Australia Council for the Arts (2012) and Screen Australia (2015) found that women were still under-represented not only in terms of characters, but also in terms of writers and directors (Lally). A recent Australian Writers Guild survey (2016) also found that plays written by men were more likely to be programmed in 2017 on main-stage theatres than those written by women. This lack of representation has led to the creation of Women in Stage and Screen (WITS) an Australian organisation supporting females in the industry.[17] It has also prompted well-known Australian female playwrights and directors, such as Patricia Cornelius and Gillian Armstrong, to publicly advocate against this gender inequity.[18] This "absence" of women has, to Case, led to "the

[17] See their website (https://wits.org.au/) for more information.

[18] See Rosemary Neill's articles that quote both Cornelius and Armstrong.

suppression of the tradition of women playwrights" (44). This suppression has also affected understandings of the playwriting process, which remain male dominated. It is no wonder then that the knowledge on playwriting is also driven by men, leaving an opportunity open for a female playwright, like myself, to at least begin discussing a feminist way of playwriting.

Critics who do acknowledge female forms of playwriting tend to generalise. Edgar, for example, states that "female dramatists" use "disrupted-time strategies" to be "more visible" but does not explain how these strategies operate to present a different type of storytelling (*How Plays* 111). If there are fewer plays written by women, then manuals on how to write plays will likely focus on plays written by men. This then means that audiences and writers alike view stories through the universal male perspective. Alison Croggon writes the following in her discussion of gender in Australian theatre:

> Men can speak for all of "mankind", while women (or people with the wrong-coloured skin, sexuality, body) speak only to their own kind. The "human condition" has, for centuries, been considered to be a male state.

Existing outside of what is deemed universal presents an opportunity for female playwrights to begin writing about how they write plays. Lyssiotis describes how she initially started writing plays because "there wasn't much written for women or about women". She also recalls how there was "no avenue" or encouragement for her to "write [her] own stuff" (Personal Interview). In a similar way, Dimitriadis wishes "there were more Greek women around" the higher levels of the arts industry and feels that lack of "industry support" for her play was due to "Anglo-Australians" not funding "art that they are not comfortable with" (Personal

Interview). The rawness of her writing is just too much for the Anglo-Australian dominated theatre industry. This domination was bravely confirmed by Australian academic and director, Julian Meyrick when he admitted that "the work of today's theatre artists is good but, let's be honest, we're a socially homogeneous bunch: middle-class, tertiary-educated, white middle-Australians". These issues regarding both our gender and culture do not necessarily need to stunt our ability to express ourselves theatrically; they can be seen as avenues for us to grow artistically and create plays. It is within this rich and fertile ground that this thesis has grown. I, as a Greek-Australian feminist playwright, will explore an aspect of Greek-Australian feminist playwriting and this presents a different understanding of feminist playwriting. Playwriting as a female is about challenging patriarchal understandings, but playwriting as a Greek-Australian female is also about challenging cultural stereotypes.

Contributing to feminist playwriting

Female writers have challenged "the dominant image of the male as moral, literary and aesthetic arbiter", as Michelene Wandor describes (178). In *Unmaking Mimesis*, Elin Diamond begins by identifying "the phallic signifier" and how it organises "the production of meaning" (iv). This is similar to Cixous' work on *écriture feminine* that presents a feminine way of thinking about and doing writing that challenges the "the phallocentric tradition" ("Laugh" 879). As discussed in the Introduction, *écriture feminine* is about writing as a female and through the female body. Cixous compares the repression of the female body to the repression of female writing: "Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time" ("Laugh" 880). Her idea about women writing simultaneously "break[ing] up", "destroy[ing]" and "project[ing]" is similar to what this thesis is arguing, in that Greek-Australian feminist playwriting presents our hybrid, feminine experiences by reworking and breaking apart other texts. Cixous' famous statement "either woman is passive or she does not exist" is still relevant

when considering playwriting literature. The limiting nature of this literature must change: the two "races – the masters and slaves" must be challenged. Like Cixous, "I look for myself throughout the centuries and don't see myself anywhere" (*Newly Born* 64, 70, 75, 94). In order for me and other Greek-Australian feminist playwrights to understand our practice, we need to describe our playwriting style and not be bound by specific, male-created processes. An aspect of our style – hybridity – can be understood through an intertextual process. Embodying in practice and reflecting on this stylistic aspect (hybridity), gives me the power to understand and articulate a part of my playwriting practice.

My study continues the work of some critics who have started to acknowledge the importance of reflective playwriting practice as well as the significance of dialogism when considering playwriting. One of Josè Rivera's playwriting tips is to analyse individual practice, as this leads to better practice thus through reflection comes improvement (33). Paul C. Castagno encourages playwrights to shift away from Aristotle and start questioning presumed truths (10, 75). He analyses new plays written by women, including Sarah Ruhl and Suzan-Lori Parks, through a Bakhtinian framework and expresses how these plays are dialogic hybrids: they are "polyvocal" and bring together different "genres" and forms (51, 14–5). The hybridity of the different forms of writing (colloquial, lyrical) within these plays expresses the complexity of feminist playwriting. If some feminist plays are dialogic and not focussed on a particular formula, then the playwriting literature must start to consider further how this works; for example, through a variety of texts that are connected together in a fluent, intertextual way. By considering playwriting work through this intertextual matrix, I argue that some feminist playwrights will finally be able to articulate how they individually form texts, banishing suggestions of the right or wrong way to write in favour of a validation of the polyvalence implicit in intertextuality. Michael Wright highlights the importance of "post-creative self-analysis". He even advocates for "early self-analysis" as this is what leads to better "future

work" (ix). By reflectively investigating my play and the plays of Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis through an intertextual process, a greater understanding of Greek-Australian feminist playwriting is gained. This ensures that some feminist playwrights have an alternative to the playwriting literature that exists today.

This use of other texts has been considered in some writing about feminist playwriting and criticism but, like the male playwrights described at the beginning of this chapter, fear of theory is also evident in some comments made by female playwrights. This shows that understandings of playwriting are not divided in terms of male and female playwrights. The power of these phallocentric understandings transcends gender: they are common and conventional ways playwrights describe what they do. Even Lyssiotis describes her process as "instinctual" (*"Past is Here"* 83). In my interview with her, however, she also acknowledges doing "research" to "further the idea" and even stated that she "love[d]" research. Dimitriadis describes her process as being about "bringing together" her "poetry to form a chronological story" (Personal Interview). For Dimitriadis, her own poetry texts were integral to the process of writing the play.

This thesis expresses and exhibits a different way of writing a play that is hybrid feminist, and this is relevant to all playwrights regardless of culture and gender. Even though the role of intertextuality in feminist playwriting practice has already been indirectly acknowledged by some female playwrights, direct discussion is necessary. Stephenson and Langridge's interviews with modern Western female playwrights subtly indicate an interest in and scepticism towards critical influences. Even though Charlotte Keatley states directly that "theatre isn't intellectual" and Pam Gems expresses the same sentiment, Gems also references Jean-Paul Sartre when attempting to explain the meaning of a film and insists she reads "everything" (76, 89, 90, 94). This intellectual denial becomes even more apparent in Bryony Lavery's interview, where she does not identify as an intellectual but still finds herself

considering Shakespeare and realising how he is "firmly implanted" in her "psyche" (110, 114). Even Marina Carr acknowledges she is "heavily influenced by Beckett", but insists that "writing isn't about being an intellectual or about being an academic" (147–8). There is clearly a fear of academia running throughout these comments and this thesis faces these fears by explicitly clarifying what some of us actually do in our plays.

This fear is explained by Case, who describes how "theory occupies a…problematic position": by entering the "male-dominated… 'ivory tower'" of academia, feminists risk being "elitist" (112). Mary-Kay Gamel describes this perfectly as "the academic establishment" being "like Delphi, an institution in which women are expected to act roles written by men" (167). Case suggests how feminists can, within this tower, begin "deconstruct[ing] the traditional systems of representation and perception of women" (115). This is relevant when considering how some of the female playwrights above did acknowledge the intertextual – how other texts have influenced the development of their plays. Writing within this traditional format can also be liberating: for me, it offers an opportunity to change how knowledge is expressed, especially through my personal voice and my play. From within the tower, I am creating our space in feminist playwriting.

These textual connections are significant in my feminist playwriting process. Naomi Wallace clarifies this perfectly when she states "my work is as its best when it is influenced by others" (Stephenson and Langridge, 164). My work is also a response to diverse influences: it is a reframing of my influences and this allows my own individual experiences to be portrayed on stage. It is in a sense a way of retelling but, as Cixous states, "retelling differently" (*Newly Born* 65). Austin encourages "feminist theatre critics and practitioners [to] grab onto theory and try to use it" (139). By using parts of the patriarchal system, feminists can create some change. Dolan wants her feminist spectators to "hone their critical interpretive strategies" in order to create "sites for political agitation and intervention" (*Feminist Spectator as Critic* xxi).

Janet Brown similarly expresses how "feminists find ways to enter and critique the discourse from within" (168). In this way, some intellectual or academic theories can offer feminist playwrights ways of *re-writing*. This intertextual exploration is not uncommon amongst feminists and can be considered as an aspect of many feminist playwriting styles. Greek-Australian feminist playwriting, however, is particular because of the way it expresses its feminine hybridity. We challenge stereotypes as well as rework culturally significant texts in order to express our feminine hybridity on stage.

Reading texts can be a subversive academic act, especially if it is embodied in a play. Pearce recognises how "reading" can "do" something "to us" and "read[ing] a text as a woman/as a feminist is in itself a profoundly political act" (41). Dolan also notes how "feminist performance criticism is subversive by nature". This is accomplished by "reading against the grain of stereotypes and resisting the manipulation of both the performance text and cultural text". This works to create an "effort toward cultural change" (*Feminist Spectator as Critic* 1–2). Case further explains how feminist theorists have exposed the "cultural construction" of women on stage, showing that "there is no real woman", only "the male subject" and his version of woman (121).

It is in my practice that I express this with even greater impact. In *The Debt*, the protagonist Maria is continually doing lessons, being taught how to be a woman by the Widow. When she is confronted by the Widow without her feminine costume, she realises that all of these processes are about gendering her and every other woman. Even though she comes to this realisation, Maria is incapable of existing without these lessons and demands that the Widow put her costume back on again; she cannot comprehend herself without these cultural and gender norms. Clearly practice can also work to embody critical concepts that challenge understandings of gender. Case believes intellectual elitism can be relieved by combining theory with practice (130). Pearce describes how reading is a theoretical, logical and mindful

as well as a practical, affective and bodily activity. She recognises how "a feminist reader is in conflict with cognitive and affective modes of reading" (132). These different modes are satisfied when knowledge is also expressed through practice. In this project, I read texts cognitively in a written thesis, but these same readings are embodied in my play; both modes of writing (academic and playwriting) illustrate how Greek-Australian feminist playwriting portrays its hybridity through an intertextual process that challenges stereotypes and reworks texts.

Conclusion

A play does not have to be defined as being formed through a masculine, essentialist manner. A play can also be defined as being un-formed through a reversal of this masculine, essentialist manner where the culturally constructed nature of seemingly critical "truths" and forms are revealed. Feminist playwriting strives to un-form the form of a play itself by working to question, expose and reclaim knowledge of playwriting through reading critically, as feminists, in practice. Janet Brown believes that "feminist authors can begin to alter the interpretive paradigms themselves". Even Butler's definition of gender performativity encourages feminists to contest, undo, trouble gender realities that can be both "reproduced and contested" (*Undoing* 30).

This is why the intertextuality inherent in Greek-Australian feminist playwriting is as much about reading as it is about playwriting: reading and re-reading allow me to explain our position as Greek-Australian feminist playwrights. At the same time, this is not an angry second wave *call to arms*, fighting to liberate female playwrights from oppressive male playwriting structures (though this would be a fascinating study). I was raised by a Greek migrant woman whose memories of unequal educational opportunities are just as staunch as her beliefs in being a productive homemaker. I am not a product or result of the second wave. I was also raised by

my sister whose capitalist 1980s/1990s form of feminism was about making money and buying property. In my playwriting, I attempt to bring these two diverse positions together in order to present a version of the Greek-Australian woman whose encompassing of traditional female and male roles may spark a discussion, thought, even wondering of where we, as daughters of Greek migrants, are and where we want to be. It is not a movement or wave: it is a dramatic portrait of how *we were made* that entices us now to consider *how we can be unmade*.

In this chapter, I have argued that the manuals on playwriting are phallocentric and thus there is a need to articulate not just a feminist, but a hybrid feminist perspective, in our understanding of playwriting. Articulating how Greek-Australian feminist playwriting can be understood through intertextuality gives culturally hybrid feminist playwrights an understanding of an alternative way of storytelling and empowers them to contribute to the knowledge on playwriting, which should always be forming and reforming.

In the next chapter, I will begin to illustrate how this intertextual process operates in Greek-Australian feminist plays. Tes Lyssiotis' play *A White Sports Coat* expresses Greek-Australian feminine hybridity by challenging the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype and by disrupting and reforming patriarchal texts through the *genotext*.

Chapter Three:
Merging Texts to Portray Feminine Hybridity in Tes Lyssiotis' *A White Sports Coat*

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I confirmed the need to broaden our understandings of playwriting by analysing the common conventions promoted by playwriting manuals, arguing that they exclude feminist forms of playwriting. This theoretical lack, however, can be rectified by embracing the polyvalence of intertextuality when considering feminist playwriting. By directly articulating this inherent connection between intertextuality and hybrid feminist playwriting, our understandings of playwriting can broaden. I begin to explain an intertextual process of reading-writing that can be used to comprehend Greek-Australian feminist plays. In this chapter, I specifically illustrate how this significant intertextual process operates in practice by analysing Tes Lyssiotis' play *A White Sports Coat*.

A White Sports Coat (1988) by Tes Lyssiotis is a one-woman, bilingual play about a pregnant Greek-Australian playwright who is trying to write the final scene of her play. She is continually distracted by thoughts about her past growing up in country Victoria with her Greek migrant parents. As these memories fragmentally gestate to present the complexity of this powerful second-generation identity, the audience – through texts and a polyphony of voices – are able to experience the hybridity of Greek-Australian femininity.

Through this play, I show how the hybrid (Greek-Australian) feminine identity is portrayed on stage by an intertextual process where the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype is challenged and texts, both cultural and bodily, come together in order to capture the diverse voices that make up our unique sense of self. This is about understanding how we express our

hybrid identity and how we, as feminist playwrights, merge these two cultures (Greek and Australian) together on stage.

Expressing cultural hybridity

Language is indicative of hybridity: the various ways we communicate through language portray parts of our own selves. This is also the case when it comes to the body, specifically how the *genotext* expresses meaning, and this is discussed later in this chapter. Knowing a second language is impressive to many Australians. My bilingualism, however, was never a conscious choice – I did not decide to learn Greek. I could only communicate with my parents in this language. Understanding and speaking Greek was what I had to do in order to know and have a relationship with my parents and, in turn, understand myself. Graeme Turner believes "we learn to speak in the language and customs of our culture, and are thus in a sense constructed through them…we are the subjects, not the authors, of cultural processes" (21). We are all dependent on a culture that is not of our choosing. We are all indoctrinated into this culture. This process becomes more complex when more than one culture is involved. You learn to function in two cultures.

In *A White Sports Coat*, Tes Lyssiotis illustrates how this cultural hybridity functions: "English in the shop. Greek at home" (28). The simplicity of this statement gives the impression of seamless assimilation: we can easily go from one culture to another, one language to another. The Daughter in this play does go fluently from Greek to English, from English to Greek and no translation of either language is included in the performance. She also goes from one text to another:

> Πως θα μάθω Εγγλέζικα; Ποιός θα με μάθει; [Speak English, Speak English]

> We had one cardinal rule in the shop, only English was to be spoken. Chipya STEAKI'N' EGG. Sorsiges, Fis kai Chipya.
>
> *Heartburn causes her to stop reading. Tries to burp. Drinks a glass of water. Waits for it to pass. It doesn't. takes bicarb of soda.*
>
> Heartburn. You're at it again. I've just got one scene to write. They say it will be a hairy baby. Two weeks to go (28).

