Aeschylean Drama and the History of Rhetoric

Allannah K. Karas

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AESCHYLEAN DRAMA AND THE HISTORY OF RHETORIC

by

ALLANNAH KRISTIN KARAS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Classics in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2017
AESCHYLEAN DRAMA AND THE HISTORY OF RHETORIC

by

Allannah Kristin Karas

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Classics in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

Aeschylean Drama and the History of Rhetoric

by

Allannah Kristin Karas

Advisor: Professor Dee Clayman

This dissertation demonstrates how the playwright Aeschylus contributes to the development of ancient Greek rhetoric through his use and display of \( \pi e \theta \omega \) (often translated “persuasion”) throughout the \textit{Oresteia}, first performed in 458 BCE. In this drama, Aeschylus specifically displays and develops \( \pi e \theta \omega \) as a theme, a goddess, a central principle of action, and an important concept for his audience to consider. By tracing connections between Aeschylus’ innovations with \( \pi e \theta \omega \) and later fifth and early fourth century conceptions of Greek rhetoric, I argue that Aeschylus plays a more important role in the development of practical principles and concepts of the rhetorical art than has been previously acknowledged. Methodologically, in this dissertation I combine word studies and thematic analysis together with examinations of choral narratives and staging, iconographical research on the goddess Peitho, and a close study of Athena’s speeches to the Erinyes (\textit{Eu.} 778-891) through the lens of Aristotle’s \textit{Rhetoric}. Through these diverse modes of analysis, this dissertation validates Aeschylus as a conceptually innovative playwright and offers an approach for further examination of early Greek rhetoric through the portrayal of \( \pi e \theta \omega \) in drama.
For ALL of my big wonderful family,
especially, Grandpa Nick “the Greek”
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These acknowledgements would not be complete without my deepest thanks also to the countless friends and family members who have walked beside me throughout the entire dissertation process. To ALL of my lovely friends and family, especially in New York, I owe immense thanks for their constant love, inexhaustible patience, and encouraging presence throughout this adventure. Thanks, in a very special way, to my dear friend Alvaro del Portillo, who has bent over backwards for me countless times over the past number of years. I am grateful also to my wonderful grandparents and to my favorite people in the world—Trevor, Anselm, Olivia, Francesca, Mary, Dominic, Faustina, Athanasius and Avila—for filling my life with nonstop excitement, deep affection, and immense joy. Finally, and most especially, thank you to my dear, loving, and incredibly generous parents, Andrew and Laura Karas, who continually teach me, by their example, what matters most in life.
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### ABBREVIATIONS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ARV</td>
<td><em>Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters</em>. 1956. Edited by J.D. Beazley. 2nd ed., Oxford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td><em>Beazley Archive Database</em>. <a href="http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk">www.beazley.ox.ac.uk</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM</td>
<td>The British Museum, London, United Kingdom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMA</td>
<td>The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.</td>
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This dissertation examines πειθώ and its connection with the idea and practice of Greek rhetoric in the fifth and early fourth centuries BCE. Specifically, I demonstrate how Aeschylus contributes to the development of rhetoric through his use and display of πειθώ in the *Oresteia* (458BCE). In this drama, Aeschylus assigns the goddess Peitho new features that will become characteristic of ancient Greek rhetoric; he presents his new ideas of πειθώ as central to the plot movement of the entire trilogy; and, at the culmination of the drama, he stages a work of persuasion framed in terms of πειθώ and in the form of masterful speeches (*Eu. 778-891*) that seem to anticipate the model of deliberative speech discussed much later in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*.

**Chapter One: Greek Rhetoric, Drama, and Πειθώ**, provides the scholarly context for my argument: discussions of the history of rhetoric together with the role of drama in the development of this art. It also surveys scholarship on πειθώ, a term which has not yet been fully incorporated into scholarly accounts of rhetoric’s history in ancient Greece. This discussion of the state of scholarship is then balanced with a catalog of the pre-Aeschylean usage of πειθώ as a verb, a personified goddess (Peitho), and an abstract noun. The term emerges from an erotic tradition with little or no explicit connection with public, political speech. Yet, after Aeschylus, is frequently seen in conjunction with what will eventually be called “rhetoric.” Aeschylus, I argue, has a crucial role to play in this shift in πειθώ’s meaning and associations.

**Chapter Two: The Goddess Peitho: Personified Aspects of Rhetoric?** examines the four instances where Aeschylus depicts Peitho as a personified deity. It examines the role of personifications in developing Greek thought as well as their potential effect when brought to the fore in a dramatic performance. I note how each time Peitho “appears” in the *Oresteia,*
Aeschylus removes her from her traditional contexts and slightly alters her characterization towards that of a personage involved with what contemporary and later playwrights, philosophers, and theorists associate with rhetorical speech. These changes are noticeable and remarkable considering Peitho’s earlier mythical and cult tradition. Pre-Aeschylean literary, artistic and cult references present her as a complex personification with predominantly private and erotic associations. In the fifth and early fourth century BCE, however, the goddess Peitho becomes equated—in literature, drama, and political texts—with rhetoric. As the first extant poet to systematically change Peitho’s traditional representation, Aeschylus plays a key part in this evolution.

Drawing on previous work by recent scholars of Greek literature and art history, Chapter Two examines evidence from poetry, inscriptions, vase painting, and cults in order to understand each of Aeschylus’ depictions of Peitho against the backdrop of her previous tradition and, at the same time, looks forward to her future. In the Oresteia Aeschylus uproots and transforms Peitho by giving her a new genealogy (Ag. 385), new working companions (Cho. 726), and a firmly established role in civic society with relation to speech (Eu. 885; 926). Also, in each of these cases, Aeschylus gives Peitho qualities which are specifically associated with rhetoric by later playwrights, sophists, philosophers and rhetorical theorists: forcefulness, trickery, and a close relationship with civic speech.

Chapter Three: The Centrality of Πειθώ to the Oresteia analyzes πειθώ’s important role within the drama itself. Combining a word study of πειθώ together with analyses of choral narratives and theme, this chapter demonstrates how πειθώ comes to the fore as an important concept for the audience to consider while watching the play. In the first place the entire plot or main actions of each play take place not through the decisions of blind Fate, but through
dynamic moments where one person must win over another in order for the action of the play to progress. Each of these dramatic moments, moreover, features a word (or words) derived from the verb πειθω. In addition, Aeschylus gives each of these actions dramatic prominence through his use of parallel or mirroring myths and through the characters’ invocation of Peitho personified in closely related scenes (Ag. 385-411; Cho. 613-622; Eu. 723-730). In these three ways, this chapter concludes that Aeschylus seems to invite his audience to ponder the nature of πειθω itself.

Chapter Four: Πειθω and Athena’s Rhetoric at Eumenides 778-891 argues that Aeschylus stages a performance of rhetoric through the speeches of Athena to the Erinyes at the end of the Oresteia, speeches which not only conclude the trilogy but also highlight the influence of Peitho in a civic situation. The first section of this chapter argues that in the encounter between Athena and the Erinyes at Eumenides 778-891 Aeschylus presents a display of the persuasive process which would have called the attention of the audience as important. Through the use of various staging techniques, he sets up the scene as dramatically prominent and gives Athena a task of persuasion more momentous than any other in the Oresteia. The second section of this chapter consists of a close analysis of these speeches through the lens of Aristotle’s Rhetoric. I demonstrate how, in content, Athena’s work anticipates Aristotle’s description of deliberative speech. Its form resembles the three basic modes of internal argumentation (ethos, pathos, logos) and the basic speech structure laid out in the Rhetoric. In this way Aeschylus resolves the entire Oresteia with a display of the work of πειθω as effective deliberative rhetoric in the speeches of Athena in Eumenides 778-89.

In Conclusion, I argue that Aeschylus contributes to the development of rhetoric through his depiction of Peitho personified, through his presentation of πειθω as the main theme and
action of the drama, and through the speeches of Athena at the end of the *Eumenides*. It is hoped that with the arguments presented in this dissertation, Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* may find an enduring place as a core text in accounts on the history of Greek rhetoric.
CHAPTER ONE: Greek Rhetoric, Drama, and Πειθώ

I. Introduction

In this dissertation I argue that rhetoric, the ideas and underlying principles of a prose discourse used in the late fifth and early fourth century BCE for civic and political speech, underwent significant development in Greek drama through πειθώ (often translated “persuasion”), a dynamic concept and action which the playwright Aeschylus presents in innovative ways throughout his Oresteia. Through my analysis of this drama, I suggest that as early as its first performance in 458 BCE, we see underpinnings and the concept of rhetoric being displayed and developed on the stage.

Most scholars agree, at least in general, that Greek drama was an important site of intellectual innovation. This genre flourished during a time of great cultural ferment marked by the expansion of literacy and an intense concern for formal arguments in the law courts of the Athenian democracy.\(^1\) Greek drama connected with the community by performing and commenting on relevant civic and political issues at the festivals of Dionysus before the citizenry of democratic Athens.\(^2\) Also, within its own texts, it created divisions between sung meter (choral lyric) and unsung meter (character speech), and immersed its audience into the dynamics of antithetical conversation and thought.\(^3\)

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1 “One may, then, productively consider tragedy as a central participant in the fifth-century examination of language. The expansion of democratic and legal institutions along with the concomitant importance of persuasive speech, the growth of interest in rhetorical theory, and the increasing popularity of studying the art of public speaking must be understood as forming part of the context in which most surviving tragedy was produced,” (Barrett 2002, 8).

2 Buxton calls “tragedy, the genre which, above all others, exposed ambivalences generated by the cultural world of Greece,” (Buxton 1982, 66). See also Bers 2009, 11-21.

3 According to Walker, this unsung meter of drama gradually developed into the unsung, un-metered “poetic” prose of the early sophists (Walker 2000, 2). Also, Sansone 2012, 60, 223-224; Bromberg 2009, 78-81; Collins 2004; Murphy et al. 2003, 21 and Rosenmeyer 1982, 209-210, who discuss drama and its important work with antithesis and the cultivation of antithetical thought.
Not all scholars, however, acknowledge the influence of the dramatists as part of a gradual influence of poetic discourse on the prose used in civic situations and eventually identified as rhetoric.\(^4\) Scholars who look to the dramatists, moreover, tend to focus their research on the work of Aristophanes and Euripides, who are unmistakably in dialogue with the sophists and orators of their time. Aeschylus, however, is often considered irrelevant. Yet by neglecting to analyze his drama as well, studies on the history of rhetoric run the risk of misunderstanding and misrepresenting the multifaceted origins of the art.

Additionally, within Aeschylus’ work, the term πειθώ deserves more careful consideration. During the fifth and early fourth centuries BCE, πειθώ was not only closely associated with rhetoric (as a synonym and personification of the art) but also described as rhetoric’s end or purpose. Scholarship on the history of rhetoric, however, often takes for granted πειθώ’s connection with rhetoric. As a result, the history of rhetoric is often constructed based upon the theoretical or technical works of prose writers and philosophers such as Gorgias and his λόγος (427 BCE),\(^5\) Plato and his use of the adjective ρητορική (c. 385 BCE),\(^6\) Isocrates, who refers to the abstract ρητορεία in 392 BCE, or Aristotle and his theoretical discussions in the Rhetoric (350-336 BCE).\(^7\) By focusing their analyses on such discussions, scholars often omit any reference to πειθώ at all. At best, they treat πειθώ in early literature as representing an un-theorized collection of practices pertaining to verbal persuasion.\(^8\)

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\(^4\) An exception to this is Homer, whom almost every writer of a history of rhetoric mentions if only briefly in the beginning of their work.

\(^5\) Date is from Kennedy 1963, 47.

\(^6\) Plato, Gorgias 448d9. While it cannot be absolutely proved that Plato first coined the word, there have been many studies made defending the assertion. For a summary of this argument see Timmerman and Schiappa 2010, 9-10. Regardless, it is in Plato that we have the first extant reference to the term. The date 385 BCE is also subject to dispute; it is taken from Schiappa 1990, 457; for a similar date, see Kennedy 1963, 47.

