

The Agony and the Alchemy: Mythic Elements of Theater in Group Process

My name is Connie Romero and I am from New Orleans. Prior to my becoming an analyst, I worked in the theater for many years, first as an actor and then as Director. If you have ever worked in the theater, you know first hand how much of a collaborative art form it is - how much putting a play together is group process. And, like any form of group process, it can be both exhilarating and/or dis-membering. It can also, on occasion, be transformative. Though coming from a different perspective than my colleagues, I have found that we wound up with many of the same questions about what it means to be in and to work with a group.

My talk focuses on how the theater, or rather the Spirit of the theater, with its ancient roots in the Dionysian archetype of death and rebirth in community, might offer us a vessel for reflecting on group dynamics. I'll start out by examining some specific ways theater can raise group consciousness, followed by a look at Jung's relationship to a theatrical work, Faust, and then wind things up with an exploration of Aeschylus tragedy, The Eumenides, as an example of how a group wisdom process might be engendered in the face of generations of rage and grief.

To begin: the word theater comes from the Greek Theasthai which means "to view" and the Greek amphitheaters, known as Theatron were called the "places of seeing". They were in effect not only the literal places of watching a play, but became the primary means Greek culture looked at and reflected upon itself.

But specifically how can theater help raise group consciousness? First, attending the theater offers a temenos or sacred space where we can view both the personal and group shadow. This revelation of shadow dynamics is perhaps one of the theater's most valuable contributions to culture. Aristotle intuited this in the Poetics when he wrote that theater is important to a society because it reveals the "tragic flaws" of a character or group. These shadow elements usually have to do with hubris or false pride.

He also points out that theater allows for the expression of deep emotions in a contained way. Through this cathartic process we may keep some of our more destructive impulses in check. In Aristotle's observation of the human tendency to mimic or dramatize, he's acknowledging the inherently theatrical nature of the psyche. Jung, too, echoes this understanding when he likens the dream to "...a theater where the dreamer is himself the scene, the player, the producer, the author, the critic (and I want to emphasize this) the public" (CW8, par. 509). Clearly, one of the ways we come to know ourselves is from the perspective of the group.

Theater is also a lens through which to view the dialectic between the individual and the group. In fact the origins of theater have their roots in the splitting and periodic reconciliations between our communal group mind and our individual human identities. I will say a bit more about this in the last section on Greek Tragedy.

Watching a great play bypasses the rational, individualistic, more Apollonian mind to reach its' effect - which is a moistening re-acquaintance with the dark light of Dionysus and the luminosities of the unconscious. We go seeking aliveness and a more passionate experience of life that counterbalances our sometime isolation and alienation. The theater is also an antidote to the endless literalizing of the modern mind that would dry up everything and leave us adrift in a world gone mad with fundamentalism.

In many ways, Theater attempts to do for the group what analysis does for the individual. But how does it actually engender the particular Alchemy I am referring to?

Perhaps a memory can help moisten things here: When I was a little girl my parents took me see a production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Like many people have reported about this particular play, it was a numinous experience. I

was transported by the vision of another world. The stage was a glittering panorama and the energy that emanated was both dark and curiously luminous. The actors were so beautiful, behaved outrageously, and revealed their vulnerability, misguided heroism and selfishness with grand humor and a searing kind of sadness. I had no idea at the time we in the audience were being introduced to Shakespeare's vision of the *Mundus Imaginalis* – or that aspect of the collective unconscious that houses our deepest dreams and memories. The capacity of the theater to body forth this vision of another world awakened the religious archetype in me. It called back up a vision of the divine the modern world seemed to neither believe nor value.

Playwright Christopher Durang, likens our need for theater as akin to the way plants use photosynthesis (the process of turning light into food) in the way that we go to the theater looking for help with a kind of psychological photosynthesis. Durang, through his metaphor of photosynthesis, helps move us closer to the alchemical nature of theater. However, where Durang deems the source of light the playwright's script, in my experience the dark but luminous light of Dionysus is called out by the dynamic interaction between the actors, the script, and the audience. This is essentially a transcendent relational process that no human being is the source of. And it emerges out of a sacred communal ethos – or primal group unity.