The Daughter begins by reiterating her mother's words in Greek. She then explains this need to speak English in English. Her English then becomes *Greeklish* (Greek and English); English words spoken with a Greek accent. These Greek-English words are the parts between these two cultures – incomprehensible attempts to bring two languages, two cultures together. The language of her past then becomes interrupted by her present state of pregnancy: the future interrupts the past and English is spoken clearly again. The fluency of her transformations represents a Greek-Australian woman's reality, which is about concurrently existing in two cultures without translation. As Lyssiotis expresses, she writes "from the inside out, not from the outside in"; she is interested in portraying our internal lives, not how our lives are defined by the outside Anglo-Australian mainstream culture ("Interview: 'Going to the Source'"14). This play, as Marc Maufort explains, resists "both mainstream Australia and the traditional Greek patriarchal order". Understanding Greek and English may seem impressive to some, but it is that part in the middle, between two languages and cultures, that signifies our hybridity, and this remains untranslatable. It is a "position of in-betweenness" (121, 122). Even though it is her mother who speaks these words, her mother's attempts to speak English reflect the pivotal part of her Daughter's reality: broken Greek and English coming together. It is this incomprehensible language of *Greeklish* that strives to merge two cultures and this is what we, the children of Greek migrants, try to continually do, even in our playwriting.

Lyssiotis not only merges languages, becoming one of the first Australian playwrights to write a "bilingual play" and "validate the stories of migrant women", but she merges texts together in order to show what this merging of cultures looks like (Personal Interview). She starts the passage above by expressing her mother's difficulties with English through her mother's voice. She then introduces her own voice and reflects on her past, until she is interrupted by her present pregnant reality. The polyphony of these voices work together as diverse texts, capturing how she both reads and then writes her past simultaneously. The Daughter not only goes from one language to another, but also moves from one text to another: she is at this moment reading and writing and, as discussed earlier, intertextuality is about uniting reading and writing. For the Daughter in this play, intertextuality seems to be how she expresses her cultural hybridity in playwriting. Just as she goes from Greek to English, she also goes from text to text and her story is told through this textual polyphony. It is thus through intertextuality that she is able to portray her hybridity.

This merging process is also reflected in how Lyssiotis challenges the conventional female Greek-Australian stereotype – the "Good Greek Girl". By both confirming and confusing this female stereotype, a significant aspect of this intertextual process becomes apparent.

Confirming and challenging the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype

Lyssiotis creates a profound fusion between the roles of mother and daughter through her one-woman play. The stereotypical Greek mother concerned about her daughter's virginity and marital prospects is embodied by a pregnant daughter whose body continually interrupts the writing and telling of her story with heartburn, the unborn baby kicking, eating, food intolerances, feeling uncomfortable, burping and breathlessness (28, 29, 34–5, 38). The

hybridity of the female form itself is mirrored by the hybridity of her culture: she is both mother and daughter just as she is both Greek and Australian.

The different performances of the poem “The Patriarchal House” by the main character, the Daughter, exemplifies this feminine cultural confusion.

> “The Patriarchal House”
>
> Over there at the edge of our village
>
> our mill turns
>
> and the sun of summer
>
> doesn’t shine through the trees.
>
> Myself, I prefer my poor house
>
> Myself, I prefer my patriarchal house
>
> It was here my eyes first saw the light
>
> My eyes and my heart
>
> And amongst my brother’s and sister’s children
>
> Games, and laughter can be heard from the yard,
>
> Near the cool wall.
>
> I don’t want false joy um happiness
>
> nor false riches which are soon wasted.
>
> I prefer my poor house
>
> prefer my patriarchal house
>
> I prefer my poor house
>
> I prefer my patriarchal house (25−6)

She primarily performs it in Greek, confessing she performed it better as a child, then she performs it in English for the current Australian audience. She also speaks about performing it in the past and, lastly, begins to perform it as she has contractions going into labour. There is an anxious need to repeat the poem as this will ensure she will meet "Good Greek Girl" stereotypical cultural expectations, but even she realises that every time it is performed, it changes.[19] It is ironic that a pregnant child of Greek migrants is reciting a poem that is about holding onto and going back to the stability of the past patriarchal home when physically it is profoundly clear that no home can encompass her ever-changing form. Being a hybrid means never being able to fit into a cultural category completely and this is expressed intertextually.

Its incessant repetition also exemplifies the migrant child's need and inability to create a stable cultural identity. This need for stability contrasts with the fluency of her bilingualism. Just as she goes in and out of Greek and English, she goes in and out of past memories and present concerns and seamlessly changes from being a mother to a daughter and vice versa.

> DAUGHTER I grew up in the Wimmera…Sleep she said.
>
> MOTHER Μη σηκώσεις τίποτα κόρη μου (28).

There is a familial demand to perform the same duties and remain Greek, which contrasts with the polyphony of voices the daughter encompasses. This explains the Mother's need for her daughter to recite the poem "The Patriarchal House": "Mum used to make me do this every time we had visitors" (26). Smolicz describes how it is the children of Greek migrants who are responsible for preserving the mainland culture ("Tradition" 147). The daughter's lack of compliance towards her mother's demands reflects this conflict between the past and present; between being Greek and Australian. Greek-Australian women, who seem ever-

[19] The "ambivalence" of the stereotype, as Homi Bhabha explains, is that it is fixed, but also needs to be anxiously repeated (94–5).

changing in this play, are still striving to stabilise their cultural identity and be "Good Greek Girls". The daughter's final reading of the poem and the fact she gives in to her mother by allowing her to "teach Andrea [her son] the poem" indicates this need for cultural stability; through the continuation of this cultural tradition onto the next generation, cultural longevity is ensured (45).

This is, however, juxtaposed with her singing parts of the 1950s song "A White Sports Coat and a Pink Carnation" by Marty Robbins.

> "A white sports coat and a pink carnation
> I'm all dressed up for the dance…" (23)
> "…Once you told me long ago
> To the prom with me you'd go" (25)

She will never be able to recite "The Patriarchal House" as innocently as she did; it will always be interrupted by her own past where her migrant father sang this American song in Australia. These interruptions represent the many facets of being a Greek-Australian woman and the complete inability of ever fixing one stereotypical text to explain our experiences. Mixing these traditional and modern texts together authentically expresses our ambivalence and confirms and challenges the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype.

The Daughter in this play is influenced by her mother, but her refusal to take ownership of her mother's land in Greece is rebelling against traditional expectations. She will also not just "stay home and look after" her "husband and children" and will continue to attempt to write that "one scene" regardless of her preoccupations with the past as well as present mundane household duties (42). She writes and follows a list that outlines typical maternal duties:

> Bake cakes for kinder…Done. Banking…Right. Take Andrea to mum's…Yep (29).

This contradictory depiction of the Greek-Australian woman who is both the rebellious playwright and productive homemaker confuses the static stereotypic passivity of the "Good Greek Girl".

Her rebellion is also evident in her rage. She has inherited her mother's sense of justice and, in turn, the anger that comes when justice is not done. Eleni Tsefala asserts that Greek-Australian female playwrights "use theatre to regain values such as justice, freedom and equality" (339). The mother feels slighted by her family who refuse to acknowledge her as sole owner of the land in Greece thus who owns the patriarchal home is, ironically, debatable and has caused a family conflict. This inherited rage comes to the fore at the end of the play:

> I THOUGHT BLOOD WAS MEANT TO BE THICK. I'm sick of the whole business, leave me out, who cares about the scene, the land, the scene…the poem, the letter, Lamama (44).

Anger is a common trope in Greek-Australian feminist plays. Fighting against the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype by challenging the texts that define us involves portraying our rage and destabilising the stable gender and cultural stereotypes that are vying to repress us. For the Daughter, this rage is also towards the outside, Anglo-Australian academic community that is also vying to define her:

> Two weeks to go and another invitation to a multicultural committee, panel, conference, seminar.

Reads out the title of the conference.

> "WHAT IS MULTICULTURALISM: ITS EFFECTS AND REMEDIES?" Ah. What is multiculturalism? Its effects and its remedies? Maybe I could be "Ethnic in Residence" at Melbourne University. I could live in a house with my family on the University grounds and form the nucleus of an ethnic display village. We could dress in traditional costume and put on regular displays and festivals and then offer ourselves as subjects for field research for students of education, linguistics, psychology and…even Drama…Maybe I could recite the Poem at the conference (30).

The passive aggressiveness of the Daughter's dialogue sarcastically describes all the ways her hybridity is intellectually explained and constrained. She feels like an object of research that needs to be defined. She is simply presented as the "Good Greek Girl" in her traditional costume with her family. The text of this play – which embraces many voices, including parental and intellectual – challenges these oppressive definitions through intertextuality. By describing and reforming the text of this conference in her own words, she shows the complexity of her own identity that staunchly refuses to be explained by any field of knowledge.

By using one actor to perform these texts and characters, Lyssiotis is able to show how Greek-Australian women encompass many texts and many gender and cultural roles. By making the playing of these roles explicit, she is able to destabilise the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype (subservient, maternal) and present the fascinating complex realities of contemporary Greek-Australian women.

In this play, the pre-occupation with performance also further shows how some Greek-Australian women define themselves: their identities are formed, confirmed and questioned through performance. In Lyssiotis' play, this can be seen in the references to dancing, playing

piano and singing and, more significantly, through the articulation of her writing process, where she is able to attempt to portray her own life (25, 31). Her thinking out loud is almost like a stream of consciousness where current issues about multicultural conferences are interlaced with the past Greek poem "The Patriarchal House" and childhood memories. Through the writing, she is able to show the polyphony of voices, from her present adult voice, mulling over multicultural conferences; to her childhood voice reciting a poem; to her current voice trying to articulate who her mother was (30). Playwriting gives this character a vehicle not to clarify herself, but to embrace the lack of clarity: to show the messiness of feminine cultural hybridity, where many voices and many times are continually attempting to make sense of the hybridity, but are always bound to fail, which allows the story itself to go on. It is like the "baoulo": she "open[s] a can of worms" in this play in her attempt to fuse together different worlds and times (24).

As discussed earlier, this contrasts with the authoritative instruction about when English and Greek should be spoken. Her mother's struggle to speak English is accompanied with the reprimanded to speak "English in the shop. Greek at home" (28). This is similar to her mother's description of the "children born over here" who "don't understand" Greece, but also admits she is a stranger in Greece as well (44). Her insistence to pass on her land in Greece to her daughter ("It's yours, don't let them take it" 44) is a desperate attempt to hold onto the past, to hold onto her cultural heritage. But just like we see the gestation process unfold, we also see how the daughter's past, present and future change with every text, with every word she writes; and yet, she still cannot finish the scene because no one scene, no one voice, can actually capture her ongoing experiences of living as a Greek-Australian woman. Clearly her mother's confusing wants and loyalties disrupts the typical "Good Greek Girl" stereotype – specifically, the passive old woman (*yiayia*) in black – and this portrays the ambiguities that are prominent in Greek-Australian female identity.

Lyssiotis challenges the “Good Greek Girl” stereotype by making the roles of mother and daughter interchangeable. The explicit nature of this is furthered by the way she transforms traditional patriarchal texts (“The Patriarchal House” and “White Sports Coat”) through repetition, which is reminiscent of how stereotypes operate – they are repeated anxiously, according to Bhabha – but with every repetition in this play, the stereotypical texts change (94–5). This contrast between stable, authoritative traditions and fluent modernisations of these same traditions shows how some Greek-Australian playwrights reform texts and challenge stereotypes in order to portray their hybridity. Through this intertextuality, a new and tangible Greek-Australian feminine voice is expressed. The explicit nature of the various performances in the play complement the daughter’s rebellion and rage against the authoritative voices of the past. Lyssiotis shows her audience, through different cultural texts and by performing the playwriting process, that being a Greek-Australian woman is just a performance; in doing so, she is able to freely explore the complexities of her own cultural hybridity.

Cultural hybridity expressed intertextually

For the Daughter in this play, intertextuality seems to be how she expresses her cultural hybridity; just as she goes from Greek to English, she also goes from text to text and her story is told through this textual polyphony. It is thus through intertextuality that she is able to portray her hybridity.

This intertextuality is evident in the strength and power of the female voice, which is reminiscent of Greek tragedy. Lyssiotis has “always been drawn to the Greek tragedies” and “keep[s] coming back to them” to “draw inspiration” (Personal Interview). She adapted Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* in the play *Tales from the Watchman* (2007). Listing *Agamemnon*, *The Trojan Women* and *Medea* as the tragedies that have inspired her the most, it becomes clear

how the characterisation of her mother in this play has the same prominence and passion as Hecuba in Euripides' *The Trojan Women*.

> No. Let me lie where I have fallen. Kind acts, my maids,
> Must be unkind, unwanted. All that I endure
> And have endured and shall, deserves to strike me down.
> O gods! (269)

Even though the Mother is not facing an unknown, dangerous future after a war, her register once she discovers her daughter's virginity may be lost is similar to Hecuba's pathos:

> Αχ η κόρη μου, η κόρη μου. Τι να γίνει; Κόρη μου.
> Παναγίτσα μου, τη ματιάσανε.
> [Oh my daughter, oh my daughter. What will happen? My daughter.
> Mother Mary, they have given her the evil eye] (33).

Lyssiotis has clearly presented the classical mourning mother, a cultural archetype almost impossible to avoid when trying to portray our mothers. Classical tragedy seems to resonate in our work; it is a cultural text that lives within our imaginations. The unavoidability and inspiration we find from Greek tragedy is further explored in Chapter Five where I show how my play *The Debt* adapted parts of Sophocles' *Antigone*.

Lyssiotis uses other texts (song, poem, children's story) in *A White Sports Coat* to express her story and through the fragments of these texts audiences understand these characters. She also encompasses many voices from the past, mimetically presenting her migrant history from a second-generation migrant child's perspective as well as dialogically

addressing her audience about her current concerns, such as mundane household tasks, finishing the final scene of her play, the typical pains of being pregnant and the frustration of being labelled a multiculturalist.

Using a pregnant Greek-Australian woman writing the final scenes of her play, *White Sports Coat* is an odyssey through the life of a Greek-Australian woman. Like Lyssiotis' other plays, as Con Castan describes, regardless of "surface" it has "the underlying seriousness of high art" (86). Lyssiotis shows the importance of intertextuality by presenting a playwriting process. When the Daughter reads a part of *Teeny Tiny and the Witch Woman* by Barbara K. Walker, the story becomes a metaphor for her position as a playwright who cannot "sleep" because they have "one more scene to write" (28–9). The female playwright is the childlike "Teeny Tiny" who can see that they have been kidnapped by the "witchwoman" and just needs time to escape. Through this children's story, Lyssiotis is able to show the inescapability of her own past, her own present reality where mundane chores need to be completed and her future, symbolised by the baby kicking (29). By reading the children's tale, consulting "her list" and "notes", and then reading a "letter", she is able to continue typing her play again (29, 30). We do not see what she is typing, but it is assumed it is what she is actually performing; we see the process performed – we see her explore and then make sense of these texts from her past and present.

The way these texts work together shows what Kristeva describes as an "intersection of textual surfaces" where there is no "fixed meaning", just "dialogues among several writings" (*Desire* 58, 65). As a hybrid playwright, she expresses her experiences through the process of playwriting, which can be described as intertextual. The children's text that uses the classic female stereotype of the witch is now female centred. Both Teeny Tiny and the witch are women; she is Teeny Tiny staying up to write and her mother is the witch who wants her to sleep and ignore how the "fence" is "made of bones" (29). The patriarchal house in the poem

that she recites for her mother and the one we are seeing being written/formed in this play is made out of people, specifically the sacrifices of women, and this Greek-Australian female playwright refuses to sleep until her story is written. Reworking this classic tale allows Lyssiotis to capture a part of what it is like not only to be a child of Greek migrants, but to be the child that has to tell the story. Thus, in this play Greek-Australian female playwrights are not only intertextualising, but are intertextual; we are made by many texts and we rework these texts when we write plays about our experiences.

The one performer in this play is "a pregnant woman" and all throughout the play, the audience is reminded of her current state. The stage directions state that "throughout the play she's thirsty, drinks water and nibbles different foods" (25). This preoccupation with her gestating body is also evident by the kicking and heartburn she experiences (28, 29). Audiences are reminded of her everchanging, unpredictable body that works like a *genotext* because of its lack of structure and instinctual nature that contrasts with patriarchal structures. The Daughter even finds it hard to manage her own body, feeling uncomfortable and consistently moving on "the chair" as she writes and being "out of breath" (35, 38). The *genotext* shows the prominence and power of the female form and how it can actually disrupt the construction of a play. Here the body is defying the written word. Lyssiotis is using the pregnant female body as a metaphor for the hybrid female: just as we are daughters, we are also mothers; just as we are Greeks, we are Australians.