\(^7\) The word appears three times in Isocrates, first in Against the Sophists 21 (c. 392 BCE) and also in Niccoles 8 (c. 374 BCE) and in Antidosis 25 (c. 354/3 BCE). These dates are taken from Schiappa 1990, 460. The dates for Aristotle’s Rhetoric are taken from Kennedy 1999, 76.

\(^8\) This evaluation obscures traditional nuances of the word (and particularly the personification) πειθώ and the
I argue, however, that, throughout the *Oresteia*, which was first performed around 458 BCE, the playwright Aeschylus makes use of πειθώ in innovative and important ways that look forward to later discussions about the art of rhetoric.\(^9\) The *Oresteia* is one of Aeschylus’ most important dramas and his only extant trilogy.\(^10\) Throughout this drama, Aeschylus gives πειθώ meanings and associations which place it in connection and subordination to early Greek ideas about rhetoric, a developing assortment of ideas and techniques used in fifth and fourth century prose discourse aimed at winning over of audiences in public, often political, speech.\(^11\)

Πειθώ appears\(^12\) in the *Oresteia* as a personified goddess, as a central structural principle and theme, and as the beginning and end of elaborately wrought persuasive speeches (*Eumenides* 778-891) which resolve the entire tragedy. I argue that in each of these aspects, Aeschylus presents aspects of πειθώ which anticipate ideas and practices of rhetoric as it will be discussed, categorized, and analyzed by prose authors of the fifth and fourth centuries. Ultimately, this examination suggests that, through πειθώ, a self-conscious understanding of rhetoric existed in ancient Greece earlier than the arrival of the sophists or the use of the term ῥητορική by the philosophers, indeed, as early as the Aeschylus’ performance of the *Oresteia*.

\(^9\) Date is from Sommerstein 2010, 8.
\(^10\) Although technically the *Oresteia* is a tetralogy, because of the scarcity of evidence—or text, for that matter—for the satyr play *Proteus*, I do not incorporate this play in my analysis. As a result, I also refer to the *Oresteia* as a trilogy throughout.
\(^11\) We cannot operate under the assumption that rhetoric in 458 BCE was a monolithic concept and practice, or cohesive discipline. In the fourth and fifth century, different ideas about the art of civic persuasive speech emerged not only in the abstract treatise of Aristotle, but also in the discussions of the philosophers and practices of the sophists and orators. As a result, I define rhetoric as above.
\(^12\) While πειθώ never appears visibly on stage, the word occurs in a variety of forms and functions throughout the entire dramatic production.
II. Scholarship on the History of Greek Rhetoric

A. Prose-Based Accounts

Many accounts of the history of rhetoric begin by highlighting the value placed on eloquent speech in ancient Greek culture from the times of Homer and Hesiod. The most-quoted text is Hesiod’s *Theogony* 79-97, where persuasive speech is called a gift of the Muses for kings. The Homeric references generally include examples such as Phoenix’s words and speeches to Achilles in *Iliad* 9.443, along with descriptions of speakers such as Nestor (Hom. *Il*. 1.248-49), Thersites (Hom. *Il*. 2.275), and Menelaus compared with the eloquent Odysseus (Hom. *Il*. 3.212-224).

Much has also been written about the construction of persuasive speeches in Homer. Even in antiquity, Homer was considered foundational to rhetoric. Knudsen, in *Homeric Speech and the Origins of Rhetoric* (2014), argues that Homer possessed an acute and remarkable awareness of available rhetorical practices and what she calls “an internalized systematicity in its practice.”

Less radically, other scholars assert a general continuity of development from Homeric speeches (dated to the eighth century BCE), to the more elaborately “rhetorical” speeches of the Greek orators.

Scholars often point to the mid-fifth century arrival of the Sicilian sophists (Corax, Tisias, and certainly Gorgias) and their model speech handbooks as the “official” beginning of rhetoric, a

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14 See West 1988, 5.
16 See particularly Knudsen 2014, 21-28, who references Pseudo-Plutarch’s *Essay* 172; O’Sullivan 1992, 67 n.35; Kennedy 1999, 5-12. On ancient writers who were opposed to using Homer as model, see Enos 2012, 21.
18 The dating of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are subject to debate. Carey writes: “If we jump three and half centuries from Homer’s Greece to the fourth century BCE, we find ourselves struck more by the continuity than by any radical change,” (2000, 174). Other scholars who trace the emergence of rhetoric from within early poetry are Walker 2000, 7-21 and Havelock 1982, 32.
Corax and Tisias are mentioned by Cicero in *Brutus* 46, but most modern scholars now consider them shadowy figures given the scant evidence which we have for them and their work. Gorgias, however, remains central to the story of early rhetoric in most modern texts on the subject and consistently receives full treatment in surveys of the history of ancient Greek rhetoric. Some go so far as to equate Gorgias with the true “birth” of rhetoric in ancient Greece, as in Wardy’s 1996, *The Birth of Rhetoric: Gorgias, Plato, and their Successors*, and Pratt’s 2015 article about Gorgias, *On the Threshold of Rhetoric*. On the other hand, Kennedy, in his surveys of rhetorical history, argues that “rhetoric in argument, in style, and in arrangement was not introduced into Greece suddenly and dramatically in 427 B.C. by Gorgias, but was already present in most respects.” It remains a more common supposition that Gorgias and the other sophists of the late fifth century were merely part of a gradual process of rhetoric’s development in ancient Greece.

The fourth century likewise featured the emergence of many more rhetorical handbooks, practical guidebooks containing techniques and illustrative speeches which seem to have been circulated by the sophists such as *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* by Anaximenes. Some evidence suggests that such rhetorical handbooks were written and used even earlier. For example, Haase 2011 compiles many ancient references to rhetorical handbooks written by pupils of Isocrates.

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20 Corax and Tisias seem to have come to Athens around 476 BCE (Usher 1999, 2). See also Murphy et al. 2003, 8, 23; Rutherford 2005, 78.

21 The following authors, for example, do not think that Corax and Tisias should be treated with such prominence as has been given them in the past: Hinks 1940, 61-69; Kennedy 1963, 58-61; Cole 1991, 65-84; Sansone 2012, 173. There is fairly recent speculation that “Corax” was just an insulting nickname for Tisias (e.g., Carawan 2007, 56-59). Also, Gagarin 2007, 30. The same can be said of the lost work (also handbooks) of the sophist Thrasymachus and the tragedian Thedorus, which may have been in circulation around this time, or a little later. See Haase 2011, 9-42.


23 Kennedy 1963, 47.

24 Dating for the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* is still uncertain, but recent work by Mayhew and Mirhady attribute it to Anaximenes, who lived from 380-320 BCE; thus they date the book to about 344 BCE, which is earlier than Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. See Mayhew and Mirhady 2011, 450; also Chiron 2007, 90.
(436-338 BCE) and by a servant of Theodectes (380-340 BCE). Yet whether or not these handbooks actually existed or were in use at the time cannot be ascertained with absolute certainty on such scanty evidence. Nonetheless, regardless of when they were written, the rhetorical handbooks, in time, they had an enormous influence on the solidification and dissemination of ideas and especially practices of rhetorical speech.

The philosopher Plato is also considered a key player in the development of rhetoric, even though he posed as one of its most vehement opponents in the early fourth century. There is a unique trend in scholarship on the topic which marks the true “beginning” of rhetoric as the moment of Plato’s supposed coinage in the phrase ἡ ῥητορικὴ τέχνη (“the rhetorical art”) around 385 BCE. Schiappa wrote The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Classical Greece (1999) and “Rhetorike: What’s in a Name? Towards a Revised History of Early Greek Rhetorical Theory” (1992); in 1991, Cole wrote The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece. These texts distinguish between the pre-rhetorical times of the poets, the pre-disciplinary times of the sophists, and the time when rhetorical theory truly emerged with the use of the word ῥητορικὴ by Plato and its corresponding theoretical explication by Aristotle. By contrast, in Greek Rhetoric before Aristotle (1993), Enos defines rhetoric as "an intentional use of language to persuade," and proposed a more evolutionary model which acknowledged the general contribution of Homer, the poets and the tragedians and the specific contribution of the pre-Socratics. Scholars continue to debate these questions, which ultimately rest on an understanding of the definition of rhetoric itself.

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25 See Haase 2011, 23.
26 Knudsen, argues that Homer had access to and used available written texts on rhetoric (2014, 86).
29 Enos 1993, 29-30. Enos also writes later: “Attempting to pinpoint a precise moment in history muddles the more important goal of understanding the processes that led to the establishment of rhetoric.” (2012, xvii).
30 For some explicit definitions of rhetoric, see Cole 1991, ix; Murphy 1983, 3-4; Knudsen 1983, 6. For the purposes
Surveys of rhetorical history, after discussing the handbooks and Plato, generally turn to a close analysis of Aristotle. As the earliest extant theoretical compilation and presentation of the art in Greek literature, Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (c. 350-336 BCE) marks, as it were, a culmination in the development of Greek rhetoric. In Aristotle we have a relatively holistic and theoretical presentation of the rhetorical art together with a categorization of various practices and techniques of persuasive speech and when they should be applied. Scholars assert (and I would agree) that in the *Rhetoric* a synthesis is achieved, and a first relatively complete articulation of the rhetorical art finally emerges in ancient Greece.

For many years, the early history of rhetoric in ancient Greece has been retold in this fashion. This is not an entirely inaccurate representation of the influence of the early poets, the sophists and orators and their handbooks, and the work of the philosophers. Nonetheless, the lack of attention given to the work of the dramatists and their contribution to this history needs to be remedied.

The omission or very brief treatment of drama (with the exception of some work on Euripides and Aristophanes) may arise from a number of presuppositions about the genre. The first may lie in a lingering modern prejudice towards examining poetic texts for evidence of intellectual development in antiquity. Griffith asserts that “[c]ritics shrink from ascribing too much subtlety, self-consciousness, or allusiveness to Greek authors and audiences before the arrival of Euripides and the sophists in the later fifth century.” In *Greek Drama and the Invention of Rhetoric,* Sansone also notes a lingering scholarly reluctance to attribute self-consciousness and/or

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31 Sansone (personal correspondence) has pointed out to me that there may have been other theoretical treatises which predated Aristotle’s *Rhetoric.* Sections of Plato’s *Phaedrus* (c. 360’s or so), for instance, seems to presuppose the existence of theoretical discussions (and possibly published material) on the topic.

32 Griffith 2002, 246.
intellectual inventiveness to poets and dramatists. Whether or not this prejudice exists with the pervasiveness which these scholars suggest, general overviews on the history of rhetoric give only very summary reference to the poetic utterances of drama. An exception, perhaps, is Walker 2000, who addresses this issue directly in defending the continuum between *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*. Walker writes what he calls a “sophists’ history of rhetoric,” and argues that rhetoric came not so much from practiced oratory as from poetic and epideictic modes of expression.

The second reason is more historical. Since fifth and fourth century dramatic performances occurred in a multifaceted oral society, drama was very likely subject to influence from displays of the sophists, procedures and expressions used in courtroom oratory, and speeches presented in the democratic assembly. Thus, Knudsen remarks: “Tragic rhetoric is simply…not as chronologically remarkable…[and it] lacks the pristine state of Archaic poetry with respect to theorized rhetoric.” For these and other reasons, many scholars have focused on outside influences but have neglected to look more closely at drama as a site of rhetorical innovation in and of itself.

### B. The Role of Drama in Histories of Rhetoric

Scholars analyze drama and rhetoric from several different angles. In a brief but informative article entitled “Rhetoric and Rhetorical Devices,” Bromberg 2014 lists a number of influences:

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34 See also “Poetic Speakers, Sophistic Words,” (Knudsen 2012, 31-60). Walker barely mentions drama in his monograph, because he—and other scholars—often place drama with poetry as a different but not entirely distinct category of poetic expression. See for instance Walker 2000, 20. See also Sansone 2012, 47.
35 Walker 2000, ix. He describes rhetoric as “the art of epideictic argumentation/persuasion that derives originally from the poetic tradition and that extends in ‘applied’ versions of itself to the practical discourses of public and private life,” (Walker 2000, viii).
36 See Kennedy 1963, 27.
these approaches. He notes that some scholars tend to identify outside influences to explain the figures of speech, arguments, and formal debate scenes found in drama. Others discuss the cultural ambivalence towards rhetoric which is later picked up in drama, or analyze how the sophists and Attic orators may have inspired some of the thoughts and ideas expressed in tragedy. Still others note the structural resemblances between drama and contemporary legal procedure, the Athenian political system, and the performative, competitive nature of ancient Greek culture.

