


Greek national and cultural identities consist, to a large extent, of clusters of cultural memory shaped by our ongoing dialogue with the classical past. In this dialogue between modern Greece and classical antiquity, Greek tragedy takes pride of place. For a long time a part of the Western canon, Greek tragedy has proved exceptionally malleable as an interpretive lens through which to focus contemporary crises, ideological tensions, and political dynamics.

The aim of the 'Eumenides' project is to catalogue and analyze the multifarious ways in which ancient Greek tragedy and tragic myth have been adapted, reinterpreted, revised, or re-imagined in modern Greek poetry and theatre from the late 19th century to the present day. In particular, it will explore the various ways in which Greek tragedy has been a crucial factor in the formation of a poetics and a politics of modern Greek national and cultural identity.

One of the project's fundamental objectives is to address issues of 'influence' or (better) *intertextuality* and *reception*. In other words, we will explore how modern Greek authors establish protocols for the creation of meaning(s) by inviting audiences to respond not only to the text itself but to a network of texts invoked by it—in this case, to a network of Greek tragic texts that are filtered or encoded through their modern successors. 'Influence', intertextuality and reception cover a wide range of textual strategies and may extend from verbatim citations or verbal allusions through appropriations of themes and motifs to cryptic references or largely thematic affinities. To take but a few examples, the plot and language of Euripides' *Helen* are crucial to the articulation of a poetics of nationhood in George Seferis' "Helen" and other poems reflecting his Cypriot experience (*Logbook III*, 1955). Further, in Yannis Ritsos' *Fourth Dimension*, tragic myth is confronted with intellectual and political currents of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, especially Sartrean existentialism, which fundamentally altered the Greek cultural landscape. In an emblematic piece of modern Greek theatre, Iakovos Kambanellis' trilogy *The Supper*, one witnesses a refashioning, now good-humoured and now glum, of the Labdacid and Atreid myth. 

Cut down to size, and transplanted into a contemporary, and rather humble domestic setting, the cornerstones of classical Greek tragedy are turned by Kambanellis into mythical filters through which to approach social or individual pathogenies that may be seen as characteristic of modern Greece. Last but far from least, allusions to Greek tragedy, though sparse, are an integral part of work published by major Cypriot poets such as K. Charalambides, and are used largely as a tool for collective (self-)criticism or for furthering the debate on national and cultural identity.