This process of understanding and expressing the past (her mother), present (her) and unknown future (unborn child) comes to an end with her "contractions" (45). Even though the Daughter focusses on reciting the Greek poem and singing the American song as she goes into labour, she resigns herself to the needs of her body; these bounded, cultural texts are overrun by the *genotext* that demands to be heard, thus the conclusion of the play text – once the body takes over, no words are left to articulate or perform. No matter which texts the Daughter puts

together or how she reimagines these texts to tell her story, the final image she leaves audiences with is the female body about to create life and this powerful intertextual hybridity, where the *genotext* (her body going into labour) is in dialogue with the bounded texts (poem and song), shows an enthralling and integral aspect of Greek-Australian women:

Her contractions begin.

Πέρα στην άκρη του χωριού

Ο μήλος μας…

[*contraction*]…γοργά κυλά

και [*contraction*] ο ηλιος του καλοκαιριού

Μέσα απ'τα δέντρα δεν περνά.

Εγώ πουώ

Το σπίτι μου one lousy scene to go…TO…just one

scene. Πατρικό MUM! MIND ANDREA. Εκεί πρωτα

άνοιξα το φως…PANAYOTI! Τα…

[*contraction*] μάτια μου…Are my bags packed? Deep

breath. Και η καρδιά…Και μέσα…

Mum you can teach Andrea the poem.

'A white sports…coat…and a…pink carnation…

I'm all dressed up…for the…dance…'

Once you told me long ago….

Exits holding her stomach, singing "A White Sports Coat" (45).

This shows how the contractions (*genotext*) are speaking at the same time as a recitation of parts of the poem "The Patriarchal House" in Greek and a performance of the song "A White

Sports Coat" (bounded texts). The power of the *genotext* is prominent; it can interrupt and defeat these patriarchal texts. Through this intertextuality, Lyssiotis shows not only the hybridity in the female Greek-Australian identity, clear through the bilingualism and the diverse use of traditional and patriarchal Greek and English texts, but also how this hybridity can never be stabilised: the changing female form continues to create and recreate unpredictably.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how Tes Lyssiotis' play *A White Sports Coat* can be understood intertextually to depict the hybridity of the Greek-Australian female identity. This is accomplished through an intertextual process that challenges the prominent "Good Greek Girl" stereotype. It also reforms cultural texts via the *genotext*. This shows a hybrid, feminine form of playwriting, confirming how Greek-Australian feminist plays can be understood via intertextuality, and this type of playwriting needs to be acknowledged.

In the next chapter, I will analyse another Greek-Australian feminist play to show further how intertextuality operates to express feminine hybridity. Koraly Dimitriadis' *KORALY: "I say the wrong things all the time"* more brutally confronts "Good Greek Girl" stereotypical expectations as well as contrasts her own poetry to traditional rituals and voices. This play also demonstrates a similar intertextual process: the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype is confronted and patriarchal texts defeated by the *genotext*.

Chapter Four:
Performing, Challenging and Rewriting the "Good Greek Girl" in Koraly Dimitriadis' *KORALY "I say the wrong things all the time"*

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that Lyssiotis' *A White Sports Coat,* through an intertextual process where the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype and texts are reformed, cultural hybridity is presented, making a connection between hybridity and intertextuality in Greek-Australian feminist playwriting.

In this chapter, we enter the world of Koraly Dimitriadis, where ethnic gender expectations are there to be defeated. Dimitriadis describes her work as being about "dismantling" the "Good Greek Girl", "a construct created by patriarchy" (Personal Interview). Reviewer Shane Murphy explains how *KORALY: "I say the wrong things all the time"* is appealing because it is about "the crossing of boundaries" by an alleged "good Greek girl from a good family"; the pleasure of seeing the play is about "breaking away from the mad Mediterranean stereotype". Hamish Danks Brown similarly reviews this "self-revelatory" play as being about "a woman who has been driven to break out of the 'good Greek girl' stereotype of being a homebound wife and mother". Both Dimitriadis and the receptions of her play identify its central purpose: to eradicate the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype.

In a similar structure to the previous chapter, this chapter argues that Dimitriadis' play unashamedly confronts the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype by articulating the effects of living by strict gender rules where women's minds and bodies are defined by a patriarchal tradition of sexual passivity. It reforms cultural texts through the *genotext*, portraying the complex nature of Greek-Australian femininity.

KORALY: "I say the wrong things all the time" (2016) by Koraly Dimitriadis is also an autobiographical, one-woman show about the writer's experiences with divorce and depression. Koraly, through her poetry, fragmentally presents different parts of her life, from the melancholic world of dating to her childhood. She unapologetically expresses her rage, aiming to expose the repressed hypocrisies of her own community in order to find herself. This angry, darkly comical odyssey through a Melbournian's miserable and hilarious mindset integrates film and songs, encompassing the never-ending voices and forms that make up a Greek-Australian woman.

This chapter argues that Dimitriadis challenges the sexual chastity of the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype in her play by confirming and articulating gender expectations through performing, like Lyssiotis, both the mother and daughter. She embodies the *yiayia* figure, merging generations together and this, in effect, destroys the stability of the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype. She also satirises this young, innocent stereotype, which allows her to express herself, as well as obliterates the binary separation of Greek and Australian characteristics. Through this type of role-playing and by portraying the playwriting process itself, the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype is anxiously repeated in order to show the ambiguity of hybrid femininity. Dimitriadis' further portrayal of the reading-writing process confirms the importance of intertextuality. She also uses her own poetry to write this play, again portrayed on stage, but this process is also about the *genotext*. The powerful use of the body shows how stable, patriarchal understandings can be transformed in order to present feminine hybridity.

The "Good Greek Girl" stereotype expresses feminine hybridity

By navigating between characters and time periods, Dimitriadis is able to challenge stereotypical understandings of the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype.

Koraly is suddenly transported back to her younger years and she is talking to her sister. She is a panic. She is upset. Crying.

Shhh

Don't tell Mum

Koraly begins to panic, like she is a young girl trying to keep a secret from her Mum. She scrambles to hide the evidence, piling her books that are all over the floor. She is afraid, petrified at the thought of being caught having sex.

Don't tell Mum

A memory surfaces and she begins to mimic her Mum as she runs to put her books on her desk.

MUM *En ntrepese?* You should be ashamed of yourself. I'm going to chop your fingers off the next time I catch you. You should pray to God to forgive you.

Koraly runs to centre stage. Robotic, she mimics the incessant, monotonous, repetitive nature of words shouted to her by her parents growing up in her migrant culture in relation to sex. Her hand is ready to smack as she moves from facing the audience to facing the wall. As she pivots from facing the audience to facing the wall the bedroom lights flash on then off.

Preparing to smack

MUM *Vromiara*.

Face to the left, preparing to smack

MUM Dirty girl (12).

By performing her own mother, she is able to create confusion between female roles. The use of Greek and English captures this hybridity that cannot be contained by the discrete positions

of mother and daughter. Greek-Australian women exist between time periods and cultures, challenging the boundaries between time and culture. By articulating the gender expectation (the need to repress female desire), Dimitriadis is able to challenge it, showing how stereotypical expectations can be questioned through their articulation. The "Good Greek Girl", which encompasses both the passive daughter and mother, is meant to be content with her lack of sexual liberty, to be proud of her chastity. Not only is Dimitriadis admitting so-called sexual discretions (masturbating), but she is also portraying the consequences of admitting these discretions. This articulation allows her by the end of this scene to realise her age and proudly pronounce repetitively "I'm 32!" (14). Through articulating the consequences of challenging the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype, Dimitriadis is able to confuse and question her audience's expectations, allowing for a more ambiguous portrayal of Greek-Australian feminine identity.

Dimitriadis also portrays this complex female hybridity through explicit role-playing. Koraly further mocks the "Good Greek Girl" through the *yiayia* figure by expressing the hypocrisies of various common Greek phrases older Greek women use towards younger Greek-Australian women. Her use of both Greek and English brutally and humorously exposes this chaotic and contradictory way of thinking.

KORALY *O Theos na tin anapafsi*

May God rest her soul

Kali Orthothoxi kopela, itane.

She was a good Orthodox girl

Pige kai sto panepistimio.

She went to university, got a business degree

Married in the Orthodox Church.

Two well-behaved children

Ta kaimena.

Poor things

A big house in the suburbs.

Right on the river.

E, O Theos na tin anapafsi.

May God rest her soul (23–4)

It is this intercultural and intergenerational portrayal of Greek-Australian women that exposes the way these stereotypes actually operate. Dimitriadis is able to use satire to reveal the contradictive nature of Greek-Australian "womanly duties", where the "love" of the community is only possible if you are "normal" meaning "pop[ing]" children "out like popcorn" (24). The "sacrifice[s]" of the older generation can only be repaid by the new generation making the same "sacrifice[s]" (24). Like Lyssiotis, she is merging together these old and new Greek and Australian voices in order to capture the illogical nature of stable gender and cultural understandings. By making these repressive and hypocritical expectations explicit, Dimitriadis is able to feel empowered.

Furthermore, her contradictory "Stepford wife" impersonation where the "happy housewife" is also the "medicated housewife" captures the unreality as well as the danger of the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype, which creates unrealistic expectations (25). It also further shows the nature of the hybridity that is continually attempting to reconcile this cultural and gender ambivalence by referring to and challenging stereotypes.

KORALY Give me the pills

I will drink them like wine

allow their brilliance

to dry my tears

my marriage medication

stitching me up tight

like good Greek girls

The lights are suddenly back up again, the happy housewife music starts and Koraly is the happy wife again, keeping up appearances, she wants to offer more of her sweets because that is what life is about, baking and cleaning and cooking.

KORALY *Sas aresan*? Did you like them? Good. Good. *Itan orea? Efharisto.* Thank you, thank you so much. You should see my friend Stella's new extension on the house. It is so big. She has a big kitchen. Do you have a kitchen? (25)

Her depressed mental state expressed through poetry contrasts with the enthusiastic, bilingual, colloquial dialogue. She performs both of these roles and this portrays how this Greek-Australian woman encompasses contradictory positions, which leads to her demise. She is, like Lyssiotis, repeating the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype and, in Dimitriadis' case, the anxiety as well as the stereotype is performed. Seeing these texts side-by-side captures the hybridity of Greek-Australian feminine identity. By attempting to embody and perform this stereotype, Dimitriadis is able to show its limitations.

Her introductory poem, "Mediterranean Madness", also attempts to challenge the binary between Greek and Australian cultural characteristics through her juxtaposition of "Mediterranean madness" and "Aussie Blue": the madness of the Mediterranean clashes with the calmness of the Anglo-Australian (1). By the last stanza, the binary collapses: they both

swallow the different stereotypical cultural aspects. This meshing together of culture further presents the hybridity of a Greek-Australian experience that is torn and made up of two diverse cultures. Stereotypes thus work to challenge themselves in order to present the cultural hybridity of Greek-Australian women on stage.

Koraly's inability and resistance to conform leads her a "wide step away/from the migrant dream" (22). This rebellion causes a backlash where she is told to "shh" and "[b]e more womanly" (15). By exposing these restrictive gender expectations, Dimitriadis is able to challenge the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype.

She brutally expresses this rage and rebellion through self-harm. She wants to "rip off" her "vagina" and then hopes doctors will "scoop out all the womanly parts" (16, 28). By wishing away her womanly parts, she seeks to find stability and solace. Blaming her body is a way of taking control, but it is also another way of articulating the pain and frustration of not being able to fit into the passive "Good Greek Girl" stereotype. Again, it is through writing and performing, reading and then re-writing this stereotype that Dimitriadis is able to come to terms with her own self. This is a way of portraying Greek-Australian femininity: through the articulation and presentation of gender and cultural stereotypes in order to rebel against them.

She is also contradictorily "dream[ing] of" her "parents' past" and then wanting to "extract with a syringe the bouzouki from" her "veins" (21, 22). Like her gender, this need to both embrace and abandon her cultural heritage expresses a significant aspect of cultural hybridity; at once we need our cultural past present and yet, we also need it in the past. By confronting cultural stereotypes and embracing different voices that attempt to contain the fluency of her cultural hybridity, Dimitriadis is able to capture the hybridity of the Greek-Australian experience.

Like Lyssiotis, she exposes the writing process and presents herself actually writing:

Koraly has an idea all of a sudden. She quickly puts her stool back and jumps behind her desk at the computer and begins to type. This poem is going to be a good one! There, among stacks of books and her characteristic tea mug, she clears the desk to make room for her thoughts. She makes contact with her keyboard, satisfied at how proactive she is being. She's proud of herself, she's owning her voice and she's making sure this is a message she doesn't forget – a message no one will forget. Projected up on the wall is the word document, the words appearing as Koraly types frantically, with energy and fervour. We are getting a glimpse into what Koraly sees, a glimpse into her mind (8–9).

Through writing, she is able to come to terms with her own identity, but by showing this performance of writing, Dimitriadis is reminding her audience that these seemingly innate gender and cultural concepts are actually constructed. Again, this is about exposing stereotypical expectations in order to challenge them.

Dimitriadis challenges conventional understandings of Greek-Australian women through role-playing in her play. She portrays the staunch gender and cultural characteristics encompassed by the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype in order to rebel against them. By embracing the contradictory nature of her audience's understandings of Greek-Australian women, she is able to express this hybridity (Greek-Australian) and feel empowered. Showing her audience the writing process itself presents a confused sense of self that is always in a process of becoming, thus challenging the stable stereotype about Greek-Australian women in order to present our hybridity.

Intertextuality: performing the reading-writing process and the *genotext*

Intertextuality is a significant way of understanding this play, especially in terms of presenting our hybridity. Dimitriadis performs her own poetry throughout the play and it is through the poetry that we come to understand her experiences. Like Lyssiotis, she uses the Greek language, but Dimitriadis does this through music, embedding the melancholic folk songs of the past in an attempt to explain her own pain away. She also encompasses the voices of her family and other older female migrants with simmering rage and humour. Dimitriadis is striving to find herself through these voices, showing how intertextuality can express one's hybrid feminine identity.

The reading-writing process portrayed on stage can be understood through the concept of intertextuality. By reciting her own poem "How to get a fuck", she is able to then feel inspired and begin writing, which leads to the success of her "book launch" (9). The poem emphasises the vicious nature of "a man's world" where women are objectified and only by reversing this objectification and taking on a brutal masculine role where you "keep your words to yourself" and "forget fairytales" are you able to feel empowered. The silence of her "screaming" is profoundly heard in this poem, but it also becomes prominent when she finishes reciting, stops talking completely and just writes. Audiences can see how she constructs the last part of this poem and also see how, by performing the start of the poem, she is then able to finish it. The text gives her an avenue to express herself. Not only is she reversing the stereotypical roles of men and women – making the woman subject of her own objectification, which exposes the brutal nature of patriarchy – but she is then able to take this poem to discover something about herself. As she writes, the "words 'survive', 'woman', 'emotion', 'motion'…are projected on the wall" (9). Not only does the poem itself create the play text, but there is even a dialogic connection between her own words that allows her to feel free by

expressing her story. The Greek-Australian female experience can be understood intertextually, and Dimitriadis expresses it by showing how the performance of her poems allows her to write and tell her own story for the stage.

This play also shows how she has been inspired by fellow Greek-Australian writer, Christos Tsiolkas. Dimitriadis describes her first experience reading his work as follows:

> I first read his work when I was very sheltered and repressed and I just couldn't believe the honesty in his work and that a Greek person was saying those things! I contacted him and told him I was writing. I was writing in secret at the time. And he wanted to mentor me and he has ever since, mostly in my novel, *Divided Island* (Personal Interviews).

In this play, it is the explicit description of sexual acts that is quite reminiscent of Tsiolkas' first novel, *Loaded*. In this novel, the protagonist Ari, like Koraly, is experiencing a sexual odyssey.

> I don't want him to come in my mouth, I fear the disease that might be floating inside his body. But he pushes his cock hard into my throat (58).

This abject description of fellatio where Ari comes to terms with his sexuality by torturing and punishing himself through lewd, masochistic acts of sex, is transformed in Dimitriadis' play, where her description of fellatio is pleasurable and erotic:

> I'll crouch to my knees
> take you into my mouth
> along with all my words
> because I can fit a lot in there
> and I will suck your cock, baby

> from its start to its end
>
> and then I'll lick you, I'll lick
>
> rub my head, cheeks, lips
>
> all over your stick
>
> and with my hair everywhere
>
> you'll knot your hand in there
>
> pull my face back
>
> to your cocoon (10).