While various aspects of the historical context of the fifth and fourth century cannot be ignored, drama and the rhetoric of the courts also likely profited from a relationship of mutual influence. Dramatic practices probably influenced the speeches in the courts and vice versa. Bromberg, therefore, complains that for a long time scholars have seen the influence of rhetoric on drama without considering drama (and other poetic genres) as “sources of developments in effective public speech.” Other scholars also observe that the tendency to analyze outside influences upon drama can be detrimental to a deeper examination of the innovative potential and impact of drama itself.

Accordingly, a relatively new movement in scholarship has begun to mine ancient Greek comedy and tragedy for evidence of incipient rhetorical practices emerging almost exclusively

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38 See particularly Bromberg 2014, 1172 from H. Roisman’s, *The Encyclopedia of Greek Tragedy*.
41 See Navarre 1900, 72-7; Rose 1976 wrote an article entitled *Sophocles*’ *Philoctetes* and the *Teachings of the Sophists*; similarly, Conacher has an entire 1998 book entitled *Euripides and the Sophists: Some Dramatic Treatments of Philosophical Ideas*. On the orators and tragedy, see Bers 1994, 189-91.
42 On legal procedures and drama, see Garner 2014; Hall 2006, 353-92.
43 See McDonald 2007, 474.
44 Bromberg 2009, 44; 2014, 1172.
45 Sansone 2012, 223.
within the genre of drama. While these scholars may examine drama in ways similar to the scholarship referred to above, they operate under different assumptions about its potential for developing rhetoric. Mastronarde comments: "Many of the techniques of rhetoric are native to traditional forms of oral discourse and poetry and not an invention of those who explicitly organized and taught the art in the second half of the fifth century." For example, O’Sullivan shows how certain stylistic types were developed in the comedies of Aristophanes, thereby contributing to their eventual formalization in rhetorical theory. Another example is Castelli’s *Meter Sophiston: La Tragedia nei Tratti Greci di Retorica* (2000), which seeks to locate the origins of rhetorical technique within drama by cataloguing all of the tragic texts which are used later by fourth century rhetorical theorists.

Bromberg’s 2009 dissertation, “Tragic Persuasion and Early Greek Rhetoric,” takes a step further and re-contextualizes Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* “within a tradition of speech making and argument largely shaped by tragedy.” Focusing on tragedy’s persuasive purpose and close attention to audience response, Bromberg sees in drama not “the influence of sophistic relativism” but “a native tragic predilection for antithetical thought, resulting from the introduction of two individual actors who shared the stage and interrogated one another.” Closely aligning with and expanding upon Bromberg’s work is Sansone’s *Greek Drama and the Invention of Rhetoric* (2012). Sansone proposes that the unique intellectual moment occasioned by dramatic

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46 Halliwell 1997, 123. See also Goldhill 1986, Chapter 9, who emphasizes that tragic rhetoric did not merely reflect sophistic culture, but was a parallel symptom to a fundamental concern with the power of language. Also Murphy et al. 2003, 21 states: “The consciousness of antithesis [a speaker and a chorus going back and forth] as it was played out on the Greek stage, is a significant prelude to the establishment of a rhetorical consciousness among the Greeks.” See also Bers 1994, 179.
47 Mastronarde 2010, 208-209.
49 Bromberg 2009, 239.
composition and performance changed the “character of verbal expression”\textsuperscript{51} and thereby introduced techniques (for instance, the argument from probability and the figure of anticipation) which later became “representative features of rhetorical speech.”\textsuperscript{52} Another important text, Walker’s \textit{Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity} (2000), does not deal extensively with drama; but he proposes that ancient Greek rhetoric (in its definition as ideas and techniques forming the art of persuasive prose used for civic and political speech) ultimately descends from modes of expression used in poetry and song.\textsuperscript{53} In his view, Greek tragedy, while not intentionally aimed at developing rhetoric,\textsuperscript{54} played a large role in shaping ancient Greek culture and, I would add, the way in which that culture expressed itself.\textsuperscript{55}

The scholars I have cited all highlight the innovative potential of Greek drama with regards to the development and emergence of rhetoric in ancient Greece. My analysis builds upon the work of these scholars—particularly that of Walker, Bromberg, and Sansone—by advancing their theoretical approach and applying it to Aeschylus’ \textit{Oresteia}.

Despite changes in scholarly perspectives on the importance of Greek drama to the history of rhetoric, reluctance to include Aeschylus has persisted. This is perhaps due to the comparatively small extant corpus of Aeschylean text,\textsuperscript{56} or to Aristophanes’ presentation of Aeschylus as less rhetorical than other Greek tragedians (Ar. \textit{Ran}.1069-1082). Even Aristotle, who selects most of his examples for his \textit{Rhetoric} from tragic dialogue, only mentions Aeschylus once throughout the

\textsuperscript{51} Sansone 2012, 5.
\textsuperscript{52} Sansone 2012, 146; see also 119-145 for a more complete presentation of his argument on the importance of tragedy to the development of Greek rhetoric.
\textsuperscript{53} He considers rhetoric “in more or less sophistic terms as centrally and fundamentally an art of \textit{epideictic} argumentation/persuasion that derives originally from the poetic tradition and that extends, in ‘applied’ versions of itself, to the practical discourses of public and private life,” (Walker 2000, viii).
\textsuperscript{54} The primary aim of ancient Greek drama was to win over the audience and the judges in the contest.
\textsuperscript{56} This is the opinion, \textit{inter alios}, of Castelli 2000, 148; I would agree.
entire text (Arist. Rh. 1388a8). While the later dramatists provide many instances of rhetorical sophistication which can be easily recognized, categorized, and analyzed, Aeschylus has been traditionally disregarded as too archaic to be of much use.

Modern scholarship has perpetuated the supposedly non- (or possibly pre-) rhetorical status given to Aeschylus in antiquity. For example, Usher writes that “[d]isappointingly but perhaps predictably, the earliest tragedian, Aeschylus, does not add much to our knowledge of early rhetoric.”

Although Navarre’s 1900 Essai sur la Rhétorique Grecque avant Aristote includes rhetorical techniques which Gorgias may have inherited from Aeschylus, his list is relatively short compared with those of other playwrights, and in Castelli’s similar 2000 work, reference to Aeschylus is almost nil.

Scholars who study Aeschylus often limit their examinations to a few plays or scenes or to analyses of style. For instance, in his 1992 article “Aischylos bei den Anfängen der Griechischen Rhetorik,” Jarcho briefly analyzes the legal wording and the rhetorical situation of the events of the Oresteia in the light of evidence from the later rhetorical handbooks. His main contribution is the idea that the Rhetorica ad Alexandrum and ad Herennium reveal “elements of the rhetorical way of thinking on Attic soil at least thirty-five years earlier than Gorgias came to Athens,” (die Elemente der rhetorischen Denkweise auf dem attischen Boden mindestens 35 Jahre früher finden, als Gorgias nach Athen kam).

Focusing on the Eumenides, Rossi’s 1999 “Strategie oratorie nelle Eumenidi di Eschilo” does not discuss the possible impact of the trilogy as a whole. Other scholars have worked on individual plays, e.g., Carroll’s 1996 dissertation, “The Use and Function of

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57 Aristotle quotes Aeschylus in a section of his Rhetoric on the emotion of envy. See also Schmalzriedt 1980, 104, 106; Jarcho 1992, 69.
58 Usher 1999, 16.
59 Navarre 1900, 98. The main techniques from Aeschylus which Navarre lists are repetition and homeoteleuton.
60 Jarcho 1992, 73. He suggests that a rhetorical way of thinking may have arisen with Aeschylus, or possibly also from outside influence such as from the courts. Ibid., 69.
Rhetoric in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound,*" which examines how this drama as a whole could be considered as a forensic defense speech. Similarly, Gödde’s 2000 monograph focuses on ritual and the rhetoric of supplication in Aeschylus’ *Suppliants.* From a different perspective, Blasina’s 2003 article “Retorica e Tragedia: Maestri e Atti Didattici in Eschilo” examines Aeschylus’ rhetorical contributions, but only “in contexts relating to the teaching effectiveness of the word.”⁶¹ Novelli 2006 analyzes examples of anacoluthon throughout Aeschylus’ extant corpus. Sansone 2012 too discusses rhetoric as exhibited in Danaus’ rhetorical instructions to his daughters in the *Suppliants,* but even this analysis takes up less space than his treatment of Euripides. Most recently, Rynearson’s 2013 article examines evidence for amatory rhetoric in Aeschylus but focuses exclusively on scenes in the *Eumenides,* the last play of the *Oresteia.*⁶²

None of these accounts, however, is comprehensive enough to definitively instate Aeschylus as a transitional figure in an evolutionary account of the history of rhetoric. My work expands and builds upon the studies of the scholars who seek evidence of rhetorical development within the drama of Aeschylus, regardless of potential outside influence. In order to understand more holistically the rhetorical innovation of Aeschylus in his drama and its possible impact on the audience, I analyze a complete trilogy of Aeschylus and identify evidence for the development of ideas about Greek rhetoric in his innovations with πειθώ.

### III. Πειθώ: A Catalog of Uses Before and After Aeschylus

Πειθώ (loosely translated as “persuasion”) is not only present in significant ways throughout the *Oresteia,* but has a tradition and common usage—as a verb, a goddess, and a

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⁶¹ From Blasina 2003, 21: *explicitamente in contesti riguardanti la didattica sull’efficacia della parola.* Blasina’s emphasis on a “conceptual though not systematic rhetoric” (*una retorica concettuale, pur se non sistematica*) correlates closely with my own perspective (Ibid.).

⁶² For more on amatory rhetoric and its popularity in the fifth century BCE, see Section IV below.
noun—which precedes that of Aeschylus. Yet after him, the term is used explicitly with reference to the art and theory of rhetoric itself.

A. Verb

According to etymologists, the origin of the noun πείθω lies in the present stem of the verb, πείθω, or the present middle, πείθομαι, which is historically prior. While the most common translation of this word is “to persuade,” and in the middle “to obey, or be persuaded,” scholars have collected several other nuanced meanings based on its Proto-Indo European roots. Schulz, for instance, claims that the middle means “to trust or believe” and, only later, “to obey.” Mourelatos, in view of the fact that πείθ/πίθ- words in Greek are related to fid- words in Latin, considers that “the core idea for the middle πείθομαι would seem to be: ‘to commit oneself to another,’ hence ‘to agree to be ruled by him,’ and ‘to place trust in him.’” As far as the active form of the verb is concerned, Pepe and others consider it a factitive verb which means “to make someone obey…conveying the general notion of a subject’s ability to extend his influence over another person and make that person obey his will, without specifying how this influence is obtained.” Mourelatos also suggests that πείθω could also carry meanings such as “to enlist,” or ‘to engage,’ or ‘to win over,’ towards the performance of an act, or toward the adoption of an attitude or belief.”

The verb πείθω occurs with great frequency in Homer, from whom Aeschylus is said to have borrowed much of his material and language (Athenaeus 8.347e). According to LSJ, the active form of the verb in Homer can be translated “to persuade” (Il. 22.91; 5.252); or “to prevail

63 Schulz 1952, 62-63.
upon”…“by fair means,” “by entreaty” (Il. 1.100), or “by misleading” (Il. 1.132; 6.360). Iliad Book 9 illustrates some of these usages in the embassy to Achilles. Nestor, to begin with, urges the council to think about how they might “prevail upon” Achilles “with gentle words and soothing gifts” (πεπίθωμεν / δόροισιν τ’ ἀγανοίσιν ἔπεσσι τε μειλιχίοσι, Il. 9.112-113). Nestor later reiterates his appeal with the verb πείθω (Il. 9. 181), and the ambassadors make their best effort (Il. 9. 184). Achilles acknowledges their attempt to persuade him but directly rejects their plea: οὔτ᾽ ἔμεγ᾽ Ἀτρεΐδην Ἀγαμέμνονα πεισέμεν οἴω (“I don’t think that Agamemnon son of Atreus will persuade me,” Il. 9. 315). In the end, Achilles asserts even more strongly, as if in direct opposition to Nestor’s intentions: οὔδὲ με πείσει (“He will not persuade me, Il. 9. 345) and, later: οὔδὲ…κεν ὅς ἔτι θυμὸν ἐμὸν πείσει᾽ Ἀγαμέμνων (“Not even in this way will Agamemnon prevail upon my spirit,” Il. 9. 386).