This primal source - or unitary field – exerts a powerful effect that is manifest both physically and spiritually in drama. On the physical level we can feel the way a potent drama arouses our affects – the emotions lodged in the body. Unlike daily life where we may deny or act out much of what we feel, in the container of the theater our emotions can come alive and even take on meaning because they have, through the

structure of the play and the bodies of the actors, a channel along which to flow. Within this process, the affective resonance produced between actor and audience may then become a sacred alliance. (This is also true of analysis but here we are imagining it as a group level process)

The Obie Award winning theater director, Anne Bogart, in a recent discussion on theater hosted by the American Psychoanalytic Association (2009) spoke about this phenomena. She cites recent evidence that “mirror neurons” in both the actor and the audience move into a form of limbic resonance that can change both. And group wisdom researcher and professor, Christopher Bache, suggests that the chakra centers in a teacher and her students may move onto a form of resonance that raises the consciousness of both.

Theater can provide this for us in a way film, for all its technical precision and fantastical beauty, cannot. The real time sensuous experience of bodies in resonance in a sacred space invites us into a living 3 dimensional process. My sense is that watching a play in embodied presence at the group level helps counterbalance some of the more flattened out schizoid aspects of modern life. We may, in fact, touch down – albeit safely – into some of our earliest and deepest wounds and passions without causing undue damage to ourselves or others. We may also return renewed.

In addition to the theatrical nature of the psyche, is theater linked to depth psychology in other ways? And if it is, how is this relevant to group process?

Theater and Depth psychology do share a conjoined heritage, both at the archetypal and historical level and this influenced us a group.

Historically, Depth Psychology was, to an extent, birthed through the theater in that Freud based much of his theory of the unconscious on Sophocles Tragedy, Oedipus Tyrannous. Likewise, Jung's view of the psyche was also profoundly influenced by a theatrical work. In MDR he speaks movingly about his relationship to Goethe's play, Faust. He writes: *I realized with something of a shock (that Goethe's Faust) meant more to me than my beloved Gospel according to St. John. There was something in Faust that worked directly on my feelings...(the drama) struck a chord in me and pierced me through...Goethe had written virtually a basic outline and pattern of my own conflicts and solutions... I ...realized this was my fate.* (1960, pgs.87 and 235)

The chord struck in Jung still resounds through our psychology today. While he included Freud's notion of unconscious incestuous desires as part of the unconscious, Jung expanded the notion of depth itself through his idea of the collective unconscious. In Volume Five of the Collected Works he makes it clear that it is in the imaginal deeps of the primordial unconscious that the seeds of transformation lie. He calls on Goethe's images of the Archetypal Mothers in Faust Part II to bring his view of the collective unconscious to life. Jung explains:

When the libido leaves the right upper world...it sinks back into its own depths, into the source from which it originally flowed, and returns to the point of cleavage, the navel...this point is...the mother...the fountainhead – and this is the dangerous moment when the issue hangs between annihilation and new life. For if the libido gets stuck in the wonderland...then for the upper world man is nothing but a shadow... But if the libido manages to tear itself loose and force its way up again, something like a miracle

happens: the journey to the underworld was a plunge into the fountain of youth and the libido...wakes to new fruitfulness. (CW5, par. 292)

For Jung, then, change at the individual or group level involves an encounter with the primordial source. Both theater and depth psychology are taken up with this archetypal endeavor - again with theater doing this at the group level and analysis for the individual.

However, Faust's descent to the Mothers, while a genuine effort to moisten his arid psyche, illustrates the way in which we can become possessed by the shadow. In the following scene, inflated by lust and greed Faust, makes even the devil shiver, when intent on possessing the historical Helen of Troy, he insists that Mephisto tell him where to find her. The devil replies:

Mephistopheles: I dislike letting out one of the higher secrets. There are goddesses throned in solitude, outside of place, outside of time. It makes me uneasy even to talk about them. They are The Mothers.

Faust: (startled) The Mothers.

Mephistopheles: Does it give you the shivers?

Faust: The Mothers. The Mothers. It sounds so queer.

Mephistopheles: Queer it is. Goddesses unknown to mortal men, hardly to be named by them. You'll need to dig deep to reach them. It's your fault if we have to do it.