By articulating this act of sex in her play, she is able to liberate the repressed, passive "Good Greek Girl" who should be repulsed by her sexual urges. Tsiolkas has clearly given her the courage to describe her sexual experiences, but Dimitriadis has also transformed his sexual writing by describing the pleasure and empowerment experienced.

Dimitriadis primarily uses the body to show the different roles Greek-Australian women encompass. Her consistent changing from traditional costume to modern-day daywear and nightwear portrays how Koraly is feeling and what she is trying to achieve, from dancing correctly to picking up a man (4). In both cases, she is looking for male approval. The performative nature of these dancing and night club sequences contrasts brutally with her references to self-harm. As described earlier, she becomes repulsed by her body, wanting to "rip off" her "vagina" and then wanting to "drip" out the Greek music in her veins (16, 21). This can be interpreted as the *abjection* in the *genotext*. The Kristevan concept of abjection challenges notions of fixity: she states that the abject is a "place of banishment" that "disrupts identity, system, order" (*Powers* 2, 4). Like the notion of hybridity, the abject lacks a stable sense of belonging. The repulsion expressed by Koraly about her body, which works as a *genotext*, is reminiscent of Kristeva's description of self-abjection.

> I expel myself, I spit myself out, I abject myself within the same motion through which "I" claim to establish myself (3).

Koraly also claims the abjection she feels towards her body. Just as she cannot control sexual urges, she cannot control how her past Greek ancestry has influenced who she is; the music cannot be silenced. It is, more importantly, the body that stops the narrative. Koraly is "overruled" by her "body" and words lose cohesive meaning in the text once she starts repeating "pain" (28). It is the body's "pain" that takes centre stage, overriding even the shame and lack of love she feels for her "naked body" (28):

> Dirty, disgusting, pleasure is wrong dirty, you have to be a virgin, be a virgin, no boyfriends, no sex, sex is wrong, sex is right with your husband, but sex is wrong, sex is bad, I can't have sex, it hurts, what is wrong with me, pain, you want me, come and get me, your sex, our sex, sweet, bitter pain, pain, pain, pain (28).

Coherence is no longer possible once the body feels "pain". She also believes that this "pain" is caused by her womanly urges and demands, as described earlier, that her "womanly parts" be "scoop[ed] out" (28). The physical inescapability of her sex contrast with her repetition of "my body" (28). She is both reclaiming and attempting to escape her body, wanting both control and freedom from her body. In this scene, she wonders whether her body is "denying or inspiring" her (28). Clearly the female form does both of these things, as illustrated in Lyssiotis' play as well. The interruptions of pregnancy are a part of Lyssiotis' narrative just as Dimitriadis' body feeling both pleasure and pain is fundamental to the story. The ambiguity of the female form is crucial to the Greek-Australian female story: it is as hybrid as our cultures and affects and structures the story itself in an uncontrollable manner that is reminiscent of the *genotext*.

One day you and I

we *will* love each other

we will look into a mirror

me and my naked body

and we won't be

two entities divided by

pain and the past

One day, we *will*

Love each other (29)

Dimitriadis' hopeful end to this scene furthermore highlights the importance of the body and this need for a woman to love and unite with her body. The role of the body in this Greek-Australian woman's play is paramount in understanding her experiences and identity. The intertextuality is clearly not just about reworking texts, but about the *genotext* and how it unbounds, questions and critiques the bounded, cultural text. This is a type of feminist playwriting practice that portrays hybrid femininity.

Conclusion

Greek-Australian cultural understandings are both made and unmade in this play. Dimitriadis evolves the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype through role-playing and satire. This portrays our hybridity authentically: always changing and being challenged as it is impossible to ever capture in a stable manner though playwriting. Our hybridity can clearly be understood through an intertextual process where not only are stereotypical texts transformed, but the unpredictability and anarchy of the body (*genotext*) is embraced to show the chaotic in-betweenness of Greek-Australian femininity.

In the next chapter, I further explore this intertextual process in my own practice research submission to this thesis: a play entitled *The Debt.* Following a similar structure, I argue that the cultural stereotype of the "Good Greek Girl" allowed me to express our hybridity in my playwriting, where I also reformed traditional Greek and English texts (classical tragedy and Pinter) and disrupted patriarchal understandings through the *genotext*.

Chapter Five:
Reforming, Combining and Challenging Sophocles and Pinter to Portray Feminine Hybridity in Christine Lambrianidis' *The Debt*

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that Koraly Dimitriadis' play *KORALY: "I say the wrong things all the time"* can be understood through an intertextual process where the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype is challenged in order to express our hybrid identity. This process is also about reforming cultural texts and, through the *genotext,* critiquing stable understandings of gender and culture, thus confirming the connection between intertextuality and hybridity in Greek-Australian feminist playwriting.

My practice research submission to this thesis, a play entitled *The Debt* (2015), depicts an allegorical dystopia about a slave named Maria who is forced to participate in gender-based cultural lessons, from cup reading to crocheting. Each lesson is an overt attempt to hold onto the old ethnic traditions that Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis also perform in their plays; however, unlike Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis, I am portraying the Greek-Australian female experience through my responses to two iconic Greek and English texts: Sophocles' *Antigone* and Harold Pinter's *One for the Road*. These texts played a major role in my understanding of playwriting and the connection I find between them is based on my own hybridity: the texts represent two diverse ways of storytelling for the stage and my way of playwriting responds to and reforms these ways. Mary-Kay Gemel discusses how "the contemporary theatrical performance of ancient drama is a constant dialectic between Identity and Difference, between modern performers and ancient scripts, between continuity and change" (159). In the same way, playwriting, for a hybrid feminist, can be defined as a dialectic between the classical texts that have formed us as writers and our modern readings of these same texts. As stated in Chapter

Three, texts form one's identity and as a Greek and Australian I found that these plays not only captured something about these cultures but were also, ironically, not a part of these cultures (Turner 21). Modern Greece is no longer ancient and modern Australia is no longer British. What then lies in, outside of and between these texts is where I found my sense of hybridity, and this is what I present in my play. This can be understood as a form of intertextuality, where reading-writing as a Greek-Australian feminist is at the forefront of my process and is embedded in how I explore whether Maria can actually exist in opposition to a dominant ideology.

This chapter begins by arguing that, like Lyssiotis and Dimitraidis, in my play I present our hybridity through the transgression of the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype. In *The Debt*, Maria is taught how to be a "Good Greek Girl" and even though these traditional rituals – which I call lessons – are presented, their absurdity is shown, especially in terms of how they conflict with an individual's needs and wants. The female role-playing is again performed to articulate the impossibility of ever capturing our feminine hybridity. This is further revealed through confusing the female roles of mother and daughter, like Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis, confirming the dangers of the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype. Through this confusion, I am able to capture a part of being a woman who is both Greek and Australian.

This intertextual process is also about reforming Sophocles and Pinter. I am able to express myself in this play through a reworking of these texts and through the power and unpredictability of the *genotext*, able to question not only what it means to be a Greek-Australian woman, but what it means to tell a story for the stage as a Greek-Australian woman.

Confirming and challenging the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype

In my play *The Debt,* the performance of culture and gender becomes a set of explicit lessons that must be learned. In this world, everyone can be "trained to become proper citizens",

which immediately shows that cultural identity is a taught, not innate, entity (4). Maria is taught how to read cups, make bonbonniere, crochet, sew and break eggs. Even though these are not explicitly or solely Greek traditions, it is the regulatory nature of how they are performed that strives to make these traditions everyone's traditions. It is the repetition of the act and the constant backlash against the act that demonstrates how the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype is both made and unmade. As the Widow says, "It's not about wanting, it's just about doing" (24). The personal choices or wants of women are irrelevant when cultural expectations need to be met.

In Maria's first lesson, she must learn how to read coffee cups. During this time, she describes the typical trajectory of a Greek girl's life: "Birth, bang! Money, bang! Marriage, bang! Mortgage, bang! Babies, bang!" (7). By articulating these expectations, she feels empowered, but she is still longing "to be like" her "mum" and is "doing everything they are telling" her "to do" (7). This conflict between changing and embracing the past is quite clear and, like both Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis, I embrace the contradictions because they are integral to my experience of being a Greek-Australian woman. Cultural and gender characteristics are made, and they are also embraced and challenged. Maria belittles but also strives to be "a real woman" (8, 24). She firstly views the lessons as "useless, superstitious tradition[s] that ha[ve] nothing to do with" her, but then longs for the Widow to "dress" like that again: these pretend, made-up traditions have now become realities she needs in order to understand herself (9; 35).

By taking an actual tradition and writing about it like it is a made-up lesson, I felt empowered; it was almost like I was able to expose how false and banal these stereotypical gender and cultural acts are. Without these acts, however, there would be a major part of my identity missing. By writing performatively about these traditions, I was able to articulate not only the repressed nature of the Greek-Australian community, but also the importance of these traditions that give us a sense of cultural wholeness. Reading coffee cups is both "silly" and

"important" to me and, like Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis, I use these conflicting views to explain how unstable our understanding of ourselves, as Greek-Australian women, actually is (9).

We are as "weak" as the Widow and as "silly" as Maria, but most importantly, we "are more than" women (10, 37). This idea of surpassing the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype and "not be[ing] like" our "parents" is expressed by actually performing these "useless, mundane lessons that have no end" (37, 29).

WIDOW: No! You're doing it all wrong.

MARIA: This is how you said I should do it.

WIDOW: No, you don't listen.

MARIA: Oh my god! You are driving me crazy!

WIDOW: Watch and learn.

Maria looks carefully as the Widow is crocheting.

MARIA: Oh…ok…I think I get it now.

WIDOW: Let's see you do it then.

The Widow watches Maria crocheting (19).

This intergenerational relationship between the Widow – who is, as described in Chapter One, the *yiayia* figure – is an important part of the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype, and Maria confuses the idea of mother and daughter, as the Widow's role as mother is simply a job and Maria ends up taking on this job as mother by the end of the play. The "tradition" of "pass[ing] it on" where "daughters become mothers" is both confirmed and denied (31). This is the way Maria develops, but she was clearly bound to develop this way, evident by the explicit role-playing during the lessons. This is the original stereotype, a printing mechanism, but this time women are being made and re-made. Here the expectations are actually met. As Maria tells her brother,

"this is what we are expected to do and this is just what we do" (22). By showing audiences what it would be like if cultural traditions, such as crocheting and coffee cup reading, were followed through completely, I was able to expose the dangers of actually embodying the stereotype.

These dangers are clear through the violence. The continual torture scenes that follow the lessons show how a human being is actually made to behave a certain way.

> *Maria screams from the pain after holding the large candle for hours. The Party Leader laughs.*
>
> **PARTY LEADER:** So do you love men now?
>
> *She becomes very angry, but still cannot construct a sentence.*
>
> **PARTY LEADER:** Do you?
>
> *He goes up to her as if he is about to kiss her. She drops the large candle. He laughs again and picks it up.*
>
> **PARTY LEADER:** Ok well now we're going to have to start all over again so take it off.
>
> *She begins to undress. He undoes his pants* (19).

The contrast between these scenes, from lessons to torture, creates a profound ambivalence that brutally exposes the realities of the cultural and gender stereotypes that make and unmake an individual. Greek-Australian, like any hybrid culture, exists and is torn between these two domains, which are teaching as well as requiring us to behave in certain ways. As the Widow expresses, "Marriage…children…family…that's life." (23). Articulating this cultural expectation, one that is prevalent in the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype, I wanted to show not only a repressive aspect of Greek culture, but also the calming simplicity of this patriarchal

certainty. Like Lyssiotis and Dimitriadis, I articulate this cultural stereotype with ambivalence, challenging audiences' expectations through this confused sense of self.

Even though "everyone gets married", Maria strives to "be the first and greatest citizen this civilisation has ever seen" (31, 37). Her need to be free and find a sense of agency in this totalitarian society drives the narrative and questions whether an individual can ever exist against an ideology. It is her body that suffers for this need. She is continually tortured and her final "water boarding wedding" is an actual baptism further into this extreme form of patriarchy (36-7). In the end, she wonders why this violence continues and whether this will ever end.

When the role-playing becomes real, horror is inevitable. In my play, I show Greek-Australian hybridity by creating characters that perform an intertextual process; I attempt to show how cultural and gender identity is formed. I also, however, portray the inability to ever embody stereotypical forms of culture and gender and how we, as Greek-Australian women, are all striving to create our own unique sense of self that is beyond our culture and gender. The hybridity of Greek-Australian women is understood through this articulation and deconstruction of the "Good Greek Girl" stereotype and this is captured by our ongoing need to define and reclaim our identity.

The intertextual process: reworking Sophocles and Pinter and the *genotext*

The Debt combines classical Greek tragedy with Harold Pinter to present how Greek-Australian women are torn by traditional and modern texts. The other voices exist metatheatrically within the style and structure, showing the link between classical Greek and

modern English texts.[20] There are no Greek words and even Greek rituals, like reading coffee cups, are presented as strange. I have created this silence in order to show how the language, music and other cultural traditions are struggling to exist authentically: being a Greek-Australian woman means being taught specific rituals and it is through our bodies that we find consensus between these two cultures, mixing the cathartic, masculine brutality of tragic and Pinteresque texts. This intertextual process is about presenting this method of reading-writing on stage, but also the *genotext* and these aspects combined are able to present both the Greek and Australian parts of our identity in the playwriting.

This is exemplified when the protagonist in *The Debt*, Maria, takes a hold of her narrative in Lesson 9: Justice by insisting on doing the same work as Ari. The character of Party Leader intertextually pays homage to Nicolas from Pinter's *One for the Road*. This particular scene is styled in a similar way to when Nicolas interrogates Gila. The rhythm of the question and answer sequence in Pinter's play has, however, been transformed. In Pinter, Nicolas never loses control of the interrogation:

NICOLAS When did you meet your husband?

GILA When I was eighteen.

NICOLAS Why?

GILA Why?

NICOLAS Why?

GILA I just met him (331).

---

[20] Francis Gillen, in his article *Kindred Spirits: Harold Pinter and Greek Tragedy,* celebrates Pinter's Nobel Prize for Literature by comparing his plays to Greek tragedies. He identifies two common characteristics: their interest in "the destructive force of *hubris*" and their "attack on the prevalent myths of" their "time" (24).

There is no questioning of Nicolas's authority; Pinter presents patriarchy in its most authoritarian. I have used a similar structure and characterised the Party Leader in a similar authoritarian way, but I have given Maria more agency, which allows her to question this patriarchal authority:

MARIA: I want to work with Ari.

PARTY LEADER: That's impossible.

MARIA: No it's not, he needs me.

PARTY LEADER: Is this about his tantrum the other day?

MARIA: I want to do it all.

PARTY LEADER: You can't.

MARIA: I won't tell anyone.

PARTY LEADER: It's not as simple as that.

MARIA: I can do both.

PARTY LEADER: Really?

MARIA: Try me.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: We will have to get you wet for the last lesson.

MARIA: That's fine.

PARTY LEADER: Not many survive.

MARIA: I will.

PARTY LEADER: You'll have to wear the dress too when we wet you.

MARIA: Why?

PARTY LEADER: No point in not using what you've worked so hard to make.

Pause. She looks unconvinced.

PARTY LEADER: If you won't wear it for him then you'll wear it for me. Do you understand?

MARIA: Fine, I'll wear it. What else? (27–8)

Maria is also asking the questions and trying to find a way to control her own fate. In Pinter's play, Gila never has this opportunity. In order to create a female character that reflects an aspect of my experiences as a Greek-Australian woman, Pinter's sparsely brutal colloquial dialogue was reworked: its dialogic, agonistic back and forth structure allowed me to show how patriarchal authority operated, but it is through a Greek tragic register that I was able to interrupt and assert my past.

MARIA: I'm happy to die, but that will cost you more money, won't it?

Maria lifts her robe up.

MARIA: Come on…fuck me to death now.

The Party Leader approaches her and starts to choke her. He looks at her in the eyes and wants to kiss her. He stops choking her and pulls her robe down.

PARTY LEADER: You'll have to be completely cleaned first with water.

MARIA: I know.

PARTY LEADER: This is uncharted territory.

MARIA: I'm aware.