The meaning of the earlier middle/passive form varies even more widely. It can mean “to obey or listen to” (Il. 1.79, 289, 3.260, 18.273) or “be prevailed upon, won over, or persuaded” (Il.5.201). In Iliad Book 23, it can also mean “to let oneself comply with” (Il. 23.48) or “to yield or succumb” (Il. 23.645). The first example takes place in the scene just after Achilles has taken leave of the body of Patroclus on the day before his funeral. Since it is evening, the other Greek leaders urge Achilles to cleanse himself of blood and compose himself before coming to dinner, but the grief-stricken hero refuses to do so. He does, however, agree to eat: ἀλλ᾽ ἤτοι νῦν μὲν στυγερῇ πειθώμεθα δαιτί (“But for now, let us yield to feasting, though it is hateful,” Il. 23.48). Nestor uses the verb similarly in a latter portion of the same book when, during the funeral games for Patroclus, he comments on his inability to compete in athletic events due to his age: ἐμὲ δὲ χρῆ γῆραϊ λυγρῷ / πειθεσθαὶ, τότε δ’ αὔτε μετέπρεπον ἥρωεσσιν. (“It is necessary for me to yield to miserable old age, but at that time I distinguished myself among the warriors,” Il. 23. 644-645).

67 All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
Other translations of the middle/passive as to “trust in” or “to believe something” can also be found in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. For instance, in *Odyssey* Book 16, when Odysseus arrives home to Ithaca and reveals himself to his son Telemachus, the young man does not at first believe that it is his father: Τηλέμαχος δ’, οὐ γάρ πω ἐπείθετο ὃν πατέρ’ εἶναι, / ἐξαὐτίς μιν ἔπεσσιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέπην (“But Telemachus did not yet believe that it was his father, and once more replying with words he addressed him,” *Od*. 16.192-193).

Homer’s usage, then, when combined with the conjectures of etymologists and lexicographers, suggests that the verb πείθω originated and was used throughout the times before Aeschylus as a broadly conceived action of one person making another willing to either do or believe something. What is more, this “prevailing upon,” seems to have consistently involved a process of entreaty akin to the English word “persuasion.”

B. The Name

No extant Greek author before Aeschylus seems to use the abstract common noun πειθώ. Indeed, the noun πειθό, while derived from the verb πείθω seems to have first occurred not as an abstract concept but as an erotic female goddess companion of Aphrodite: Peitho. This makes the name of this goddess unusual since more often the impersonal form precedes its personification. As a result, however, in etymological dictionaries Πειθώ (Peitho) comes...
immediately after the entry for the verb but before the entry for the common noun. Chantraine and Smyth both describe it as a name that represents an action and is often used for mortal women and goddesses.\textsuperscript{72}

Peitho as a goddess does not occur in Homer, but she is depicted in several other texts and vase paintings which predate Aeschylus’ \textit{Oresteia}, principally in association “with birth, sex, and marriage, and above all, with Aphrodite.”\textsuperscript{73} Peitho’s role in Greek art, poetry, and cult generally involves a specifically erotic and sometimes forceful action of winning over another person so that he or she would willingly comply with another person’s wishes. Among the few examples of Peitho’s pre-Aeschylean depiction in vase painting, a fragment of a \textit{skyphos} at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (c. 490 BCE) provides clear example of her association with Aphrodite (\textit{Fig. 1}):

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{peitho_aphrodite_vase}
\caption{Peitho and Aphrodite. Fragment of a terracotta \textit{skyphos} by a follower of Douris, c. 490 BCE. MMA 1907. 286.51. Photo from collections of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.}
\end{figure}

foundation of mythological thought,” (Aellen 1994, 13, tr. Stafford). For more on this fluidity, see Stafford 2000, 4; Shapiro 1993, 13; Burkert 1985, 185. On personifications more generally, see Chapter Two Section I.

\textsuperscript{72} Smyth 279, 70-71; Chantraine 1933, 116-117.

\textsuperscript{73} Shapiro 1993, 186; Smith 2011, 55.
Here a veiled Peitho (far left) appears behind Aphrodite and a small winged figure of Eros. The rest of the scene on the vase likely depicted the seduction of Helen.\textsuperscript{74} Peitho is also depicted with Aphrodite in a fragment of a \textit{skyphos} by the Douris painter (MMA 1907.286.51), dated to 460-450 BCE.\textsuperscript{75} Early lyric poets corroborate this association with Aphrodite or other erotic deities.

Sappho, for instance, explicitly names Aphrodite as Peitho’s mother:

\begin{verbatim}
εν.\[3pt\]Κυθερήας τρό-
φος[3pt]\[3pt\]θ]ρέ

δὲ θυγ[ατέρα (τῆς) Άφρο]δίτης εἴρηκε τὴν
Πειθώ
\end{verbatim}

(Sappho fr. 90.5-8V).\textsuperscript{76}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{…(foster)-child of Cytherea,}
  \item \textit{…but in other places,}
  \item \textit{she calls the nursling daughter of Aphrodite}
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Peitho…}

Another possible reference in Sappho to Peitho as the servant of Aphrodite is the following passage: Σαπ\[3pt]\[3pt\]φῶ{ι} δὲ τὴ[ν] θεόν χρυσοφάη<ν> θεράπαιναν Αφροδίτας (“Sappho [calls] the goddess [Peitho] the golden-shining attendant of Aphrodite,” Sapph. fr. 23 V, quoted in Philodem. \textit{Piet. Gomperz 1866, 42}.\textsuperscript{77}

This association with Aphrodite is also evidenced by cult inscriptions found throughout Greece and dated from as early as the mid sixth century BCE.\textsuperscript{78} According to Pausanias (1.43.6), there seems to have been a statue of Peitho and other lesser erotic deities such as Praxis, Paregoros, Eros, Himeros, and Pothos in a shrine to Aphrodite at the temple of Dionysius in Megara. Peitho also had other cult images and shrines in Argos, where she seems to have been worshiped with

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{74} See also Shapiro 1993, 149, 124; Icard-Gianolio 1994, 234.
\item \textsuperscript{75} This vase is in a very fragmented condition. For more see Icard-Giancolio 1994, 234.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Found in the scholiast to Hesiod \textit{Op.} 73, Voigt and the Campbell both accept the above lines as actual text, despite its fragmentary condition. See Voigt 1971, 100 especially. Buxton, however, mentions this text without comment in a footnote (Buxton 1982, 197 n. 39).
\item \textsuperscript{77} While this text is of questionable authorship, Lidov comments in a personal correspondence that “the reference to Peitho is not at all well established but…it is an old conjecture and was taken for granted for a long time.”
\item \textsuperscript{78} Smith 2011, 55; Rosenzweig 2004, 82-91. See also \textit{IG} II. 4583; \textit{SEG} 41.1848; MMA 1981.11.9.
\end{footnotes}
Artemis as a marriage goddess (Pausanias 2.21.1), and in Daphni, as a close associate of Aphrodite (IG II.5.1558.1). In Mytilene (IG XII 2.73) and Pharsalos (IG IX.2.236), however, Peitho is referred to more as a cult epithet of Aphrodite than as an individual deity.79

Like Aphrodite herself, Peitho and her actions seem to vary between direct and indirect, gentle and violent kinds of erotic inducement. In the first place, Peitho very often works in nurturing contexts bestowing gifts which young people need in order to woo their lovers. For instance, a Splanchnopt pyxis (c. 460-450 BCE) at the Archeologico Museo Regionale delle Marche in Ancona, Italy, depicts Peitho at a scene representing the birth of Aphrodite.80 In Hesiod’s Theogony, the Oceanid Peitho is entrusted with the responsibility of bringing up youths (ἄνδρας κουρίζουσι, Hes. Theog. 347); and in the Works and Days, she adorns the newly created Pandora with golden necklaces:

两类 δὲ οἱ Χάριτες τε θεαὶ καὶ πότνια Πειθῶ

ἄρμοις χρυσεῖοι ἔθεσαν χροῖ… (Hes. Op. 73-74)

And around her, the divine Charites and lady Peitho placed on her skin golden necklaces;…

Golden necklaces such as the ones Peitho presented to Pandora have long been symbolic of the beauty and charms of womanhood and the ability to win over someone in love.81

The particular graces which Peitho bestows upon the young person are typically those

79 See Buxton 1982, 32-33; for Peitho as an aspect of Aphrodite and a discussion of personifications and epithet theory, see Stafford 2000, 3.
80 See also Stafford 2000, 129; Smith 2011, 60; ARV (2) 899.144, 1674; BA 211902.
81 The erotic connotations associated with golden necklaces find precedence in various places in earlier literature. In Odyssey 17.295-96, the suitors present necklaces to Penelope to woo her. In the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite, Aphrodite adorns herself with necklaces (line 88) before attempting to seduce Anchises and, in the other Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite, she is depicted as adorned with golden necklaces at her birth (VI.10-13). See Pepe 1967, 130 and Buxton 1982, 37 for further conclusions based on these texts. Even outside of erotic contexts, golden necklaces have been associated with the work of Peitho, for instance, in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, where there is direct correlation between the necklaces and Peitho: Iris offers Eileithyia necklaces in order to convince her to help Leto in childbirth (Hom. Hym. Merc. 103, 113). They also call to mind the girdle used in the dios apate scene of the Iliad (Hom. II. 14.215) and in Choephoroi 613-622 where Minos persuades Scylla to kill her father by enticing her with golden Cretan necklaces.
which render her (or him) erotically attractive. For example, Peitho occurs in a fragment of Ibycus addressed to the handsome young man, Euryalus:

Εὐρύαλε γλαυκέων Χαρίτων θάλος
καλλικόμων μελέδημα, σὲ μὲν Κύπρις
α’ τ’ ἀγανοβλέφαρος Πείθω
θόρο ῥοδέοισιν ἐν ἄνθεσι θρέψαν. (Ibyc. fr. 288 PMGF)

Euryalus, child of blue-eyed Charities, delight of the fair-haired [Horai], Aphrodite and gentle-eyed Peitho nurtured you in rose-flowers.

In Sappho fr. 96.29V, Peitho appears towards the end of a poem in which Sappho is describing a lovely woman. 

ε]ὔ μαρ[ες μὲ ν οὐ.α.μι θέωσιν μόρ-
θαμα τας[v...]ρος ἥη<τ>ς[...] νιδηον
[ ]τρ[.]ματι-
[ ]μαλ[ ]ερος
και δ[.]μ[ ]ω Αφροδίτα
καμ[ ]νέκταρ ἔχεον ἀπό
χρυσίας[ ]
[...()]απουρ[ ]χέρσι Πείθω
[ ]θ[.]σενη
[ ]ακις[...ai
[ ]ες τὸ Γεραίστιον
[ ]υ φίλαι (Sappho fr. 96.21-34V)

It is not easy for us to rival goddesses in loveliness of figure…of Adonis…Aphrodite poured nectar from a golden…her hands…Persuasion… the Geraesteum …dear… (tr. Campbell).

According to Page, the content of the poem as a whole does not reveal much more than “the mutual

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82 “This convention [where Peitho is associated with the childhood of a person] indicates a special relationship between these gods and the human person, which embodies and guarantees the person’s physical beauty” (Pepe 1967, 149).