Faust: Show me the way.

Mephistopheles: There is no way. You'll enter the untrodden, the unreasonable, the unpermitted, the impermissible. Are you ready? There'll be no locks or bolts. You'll be

*pushed about from one emptiness to another...Have you any notion what emptiness is?
Barrenness?.....*

*Faust: (shuddering) The Mothers. It hits me every time. What is this word I can't bear to
hear?...*

*Mephistopheles: Down you go then....When you come to a glowing tripod you'll know
you're as far down as you can go. By the light it throws you'll see the Mothers. Some
sitting, some standing or walking about. It just depends. Formation, Transformation, the
eternal mind eternally communing with itself, surrounded by the forms of all creation.
You'll be in great danger and you'll need a stout heart." (quoted by Edinger, pg.54-55)*

We do need a stout heart and a container –such as theater or analysis – to reflect upon this sacred mystery. And we very urgently need to explore our individual and collective shadow. Jung offers an example of how we might do this in the way he reflected at length upon the play and the human shadow throughout his life. For him Faust was an example of what happens to us personally and collectively when the god image falls out of heaven and into the shadow of the human being. In MDR, he writes that though ultimately released from the devil and admitted to heaven, Faust, remained at death, still unconscious of the ruthless nature of his ambition and lust. This is evident in the way in which he has Mephisto kill off the sacred couple, Philemon and Baucis, so he can develop the beautiful wooded land they live on. In a fit of greed Faust cries: “ Go then and get them out of my way...the old folks there ought to resign their linden trees so dark and tall. The few trees that are not mine reduce the world I own to gall....go then and get them out of my way!” Jung wrote: “I felt guilty, quite as if I myself in the past had helped commit the murder of these two old people. This strange idea alarmed me,

and I regarded it as my responsibility to atone for this crime, or to prevent its repetition.” (MDR, pg.234). Jung writes he would go on to become “the avenger of Philemon and Baucis, who unlike Faust the superman, are hosts of the gods in a ruthless and godforsaken age. For Jung, this meant taking up the problem of the personal and collective shadow by “consciously link(ing) (his) work to what he felt Faust had passed over: respect for the eternal rights of man, recognition of “the ancient”, and the continuity of culture and intellectual history (ibid, pg. 235).” Goethe’s capacity to reveal the cultural and individual shadow through the vessel of the theater, and Jung’s willingness to open himself to the play’s epic vision calls each of us to ponder what is really ours and what belongs to the ages.

Another memory: In the mid-1980s in the urban decay that was downtown Los Angeles, something almost unbelievable happened. A husband and wife team both long time theater directors and producers through great tenacity and passion refurbished an enormous turn of the century bank building in the dying heart of the celluloid city. Combining the best of new and old theater from around the world, the enterprise, the LAAT, for a few brief years until killed by lack of funding, re-awakened the downtown beating heart of the city. Dionysus got his due as famous actors worked for scale, new plays got produced, and people donated in any way they could. Tom Waits, playing a character in one of the new plays, summed it up when he looked around and stated, “I kinda like the ambulance of the place.” Lest I sound too idealizing, let me say the theater was an island surrounded by danger and terrible squalor. I had my car burglarized in a 15 minute interval and between shows we sat out back of the building and watched the rats parade through the alleys. At this time Reaganomics had emptied the mental hospitals,