PARTY LEADER: You will…

MARIA: As long as I can make them all pay for everything they have done, I don't care.

PARTY LEADER: That sounds reasonable (30).

Her insistence to die and rebel against authority is just like Antigone in Sophocles' *Antigone*. There is a connection between Greek culture and Greek tragedy. Tragedy is still a way of understanding one's culture. I am, like Butler in responding to Hegel's interpretation of *Antigone*, troubling our understandings of feminine sacrifice as not a private act, but a political one that can be a source of power.[21]

> **ANTIGONE:** You choose to live, I choose to die.
>
> **ISMENE:** Not, at least, without every kind of caution I could voice.
>
> **ANTIGONE:** Your wisdom appealed to one world – mine, another.
>
> **ISMENE:** But look, we're both guilty, both condemned to death.
>
> **ANTIGONE:** Courage! Live your life. I gave myself to death, long ago, so I might serve the dead (88-9).

The style of *Antigone* inspired me subconsciously to express feminine power, but this was not the only style I detected in my own writing. Mixing this tragedy with the emptiness of Pinter created an intertextual, hybrid style that allowed me to tell my story. These two storytelling forms evidently affect how I tell a story. These two great masculine ways of telling stories on the stage (Greek tragedy and the Pinteresque) are embedded in how I write, and this obviously shows the significance of *reading* text in actually forming how text is *written*. The phallocentric structure has evolved in my way of storytelling, but it is still there and by embracing it, transforming it and using it to tell my tale, it allows me to express my hybridity and this is

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[21] See Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death.* Unlike Hegel, Butler believes that the presence of the family (*oikos*) is essential to the running of the *polis* (12).

liberating. Intertextuality and intertextualising are subconscious but crucial aspects of my playwriting and through them I am able to form a play that captures my cultural hybridity – the old Greek voice of Sophocles combined with the modern English voice of Pinter allow me to portray my experiences as a Greek-Australian woman.

Furthermore, in *The Debt,* the *genotext* plays a crucial role in the torture scenes, where the female body takes centre stage. I unbound the female characterisation in Pinter's *One for the Road* and how the female body is presented in Sophocles' *Antigone* through the female form, showing the complexities of a hybridity that is not just presented by reworking other texts, but is about giving the *genotext* a space to create its own meanings. Unlike Pinter's *One for the Road*, in *The Debt* the female body is at the centre: it speaks more vividly than the torturer's (Party Leader) words. In *The Debt*, I use short sentences with extensive pauses, like Pinter, but I actually expose parts of the physical torture by showing how Maria is forced to hold cultural poses, such as holding a dance pose or a candle (10, 17). There is also more of an extended narrative that is not just about the torture itself, but about how any individual can exist within an ideology they are against. Unlike Greek tragedy, the punishment is on stage rather than off and the brutal violence is seen by the audience. Antigone's body is spoken about; in my play, the female body is present and speaks for itself. This shows a significant aspect of our hybridity: we are influenced by and rework texts, but our own essential femaleness, as signified by the *genotext*, disrupts this simplicity to ensure no stable meaning of who we are is ever permanent or oppressive, like a stereotype.

Unlike *One for the Road*, which is about the torturer's journey, *The Debt* is centred around the tortured, Maria.[22] She is forced to hold a dance pose in one scene and then a large

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[22] Michael Billington describes *One for the Road* as "a psychologically complex work about the tortured nature of the torturer" (*The Life* 296).

candle in another. Even though these are not horrific images of torture, they still expose the strength of the female body. The body plays a key role as the audience sees it struggling and hears Maria gasping for air. In all of the torture scenes, Maria's body is the central focus. All of the Party Leaders' words are directed towards her and even in the water boarding wedding scene, the audience is still wondering whether her body can withstand the suffocation (36-7).

This *genotext* is "language-destroying" (Scarry 19). The pain of torture is so intense, language is no longer relevant. Throughout the two main torture scenes, Maria's groaning and struggle to hold a particular pose is finally released when she gives up. I would imagine that sound at the point where she lets go of the dance pose or the candle is a mixture of relief, anger and fear. Language is falsified by the torturer (the Party Leader continually asking demeaning questions or abhorrent statements) in order to control and, in effect, breaks Maria's capacity to use it: screaming and other non-linguistic sounds of pain are an inevitable effect. Through the body, I am able to articulate pain while attempting to find another way of communicating our hybridity that is not limited to language. Bilingualism in Lyssiotis' and Dimitriadis' plays portrays our hybridity; the barriers between languages seem non-existent. I, on the other hand, was trying to find something beyond language that shows the brutal way we have been forced into rituals or stereotypes, speechless and struggling to survive.

In other scenes, we see Maria in a "white robe, which is slightly torn" and "her eye is bruised" and later her "robe" is "even more torn and stained" (10, 17). This is similar to Gila in *One for the Road*, whose entrance is more powerful than any words used: it is "the most potent of moral signifiers", as Richard Allen Cave states (141). This is the bodily result of torture: Gila's "clothes" are "torn" and she is "bruised" (Pinter 331). Her torn clothes indicate

sexual abuse and Mary Luckhurst describes it as "the marks of repeated rapes" (364). Elaine Scarry believes that these types of images are necessary in order to express and apprehend pain and in this way "the image of the wound" can have a '"language of agency"' (16). The bruised marks on Maria and Gila speak to the audience. They express their suffering. Cave expresses how "the body speaks truths, which the voice would often seek to deny" (142). The audience sees the truth on their bodies and hears the lies from their interrogators and this contradictory illustration incites both anger and fear as it exposes the unjust tragic power of torture – but also the power of the *genotext* that can override and become a type of language.

Maria, like Gila, remains silent, but her body is central to the main torture scenes and her body in pain is the central image. After most pauses, there is a description of Maria where the word "struggling" is repeated (11). The Party Leader's brutal statements aim to also intensify the mundaneness of his words. "Dicks go soft" is a short, monosyllabic sentence; stylistically; like "fuckpig", it is simple, but its horrific nature and how it works as an illusion to rape only makes its simplicity even more fearful (Lambrianidis 19; Pinter 332). Both Nicolas and the Party Leader use language in a violent way, but it is also quite casual and aims to deny the pain they are inflicting onto their victims. It is Maria's need to "love men" that leads to her demise; she drops the candle and is then raped off stage (18–9). The fact the Party Leader is actually the one controlling and imposing all of this pain is deeply connected to his misogynistic rhetoric.

Maria, on the other hand, remains silent, but her gasps and other noises of struggle viscerally affect the audience; her pain is louder than the Party Leader's words. His words, however, perform as they cause Maria to give up on her body and fall or drop a candle. It is not until the end that we see her exceed her body's expectations, and this body-less character becomes something unrecognisable: a rebel and a patriot; a man and woman. Illustrating the

female protagonist's power and agency was my aim and Maria exceeds the boundaries of victimhood. In contrast with Pinter, she, not the torturer, is the central character.

In *The Debt*, the torture ends with Maria finally defeating her own body and surviving water boarding. She has to give up a part of her moral self in order to become this hybrid citizen that takes on both the work of women and men. I wanted the victim to survive and not survive; be alive, unlike her muted brother, but become the torturer. In this sense, my play has a similar sense of circularity as Pinter's work with even more horrific consequences. By objectifying the pain right at the beginning of the play, I am actually exposing the challenges Maria must face and so by the end, when she actually has a sense of agency, audiences can both fear and admire a woman who survived torture, as opposed to pity a woman like Gila, who is left to work in the brothel upstairs.

In *Antigone*, the suffering female body is locked away in the "dark recesses of the tomb". The Messenger describes her as "hang[ing] by the neck in a fine linen noose, strangled in her veils". This chaste, passive image is then overtaken by Haemon's grief: "the boy, his arms flung around her waist, clinging to her, wailing for his bride" (122). The female body is not the subject of the final tragic moment; it is now about Haemon, whose "blood" is "bright red on her cheek glistening white" (123). Their sexual union, with "body enfolding body", is achieved through Antigone's submissive body that remains inactive, hanging there like meat for a father and son to fight for. She is, as Rush Rehm states, within a "liminal state between living maiden and dead bride" (64). Kirk Ormand also connects her death to marriage, describing it as "a void, a lack of resolution or integration of any kind" (95).[23]

[23] Also see Helen P. Foley, who discusses further interpretations of Antigone's corpse.

By writing about how the female body responds to torture in *The Debt*, I am able to show the living pain a female body experiences and through this show its strength. In Lesson 3, we see her trying to hold the dance pose and respond to the Party Leader's questions. She "struggles to respond", but the struggle itself is admirable (11). The scene is structured about this *genotext*: this is the text the audience is following carefully. It is not inactive or passive: it is there feeling, responding and struggling to survive. Similarly, in Lesson 5, she is trying to hold onto the candle and is continually struggling to speak. The word struggle is repeated (17–19). It is through the female body's struggle that I am able to show and embody our hybrid nature, which is continually torn by tradition and modernity. This shows how the intertextuality in my play is disrupted by the *genotext* and how this disruption is necessary to express my cultural hybridity, which is continually changing, like my female body, and never can be contained.

Like in Dimitriadis' play, the pain of the female form is *abject*. Maria's body is oozing blood and struggling, but by expressing the *abject* within the *genotext*, I am able to present the complexities of our own struggles to belong and be defined. The connection between hybridity and intertextuality is further evident through this abjection within the *genotext* that continues to challenge repressive, monological understandings of our identity. Greek and English texts in *The Debt* have been reworked and, through this reworking, I am able to present two ways of storytelling for the stage; this shows the hybrid style of Greek-Australian feminist playwriting. I also give prominence to the female body and, through this *genotext,* I am further able to challenge stable understandings of my feminine hybridity and embrace a fluidity of Greek-Australian femininity. Clearly there is a synthesis between hybridity and intertextuality, and this is significant in understanding Greek-Australian feminist playwriting.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that in my play, *The Debt*, the “Good Greek Girl” stereotype is challenged in order to express my hybridity. Through role-playing and confusing traditional female roles, the danger of this stereotype becomes clear, confirming how Greek-Australian feminine hybridity is about the conflict between cultural expectations – epitomised by the “Good Greek Girl” stereotype – and the real needs and wants of an individual. This intertextual process where hybridity is expressed is also about how classical and modern texts are reformed not only through a feminist perspective (my reading of Sophocles and Pinter), but also through the female body. The disruption of this *genotext* epitomises how portraying the Greek-Australian female experience is about breaking stereotypes as well as texts, as the hybridity of Greek-Australian feminist playwriting can be understood intertextually.

Unlike the other chapters, the following chapter expresses knowledge through practice; it expresses the intertextual nature of Greek-Australian feminist playwriting through actual playwriting. My practice research project, *The Debt*, dramatically portrays our experiences as Greek-Australian women, revealing the profound connection between intertextuality and cultural hybridity.

Chapter Six:
The Debt (Practice Research Project)

Synopsis

An unnamed ethnic group is in debt: its artefacts, land and people are being sold to the highest bidder as repayments. The Party is a business who buys these people on sale, trains them to become proper citizens and then makes profit from their re-sale. Maria and Ari, who are twins, have been sold and forced to participate in gender-based cultural lessons, from cup reading to gun shooting. The play follows Maria's lessons with the Widow, where she fights against the mundane, domestic chores only to be punished by the charming Party Leader. As the Party plans to marry her off to the creepy Groom and Ari begins struggling in his lessons, Maria threatens to start a coup if the Party Leader does not allow her the freedom to complete the male-based lessons. Will Maria save herself and her brother and finally be free? Or will she become the ultimate Party citizen? In this dystopian world where everything can be bought and sold, anything is possible. *The Debt* is a new Australian play that questions whether an individual can exist in opposition to a dominant ideology as it bravely and brutally exposes the extremist effects of debt.

The Debt is inspired by both Greek tragedy and Harold Pinter in terms of challenging tyranny and it does this through paradoxical allusions to both the Greek Economic Crisis and the female migrant experience. It is subversively responding to the legacy of capitalism, patriarchy and nationalism by creating a dystopian world that not only uniquely explores extremism, but also disturbingly imagines the inevitable and complex fascist effects of any economic crisis. Above all, *The Debt* celebrates human resilience in its incessant capacity to fight for freedom at any cost.

The Debt

"Great will be your glory in not falling short of your natural character; and greatest will be hers who is least talked of among the men whether for good or for bad." – Pericles, 431 BCE

"There is no economic crisis, only thieves." – Jewellery shop assistant, Santorini 2009

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AUCTIONEER, *early fifties*

MARIA, *late twenties*

ARI, *Maria's twin brother, late twenties*

PARTY LEADER, *late twenties*

WIDOW, *late sixties*

GROOM, *early forties*

LITTLE BOY, *seven years old*

*The Auctioneer can be doubled by Ari or the Groom

PROLOGUE: SELLING

Auctioneer facing the audience, standing behind a lectern, holding a gavel.

A projection of beautiful islands is behind him.

AUCTIONEER: Here we have the most beautiful parts of the world. They say God himself would holiday here if he could. These islands have everything: beaches, history…you name it, they have it so let's start the bidding at one billion dollars. Do we have one billion? One billion over there. How about 1.1 billion? Yes, 1.1. Can we take it to 1.5 billion? Yes, to the gentleman on my left. What about 2 billion? 3 billion from the gentleman on my right. What about the gentleman on my left? Can you go up to 4 billion? Yes, we have 4 billion. 5 billion?

Pause.

Now come on…this region is like no other; its beauty exceeds no other and it's just waiting for the right gentleman to have it so let's go; do I hear 5 billion? Yes, 5 billion, going once, going twice…sold to the gentleman on my right.

A projection of a white marbled building.

AUCTIONEER: Here is the symbol of civilisation in all its glory. Let's start the bidding at 1.5 billion. Do I have 1.5 billion?

Pause.

No? These are not just marbles gentlemen; they are the beginning of culture as we know it. They are priceless, but today you're all lucky to have a chance to buy them. Don't let this opportunity pass you by.

Pause.

Ok, we have 1 billion. Any one for 1.5 billion?

Pause.

Going once…going twice…sold to the gentleman on my left.

There are no more projections.

MARIA and ARI enter in modern day clothes. Their hands are tied.

AUCTIONEER: I have saved the best until last. Here we have a rare breed; a brother and sister. They can easily be trained to become proper citizens. Let's start the bidding at 1 million. Do I have 1 million? Yes, I have 1 million in front of me. Do I have 1.5? Yes, the man on the left, fantastic, you won't regret this bargain. How about 2 million? Do I have 2 million? 3 million from the man in front of me, amazing! Clearly you know a rare commodity when you see it. Going once...going twice…sold for 3 million.

LESSON 1: THE PARTY

An old fashioned 1970s kitchen with a table and chairs.

Ari and Maria sit on chairs facing the audience. They are wearing white robes.

The Party Leader and Widow enter and look at them from a distance. Maria and Ari cannot see them. The Party Leader, holding a clipboard, is wearing a suit, cleanly shaven and his hair is perfectly styled. The Widow is wearing all black clothes with a black scarf over her head.

WIDOW: How much?

He looks at his clipboard notes.

PARTY LEADER: 3 million.

WIDOW: A bargain.

PARTY LEADER: Yes, I know.

Pause.

WIDOW: Are there more to buy?

PARTY LEADER: Plenty more I'm sure.

Pause.

WIDOW: Have the cups come in?

PARTY LEADER: They never seem to stop coming in.

WIDOW: Good. We're going to make a killing.

PARTY LEADER: Yes, I know.

Pause.

WIDOW: Can I take her?

PARTY LEADER: No…not yet.

Widow is about to exit, but turns and faces Party Leader.

WIDOW: The marketplace has been kind to us.

Widow exits.

The Party Leader approaches Ari and Maria. He is more confident and arrogant now.

PARTY LEADER: Hello.

Maria and Ari look up at him.

PARTY LEADER: Welcome to the Party.

He shakes Ari's hand, but then Maria refuses to shake his hand.

PARTY LEADER: It is so good of you to join us.

MARIA: We didn't join.

ARI *(to Maria)***:** Maria, just listen to this guy please.

MARIA *(to the Party Leader)***:** You were just the highest bidder.

ARI *(to the Party Leader)***:** Apologies for my sister's rudeness, she doesn't realise that…

MARIA *(to Ari)***:** Shut up Ari!

PARTY LEADER: There really is no need for this rudeness Maria. The boys didn't hurt you, did they?

MARIA: Not really, but that's not the point.