83 Although the line (and the text immediately surrounding it) is extremely fragmented (and some would say indecipherable, e.g. Page 1955, 92), the presence of the proper noun Peitho is clear. Joel Lidov comments that the presence of Peitho as a proper noun is an assumption more reasonable than not because “the lines above and below make it look like we are in a third person singular environment, so it would be hard to get a first person verb in,”(from personal correspondence). See also Vogliano 1942, 114. This passage is not mentioned in Buxton 1982.
love of Atthis and the absent girls, and the desire of Sappho to comfort Atthis.” Yet it again shows Peitho in an erotic context bestowing beauty on a beloved. In Pindar, the youth blessed with the nurturing presence of Peitho is Theoxenos: ἐν δὲ ἅρα καὶ Τενέδῳ / Πειθώ τε ἔναιεν καὶ Χάρις / νιών ᾿Αγησίλα (“So, after all, in Tenedos / Persuasion and Grace dwell / In the son of Hagesilas,” Pind. fr. 123.13-15 Snell, tr. William H. Race). In Pindar’s Pythian 9, at one point the Centaur instructs the young lover Apollo about how to approach his beloved seemingly without force but with the help of Peitho: κρυπταὶ κλαΐδες ἐντὶ σοφᾶς / Πειθοῦς ἱερὰς ϕιλοτάτων (“the hidden keys of holy lovemaking belong to clever Peitho” Pind. Pyth. 9.39). It is Peitho who nurtures the young lovers and also grants them the qualities they need to “win over” their beloved.

Additionally, Peitho’s actions can be a bit forceful, as on a skyphos by Makron (490-480 BCE), one of two extant vase paintings depicting Peitho painted before the time of the Oresteia (Fig.2). Here she appears in the background supporting an aggressive action, the abduction of Helen.

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84 Page 1955, 93.
85 The only strange thing here may be the reference to Geraesteum, but Page writes that, “occasional glimpses of the subject –matter (Aphrodite, Peitho, and pouring of nectar, Geraestus) reveal nothing irreconcilable” (Page 1955, 95-96, fn. 2).
86 See further Bérard 1974, 91-92, 161-164.
87 On the other hand, as Joel Lidov points out in a personal correspondence that there could be connotations of forcefulness in this passage since we don’t precisely know how Apollo’s beloved in this passage got to Libya.
88 The other is a Euthymides oinochoe (c. 510-500 BCE) in New York also depicting the judgment of Paris, but in a very fragmentary condition (MMA 1981.11.9; Shapiro 1993, 122; Stafford 2000, 130).
89 The seduction and/or abduction of Helen is a common scene for Peitho in Greek vase painting (Smith 2011, 58).
Paris grasps Helen by the wrist to drag her off to Troy. Behind Helen stand Aphrodite, adorning Helen with a wreath, and Peitho holding a flower. She is in a simple erotic pose yet supporting a violent deed. In a similarly complex situation, in Pindar’s fr. 122 Snell, a band of prostitutes are referred to as the servants of Peitho: Πολύξεναι νεάνιδες, ἀμφίπολοι / Πειθοῦς ἐν ἀφ νειῷ Κορίνθῳ (“Young girls who welcome many guests, attendants of Peitho in rich Corinth,” Pind. fr. 122.1-2 Snell). These courtesans have been forcibly dedicated to Aphrodite in fulfillment of the promise made by the Olympic winner, Xenophon of Corinth; but according to another line in the poem: σὺν δ’ ἀνάγκᾳ πὰν καλὸν (“with compulsion all is fair,” Pind. fr. 122.9 Snell). Here too Peitho becomes a guardian and mistress of individuals forced into erotic activity.

With an even more explicit emphasis on compulsion, Pindar’s Pythian 4 portrays Aphrodite helping Jason to win the love of Medea by engaging the service of Peitho’s whip:

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90 On this depiction Stafford writes: “The ‘persuasion of Helen’ raises the question of Peitho’s modus operandi: do mortals have any choice when up against her power? ...when does seduction become rape?” (Stafford 2000, 130).
91 In addition to using the whip of Peitho, Aphrodite in the scene also makes use of a magic bird charm called an iynx, a “bird of madness” (μανάδ’ ὄρνιν, Pind. Pyth. 4. 214). “The iynx, a love charm intended to instill a responsive
She [Aphrodite] taught the son of Aison to be skillful in prayers and charms; so that he might take away Medea’s respect for her parents, and so that desire for Hellas might set her mind afire and drive her with the whip of *Persuasion* (tr. Race).

Desire (Ποθείνα) here drives (δονέοι) Medea by means of the whip of Peitho (μάστιγι Πειθούς).

Yet by the end of this story, Pindar describes the marriage of Jason and Medea as one to which they both consented: καταίνησάν τε κοινὸν γάμον / γλυκύν (“and they were betrothed in a common sweet marriage,” Pind. *Pyth.* 4.222). Peitho, like her mother, traditionally fluctuates between actions of violence and the gentle agreements of lovers.

Another instance of this ambiguity in Peitho’s actions can be found at Sappho 1.18V, where the speaker (presumably, Sappho herself) begs Aphrodite to use Peitho’s forceful qualities in order to “release her from the pangs of unrequited love.” Aphrodite responds to Sappho’s plea in the lines below:

> τίνα δηὖτε πείθω. 
>.σάγην [ές σὰν φιλότατα; τίς σ’, ὦ Ψά]πφ’, [ἀδικήσι]
> καὶ γ[άρ] αἱ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,

passion in the person desired as a lover, consisted of a wryneck attached to a small wheel.” (Race 1997, 287 n. 5). Braswell comments that “the name of the bird and also the magical practices associated with it were familiar long before Pindar,” (Braswell 1988, 297, n.214b). There also seems to have been an ancient association between the iynx and Peitho as mentioned by a scholiast on Theocritus 2.17 and in the Suda, where Iynx [the nymph associated with the love charm] was considered either the daughter of Echo or Peitho. See also Diogenes Laertius 6.75; Pepe 1967, 153 n.8).

This word is also found in Sappho 40 and Ar. *Ec.* 954 meaning “to terrify” or “disturb,” and thus, in an erotic context, “to agitate” or “excite” (LSJ).

Buxton is surprised at the poetic imagery of the “lash of Peitho” and seeks to explain it as an instance of “the satisfying frisson of oxymoron, since Peitho is normally opposed to force-compulsion,” (Buxton 1982, 40). Pepe likewise claims that *Pythian* 4 “is in basic conflict with the non-violent idealization of Peitho in *Pythian* IX,” (Pepe 1967, 154), but I think that Peitho’s association with force and gentleness merely mirrors the ambiguous nature of her mother, Aphrodite.

Page 1955, 14.
αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ’, ἀλλὰ δώσει,
αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει
κωὐκ ἐθέλοισα. (Sappho fr.1. 18-24V.)

Who must I persuade this time
to lead you back to her love? Who
wrongs you, Sappho?
If she runs away, soon she shall pursue;
if she does not accept gifts, why, she shall give them instead;
and if she does not love, soon she shall love
even against her will (tr. Page).

Although it is uncertain whether the noun or verb is present, the noteworthy aspect of these lines is not so much the debate on the word but on the κωὐκ ἐθέλοισα of line 24. Aphrodite promises to achieve the desired result through Π/πειθώ even if the other person, Sappho’s beloved, is unwilling. The traditional representation of Peitho thus tends to combine depictions of both gentle and forceful aspects of erotic action.

Despite this complex erotic tradition, Peitho seems to have held some civic roles in antiquity as well. In the Theogony, Hesiod calls Peitho one of the Oceanids, lesser divinities whom Pepe categorizes into two basic types. There are those whose names refer to the physical attributes of the ocean, such as Καλλιρόη (fair-flowing, 351), Γαλαξαύρη (breeze-calming, 354) or Ἰάνθη (violet, 349). Secondly, there are those whose names related to “various qualities and processes which are beneficial to man’s existence in general, especially his political life,” such as Πλουτώ (wealth, 355), Τελεστώ (accomplisher, 358), Τύχη (good fortune, 360), and Πειθώ (Hes. Theog. 349). Another clear place in literature where a seemingly civic Peitho occurs without Aphrodite is

95 These scholars suggest that the goddess herself may be present: Page 1955, 4; Voigt 1971, 29; Pepe 1967, 136, although most admit to the uncertainty. Lidov states that “Sappho 1.18 is the one passage in the poem whose text has resisted all attempts at clarification,” (personal correspondence). Though he translates it as a verb, Buxton still assumes the goddess’ presence (Buxton 1982, 38).
96 Some scholars see a foreful and magical element in Sappho’s fragment 1.18V, noting that the lines in which the word πειθώ appears seem to closely resemble formulaic love spells, “an antithetical arrangement, assisted by repetition, alliteration and assonance,” (Petropoulos 1993, 46). See also Cameron 1939, 1-17.
97 Pepe 1967, 101, 102-103. Pepe notes something similar with the catalog of the Nereids, which contains both nymphs with watery names and those relating to life in society (e.g. Protomedea, Leagora, Euagora, Themisto, etc). See Pepe 1967, 103-04.
in a fragment of Alcman which describes the family members of Tyche:

Εὐνομίας <τε> καὶ Πειθῶς ἀδελφᾶ
καὶ Προμαθῆας θυγάτηρ…(Alc. fr. 64 PMGF)

Sister of Eunomia and Peitho,
And daughter of Prometheia…

Buxton comments that this genealogy is a sort of “oddity, since everywhere else in extant lyric Peitho’s function is unambiguously erotic.”

Peitho’s civic role is attested in Athenian culture as well. An Athenian cult to Aphrodite Pandemos and Peitho was established well before Aeschylus’ time, as seems to be indicated by a later inscription describing their worship in “ancient times” in the Aphrodisia festival. The cult was founded by either the legendary Theseus, by Solon around 594 BCE, or by Cleisthenes during his unification of the demes of Athens around 508/7 BCE. Its prominence at Athens at the time is further confirmed by Pausanias’ report that the sanctuary was situated on the south-west slope of the Acropolis (Pausanias 1.22.3).

Regardless who founded the cult, the circumstances surrounding its foundation were predominantly political ones, albeit with some erotic undertones. According to Rosenzweig, the worship of Peitho as a civic divinity seems to have sprung from the worship of Aphrodite as a goddess of unity and harmony between man and wife (the core of the polis) and amongst the

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98 Buxton 1977, 26; Buxton 1982, 41-42. There is very little one can decipher from such a fragment, however, Pepe speculates upon the meaning when he writes: “When intelligent planning employs persuasion as a political tool within a society enjoying the rule of law, then a state of political stability and prosperity can arise and endure,” (Pepe 1967, 142; 143). See also Weisäcker 1846, 24.

99 The inscription (IG II (2) 659) dates to approximately 287/7 BCE. See Smith 2011, 56 and especially Scholtz 2007, 16-17.

100 For this version of the story, see Pausanias 1.22.3 and Thucydides 2.15.102.

101 See account of Nicander of Colophon in Athenaeus 13.569d.

102 On these various foundation stories, see Anderson 2003, 134-146; Smith 2011, 55; Rosenzweig 2004, 15-17. Unfortunately, although there seems to be solid material evidence for the existence of the cult to Aphrodite Pandemos, there are no fragments of inscriptions from that site which refer to Peitho.

103 See Rosenzweig 2004, Fig. 1; Smith 2011, 56.
people of the *polis* at large.\textsuperscript{104} This would also account for the detail which Athenaeus supplies that the cult of Aphrodite Pandemos and Peitho was founded on the profits of Athenian brothels (Athen.13.569d). In summary, Rosenzweig states:

> What can be gleaned from the evidence thus far is that the founding of the cult of Aphrodite Pandemos [and Peitho] arose from people gathering together: people in the agora, meeting in the assemblies; people from the demes of Attica, coalescing into a unified whole; and people in the houses of prostitutes, looking for a good and inexpensive time.\textsuperscript{105}

Further evidence for the cult of a pre-Aeschylean civic Peitho may lie in certain silver coins, *triobols* (510-490 BCE), which depict the faces of Peitho and Aphrodite Pandemos as a Janus-headed goddess, and, on the reverse, possibly Athena (*Fig. 3*).

*Fig. 3. Triobol coins depicting Peitho and Aphrodite Pandemos. c. 510 - 490 BCE (Illustration reprinted from Seltman 1924, *Plate XXII, dd-ee*).*

These coins may have been what Anacreon was referring to when he wrote about a previous age:

> “at that time, Peitho did not yet shine silver” (οὐδ’ ἀργυρῆ κω τότ’ ἔλαμπε Πειθώ, Anac. fr. 384)

\textsuperscript{104} See Aristotle’s *Politics* 1280b33-39 on how marriage is central to the life and functioning of the *polis*. Smith writes: “Aristoteles shared with some contemporaries and perhaps predecessors the view that a successful *polis* was reliant on the distribution of grace and virtues such as *philia*, a sort of civic friendship, among *oikoi*. *Philia*, *kharis*, and *arete* resulted from and resulted in marriage,” (Smith 2011, 52). For more on the bond of marriage and its similarity to the bond of citizens in the *polis*, see Buxton 1982, 36. See also Rosenzweig 2004, 4 and Section IV below on the popularity of amatory vocabulary in the civic situation of this time.