slashed welfare and the homeless swelled the city's populace. To get from my car to the theater I walked nightly over multiple sleeping and inebriated bodies that lined the sidewalks. The sheer numbers were shocking beyond anything I had ever seen in America. It was like shuttling between the Inferno and the Paradiso – the diastole between the dying soul of the city of angels and the beating ecstatic heart of Dionysus. Enter into this scenario the newly burgeoning AIDS crisis and the city felt and looked like end times. Friends sickened and died in alarming numbers and the arts community was decimated, in shock. I watched one friend, a young and gifted actor knowing he was dying of AIDS, get onstage every night and do his job without complaint and great generosity of spirit. Some nights the dark light of Dionysus seemed to stream off him as he gave to the community everything he had left. I tell this story to re-member him but also because it was out of this apocalyptic and dismembered ethos that the theater, itself dismembered, helped put itself and the community back together in a new way. Out of this tragedy and the heartless response of the Reagan administration – the epitome of the actor possessed- Tony Kushner birthed *Angels in America* for which he won the Pulitzer prize. Not only did it body forth a searing, prescient, portrayal of a corrupt corporate America gone off the deep end, but it also held the grief, outrage, and hope of a portion of our culture who had been egregiously shunned and ignored in a time of desperate need. Harkening back to Greek Tragedy and Goethe's Faust, *Angels* presented a vision of apocalypse in the American psyche that had to be reflected upon collectively and then navigated through the heart. Though the dismemberment of the gay community, god is revealed in a dismembered state and a new post apocalyptic vision is painfully drawn but with deep feeling and compassion. At one point at the height of the tension of the play

and in despair one character asks another how people change. The answer is blunt, direct and Dionysian:

Well, its got something to do with god so its not very nice. God splits the skin with a jagged thumbnail from throat to belly and then plunges a huge filthy hand in, he grabs hold of your bloody tubes and they slip to evade his grasp but he squeezes hard, he insists, he pulls and pulls till all your innards are yanked out and the pain! We can't even talk about that. And then he stuffs them back, dirty, tangled, and torn. It's up to you to do the stitching.” (Play script, pg. 211)

Mercifully, the playwright sees us through this dark vision and as the characters wrestle with Angels and a modern day Mephistopheles, a re-newed and hard won vision of individual and collective unity eventually emerges. I wanted to bring up *Angels in America* also because Kushner appears to be working out of a new ethos but one that also hearkens back to how Greek plays were originated and performed – communally. Unlike his distinguished elder colleague Edward Albee, who states that he creates entirely alone, Kushner admits to working out of a deep awareness of group process. In an essay titled, “With a Little Help From My Friends: he states, “The fiction that artistic labor happens in isolation, and that artistic accomplishment is exclusively the provenance of individual talents, is politically charged and, in my case at least, repudiated by the facts (Essay in Play script, pg. 283) Here is one of the final scenes of *Angels in America* where the same young woman who asked how can people change has, with great struggle, emancipated herself from an impossible situation. Leaving behind her old life and starting another she shares the following with the audience from the window of a plane:

Night flight to San Francisco. Chase the moon across America. God! It's been years since I've been on a plane! When we hit thirty-five thousand feet, we'll have reached the tropopause. The great belt of calm air. As close as I'll ever get to the ozone... I dreamed we were there. The plane left the tropopause, the safe air, and attained the outer rim, the ozone, which was ragged and torn, patches of it threadbare as old cheesecloth, and that was frightening... But I saw something... Souls were rising, from the earth far below, souls of the dead, of people who had perished, from famine, from war, from the plague, and they floated up, like skydivers in reverse, limbs all akimbo, wheeling and spinning. And the souls of these departed joined hands, clasped ankles and formed a great web, a great net of souls, and the souls were three-atom oxygen molecules, of the stuff of ozone, and the outer rim absorbed them, and was repaired.

Nothing's lost forever. In this world, there is a kind of painful progress. Longing for what we've left behind, and dreaming ahead.

At least I think that's so. (pg. 275)

Greek Tragedy

Greek Tragedy is the earliest form of theater in the West. It can tell us much about group process because it emerged from the tensions between the individual and the group. Like many artistic innovations, it was birthed in a time of great collective upheaval. Powerful conflicts between matriarchy and patriarchy and singular identity versus group identity rocked the individual and collective psyche. We might say that the tensions between longing for what they left behind and dreaming ahead were highly

charged. The often disastrous outcomes of these conflicts found, at least for a time, a container in the religious practice of attending the theater. The theater became a holding vessel for the longing to be connected to the group and the need to explore individuality. Greek drama also reflected the powerful shadow produced when either orientation demeaned or repressed the other. Despite their obvious patriarchal influences, the Greek plays, through the interplay between the individual and the group of the chorus, bodied forth hope and modeled possibilities for sane community. The plays also provided a vehicle for group lamentation – much needed in the often dismembered and reconstituted Greek psyche upon which much of our own is founded.