PARTY LEADER: What is the point then? Do tell.

MARIA: Why were we sold? We didn't do anything! [*She looks around the kitchen*] It's like I'm in a time warp or something in here.

ARI *(to Maria)***:** Now you're insulting his home. Are you serious?

MARIA *(to Ari)***:** It's not his home. It's our jail.

PARTY LEADER: Jail? No Maria. This is your home and you are here to be a proper citizen.

MARIA: What for?

PARTY LEADER: We need your kind to be proper citizens.

MARIA: I don't give a fuck what you need I just want to go home.

ARI *(to Maria)***:** The more you talk, the more shit we're in so please just stop.

MARIA *(to Ari)***:** I can't believe you're taking this lying down.

ARI *(to Maria)***:** Maria, what other choice do we have?

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: He is right. We have bought you and there's nothing you can do about that.

MARIA: That's fucked.

PARTY LEADER: No…what's fucked is you.

Pause. Moves closer to Maria.

MARIA: If you're going to kill us, just get it over with…kill the shit out of us all!

ARI *(to Maria)***:** Why do you have to mention killing? He didn't say that.

MARIA *(to Ari)***:** Ari, everyone knows what these type of people do to people like us.

ARI *(to Maria)***:** And now you're making accusations again. I can't go anywhere with you.

PARTY LEADER: Are you ready for training?

MARIA: You can't make us do anything.

He laughs.

PARTY LEADER: Of course we can. You will be trained and then cleaned.

MARIA *(Confused)***:** What?

PARTY LEADER (*slowly*)**:** Cleaned.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Only so much debt can be accumulated before the cradle of civilisation needs to be cleaned.

MARIA: There's no way you will ever be able to…

ARI: We will try. *(Goes to shake the Party Leader's hand)*

LESSON 2: CUP READING

The Widow and Maria are reading coffee cups in the kitchen. They are sitting on either end of the table and there is a huge stack of cups they need to read in front of them. The Widow is wearing all black clothes with a black scarf over her head. Maria is still in her white robe.

MARIA: I don't see anything in this one.

Pause.

MARIA: It seems too clean…hardly any stains of coffee in it…just take a look at this, my god. (*Shows her cup to the Widow)* What do you make of this? *(Widow does not respond)* Now how can I possibly read that? You can't make something out of nothing, can you?

Pause.

MARIA: My mum used to be able to read any cup. Just give her a cup and she'll tell you everything and there were no uncertainties, your future was all there in brown and white. Birth, bang! Money, bang! Marriage, bang! Mortgage, bang! Babies, bang! But you were never dead in it. Sick yes…but never dead. I wonder why.

Pause.

MARIA: She was a pro.

Pause.

MARIA: Do you know where she is?

Widow ignores her and reads cups.

MARIA: Come on…you must know.

Widow continues ignoring her and reads cups.

MARIA: Everyone is trying to be like my mum here…everyone. I don't even think I inherited her talents, but you know what, I'm trying to do this...I'm trying to see what's in this damn thing.

She throws the cup onto the floor and it breaks. The Widow looks up.

MARIA: I thought at least once I agreed to do these lessons I'd be able to pass. I agreed, didn't I? I'm doing it, aren't I? And still nothing…nothing! I don't have it…I can't even see it, but I'm doing it all…I'm doing everything they are telling me to do, right?

Pause.

MARIA: Right?

She throws another cup onto the floor and it breaks.

MARIA: Just answer me!

WIDOW: There is a little boy.

MARIA: Where?

Maria looks into the Widow's cup.

WIDOW: There.

MARIA: He looks cute.

WIDOW: Of course, it's a child.

MARIA: I want to see something in my cups.

WIDOW: You can if you try.

MARIA: Do you think so?

WIDOW: Oh yes, I know you have it in you.

Maria smiles, knowing she has manipulated the Widow into believing she is interested in cup reading.

MARIA: Thank you.

WIDOW: They wouldn't have bought you if you didn't have something.

MARIA: I've got something?

WIDOW: Oh yes, I can see it.

MARIA: What is it?

WIDOW: It's hard to explain, but it's there.

MARIA: I'm so relieved.

WIDOW: It will be difficult, but you will pass.

Maria smiles sarcastically again.

MARIA: And be a real woman?

WIDOW: Of course.

The Widow gives Maria the cup.

WIDOW: Now, what do you see?

MARIA: This looks kind of like a bride.

WIDOW: Great, keep going.

MARIA: But she's not happy.

The Widow looks into the cup with Maria

MARIA: She looks wet, tired…

Pause.

MARIA: She's looking at me.

WIDOW: The future always looks at you, it's just some don't see it. You, on the other hand… you can see everything.

MARIA: I can?

WIDOW: Of course you can. What else do you see?

MARIA: Hard dicks.

WIDOW: What?

MARIA: Hard dicks.

WIDOW: What do you mean?

MARIA: I mean that this is a useless, superstitious tradition that has nothing to do with me.

Maria breaks another cup on the ground.

MARIA: Can I go home now?

WIDOW: You really are a silly girl.

MARIA: I'm silly? You've been sitting there for over an hour looking at coffee cups and making meaning out of coffee stains and I'm silly?

WIDOW: This is important Maria.

MARIA: Important to whom? You? Do you ever wonder why you do these silly things?

Widow ignores Maria.

MARIA: Is it because your life has no meaning?

Widow ignores Maria.

MARIA: Is it because you're a sad old bag who has nothing better to do?

Widow ignores Maria.

MARIA: You're so weak. You only do what they tell you to do.

The Widow hits Maria in the face. Maria falls.

WIDOW: You know nothing silly girl.

The Widow continues reading the cups as Maria struggles to get up from the floor.

WIDOW: Get up! You have another 50 to read before lunch.

LESSON 3: DANCING

In the kitchen.

Maria is standing in a dance pose with her hands up and one foot bent. She has been standing there for hours. She is wearing her white robe, which is slightly torn and her eye is bruised. The Party Leader is beside her, holding a clipboard.

PARTY LEADER: Why did you break the cups?

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: They are not yours to break.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Why did you upset her?

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: She is an asset to the Party and you had the audacity to upset her?

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Is it so hard to follow rules?

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Is it so difficult to pass the lessons?

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: What are we going to do with you?

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: You can't be difficult forever.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Are you enjoying the dance? No?

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: I didn't think so.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: I do apologise for the pain. I know after ten hours it may start hurting but remember, stay that way and you'll avoid getting a private lesson.

Moves towards Maria.

PARTY LEADER: You don't want a private lesson with me do you?

Moves closer to Maria. Maria tries to move her head, but struggles.

PARTY LEADER: Do you?

Pause. Maria tries to shake her head signalling 'no', but struggles. The Party Leader walks away from Maria.

PARTY LEADER: What's the point in talking? You're not listening.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: You think this is all unjust, don't you?

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Against human rights, right?

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: There are no rights when money is involved. Debts must be paid off somehow and you must start working properly. Those cups are not going to read themselves, are they?

He smiles. She struggles to respond.

PARTY LEADER: We are an honourable Party.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: You are lucky to be here.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Very lucky indeed to have the opportunity to become a proper citizen.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Did you hear me? You are lucky!

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Very lucky to be here.

She falls down.

PARTY LEADER: Well now look what you've done.

He begins to undress.

PARTY LEADER: Private lesson time.

LESSON 4: BOMBONIERE MAKING

In the kitchen.

The Widow and Maria are making a huge amount of bombonieres by placing sugared almonds into tulle sheets and wrapping them with ribbon. The Widow is still wearing her black clothes and scarf. Maria's white robe is torn and has red stains on it. Her eye is still bruised.

The Widow puts a sugared almond in front of Maria's face.

WIDOW: Do you see this?

Maria keeps working.

WIDOW: Hey! What is wrong with you?

The Widow hits her on the head.

WIDOW: Do you see this?

Maria nods.

WIDOW: Take it.

Maria keeps working.

WIDOW: I said take it.

Maria takes the sugared almond.

WIDOW: Now put it under your pillow tonight and you'll dream of the man you will marry.

Maria continues making the bombonieres and does not look up.

WIDOW: That's what you need to do…dream and then they'll let you have it all.

Pause.

WIDOW: How else do you think I'm still here?

Pause.

WIDOW: Why do you think I haven't gone like the rest of them?

Pause.

WIDOW: Because I dream of my husband.

Pause.

WIDOW: You'll have one soon too don't worry.

Enter Ari, holding a rifle, wearing his white robe, which now has red stains on it.

ARI: Hey, I'm home.

WIDOW: Welcome back beautiful boy.

He goes over to the bombonieres and starts eating the sugared almonds.

ARI: They taste great.

WIDOW: Yes of course.

He looks at Maria.

ARI: What's up with her?

WIDOW: She's just moody you know.

ARI: Oh…right.

WIDOW: Just leave her, she'll be fine.

ARI: Yeah, will do.

Steps closer to Maria.

ARI: I love what you've done sis.

She ignores him and keeps working.

ARI: Did you hear me? I said I love your work.

Looks at the Widow.

ARI: Nothing, I'm getting nothing.

WIDOW: She's just not feeling right today.

ARI: Well she knew what to expect and…

WIDOW: Yes, I know, but she can be very sensitive.

ARI: Jesus, she really knows how to ruin everything with her moods.

Knock at the door.

GROOM: Hello? Anyone home?

ARI: Yeah mate, come in.

GROOM: Sorry, should I come back later?

ARI: Nah mate, relax, come right in.

Ari walks the Groom in and then towards Maria.

ARI: Maria, this is…

Ari looks at Maria and becomes angry.

ARI: Put your head up will ya!

She puts her head up.

ARI: And stand up.

She stands.

ARI: This is your husband.

Pause.

ARI: Shake his hand.

She takes her arm out and they shake hands.

GROOM: Hi, I know this might seem fast, but I just thought I should see you before the big day.

ARI: Great idea; otherwise, you don't know what you're getting, right?

GROOM: Yeah, that's right.

The Groom looks at her carefully.

GROOM: Hey mate.

ARI: Yeah?

The Groom moves away from Maria. Ari follows him.

GROOM: What's with her eye?

ARI: What do you mean? You don't think my sister's good enough?

GROOM: Nah, it's not that, her eye is bruised.

ARI: Just a part of the training; we all have bruises, don't you?

Ari puts his top up.

ARI: See this one here on my chest? Got it when I rolled on the ground before I exterminated that kid.

GROOM: What kid?

ARI: You know the exterminating the enemy's kid lesson?

GROOM: I must have missed that one.

ARI: Yeah, it was only offered to guys who are advanced, like yours truly.

GROOM: Oh, that's great for you.

ARI: This is why you're perfect for her mate, always asking questions, passing the lessons, but not excelling, that's just like Maria.

GROOM: It's hard not to ask questions.

ARI: What do you mean?

GROOM: Well I want to know why we do all these things.

ARI: I don't get ya.

GROOM: How is all this training paying off anything?

ARI: I don't know. What do you think?

GROOM: It doesn't matter.

ARI: Want some sugared almonds?

GROOM: Nah.

ARI: Are you sure? They're beautiful.

GROOM: Nah, I'm right.

ARI: Suit yourself.

GROOM: Hey mate, is it ok if I chat with her alone for a sec?

ARI: What for?

GROOM: Just to see what she's like.

ARI: Um…I think there always has to be someone here.

GROOM: I'm going to marry her right?

ARI: Well yeah.

GROOM: The Party has approved it, right?

ARI: Yeah, I know the deal.

GROOM: Five minutes alone isn't breaking any rules.

ARI: I know but she runs.

GROOM: What do you mean?

ARI: She just runs away sometimes.

GROOM: It's alright, I can handle it.

Ari looks at the Widow.

WIDOW: It's ok.

ARI: Right…well…

Looks at Maria.

ARI: We'll be right back sis, ok?

Maria does not answer.

Ari and the Widow exit.

GROOM: Can you stand up? I want to see you.

Pause. She does not stand up.

GROOM: Do you know how long it's been since I've seen a woman?

Pause. She does not stand up.

GROOM: Please stand up.

She stands up.

GROOM: Now, turn around.

She turns.

GROOM: Kiss me.

She looks at him.

GROOM: Please just kiss me…I need to feel you.

She runs away and exits.

Ari and the Widow bring her back.

ARI: I told you mate, you got to keep an eye on this one or she'll do a runner.

LESSON 5: LOVE

In the kitchen.

Maria is standing and struggling to hold a large candle. She has been holding it for hours. She is still wearing her white robe that is even more torn and stained. The Party Leader watches her, holding a clipboard.

PARTY LEADER: Why did you run away?

Maria is struggling to hold onto the large candle.

PARTY LEADER: You thought this would be easy, didn't you?

She is still struggling to hold onto the large candle.

PARTY LEADER: I told you it's not. Why do you think a child doesn't carry it during all the ceremonies?

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Because it's hard, not easy. Nothing is easy, except maybe a woman, but even then, there's a cost.

He chuckles to himself.

PARTY LEADER: Sorry, I know how sensitive you are…I love all women equally. Do you love men?

Maria struggles to speak.

PARTY LEADER: What? I can't hear you. What?

He goes closer.

PARTY LEADER: Well? I still can't hear you.

Maria struggles to speak. The Party Leader gives up trying to listen.

PARTY LEADER: Oh what does it matter, you've said plenty, haven't you?

Maria struggles to speak.

PARTY LEADER: I know your answer anyway. Well of course you love men.

She struggles to respond and is becoming angry. He goes right up to her ear and whispers.

PARTY LEADER: You love men.

He goes closer.

PARTY LEADER: And you are really going to love this man.

Maria struggles to speak.

PARTY LEADER: Can you hear me?

Maria struggles to speak.

PARTY LEADER: You must be one of us now so you must be trained.

Maria struggles to speak.

PARTY LEADER: You know this…it's the process and you know what happens to a debt that never gets paid off?

Maria struggles to speak.

PARTY LEADER: Well…do you?

Maria struggles to speak.

PARTY LEADER: Dicks go soft.

Maria screams from the pain after holding the large candle for hours. The Party Leader laughs.

PARTY LEADER: So do you love men now?

She becomes very angry, but still cannot construct a sentence.

PARTY LEADER: Do you?

He goes up to her as if he is about to kiss her. She drops the large candle. He laughs again and picks it up.

PARTY LEADER: Ok well now we're going to have to start all over again so take it off.

She begins to undress. He undoes his pants.

LESSON 6: CROCHETING

In the kitchen.

The Widow and Maria are crocheting doilies on the kitchen table. The Widow is still wearing all black clothes with a black scarf over her head. Maria's white robe has more red stains on it.

WIDOW: No! You're doing it all wrong.

MARIA: This is how you said I should do it.

WIDOW: No, you don't listen.

MARIA: Oh my god! You are driving me crazy!

WIDOW: Watch and learn.

Maria looks carefully as the Widow is crocheting.

MARIA: Oh…ok…I think I get it now.

WIDOW: Let's see you do it then.

The Widow watches Maria crocheting.

Ari enters. His white robe is dirty and his hands are full of blood. He looks distressed.

WIDOW: Better, but not perfect.

MARIA: Fine.

Maria and the Widow continue crocheting.

ARI: Hi all.

WIDOW: The beautiful boy has arrived.

MARIA: Hey Ari.

Maria does not look up and is concentrating on her crocheting.

Ari washes the blood off his hands and then dries them.

He watches them work.

MARIA: How was your day?

ARI: Same old.

MARIA: Was your lesson hard?

ARI: Not really.

MARIA: Oh yeah.

ARI: Yeah.

Ari starts cleaning his rifle.

MARIA: So what did you do?

WIDOW: Less talking, more working.

MARIA *(ignores Widow)***:** So a good day?

ARI: Yeah, not bad.

MARIA: My crochet lesson is so hard.

ARI: You seem to be doing alright.

MARIA: Not really, can't crochet to save my life.

ARI: It can't be that hard.

MARIA: Yeah, that's what you think, but then you try to do it and you realise it's really tough.

ARI: Yeah, my lesson was pretty tough too.

MARIA: Was it? What did you do?

Ari is silent and looks distressed.

MARIA: Are you ok?

ARI: I can't do this.

She stops crocheting. He puts his rifle down.

MARIA: What?

ARI: I need to stop doing this now.

Pause.

WIDOW *(notices that she has stopped crocheting)***:** Why you stop?

MARIA *(ignores Widow)***:** Why?

ARI: Why? Because I can see them.

MARIA: See who?

