From the Dead (Choephoroi, Libation Bearers), cont.

3) Elektra at father’s tomb
   “To bring justice – or vengeance?” (70)

Note how Aeschylus uses chorus in LB to speed & slow rhythms development of imagery, themes of hospitality, etc.

Common patterns, mirrorings & inversions in A & LB
   Return home of the male
   Cycle of vengeance & murder: now mother & male consort
   Revelation of K & Ae on the ekkyklema
The Eumenides

How perform the past without being reduced to the past?

1) Inversions & Transformations of A & LB
   Opening Prologue does not lead immediately into Chorus
   ekkyklema image at beginning, rather than end?
   Play has 2 beginnings in a way: Delphi, then Athens
   no unity of time or place here, although unity of action
   kommos of LB vs. that of E (76-82 vs. 129-135)

2) Emerging from myth into history, breaking patterns
   political allusions to Argos alliance, Libyan excursion (114)
   establishment of law courts (119)
   “Areopagus, crag of the War God,” (126)
   not complete disavowal of past, but transformation
   Ephialtes’ reforms of Areopagus in 462 BCE, ~ 4yrs < Oresteia
The Eumenides, cont.

3) The Court Scene (121-128)
   a) balance of democracy: neither anarchy nor tyranny (126)
      balance of justice & vengeance, force & persuasion
      “Do not banish the terrible from my city” (126)
   b) masculine & feminine
      Apollo’s sophistry? (125)
      yet Athena acknowledges male mastery (127)

Bloody urn of votes no longer bloody, Erinyes into Eumenides
Procession w/ light, Optimism w/ a bit of hard realism
Thucydides, “The Melian Dialogue”
How see optimism of persuasion in light of Empire?
Herodotus’ History
Peloponnesian Wars (431-404 BCE)
“Melian Dialogue” only dramatic dialogue in work
historical to some extent, also self-referential?
who decides what constitutes the facts of history?
Athenians: “look facts in the face” (401)
they have power to set the perspective
their theories to contain facts; rhetoric that pretends
not to be rhetoric; Persuasion turns back into Force
discards ideals of justice in favor of Realpolitik
“a general & necessary law of nature to rule what one can” (404)

Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty./ “There is one safeguard known generally to the
wise, which is an advantage and security to all, but especially to democracies as against
From David Williams, ed., *Collaborative Theatre: The Théâtre du Soleil Sourcebook*, 200 & 182.

Next time: Rousseau & Nietzsche

Berkeley Rep, March 6-May 16: The Oresteia
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