Tragedy was actually birthed around 450 BC when a poet named Thespis stepped away from the chorus and began speaking “as if” he were a separate character. He also proceeded to dialogue with the chorus from this differentiated point of view. Up until this time, solo performers simply recited the stories of mythic characters.

Thespis’ innovation thrilled the crowds at the Great Festival of Dionysus but made Athenian officials nervous. Plutarch writes that the Famous Magistrate Solon, on coming to see Thespis perform, stamped his cane the ground and asked the actor if he weren’t ashamed to tell so many lies in front of so many people! To which Thespis responded it was no harm to do so in play. Solon worried that if everyone started acting like they were someone else, the city would be in trouble. However, Solon’s fears were unfounded. Thespis acting reinvigorated Greek religion and had a stabilizing effect. His acting “as if” also proved to be a valuable form of individuation. Here the artists’ innovation, rather than a self absorbed form of individualism, was brought forth and given back to the group for the benefit of the collective.

Aside from Thespis contribution to Greek culture, what does tragedy have to say us today? Nietzsche, in his work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, poses that modern culture is doomed if it continues in its overly rational Socratic bias. He points out that the Socratic ideal which imagines that all problems can be solved through a rational conscious orientation, has left us arid, godless, and dangerously unbalanced. He goes so far as to recall Greek Tragedy as a salve for the modern psyche. Nietzsche believed Tragedy could reinvigorate and re-balance modernity because it contained **both** the rational boundaried individuality of Apollo and the ecstatic communal release of Dionysus. Like Jung, who used the pair to describe introversion and extroversion, Nietzsche recognized that both Apollo and Dionysus were necessary to psychic equilibrium. He posed that the interplay between the chorus - with its roots in Dionysian communal unity – and the protagonist – infused by the individuality of Apollo – could bring the psyche into balance.

It will likely take much more than recalling Greek Tragedy to counterbalance our apocalyptic fundamentalism. However, I believe Nietzsche was highly intuitive in imagining that as a collective, we need a way to honor and experience the sensuous participation mystique of primal unity while at the same time retaining our individual identity. The ancient yet ongoing split between the patriarchal allegiance of Apollo and the matriarchal affiliation of Dionysus has left us swinging dangerously between two extremes. We become lost to any form of group and individual sanity if we fall too far out on one side or the other.

This conflict seems to have been the wrenching central theme for many Greek Tragedies. Aeschylus trilogy, *The Oresteia*, particularly, brings this struggle to bear and

then offers a vision of reconciliation that still resounds within the modern psyche. In the *Oresteia*, his last work, he offers up a model of respect and companionship between the dark luminescence of communal nature and the light of individual consciousness. Beginning with *The Agamemnon*, followed by *The Libation Bearers* and finally culminating in the *Eumenides*, Aeschylus, through the alchemical figure of Athena, offers a vision of reconciliation between the newer patriarchal gods of Olympus who in many ways representing the emergence of the individual, and the ancient Earth Mothers who retain an alliance with group unity. While she appears on the surface a patriarchal princess, the Athena of Aeschylus is actually something new. The daughter of Zeus and the Titan Metis, she is the dynamism of the new City of Athens and in her desire to create a new democracy, she invokes a new type of relational field. Athena uses dialogue and compassion to rebuild ancient alliances that have been shattered through the movement from one form of consciousness to another. Rather than repression or denigration, Athena works to include the Other, the Outcast and marginalized because she recognizes that we all are lost if we do not. Through a dialogue with the chorus of the Furies in the final play, Athena becomes the Soror Mystica to a culture as she gently but firmly helps ease the Furies transformation into the Eumenides – the Peaceful Ones. She does this by inviting the Furies into the human realm in a new way where they no longer embody only the outrage of the outcast ancient earth Mothers, but are enthroned as the protectors of the new city. In this dramatic move, we become witness to the way in which a group may begin to explore and mediate its shadow. Here the figure of Athena shows us how we might psychologically enthrone our split off, denied, more primal emotions and bring

them into the psychic city of personal and collective consciousness. Athena creates the vessel for a group wisdom process.