ARI: The people…our people.

MARIA: You need to stop looking at them in the eyes.

ARI: I can't help it Maria.

MARIA: What happened to never asking questions and just doing the lessons?

ARI: I got curious and then…

MARIA: Remember that they deserve it.

ARI: How do you know that?

Pause.

WIDOW *(to Maria)***:** You must continue.

MARIA: Fine.

Maria continues crocheting. Ari continues cleaning his rifle.

MARIA: Remember that this is what we are expected to do and this is just what we do.

ARI: I know.

MARIA: You are not responsible.

ARI: I know.

MARIA: Please keep trying to pass the lessons.

ARI: I will.

MARIA: Those are eyes of serial killers and rapists and they are the reason we are forced to be here.

Pause.

MARIA: Don't forget that.

Ari nods. Maria stabs herself while crocheting.

MARIA: Ah!

ARI: What's wrong?

MARIA: Just stabbed myself again.

Maria puts her finger in her mouth.

WIDOW: You're using the wrong needle silly girl.

LESSON 7: SEWING

In the kitchen.

The Widow and Maria are sewing a massive wedding dress.

The Widow is still in her black clothes and scarf, while Maria is still in her white stained robe.

MARIA: I hate lace.

They continue sewing.

MARIA: It's just so itchy and old-looking.

Pause.

MARIA: And you need to smell it.

WIDOW: No.

MARIA: Why not?

WIDOW: I know the smell.

MARIA: You do?

WIDOW: I've smelt it many times.

MARIA: When did you get married?

WIDOW: A long time ago.

MARIA: Did you love him?

The Widow laughs.

MARIA: Well I don't think I want to get married.

The Widow ignores her.

MARIA: Do you know what I mean?

WIDOW: I know nothing.

MARIA: What's the point?

WIDOW: It's the meaning of life.

MARIA: Marriage?

WIDOW: Marriage…children…family….that's life.

MARIA: There's more to it then…

WIDOW: No, that's it…that's all there is.

MARIA: I don't believe you.

Maria stops sewing, her fingers hurt.

MARIA: Who is this dress for anyway?

WIDOW: You.

MARIA: Me?

WIDOW: Yes, you.

MARIA: Why?

WIDOW: Because you're getting married stupid.

MARIA: I don't know if I'm ready.

WIDOW: No one is ever ready.

MARIA: What if I don't want to?

The Widow ignores her.

MARIA: What if I don't want to?

WIDOW: It's not about wanting, it's just about doing.

MARIA: I don't know him.

WIDOW: There's nothing to know…he's just a man.

MARIA: I'm…

WIDOW: And you're just a woman…

MARIA: I'm more.

WIDOW: No, you're just that. He only needs to know you from the waist down anyway.

MARIA: I have to be more.

WIDOW: Your sewing is incredible now.

MARIA: Really?

WIDOW: It's improved.

Maria looks at the dress.

MARIA: It does look good.

WIDOW: See what can happen when you try.

MARIA: I know.

WIDOW: You'll be a real woman before you know it.

LESSON 8: SEX

In the kitchen.

Maria and the Groom sit at the table. Maria's white robe has more red stains on it.

GROOM: You know you did get wet that last time.

Pause.

GROOM: I saw it with my own eyes so it couldn't have been that bad for you, could it?

She looks down.

GROOM: I just want to make sure you're satisfied, that's all.

Pause.

GROOM: That's what I'm meant to do, right? Satisfy you.

Pause.

GROOM: They've made me wait for ages for you…put me through hell you know.

Pause.

GROOM: You name it, I did it and now it's your turn, but I won't hurt you I promise.

Pause.

GROOM: I'm going to really try and once we're married, you'll be screaming your lungs out don't worry.

Pause.

GROOM: Screaming with pleasure and then with pain once the kids come.

Pause.

GROOM: I can't wait for kids, can you?

She ignores him.

GROOM: He'll be so cute.

Pause.

GROOM: You'll be great…I mean you have nearly graduated so that means you're ready for the next level and that's with me.

Pause.

GROOM: I feel really lucky they got me to be with you because I feel like we…connect, you know?

She ignores him.

GROOM: You were wet that must mean something, right?

She ignores him.

GROOM: I must have a special touch…I do try a lot because I know it's important for you…I mean for women in general.

Pause.

GROOM: I can't wait to see you in white…you'll look hot…won't you?

She ignores him.

GROOM: Answer me please.

She ignores him.

GROOM: I've paid so answer me!

MARIA: Yes, I will look hot.

GROOM: I do turn you on right?

She ignores him.

He hits her.

She stands up and faces him.

MARIA: Yes, you turn me on.

GROOM: That's a relief…I was a bit worried you were faking it.

LESSON 9: JUSTICE

In the kitchen.

Maria is standing and the Party Leader is sitting, holding a clipboard.

She is still wearing her torn white robe.

MARIA: I want to work with Ari.

PARTY LEADER: That's impossible.

MARIA: No it's not, he needs me.

PARTY LEADER: Is this about his tantrum the other day?

MARIA: I want to do it all.

PARTY LEADER: You can't.

MARIA: I won't tell anyone.

PARTY LEADER: It's not as simple as that.

MARIA: I can do both.

PARTY LEADER: Really?

MARIA: Try me.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: We will have to get you wet for the last lesson.

MARIA: That's fine.

PARTY LEADER: Not many survive.

MARIA: I will.

PARTY LEADER: You'll have to wear the dress too when we wet you.

MARIA: Why?

PARTY LEADER: No point in not using what you've worked so hard to make.

Pause. She looks unconvinced.

PARTY LEADER: If you won't wear it for him then you'll wear it for me. Do you understand?

MARIA: Fine, I'll wear it. What else?

PARTY LEADER: Nothing I can think of for now.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: No one has done this before.

MARIA: So what?

PARTY LEADER: How will you work and have a son?

MARIA: A son? No.

PARTY LEADER: Bring the boy.

LITTLE BOY enters and looks at Maria.

LITTLE BOY: Hi.

PARTY LEADER: We bought him for you yesterday.

MARIA: No! No! No!

PARTY LEADER: Now come on, introduce yourself.

The Little Boy pokes her.

Maria looks at the Little Boy.

MARIA: I'm Maria.

LITTLE BOY: No, you're not.

MARIA: I'm not?

LITTLE BOY: You're mum.

The Little Boy hugs her.

She turns to the Party Leader.

MARIA: I know what you are doing.

He laughs.

PARTY LEADER: You know nothing.

MARIA: You won't make any money if we stop working.

PARTY LEADER (*to the Little Boy*): Off to your room boy.

The Little Boy exits.

MARIA: No one wants to be a citizen.

PARTY LEADER: That's simply not true. Our people strive for greatness.

MARIA: I wonder how much our re-sale value would be if we just stopped working.

Pause.

MARIA: Breaking us makes you money, right?

PARTY LEADER: Shut it.

MARIA: I know it's only money, but I can't help but take it personally.

PARTY LEADER: You have some nerve.

MARIA: I'm a woman after all. I can't help but take everything personally.

PARTY LEADER: Watch your words.

MARIA: I just can't accept this deal in its current draft.

PARTY LEADER: Now hang on…

MARIA: Does this turn you on?

He is about to hit her, but stops.

MARIA: You can hit me all you want, but that will never stop me knowing that you…

PARTY LEADER: You need to stop otherwise…

MARIA: …need us, right? How much have you made since you started buying us? 1 billion? 2 billion?

PARTY LEADER: You don't know what…

MARIA: The marketplace has been kind to you.

PARTY LEADER: You must follow…

MARIA: Follow what? Useless, mundane lessons that have no end?

PARTY LEADER: They are our…

MARIA: We're paying for debts we didn't even make and they are just getting bigger and bigger like your cock.

PARTY LEADER: You have gone completely…

MARIA: If you don't let me do it all, then I'll tell everyone this debt is fake and we'll fuck this place up.

PARTY LEADER: We can easily…

MARIA: I'm happy to die, but that will cost you more money, won't it?

Maria lifts her robe up.

MARIA: Come on…fuck me to death now.

The Party Leader approaches her and starts to choke her. He looks at her in the eyes and wants to kiss her. He stops choking her and pulls her robe down.

PARTY LEADER: You'll have to be completely cleaned first with water.

MARIA: I know.

PARTY LEADER: This is uncharted territory.

MARIA: I'm aware.

PARTY LEADER: You will…

MARIA: As long as I can make them all pay for everything they have done, I don't care.

PARTY LEADER: That sounds reasonable.

LESSON 10: COOKING

In the kitchen.

Maria is making biscuits and singing a children's song. She is still wearing her torn robe.

The Widow in her black clothes and scarf enters.

WIDOW: They are beautiful.

MARIA: Thank you.

WIDOW: They really are something, bravo!

MARIA: I love doing this.

WIDOW: Of course, it's what we do.

MARIA: I used to do it with mum all the time.

WIDOW: We always make it together first.

MARIA: She passed it onto me and now I can do it on my own.

WIDOW: It's your turn to pass it on now, that's tradition.

MARIA: It never changes.

WIDOW: Never, it just keeps going and going…

MARIA: It never stops.

WIDOW: Students become teachers.

The Widow takes Maria's hand and they make a biscuit together with the dough.

WIDOW: Daughters become mothers.

They finish making the biscuit.

WIDOW: See? See what we can do?

Maria breaks the biscuit.

MARIA: It's time to move on.

LESSON 11: MARRIAGE

In the kitchen.

Maria changes into her wedding dress.

Ari enters and washes the blood off his hands.

He sits next to her.

ARI: Are you ready?

She nods smiling.

ARI: Like I said, it's just how we do it, yeah? Everyone gets married.

She nods smiling.

ARI: They'll start to look after us soon.

She nods smiling.

ARI: You know I did those last lessons for you.

She nods smiling.

ARI: It's always been for you.

She nods smiling.

ARI: And we're doing the right thing.

She nods smiling.

ARI: We followed the lessons and your new life is starting today.

She nods smiling.

ARI: You're finally going to be a proper citizen.

He stands and takes out his arm.

ARI: Are you ready?

MARIA: Of course.

She stands and takes his hand.

ARI: I'm going to miss you.

MARIA: Me too.

ARI: I mean I'll see you, but it won't be the same once you're married.

MARIA: Yeah I know.

ARI: Dad should be here to give you away.

MARIA: He should.

ARI: Would mum and dad be proud of us?

MARIA: Yeah…maybe.

ARI: You're getting married, I will be…

MARIA: Ari…

ARI: …the greatest citizen. They would be proud.

MARIA: Ari…

ARI: Just imagine if they were here.

MARIA: Ari!

ARI *(annoyed)***:** What?

MARIA: I'm doing both.

ARI *(angry)***:** What?

MARIA: I can't just sit in here anymore. I need more. I need to make them pay.

ARI: Do you even know what we do to them?

MARIA: I'm doing it to save you.

ARI: No you're not, that's bullshit.

MARIA: Ari, I know that you're not coping.

ARI: You know nothing!

MARIA: I don't want them to do things to me or you. I want to do things to them.

ARI: To them? Do you even know who they are?

Pause.

ARI: I don't know if I can do any of this anymore. We should just go home now.

MARIA: Home? It's too late.

ARI: How do you know that? We can build another home if we try.

MARIA: Be serious Ari.

ARI: I can't…

MARIA: I told you never in the eyes Ari, never in the eyes.

ARI: You sound like them.

MARIA: What?

ARI: You sound like those teachers.

MARIA: Ari, it's me.

ARI: No it's not. I can't even recognise you anymore.

He steps back from Maria and falls over.

MARIA: You're delirious; you don't know what you're saying…

ARI: What happened to you?

MARIA: Nothing.

ARI: What did they do to you?

MARIA: Ari you need to stop.

ARI: I want to know! I am your brother and I want to know!

MARIA: They did nothing; it's fine.

ARI: I can't see you…I can't see you.

Maria grabs Ari by the shoulders to look at her, but Ari is trying to turn away.

MARIA: Look at me Ari…look at me!

LESSON 12: LESSONS

The Widow is in coloured, modern clothes and begins packing up the kitchen.

Maria runs in wearing her wedding dress.

MARIA: What are you doing?

She begins following her.

MARIA: Why are you wearing that? And you're walking so fast…I don't understand what's going on.

WIDOW: You passed.

MARIA: What?

WIDOW: You passed all of your lessons so I'm just packing up.

MARIA: I did?

WIDOW: Yes.

MARIA: Where are your real clothes?

WIDOW: You want me to dress like that again?

MARIA: Dress?

WIDOW: Yes dress, I don't usually wear that when I'm not working.

MARIA: Working? What do you mean?

Maria becomes anxious.

MARIA: Your beautiful boy needs you.

WIDOW: Who?

MARIA: Ari.

WIDOW: The training is over, ok?

MARIA: It was more than training to me.

WIDOW: Well you should have known.

MARIA: Known what?

WIDOW: They were just lessons.

Pause.

WIDOW: It's time Maria.

MARIA: I know.

WIDOW: Your new life starts now.

MARIA: But I'm scared.

WIDOW: I know…we all are.

Pause.

WIDOW: Are you ready?

She nods.

WIDOW: Are you sure?

She nods.

WIDOW: No one has done this before.

Widow helps Maria lie down on the kitchen table.

LESSON 13: FREEDOM

In the kitchen.

The Party Leader enters, holding a clipboard and places a towel on Maria's head. The Party Leader starts pouring water on her head. Maria coughs up water and her wedding dress becomes soaking wet. Once all the water is poured, the Party Leader helps Maria up and they look at each other.

PARTY LEADER: Bravo.

Maria is coughing.

PARTY LEADER: What an amazing performance.

The Party Leader claps his hands again.

PARTY LEADER: Now that's the first time anyone has laid on that table for me in that exquisite dress and taken in the water so elegantly.

Maria is coughing.

PARTY LEADER: That was extraordinary.

MARIA: Can I do it?

PARTY LEADER: You could give up your body…that was never an issue for you…it really isn't an issue for many…I mean the body is just the body, right? But you are not like everyone else Maria…you can give up the other stuff too.

MARIA: Really?

PARTY LEADER: Oh yes.

MARIA: So when can I start?

PARTY LEADER: It's just too boring to just be a woman, right?

MARIA: The sooner I start the better.

PARTY LEADER: I'm just trying to understand...

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Do you want to be a man?

MARIA: Yes.

PARTY LEADER: And a woman?

MARIA: Yes.

PARTY LEADER: I have plans that will satisfy all your urges don't you worry. Are you listening?

MARIA: Yes.

PARTY LEADER: But you will not be like your parents.

MARIA: Good.

PARTY LEADER: You will be better.

MARIA: Great.

PARTY LEADER: It's just impossible to be like them, right?

MARIA: Yes.

PARTY LEADER: You are more than a woman.

MARIA: Yes.

PARTY LEADER: And you will be fundamental to the Party.

MARIA: Yes!

PARTY LEADER: Nothing like your parents.

MARIA: Yes!

PARTY LEADER: Nothing like your parents' parents.

MARIA: Yes!

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: You will be the first and greatest citizen this civilisation has ever seen.

The Party Leader caresses her hair.

PARTY LEADER: You will have a happy life now.

Pause. He steps back.

PARTY LEADER: You are finally clean.

LESSON 14: EGGS

In the kitchen.

The Widow is in regular clothes. She dresses Maria into a clean white robe.

They then sit on either end of the table and crack two red coloured eggs together. There is a huge stack of red coloured eggs in the middle. The eggs that crack go on one side and the other eggs that do not crack go on the other side.

WIDOW: Are you ready?

MARIA: Of course.

WIDOW: Good.

Pause.

WIDOW: It will be different.

MARIA: I know.

WIDOW: Things will never be the same.

MARIA: I know.

WIDOW: It's a different level…a higher level.

MARIA: Good.

WIDOW: Are you ready for that?

MARIA: I'm ready.

Pause.

WIDOW: I'm so proud of you.

MARIA: Will we still be able to play sometimes?

WIDOW: Of course.

Maria smiles.

MARIA: Good.

LESSON 15: EXTERMINATING

In the kitchen.

Maria is wearing a clean white robe and holding a rifle with the Party Leader, who is holding a clipboard.

The Groom is standing half naked covering his body.

MARIA: I just shoot him and he's dead, right?

PARTY LEADER: Well of course.

MARIA: I want more.

PARTY LEADER: More?

MARIA: Yes, I want him to feel pain.

PARTY LEADER: Good…how?