\textsuperscript{105} Rosenzweig 2004, 18. See also Pala 2010, 214; Stafford 2000, 125.
The idea of a silver Peitho (aside from the existence of these triobols) is not attested elsewhere. Yet, since Anacreon worked in Athens as a court poet between 528/7-514 BCE, it is entirely plausible that he might have encountered these coins. While it is uncertain whether these triobols coincided with Cleisthenes’ reforms and possible erection of the above-mentioned sanctuary, they nonetheless provide further evidence of Peitho in the public sector, very much still in the shadow of Aphrodite with a rather ambiguously defined role and sphere of activity.

In sum, then, Peitho is traditionally represented as an erotic, sometimes civic, goddess companion of Aphrodite, whose sphere of action encompasses both nurturing and beautifying roles as well as dangerously seductive ones. The most significant difference which can be noted between Peitho and the verb πείθω is that the goddess is a strongly erotic persona who infrequently—if ever—uses carefully constructed speech or entreaty in her work. More often, she is depicted with instruments (whips, necklaces, charms, flowers, etc). The verb, on the other hand, operates more broadly and with frequent reference to speech. Even in the first book of the Iliad, πείθομαι appears with μύθῳ (Il. 1.33; 1.273) and ἔπεσι (Il. 1.150). The verbal πείθω can also involve lengthily entreaties and a certain drawn out process of persuasion which involves convincing someone intellectually about something and in a wide variety of social contexts such as the embassy to Achilles examined above. The pre-Aeschylean Peitho, by contrast, is found mostly in private amatory situations using instruments to make someone yield in love—and rather

106 The objection to this supposition is the fact that the triobol was a fractional coin (half of a drachma) and hence “had a rather small issue and may not have enjoyed wide distribution,” (Rosenzweig 2004, 18).
107 Smith 2011, 56; Rosenzweig 2004, 18; for the opposite opinion, see Seltman 1924, 94-95; 98. See Simon 1970, 12-13, pls 2.4 for another picture and further discussion. One commentator goes so far as to say that “in view of the fact that these coins with (supposedly) Aphrodite and Peitho on one side have (unmistakably) Athene on the other, Simon suggests that we have here a sort of pre-echo of the end of the Oresteia, where Athene relies on the power of Peitho,” (Buxton 1982, 33).
108 Thanks to Joel Lidov, who first pointed out to me this detail about entreaty in a personal correspondence.
109 But also see Oguse 1965, 524-27; Table I and Mourelatos 1970, 137, who point out that the use of this verb with an accusative and infinitive construction only comes into use with Sophocles.
quickly, it seems. Aside from these differences, however, both the personified noun and the verb involve the winning over of one person by another, or, as Mourelatos sums up: “causation, instigation, or inducement.”

C. Abstract Noun

The abstract, impersonal noun πειθώ is almost never used in extant Greek texts before the time of Aeschylus and in any texts where it does occur, it seems either closely related to the goddess or simply meaning “conviction” or “persuasion.” One pre-Aeschylean text which uses the impersonal noun is a fragment (dated between 600’s-500’s BCE) supposedly from the Apophthegmata of the Seven Sages (fr. 6.12). At the end of a list of moral exhortations, the passage states that the person who follows these wise sayings will have, among other things: “caution at the right moment, nobility in character, mastery in work…[and] persuasiveness in speech” (καιρῶι εὐλάβειαν, τρόπωι γενναιότητα, πόνωι ἐγκράτειαν…λόγῳ πειθώ, Septem Sapientes, Apophthegmata, fr. 6.11-12). Here the noun clearly refers to an abstract idea divorced from the nuanced meanings associated with the goddess Peitho.

The term πειθώ also occurs in some fragments of pre-Socratic philosophers who may have been near-contemporaries of Aeschylus. These philosophers seem to fluctuate between an understanding of πειθώ as a divinity or as an impersonal abstract. Parmenides (c. 515-450 BCE) writes about a Π/πειθώ which seemingly functions as a divinity and accompanies another

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111 Aeschylus first uses πειθώ as an abstract, non-deified, “uncapitalized” noun at Ag.87 and 106. These texts will be discussed further in Chapter Two.
112 Unfortunately, whether or not this text is verbatim or paraphrased cannot be verified. Other passages from the Seven Sages contain πειθώ in verb form, and usually in direct commands to obey the the laws, customs, or rulers of a given place. For example, the exhortation “Obey the laws” (Νόμοις πείθου) is found twice in Septem Sapientes, Sententiae 216. 9, 38. A similar command is in Septem Sapientes Præcepta 217. 3. And, another instance of the verb meaning “obey” can be found in Septem Sapientes, Apophthegmata 2.34.2. These verbal examples are not surprising considering the wide use and application of the verb even in Homer.
semi-divine abstract (Truth), by marking the best road of inquiry for his philosophical agenda:

εἰ δ’ ἄγ’ ἐγὼν ἐρέω, κόμισαι δὲ σὺ μὴθον ἀκούσας,
αἵπερ ὤδοὶ μοῦνα διζήσιό εἰσι νοῆσαι·
ἡ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι,
Πειθοῦς ἐστι κέλευθος (Ἀληθείη γὰρ ὀπηδεῖ),…(Parm. DK fr. 2.1-4)

But come, I will tell you, and—you—pay attention and hear my story,
which are the only roads of inquiry to consider;
The first one, that “it is” and that it is not possible to “not be,”
This the path of Peitho/conviction (for she/ it attends upon Truth)…

It is challenging to decide whether Parmenides means the goddess Peitho or the purely abstract idea of conviction. This passage is preceded by the mythological and semi-amatory lines of the earlier fragment (DK. fr. 1.1-10) which features a goddess and daughters of the sun who guide the man to the light of true philosophy by throwing off their veils. Thus, Blank argues that the “invocation of Peitho in fragment 2 …is quite in keeping with the motif of seduction or temptation, philosophical or otherwise, introduced by the unveiling of the sun-maidens.”  

113 He continues: “Parmenides… although he argues for this [the Way of true faith] logically,…[he] begins by using the seductive power of persuasion…. “  

114 The wording of this scholar’s comments again illustrates the challenge of how to translate Π/πειθοῦς in the thought of this pre-Socratic philosopher: as a goddess or as “the seductive power of persuasion?”

A similar ambiguity also can be found in a fragment of Empedocles (c. 495-435 BCE), a pre-Socratic philosopher who speaks about Π/πειθόω as a semi-divine skill. The passage is taken from Clement of Alexandria (Clem. Al. Strom.V. 81):

γάρ τοι θείον, ὁ Ἀκραγαντίνος φησι ποιητής,
οὐκ ἔστιν πελάσσασθαι ἐν ὑφαλμοῖσιν ἐφικτόν
ἡμετέροις ἢ χερσὶ λαβεῖν, ἢ μεγίστη
πειθοῦς ἀνθρώποις ἀμαξιτός εἰς φρένα πίπτει. (Emp. DK fr.133.1-5)

For the divine, says the poets of Acragas,
‘Is not to be reached and made accessible by the eyes, 
nor grasped with the hands, though by this way the broadest path of **persuasion** enters the heart of men.’ (tr. Guthrie).

While Π/πειθώ has come down and made (herself/itself) available for men to use and tread upon in ordinary human activities, divinity, by contrast, always remains above mankind and out of reach. Empedocles is therefore referring to a Π/πειθώ that, while divine in origin, ends up becoming a secular, human skill. This and the above examples reveal that the abstract common noun πειθώ, while it occurs in a few pre-Aeschylean texts, is either difficult to distinguish from the goddess Peitho or else closely linked to meanings such as “conviction,” “persuasion,” or persuasiveness.

**D. After Aeschylus: The Verb, Goddess, and Noun**

After Aeschylus, the verb, but especially the personified goddess Peitho and its abstract noun counterpart πειθώ, undergo a transformation. There seem to be two main strands of development here, which I will discuss in sequence. The first takes place soon after the time of Aeschylus and just into the fourth century BCE. During this time, πειθώ becomes explicitly associated with the newly developing ideas about the art of persuasive speech, an art which will later be referred to as rhetoric.

Aristophanes provides an excellent example of the change in the perception of πειθώ and a new use in association with sophistic speech. In the *Frogs*, Aristophanes stages a competition between Euripides and Aeschylus where the two playwrights utter some lines from their tragedies. Meanwhile, Dionysus uses a scale to measure the “weight” of their lines. Euripides begins the dialogue:

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115 It must be admitted that it is difficult to ascertain the existence of these two strands of development with absolute certainty due, in large part, as Lawrence Kowerski has pointed out to me, to the dearth of evidence (personal correspondence).
Euripides
‘οὐκ ἔστι Πειθοῦς ἱερὸν ἄλλο πλὴν λόγος.’

Aeschylus
‘μόνος θεῶν γὰρ Θάνατος οὐ δῶρων ἐρᾷ.’

Dionysus
μέθεσθε μέθεσθε: καὶ τὸ τοῦδέ γ’ αὖ ῥέπει: θάνατον γὰρ εἰσέθηκε βαρύτατον κακόν.

Euripides
ἐγώ δὲ πειθώ γ’ ἔπος ἄριστ’ εἰρημένον.

Dionysus
πειθώ δὲ κοῦφόν ἐστι καὶ νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον. (Arist. Ran. 1931-1396)

Euripides:
“Persuasion has no other shrine save speech.”

Aeschylus:
“Death is the only god that loves not bribes...”

Dionysus:
Let go, let go! This one's is tilting once again.
For he inserted Death, weightiest of ills.

Euripides:
And I—Persuasion—a saying beautifully expressed.

Dionysus:
Persuasion is but light, and makes no sense...(tr. Dillon).

In his first line, Euripides removes Peitho from ritual worship and associates her directly with speech (λόγος, 1391). Euripides is angered that his line did not outweigh that of the older playwright; he defends himself, but once again refers to a πειθώ that can somehow be spoken or “expressed” (εἰρημένον, 1395). Dionysus then dismisses persuasion entirely in his last line (1396).

By the end of this passage, Π/πειθός has been slightly removed from cult status and connected with

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116 The full quotation from Euripides fr. 170 (Nauck) is as follows: οὐκ ἔστι Πειθοῦς ἱερὸν ἄλλο πλὴν λόγος / καὶ βοιμὸς αὐτῆς ἐστ’ ἐν ἀνθρώπου φύσι ("There is no shrine of Peitho other than speech, and her altar is in the nature of man").

117 Stafford comments that Euripides could be referring to the nearby temple of Aphrodite Pandemos and Peitho on the Acropolis (Stafford 2000, 126-127).
beautifully spoken speech—the kind of speech, however, which can be light, fickle, and empty (κοψτὸν…καὶ νοὸν οὐκ ἔχον, 1396). This last description may well be a reference to the use of πειθό by sophists who practice rhetoric and play with words to stun and deceive the crowd.\textsuperscript{118}

Peitho as a goddess, but also as an abstract noun, also forms the basic terminology of several fifth century prose passages from historians. Herodotus (c. 484–425 BC) tells of Themistocles’ political reliance on Peitho when engaged in conflict with the Andrians:

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\text{προϊσχομένου Θεμιστοκλέος λόγον τόνδε, ός ἢκουν Αθηναίοι περι ἑωυτούς ἐχοντες δύο θεοὺς μεγάλους, Πειθό τε καὶ Ἀναγκαίην, οὔτω τε σφι κάρτα δοτέα εἶναι χρήματα… (Hdt. Hist. 8.111)}
\]

Themistokles gave them [the Andrians] to understand that the Athenians had come with two great gods to aid them, Peitho and Ananke (Necessity), and that they [the Andrians] must therefore certainly give money…. (tr. Godley).