The Oresteia begins with Agamemnon's return home to Argos after the defeat of Troy. It has been ten years and still enraged at having their daughter Iphigenia sacrificed for winds to sail the warships to Troy, Agamemnon's wife, Clytemnestra, lures into the palace, kills him and then installs herself and her lover on the throne. The chorus – here represented by the elder citizenry - hear the cries of the murdered king and in horror and disbelief seek to question Clytemnestra. As audience members we move into limbic resonance with both Clytemnestra and the chorus. This is possible because Aeschylus has made our horror and her thirst for revenge so hauntingly familiar. Through the interaction of actor and chorus we become witness to the tragedy of an individual losing herself and her connection to her community. When Clytemnestra exults, without shame, in her identification with the archetype of revenge, it is the community of the chorus and our watching them as a group react to what has happened, that creates the vessel where we can begin to metabolize the scope of the problem. We can see that generations of unchecked archetypal rage and grief have become the seeds for group and individual shadow dynamics. In this scenario group unity is shattered, and as single entities we are set adrift. However, when shared with other audience members in the container of the theater, we can stand to the experience and reflect upon it together.

In The Libation Bearers, we find Clytemnestra's son, Orestes, driven by the god Apollo to kill his mother for having murdered his father. He does this having been assured of purification and peace by Apollo only to find himself afterward, pursued by the rage of the Furies, half human, half Titanic feminine deities called up from the depths

of the Earth by his crime. Here the battle between the ancient and newer forms of consciousness comes into full view in the way the gods of Olympus – here Zeus and Apollo - and the ancient female Earth Mothers fall into conflict.

Aeschylus clearly shows us an Apollo that, for all his power, is unable to kill off or mediate the rage of the Furies – he insults and antagonizes them instead, until finally, in desperation, he calls on Athena, assuming, as Zeus daughter, she will quickly rule in his favor. Instead, Athena assesses the situation and quickly surmises that either way she decides there will be a crisis. Much like Demeter, the Furies threaten to kill off humanity by blighting the earth if Orestes is not punished. And Apollo knows that he and the golden Mean cannot be relinquished except at untold cost to humanity. What is she to do? Athena says: “So it stands. A crisis either way.” And looking back and forth between the Furies and Orestes, she muses: “Embrace the one? Expel the other? It defeats me.” She ultimately appoints a human court from the most worthy citizens of Athens and gains the trust of the Furies when she tells Orestes that, though his actions were sanctioned by Apollo, the Furies “...have their destiny too, hard to dismiss.” Unlike Apollo, when she first sees the wild and frightening visage of the Furies, rather than insulting them, she asks them who they are, admitting she does not readily recognize them. The Furies pointing out they are far older than she, exclaim, “We are the daughters of the Night. Deep in the halls of Earth, they call us Curses.” “Now I know your birth, your rightful name” Athena states. The Furies then describe their outrage and as she listens attentively she notes that there are two sides to the problem and the ancient ones are somewhat one-sided in their wish only for revenge. In response to her capacity to listen, the Furies acknowledge that Athena has a genius for discernment and they ultimately permit her to

judge the final outcome. Surprised by this Athena queries, “You would turn over responsibility to me, to reach the final verdict?” to which the Leader of the Furies replies, “Certainly. We respect you. You show us respect.” By witnessing such dialogue the shadow of our own rage and fury may find a resting place for reflection. Here the individual and the group honor the integrity of each other. By bearing witness to this process as an audience member, something of a group wisdom process may be engendered.

Though Athena ultimately rules in favor of Orestes and the Furies are once again beset with grief and rage, she remains with them and helps the ancient Mothers find a new vision. She welcomes them into her city by having Athenian women of all ages invest them with the red robes of Athens and lead them in honorary procession through the streets in their new form as the Eumenides - honored and re-seated in a new group ethos.

The following is a highly edited version of the last scenes of *The Eumenides*, translated by Robert Fagles:

With the human jury of Athens tied in their vote, Athena pardons Orestes. Exit Orestes and Apollo. The Furies, though previously placated by Athena reel in rage once again.