She approaches the groom and starts hitting him with the gun. She then kicks him while he is lying on the ground.

MARIA: He'll be my husband now.

The Party Leader laughs.

PARTY LEADER: Fine…every woman needs a man.

He kisses her.

PARTY LEADER: Next.

The Widow, wearing her black clothes and scarf, brings Ari in. He is half naked, tied up, with a sock in his mouth. Maria puts the rifle down. The Party Leader grabs her arm and turns her around.

PARTY LEADER: He organised the sale Maria.

Ari tries to speak.

PARTY LEADER: It was him.

Ari tries to speak.

PARTY LEADER: He wanted to be the greatest citizen.

Ari tries to speak.

PARTY LEADER: He was the one who even ordered your marriage.

Ari tries to speak.

PARTY LEADER: And now he's trying to escape, aren't you?

Ari tries to speak.

PARTY LEADER: He's worthless. No one will want him. He must go.

There is silence.

Maria aims her gun at Ari.

Ari finally spits the sock out of his mouth.

ARI: I'll do anything…please don't.

EPILOGUE: BUYING

In the kitchen.

Maria is now wearing her clean white robe and is cleaning a rifle. She starts singing a children's song. The Groom sits next to her in a white robe that is torn and dirty and he is reading a huge stack of coffee cups.

The Little Boy enters.

LITTLE BOY: Hi dad. Hi mum.

MARIA: Come here beautiful boy.

The Little Boy goes to her.

MARIA: How was school?

LITTLE BOY: Good.

MARIA: Did you listen to the teacher?

LITTLE BOY: Yeah.

MARIA: Did you pass your lesson?

LITTLE BOY: Yeah.

MARIA: Good.

Maria sits again and continues cleaning her rifle. The Little Boy tries to help.

MARIA: What are you doing?

LITTLE BOY: Helping you.

MARIA: Oh no that's not for you. Get your homework out.

LITTLE BOY: Fine.

He reluctantly takes his books out and starts reading.

Maria continues cleaning her rifle.

The Groom continues reading cups.

LITTLE BOY: Why are we in debt?

The Groom puts his cup down and looks at Maria. She looks at the Little Boy.

MARIA: What?

LITTLE BOY: It says that our people are in debt.

MARIA: Where?

LITTLE BOY: Here.

The Little Boy points at a page in his textbook.

Maria rips out the page.

MARIA: You're old enough to know that there's no such thing as debt.

The Little Boy is shocked and saddened.

MARIA: We buy and sell now.

LITTLE BOY: What do we buy and sell?

MARIA: People silly.

LITTLE BOY: But isn't that too expensive?

MARIA: Don't worry, we can afford it.

She caresses the Little Boy's head.

MARIA: The marketplace has been kind to us.

The Little Boy continues doing his homework.

The Groom continues reading cups.

MARIA: Ok, I need to go.

GROOM: Where are you going?

MARIA: Training.

LITTLE BOY (*clapping his hands*)**:** It's cleaning time! It's cleaning time!

Maria goes to the door to leave and is about to exit when the Party Leader arrives.

PARTY LEADER: Are you heading there now?

MARIA: Yeah, thought I better go, but why don't you come in?

PARTY LEADER: Not if you're busy, I can pick him up later.

MARIA: No, it's fine, I was leaving early anyway.

The Party Leader, holding a clipboard, enters wearing a suit and his hair is perfectly styled.

MARIA: Say hello everyone.

GROOM AND LITTLE BOY: Hi.

MARIA (*calling out to another room*)**:** Ari, he's here, get out here!

Maria and the Party Leader move away from the Groom and Little Boy.

PARTY LEADER: How's it going?

MARIA: Fine.

PARTY LEADER: The new way working?

MARIA: I guess.

PARTY LEADER: No issues?

MARIA: Not really.

Pause.

PARTY LEADER: Are you sure?

MARIA *(ignoring Party Leader and calling out)*: Ari, get down now please!

PARTY LEADER: Profits are up.

MARIA: Good.

PARTY LEADER: We are more efficient now thanks to you.

MARIA: Great.

PARTY LEADER: This restructure is exactly what we needed.

MARIA: I know.

PARTY LEADER: Then what's on your mind?

MARIA: Nothing.

The Party Leader puts his hand on Maria's arm.

PARTY LEADER: Maria, it's me.

MARIA: I know.

PARTY LEADER: Then…

MARIA: I just feel like nothing is happening.

PARTY LEADER: About what?

MARIA: Us…it's the same routine.

PARTY LEADER: Is something else meant to happen?

MARIA: Well yeah, we do this and then one day it stops.

PARTY LEADER: What stops?

MARIA: The debt.

The Party Leader laughs.

MARIA: What's the point then?

The Party Leader continues laughing.

MARIA: All this work…all these lives...and there's no end in sight?

PARTY LEADER: What kind of end point do you want?

MARIA: Isn't there another way?

PARTY LEADER: This is the other way.

MARIA: There must be another way for us.

PARTY LEADER: Well you tell me. What is this other way?

Ari enters battered and bruised, but in a suit, holding a clipboard, with perfectly styled hair.

PARTY LEADER: Ari, do you have another way?

Ari struggles to speak.

PARTY LEADER: I can't hear you. What did you say?

Ari struggles to speak.

PARTY LEADER: There's no point talking to him, is there?

Maria ignores him and is looking at Ari.

PARTY LEADER: Right, we need to go; we're late for the auction.

Party Leader walks towards the door.

PARTY LEADER: When you find another way, do let me know my dear. *(To Ari)* Now come on Ari, it's time.

The Party Leader exits. Ari follows him and is about to leave.

MARIA: Ari.

He turns and faces Maria.

MARIA: Don't let them tell you what to do.

Ari nods.

Finish.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I argue that intertextuality shapes the work of some Greek-Australian feminist playwrights (Tes Lyssiotis, Koraly Dimitriadis and me) who, through our playwriting, speak back to a variety of texts and this captures our experiences of existing between cultures. For Greek-Australian women, it is "especially difficult" to navigate between "restrictive traditional behaviour codes in the home while living in a permissive society" (Doumanis 78). These two worlds we exist within can be both liberating and repressive, and through our plays we express this hybridity, which can be understood through intertextuality.

My process, from theory to practice and then back again, is about creating new ways of understanding this type of feminist playwriting, and the concept of intertextuality – where prominent stereotypical and cultural texts are reformed and *genotexts* given prominence – works to begin this discussion on Greek-Australian feminist playwriting. This research (thesis) and practice (*The Debt*) finally considers the feminine cultural hybridity in Australian playwriting and, by reflecting on and enacting practice, this project strives to encourage more diverse Australian plays to be made and researched.

Reflecting on practice and thinking about the process gives me, as a practitioner, the power to know how I understand, thus enabling me to change and grow cognitively. This is what Jürgen Habermas defines as the "the emancipatory power of reflection": through knowledge and understanding comes power. He also states that "[s]elf-reflection is determined by an emancipatory cognitive interest" (197, 310). This is known as emancipatory knowledge. By critically reflecting on my own playwriting and the playwriting of other Greek-Australian feminist playwrights, I am aiming to emancipate knowledge about this hybrid feminist form of playwriting. I believe that this metacognitive understanding leads to a better understanding of

how we write plays, and this is important to both encourage more work, but to also expand our knowledge on how to write a feminist play.

By combining John Dewey and Habermas, Jennifer A. Moon confirms that knowledge is created through reflection. She sees Habermas as not only asserting that reflection leads to knowledge being created, but that knowledge is also developed and this leads to a "transformation in the self". This means that "reflection used for emancipatory purposes…encourages critique and evaluation" (*Reflection* 14-5). By reflecting on Greek-Australian feminist playwriting, I am contributing to how a feminist style of playwriting is understood. As Moon states, reflective enactment is not only about "self-understanding", but it is also about "questioning of the processes" of "interpretive enquiry" (*Reflection* 14). Through a greater understanding of how I write plays, I am actually challenging the means that we use to understand this process. Reflecting on practice is a way of understanding playwriting: it challenges current linear and monological understandings, as was stipulated in Chapter Two, by exposing the polyphonic and intertextual nature of a feminist playwriting style. Moon expresses that "taking a critical overview of the self, [and] one's mental processes" leads to "emancipation" (*Reflection* 158). I am viewing my own thinking and practice critically by exploring my own and other likeminded playwriting practices and, in effect, gaining freedom from the limiting playwriting manuals by forming and exemplifying this way of understanding feminist playwriting. In other words, reflecting on a feminist playwriting practice opens up and emancipates knowledge about the way some plays are written. It also gives me, as a playwriting practitioner, the emancipatory knowledge to describe my style of playwriting. As Robin Nelson states, through this "critical engagement" practice will be "refined". Practice research is about "doing" and accepts "that knowledge is not fixed and absolute", allowing for individualised practice to be considered and not constrained by conventions (72, 9, 39). Through a type of research that both creates and critically reflects on hybrid feminist playwriting, I was able to

find a method of understanding our style that will not only clarify what we do, but also, hopefully, improve and create more of what we do. Greek-Australian feminist playwriting can be understood through an intertextual process that bravely challenges the “Good Greek Girl” stereotype and other cultural texts as well as gives prominence to the *genotext*. This is one way of explaining what we do, and it strives to encourage more hybrid voices to start discussing the nature of their playwriting.

In the Introduction, I justified my use of hybrid/hybridity through Homi Bhabha by explaining how Greek-Australian culture exists between two cultures, fitting in neither completely. The specificity of my research subject, Greek-Australian feminist playwrights, was also justified, highlighting how diversity is achieved by actually researching marginalised groups. I then clarified my feminist position by showing how these Greek-Australian plays portray the lives of Greek-Australian women and these are varied and endless. I embraced the unifying aspects of feminist playwriting, discussed by Rose Weitz, Lizbeth Goodman and Elaine Aston, emphasising the importance of an open understanding of feminist that includes, rather than excludes. Even though my research considers both gender and culture, Greek-Australian women are marginalised artistically in the Australian theatre industry, not economically, which explains my reluctance to use the concept of intersectional feminism. I use Cixous’ definition of *écriture feminine*, showing the significance of the female form itself in the process of playwriting and, specifically, how playwrights utilise the *genotext* in their plays. As Cixous asserts, with “more body” there can be “more writing” (“Laugh” 886). This chapter concludes with a description of my methodology that is both practical and theoretical. My play *The Debt* is an enactment of the intertextuality inherent in Greek-Australian feminist plays. This thesis analytically reflects on this play and other Greek-Australian feminist plays to theoretically show an understanding of Greek-Australian feminist playwriting through the concept of intertextuality. Following Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, the practice has led the

research, but the research has also influenced the practice. The theories that were used and analysed in this Introduction and Chapter One are then shown in practice in Chapter 6, which is a copy of *The Debt*. Reflective strategies, inspired by Moon, are utilised in Chapters Three, Four and Five, as I analytically reflect on my play and other Greek-Australian feminist plays. These modes of knowledge (practice, research/theoretical and reflective) have been used to describe this style of feminist playwriting.

Chapter One delves further into this concept of intertextuality, as defined by Julia Kristeva. I began by arguing that as a hybrid woman, I am made by many texts, and intertextuality is a way of describing this hybridity. I then defined the prominent ethnic stereotype, the “Good Greek Girl”, in order to show how a stereotype can repress our hybridity, but in our plays, we subvert these cultural assumptions. This can be viewed as intertextual because we are transforming stereotypical texts. This subversion continues via our presentation of reading-writing and the *genotext* in our plays. I thus conclude that the intertextual process we should use to understand our plays is about subverting the “Good Greek Girl” stereotype, transforming cultural texts through a reading-writing process as well as through the *genotext*.

The importance of this research is confirmed in Chapter Two, where the significant problems in playwriting manuals are identified and analysed. Most manuals are influenced by Plato’s essentialist beliefs in art as an instinctual entity that few can create and comprehend. This exclusivity is contradicted when the same manuals promote particular types of structures for playwriting that are highly traditional and masculine, and follow Aristotle’s approach of hierarchically ordering play conventions. In effect, some feminists and other marginalised groups who use a different playwriting aesthetic are isolated from understandings of the practice of playwriting. This is unsurprising considering women are under-represented in all aspects in the Australian theatre industry, and this lack of representation detrimentally affects our thinking on playwriting. It is thus integral to begin creating and analytically reflecting on

this marginalised work: diverse forms of playwriting must be written about. This thesis contributes to feminist playwriting, exemplifying the importance of intertextuality in understanding hybrid feminist playwriting. By articulating how this concept of intertextuality is inherent in our playwriting, new ways of writing a play can finally be critically considered.

In Chapter Three, I describe how the process of writing a play is demonstrated in *A White Sports Coat* by Tes Lyssiotis. By analysing Greek-Australian feminist playwriting, I am able to actually show how this intertextual process operates to express our hybridity. In this play, Lyssiotis merges languages and texts seamlessly to show how we exist between two cultures. She is trying to articulate a language that can encompass this ‘in-betweenness’ and she does this through deconstructing cultural texts that both acknowledge and challenge cultural assumptions. By embodying these significant poems and songs through a pregnant Daughter, she is able to show how texts have formed us and also how we can transform these same texts to liberate ourselves and express our feminine complexity. Inspired by Greek tragedy as well as a classic children’s tale, Lyssiotis confirms how diverse texts work intertextually to portray our hybridity.

Koraly Dimitriadis’ *KORALY “I say the wrong things all the time”* is analysed in Chapter Four to further justify and elaborate on this connection between intertextuality and hybridity in Greek-Australian feminist playwriting. Dimitriadis, like Lyssiotis, combines the roles of mother and daughter, but does so with more brutality to aggressively challenge repressive sexual expectations, as encompassed by the “Good Greek Girl” stereotype. She performs this stereotype in order to expose its repressive, hypocritical nature; she embodies this text to dismantle it and create a more complex portrait of Greek-Australian femininity. Her explicit use of the reading-writing process, where she is reading her poems and then writing her play, is similar to Lyssiotis and shows how, through reading and re-reading, she is able to write. The power of the female form is also portrayed as a repressive and liberating force,

further confirming the prominence of the *genotext* in hybrid feminist playwriting. I also show how the *abject* within the *genotext* is expressed in order to empower and liberate the hybrid female voice through the body. Dimitriadis is able to fight against the cultural forces of family and gender through intertextuality; her use of diverse texts captures the complexity of hybrid femininity.

Chapter Five analyses my practice research play, *The Debt*. Here I show how stereotypes can be challenged through a dystopian frame, especially through repeated rituals. I also show the need for these cultural expectations to create a sense of wholeness, but these restrictive cultural acts also repress diversity and individuality. This is the contradictory image of the "Good Greek Girl" I portray in this play. There is both a comfort and a danger in embodying this stereotype. Through the diverse styles of Sophocles and Pinter I also attempt to find a synthesis between traditional Greek and English voices. This use of intertextuality allows me to reform these canonical texts (*Antigone* and *One for the Road*) in order to express the traditional and modern hybridity significant to my own experiences as a Greek-Australian woman. This reading-writing process challenges monological narrative forms, especially through the *genotext*, which empowers and portrays the changing nature of femininity. My torture scenes also embrace the *abject* within the *genotext*, exposing the physical pain inflicted on the female form and giving this exiled, fragmented female body centre stage. *The Debt* can be understood through an intertextual process where the typical image of a Greek-Australian woman is challenged, canonical texts are reimagined and the *genotext* is utilised in order to expose the complexities of our feminine hybridity.

The inclusion of *The Debt* as Chapter Six encompasses, in practice, the ideas discussed in the previous chapters. The play shows how Greek-Australian identity is hybrid, both inside and outside of the Anglo cultural conversation. It also embodies the two levels of patriarchy (Greek and Australian) that Greek-Australian women must operate within. Its use of rituals and

cultural images shows the power of cultural stereotypes and texts in forming an individual and how women must assimilate to an ideology they are against, speak and act within a system that is not of their own making. Above all, it is an illustration of intertextuality and how what we read forms what we write.

In conclusion, there will always be "one more scene to write", as Lyssiotis repeats in her play (28, 29). We will always strive to capture our voices in our writing, as Dimitriadis repeats in her play (31). We will always try to see an "end in sight", as I write in my play (43). As Cixous expresses, "her writing can only keep going, without ever inscribing or discerning contours" ("Laugh" 889). Greek-Australian feminist playwriting will never end and how its hybridity is captured by words written for the stage has finally begun to be articulated.

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