Peitho and Necessity here seem to be a pair of complementary opposites: the Athenians’ power lies in the assurance that if their words of Peitho fail, force can still avail.\textsuperscript{119} In Thucydides also, the Plataean leader Lacon complains to the Lacedaemonians about the small hopes he has of winning them over by argumentation: χαλεπῶς δὲ ἔχει ἡμῖν πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ ἡ πειθώ ("In addition to other things, the possibility of persuading you also poses difficulty for us," Thuc. 3.53.4).\textsuperscript{120}

Later Greek sophists and philosophers likewise use the verb and the non-divine term πειθό to describe their art.\textsuperscript{121} In the Encomium of Helen, for example, Gorgias gives a brilliant excursus on the power of Π/πειθό in speech.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{118} The association of the goddess Peitho with speech, especially in the civic sphere, will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Two Section IV.

\textsuperscript{119} See Buxton 1982, 42; 1977, 28 who refers to the following ancient note: In Atheniensium potestate esse, vi ab illis obtinere quod petebant, si verbi s. dicendi facultate et artificio non possent (TGL VI, col 665).

\textsuperscript{120} For the translation of πειθό here see note in the Smith 1894 commentary which indicates “only here in Thucydides.” Hobbes’ translation renders it “the means of persuasion;” Buxton translates the entire line as follows: “But we find ourselves confronted by a further difficulty, in that we have to convince you,” (Buxton 1982, 31).

\textsuperscript{121} For recent arguments against the centrality of persuasion to the work of the sophists, however, see Gagarin 2001, 277 and Porter 1993, 267-299.

\textsuperscript{122} Many scholars agree that the Encomium expresses the core of Gorgias’ agenda and may even be representative of fifth century rhetorical theory. See Kerferd 1981, 78; Segal 1962, 102.
ὁ μὲν οὖν πείσας ὡς ἀναγκάσας ἀδικεῖ, ἢ δὲ πεισθεῖσα ὡς ἀναγκασθεῖσα τῷ λόγῳ μάτην ἄκούει κακῶς. ὅτι δ’ ἢ πειθό προσιοῦσα τῷ λόγῳ καὶ τὴν ψυχήν ἐτυπώσατο ὅπως ἐβούλετο… (Grg. Enc. 12-13)

He who persuaded (as constrainer) did wrong; while she who was persuaded (as one constrained by means of the discourse) is wrongly blamed. Persuasion belonging to discourse shapes the soul at will… (tr. Donovan).

The philosopher Plato associates πειθό directly with the art of rhetoric: τὸ πείθειν…οἷόν τ’ εἶναι τοῖς λόγοις (“the ability to persuade with speeches,” Pl. Grg. 452e1, tr. Lamb). Later in the dialogue, Socrates also says to Gorgias: εἴ τι ἔγω σονήμι, λέγεις ὅτι πειθοῦς δημιουργὸς ἐστιν ἢ ῥητορική, καὶ ἡ πραγματεία αὐτῆς ἂπασα καὶ τὸ κεφάλαιον εἰς τοῦτο τελευτᾷ (“If I at all take your meaning, you say that rhetoric is a producer of persuasion, and has therein its whole business and main consummation,” Pl. Grg. 453a1-2, tr. Lamb). In the Phaedrus, Socrates reiterates this broad πειθό-centered definition when he condemns the art as a mere compilation of rules, skills, and techniques. To Socrates, the most essential requirement for the art and practice of rhetoric is a deep understanding of the human soul which enables the rhetor “to try to make or instill conviction in this one [in the soul of the interlocutor]” (πειθό… ἐν τούτῳ ποιεῖν ἐπιχειρεῖ, Pl. Phaedr. 271a2). In Plato, πειθό has become the end or purpose of ἡ ῥητορική τέχνη. Aristotle likewise subordinates πειθό to rhetoric when he defines the art as: δύναμις περὶ ἕκαστον θεωρῆσαι τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν (“the ability, in each case, to see the available means of persuasion,” Arist. Rh. 1355b 25-26; tr. Kennedy).

Similarly, πειθό-centered perceptions of rhetoric persisted for many years in the ancient Greco-Roman world. Many of these descriptions and definitions make use of the word

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123 For more on Gorgias’ view of rhetoric and πειθό, see Chapter Two Section II.
124 See Pl. Phaedr. 271c-272b, for a complete list of what is involved in rhetoric according to Plato. He also calls rhetoric ψυχαγωγία (271c10).
125 For Aristotle, the πιθανόν—the means available to πειθό—includes everything from the basic modes of argumentation and stylistic techniques to theoretical evaluation and knowledge about human psychology. For more on Aristotle’s view of rhetoric see specifically Chapter Four Section III.
“persuasio,” which, while not etymologically related to the Greek “πειθώ,” seems to have been understood as synonymous by Latin-speaking theorists on the topic. For instance, a follower of Aristotle, the second century (BCE) Greek peripatetic Critolaus, adapts Aristotle’s definition and (according to Quintilian) describes rhetoric as: scientia videndi et agendi in quaestionibus civilibus perorationem popularis persuasiosis (“the science of seeing and conducting speech of popular persuasion on civic issues,” Quint. Inst.Orat. 2.15.19). In the first century BCE Cicero also defines rhetoric as something aimed at winning over the people involved: dicere adposite ad persuasionem (“to speak appropriately in order to persuade,” Cic. De Inv. 1.6; Quint. Inst.Orat. 2.15.5-6). By the first century CE, Quintilian describes rhetoric again in a way which resonates with that of Critolaus, Cicero, and the Greek predecessors: rhetoricen esse vim persuadendi (“rhetoric is the force of persuading,” Quint. Inst.Orat. 2.15.35).

In conclusion, the verb πειθω, the goddess Peitho, and the noun πειθώ have meanings spanning from inducement to persuasion, from instantaneous erotic seduction to a process of instilling intellectual conviction. After the time of Aeschylus, however, the word seems to experience a shift in meaning, becoming predominantly with speech in the civic sphere. Πειθώ forges close ties with conceptions of that art being practiced and discussed so extensively during the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE: rhetoric. After Aeschylus, in fact, πειθώ becomes the end or purpose of the rhetorical art in ancient Greece.

IV. Rhetorical, Civic, Public Πειθώ: A Fifth Century Phenomenon?

In addition to appearing frequently in descriptions of the rhetorical art, after Aeschylus πειθώ also reappears in her private and erotic roles. This seeming reversion of πειθώ to the erotic

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126 Critolaus supposedly also called rhetoric the usum dicendi (“the practice of speaking,” Quint. Inst.Orat. 2.15.23), a definition which could include many different aspects of communication.
sphere can perhaps best be explained through scholarly discussions on the use of amatory terminology to describe rhetoric during the fifth century BCE. The erotic understanding and expression of rhetorical speech is the second strand of developments to which πειθόω contributes.

In the first place, this later Peitho retains her close connection with speech, but in predominantly private and amatory situations. In the first century BCE, for instance, Peitho reappears several times in Meleager’s erotic epigrams. One example describes his beloved Zenophila:

"Ἡδυμελεῖς Μοῦσαι σὺν πηκτίδι καὶ Λόγος ἔμφρων σὺν Πειθόω καὶ ἔρως Κάλλος ψήφηνου, Ζηνοφίλα, σοὶ σκηπτρια Πόθων ἀπένειμαν, ἔπει σοι αἱ τρισσαὶ Χάριτες τρεῖς ἔδοσαν χάριτας. (Mel. Anth. Graec. 5. 140)"

The sweet-singing Muses with the lyre, and canny Speech with Persuasion, and Love with Beauty under his reins, invested you, Zenophila, with sovereignty over the Desires, since the three Graces gave you three graces (tr. Paton).

Peitho here is connected with Speech (Λόγος) that has a certain rational quality (ἔμφρων). On the other hand, this Peitho is a predominantly erotic deity who operates in the private sphere. Much much later also, in the fourth/fifth century CE, Nonnus describes a beautiful youth with the gifts of Peitho: χείλεα σιγήσαιμι· τὸ δὲ στόμα, πορθμὸν Ἐρώτων, Πειθῶ ναυτάουσα χέει μελιηδέα φωνήν ("I would not speak of his lips; but Peitho dwells in his mouth, the ferry of the Loves, and pours out honey-sweet speech," Nonn. Dion. 4.139-141, tr. Rouse). The Peitho of sweet speech will remain in the private erotic sphere for years to come.

Also, during the first centuries BCE and CE, the abstract noun πειθόω recurs in texts on the art of speaking. Dionysus of Halicarnassus’ *On the Composition of Words* and Longinus’ *On the

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127 Also see references to Peitho in Meleager, *Greek Anthology* 5.137, 5.195, 12.95.
128 The same applies to vase paintings; a good example of how Peitho continues to be depicted throughout the centuries, other than in scenes of the seduction of Helen, is a Meidias pelike (c. 420-410 BCE) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. This vase depicts Musaios and his wife Deiope looking at their baby Eumolpos, who is accompanied by Aphrodite, Pothos, Peitho, and other erotic deities (MMA 37.11.23).
Sublime belong to a sophistic movement which, according to de Romilly, sought to recapture the spirit of the fifth century, that time “when things were not yet separated and isolated, when rationalism and irrational habits, mythos and logos, inspiration and techne, went hand in hand.”

In these texts, the authors refer to πειθώ most often to describe the semi-magical or erotic power of word arrangement and of the orator’s influence. Dionysus, for example, writes that: τὴν τάξιν... ἡδονὴν καὶ πειθόν καὶ κράτος ἐν τοῖς λόγοις...οὐκ ὀλίγῳ κρείττον’ ἐκείνης [ἡ τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐκλογή] ἔχει (“arrangement...[for the achievement of] pleasure, persuasion and strength in discourse...is far more potent than the other [word selection],” Dion. Hal. Comp. 2.14). In Longinus’ On the Sublime, πειθό also occurs in his discussion of word arrangement. On the topic of asyndeton, Longinus writes: Ἄκρως δὲ καὶ ἡ ἐπὶ ταὐτὸ σύνοδος τῶν σχημάτων εἴωθε κινεῖν, ὅταν δύο ἢ τρία οἷον κατὰ συμμορίαν ἀνακιρνάμενα ἀλλήλοις ἐρανίζῃ τὴν ἰσχύν τὴν πειθόν τὸ κάλλος (“The combination of several figures often has an exceptionally powerful effect, when two or three combined cooperate, as it were, to contribute force, conviction, beauty,” Long. Subl. 20.1-2, tr. Fyfe). In other words, when πειθό occurs in connection with speech again, it is within the tradition of the non-political, private, erotic, semi-magical goddess Peitho.

The depiction of Peitho in these much later texts perhaps attests to the fifth century perception of politics and rhetoric as quasi-erotic. Several scholars speculate that a preference for erotic terminology originated from an amatory understanding of the social bond held in Athens at the time. Words relating to love and passion, such as πειθό, would be used to describe the effect...
of political orators on their audience. Thucydides’s describes the audience, after listening to Nicias’ speech, as follows: καὶ ἔρως ἐνέπεσε τοῖς πᾶσιν ὁμοίως ἐκπλεῦσαι (“All alike were seized with a passionate desire to sail,” Thuc. 6.43.3, tr. Jowett). Other orators whom Thucydides describes with a similarly erotic impact through their speech include Pericles and Diototus.\(^{134}\) Ludwig comments that during this time, “an orator could recommend himself to the people on analogy with courtship, addressing the devotion, sacrifice, and subservience of one stricken by eros.”\(^{135}\) If this was indeed the case in fifth century Greece, then it would not be a surprise that “[e]ros [became] an indispensable and central constituent of a sound rhetorical theory...”\(^{136}\) The popularity of erotic terminology would also have been beneficial for fostering connections between πειθώ and the art of civic speech. Mourelatos points out:

> It is only in late fifth-century literature that the association of πειθώ with rhetoric becomes firm. What doubtless underlies this development is the conception of πειθώ as ἔρως-like inducement, and as the power of agreeable compulsion.\(^{137}\)

Put differently, πειθώ may have had a key role in the amatory understanding of rhetoric at the time.\(^{138}\)

Whether πειθώ contributed or merely profited from this fifth century popularity of amatory terminology and notions of political speech, the ephemeral nature of this trend may also explain the brief tenure which πειθώ had with relation to civic rhetoric. While amatory undertones remain

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\(^{134}\) Thuc. 2.43. See Ludwig 2002, 140-141; also, Rynearson 2013, 4.