*Fury Leader - You, you younger gods! – you have ridden down
the ancient laws, wrenched them from my grasp-
and I robbed of my birthright, suffering, great with wrath,
I loose my poison over the earth, Aiee!*

*Fury#2 Poison to match my grief comes pouring out my heart,
cursing the land to burn it sterile and now..*

*Fury#3 ...the bloody tide comes hurling, all mankind destroyed!
What will I do? (enraged) The mockery of it – unbearable!*

Chorus: We the daughters of Night!

Our powers stripped! Cast down!

Athena:

Yield to me.

*No more heavy spirits. You were not defeated –
The vote was tied, a verdict fairly reached with no disgrace to you.*

*And now you'd vent your anger, hurt the land?
Consider a moment. Calm yourself. Never
rain your potent showers down—
By all my rights I promise you your seat
in the depths of the earth—
Stationed at hearths equipped with glistening thrones,
covered with praise! My people will revere you.*

*Fury Leader: (As the Furies moan) You! You have ridden down the ancient laws...
wrenched them from us! The bloody tide comes hurling cross the face of
the earth....(in despair) What will we do? (Anger building again) We the
Daughters of Night!*

Chorus: Our power stripped! Cast down!

Athena:

*You have your power,
you are goddesses – but not to turn on the world and ravage it past cure.
Let me persuade you.
Lull asleep that black salt wave of anger –
You, awesome, proud with reverence.... live with me.*

*Fury Leader: (Confused, grief stricken) But for me to suffer such disgrace...I,
The proud heart of the past....*

*Fury#2 ...driven under the Earth, condemned like so much filth,
(flaring) Fury is in me breathing hatred!*

Fury#3 (pleading, desperate) O good Earth, what agony wracks the spirit?

Chorus: It is Night! Mother Night!

*Leader: (in grief) All's lost.... our ancient powers torn away by cunning,
You younger gods obliterate us all!*

Athena:

*I will bear with your anger.
You are older. The years have taught you more,
much more than I can know.*

Leader: But for us to suffer such disgrace!

*Athena: No. I will never tire
of telling you your gifts. So, that you
can never say that I, a young god, and the mortals of the city,
drove you outcast, outlawed from the land.*

*But if you have any reverence for persuasion,
the majesty of Persuasion,
let the spell of my voice appease your fury –
Oh, please stay-*

*and if you refuse to stay,
it would be wrong, unjust to afflict this city
with wrath and populations routed. Look,
it is all yours, a royal share of our land –
justly entitled. Given forever.*

*Leader: (Very tentative, disbelieving) Queen Athena,
...Where is the home you say is mine to hold?*

Athena: Where all the pain and anguish end. Accept it.

Leader: And if I do, what honour waits for us?

Athena: No house can thrive without you.

*Leader: You would do that,
grant us that much power?*

*Athena: Whoever reveres us –
we will revere them.*

Leader: And you will pledge us that, for all time to come?

Athena: Yes – I must never promise things I cannot do.

*Leader: Your magic is working...I can feel the hate,
the fury slip away. (As she finishes this last phrase all the Furies let their
veils fall away.)*

*Athena: At last! And now take root
In the land and win yourself new friends.*

*Leader: We will embrace
One home with you Athena-*

Chorus: Hear our love, our blessing.

Athena: (to the audience) Now do you hear,
you citizens of our city,
all that she will do?
Fury the mighty queen rules the lives of men.
Those who have not felt her weight
Or known the blows of life
are yet brought to her majestic anger-
Fury works her will – who with the gods
at all times bearing down -
make our lives more just.

Yes, I prefer persuasion!
Persuasion watched my words, she met the Furies wild refusals.
(Turning to the Furies)
Thanks to our argument for blessings;
we bore through it all

Fury#3 We will give joy in return for joy
Have one common will for love!

Leader: Such union heals a thousand ills.

Athena: (To the audience) Do you hear how Fury sounds her blessings forth,
How Fury finds the way?
Hold these spirits kindly, kind they will be to you.

*I enthrone these strong, implacable spirits here
and root them in our soil.*
*(to the Furies) Deep, deep, in the first dark vaults of earth,
Reverence will attend you -
You great good Spirits, journey on.
Carry on the dancing on and on!*

All: Carry on the dancing on and on!

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