\(^{135}\) Ludwig 2002, 144. These scholars also claim that both Euripides (e.g. Eur. Med. 663-718) and Aristophanes (Ar. Ach. 142-44) speak of politics and compose their rhetorical speeches in ways that reflect the amatory poetic literature of the past (meaning, the fifth century BCE). See also Aristophanes’ Knights 1341-1342. For this argument, see Karadimas 2008, 37 and Ludwig 2002, 141-143.

\(^{136}\) Karadimas 2008, 56. For a further explication of this theory, see Karadimas 2008, 25.

\(^{137}\) Mourelatos 1970, 139. For further discussion on how Peitho may have developed into her more rhetorical role via ἔρως, see Wardy 1996, 47-50 and Goldhill 2000, 161-179.

\(^{138}\) Karadimas 2008, 7.
in discussions of rhetoric, particularly with the Socratics, in the early 400’s BCE these undertones are gradually fall out of use in actual civic oratory and discussions on rhetoric. De Romilly blames Plato, but especially Aristotle, for this change. She also argues that a modern preconception of rhetoric as a science stripped of non-logical elements is biased because of Plato and Aristotle’s approach. According to de Romilly, Plato thought that "[i]n order to save rhetoric as a techne, in order to keep some room for it in the classification of techne, one had to ignore all connection with magic [or the erotic, for that matter]." Aristotle goes a step further, de Romilly argues: in order to make rhetoric a scientific techne, Aristotle causes the art of persuasive speech to become absorbed (and purified) by logic.

On the other hand, after the fifth century, πειθώ may have been simply replaced by the more commonly used terms λόγος and ῥητορική. Even the fifth century sophist Gorgias refers to persuasive speech predominantly as λόγος in his Encomium of Helen. In Encomium 8, for instance, he speaks about a general idea of λόγος ό πείσας (“persuasive discourse”), but glorifies λόγος even more specifically: λόγος δυνάστης μέγας ἐστίν (“discourse is a great potentate,” Grg. Enc. 8, tr. Donovan). Throughout the entire text, moreover, λόγος appears a total of 34 times whereas the noun πειθώ only thrice. Both λόγος and ῥητορική take precedence in Plato’s and Isocrates’ discussions on this art as well. In Plato’s Phaedrus, the phrase τέχνη λόγων (“the art of speech,” Pl. Phdr. 273d7) is quite common; the word λόγος, used 164 times throughout the

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139 See for example Xen. Hel. 5.2.28; Mem. 3.9.7; Isoc. Hel. 10.52.1, Antid. 15.275.4; 15.318.8; 10.55.5; 8.65.2; 8.113.8; 15.245.5; but also note Ludwig’s comments that “the Socratics created their own idiom and treated language the way they pleased. The almost certainly wielded some influence, but they are not representative of their time,” (Ludwig 2002, 153).
141 De Romilly 1975, 51.
142 De Romilly 1975, 43.
144 See also Buxton 1982, 53.
145 Credit is due to the TLG for most of the numbers which are provided here and below.
Phaedrus, predominates by a large margin compared with either πειθώ (4) or ρητορική (14). The term ρητορική (88) is used more frequently, but still not quite as much as λόγος (157) in Plato’s Gorgias as well; in this text, even the noun πειθώ occurs 19 times, but, relative to the other words, this is hardly remarkable. Isocrates prefers the use of λόγος or λέγειν in most descriptions of his work and rhetorical/educational agenda. A text search reveals that in the entire speech of Isocrates’ Against the Sophists the words under consideration occur as follows: λόγος (15), ρητορεία—not ρητορική—(1), and πειθώ (0). Finally, by the time of Aristotle’s Rhetoric, the words λόγος and ρητορική seem to have taken over from πειθώ completely. Throughout this treatise on effective and persuasive speech, the noun λόγος appears 151 times, ρητορική about 30 times, but πειθώ only once, within a quotation (Arist. Rh. 1406a4). From this evidence, we can conclude that πειθώ, while used by Aeschylus and others during a time of transition in the history of rhetoric, was ultimately replaced by λόγος and ρητορική, terms for the art which have persisted through the centuries.

The gradual demise of πειθώ for discussing the art of persuasive political speech likewise explains the scholarly neglect in the history of rhetoric. Studies on development of rhetoric in a Greek tragedy through an analysis of the word πείθω and its derivatives are even less numerous. Art historians and classicists who specialize in personified deities and abstractions tend to discuss only Peitho’s status and depiction as a cult goddess in Athens and elsewhere in ancient Greece. Scholars who trace the idea of πειθώ as a theme throughout the drama of Oresteia typically remain

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146 While I have not determined the fact absolutely, it is reasonable to assume that most of the occurrences of the word λόγος in these particular texts are used in reference to the art of persuasive civic speech, the main subject under discussion.
147 See Schiappa 1990, 460-461.
148 See, for example, the full monograph by Jahn 1846, together with longer treatments by Pepe 1967, esp. 191-206, and Buxton 1982, 30-66. Discussion of Peitho in this way also occurs in accounts by art historians such as Shapiro 1993, 186-207; Icard-Gianolio 1994, 242-250; Stafford 2000, 111-140; Smith 2011, 55-60. More extensive treatment of these scholars can be found in Chapter Two of this dissertation.
in the realm of literary interpretation.\footnote{The following scholars provide smaller or larger general and thematic observations and comments about πειθόω as the word and/or goddess occurs throughout the drama: see Fraenkel 1950, 184, 200; Owen 1952, 83-84, 123-129; Thomson 1966, 65; Lebeck 1971, 20-21, 40-41, 131; Gagarin 1976, 66-68, 83; Rosenmeyer 1982, 315; Winnington-Ingram 1983, 168-172; Goldhill 1984, 263; Kane 1986, 100-117; Konishi 1990, 250; Zeitlin 1992, 214-215; Sommerstein 2010, 151. On πειθόω as a cosmological principle of the Oresteia, see Conrad’s entire 1956 dissertation; Rabinowitz, for her part, writes her 1981 dissertation about πειθόω’s change throughout the Oresteia as part of the unfolding of a re-worked creation myth. For a gendered perspective of πειθόω in the Oresteia, particularly in the Eumenides, see McClure 1997, 114; 1999, 62-72 and Porter 2005, 324-325.} And while other scholars have observed that Aeschylus alters and displays the goddess Peitho and the action of πειθόω in unprecedented ways throughout the Oresteia, they do not generally consider whether these changes contributed to the development of rhetoric in the world outside of the play as well.\footnote{On the unique importance of πειθόω to the Oresteia, see book-length discussions of the topic such as the dissertations by Bailey 1962, Buxton 1977, and Zweig 1982. See also Pepe 1967, 147-206 and Headlam 1906, 114-119. More extensive treatment of these and other scholars can be found in Chapter Two and Three.}

Nonetheless, πειθόω remains a formative albeit short-lived term which had an impact on early conceptions and definitions of rhetoric in both poetic and prose literature of the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE. As such, πειθόω deserves a more thorough and careful examination, particularly in the transitional work of the playwright Aeschylus, who uses, displays, and changes this concept in unique ways throughout his trilogy the Oresteia.
CHAPTER TWO: The Goddess Peitho: Personified Aspects of Rhetoric?

I. Introduction

Given the ancient Greek fascination with persuasion and argument, one might assume a direct connection between the functions of both the art of rhetoric and the goddess Peitho: both as closely associated with winning over another. Yet, as far as can be seen from extant evidence, no Greek artist, poet, or devotee of the goddess Peitho seems to have articulated this connection until the playwrights and, specifically, until Aeschylus.

Aeschylus changes the traditional representation of the goddess Peitho more radically than any other (extant) poet or playwright before him. This chapter proposes that Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* (first performed in 458 BCE) serves as a transition for Peitho’s association with fifth and early fourth century ideas about Greek rhetoric. Through each play of the trilogy, Aeschylus uproots Peitho from her traditional mythological heritage, gives her a new and unusual working partner, and expands her sphere of influence. While Aeschylus’ specific purpose in depicting Peitho in these ways is a dramatic one, these changes in her traditional representation connect her with ideas about the art of civic persuasion as it was being discussed, described, and often decried by near-contemporary philosophers, sophists, orators, and theorists in ancient Greece.

A. The Abstract Noun in Aeschylus

Before analyzing Peitho as a goddess in Aeschylus, it must be noted that he also makes use

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151 See Chapter One Section II.
152 One of the first to speculate about this seems to have been Zweig, although it has never been fully fleshed out. She writes that “this rhetorical meaning may have gained its vogue first in the drama, especially that of Aeschylus,” (Zweig 1982, 27).
of the abstract noun in the *Oresteia*, but its meaning, compared with his usage of the goddess Peitho, is relatively unremarkable in terms of the history of rhetoric. In the *Oresteia* the noun seems to express a meaning most closely related to the nuanced connotations of the verb πείθω: “to prevail upon or persuade.” No separate section of this dissertation will be dedicated to an examination of Aeschylus’ usage of the verb πείθω; rather, references to his uses will be woven throughout, and particularly highlighted in some textual analyses in Chapters Three and Four.

The impersonal πειθώ occurs twice in the trilogy. Aeschylus’ first use of the word πειθώ occurs in the *Agamemnon* towards the end of the parados where the Chorus is questioning the signals received about the fall of Troy. The Chorus addresses Clytemnestra, who has probably just arrived on the scene.¹⁵³

σὺ δέ, Τυνδάρεως
θυγατέρι, βασίλεια Κλυταιμήστρα,
tί χρέος; τί νέον; τί δ’ ἐπαισθομένη
tίνος ἄγγελίας
πειθῶi περίπεμπτα θυοσκεῖς; (Aesch. Ag. 83-87)

But, you, daughter of Tyndareus, queen Clytemnestra,
what need is there? What’s new? Having perceived what,
**at the instigation** of what message
are you making burnt sacrifices sent round about?

The Chorus marvels that Clytemnestra is so convinced about the truth of the recent news that she now engages in sacrifices of thanksgiving or exultation. Clytemnestra has been convinced *about* something (the fall of Troy); in this ways the word πειθῶi expresses aspects of the verb πείθω.

While Clytemnestra also responds to the “instigation of the message” by *doing* something, the non-erotic¹⁵⁴ and even impersonal quality of the πειθῶi process here seems to link this usage more closely with the meanings found in the verb than in Peitho, the companion of Aphrodite.

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¹⁵³ Page 1957, 75. Taplin, however, does not think that she arrives until the end of the Chorus’ song (1977, 282-283).

¹⁵⁴ Kowerski, in a personal correspondence, suggests that this passage may not be completely dissociated from the erotic, since it refers to Clytemnestra, an almost essentially erotic figure.
Other scholars also arrive at this conclusion by pointing out similarities between the abstract noun as used here and a nearly verbatim passage which uses a verbal construction. Here Clytemnestra is complaining and quoting those who derided her for her gullibility in believing the signals at Ag. 83-87:

…φρυκτωρῶν δία
πεισθείσα Τροίαν νῦν πεπορθήσοι δοκεῖς; (Aesch. Ag. 590-591)

…by beacon-fires

**convinced**, do you think that Troy has now been sacked?

Fraenkel considers πεισθείσα (591) almost synonymous with πειθοῖ (87). His translation of the earlier πειθοῖ therefore takes on a strong verbal quality: “what message **has prevailed upon thee**, that by sending (messengers) around, thou arrangest sacrifices?”\(^{155}\) The connection between these two passages, moreover, confirms that Aeschylus’ conception of the abstract common noun πειθώ readily parallels the broader implications of the verb. While there is no process of entreaty expressed here, there are also no amatory undertones. At Ag. 87, the common noun πειθώ thus functions as little more than the basic expression of “winning over” or “prevailing upon” someone about something.

Aeschylus’ second use of the noun is at Ag. 106. The Chorus is singing the opening parodos of the Agamemnon, just before recalling Iphigenia and the terrible back story of the events about to take place. Before continuing their tale, they pause to acknowledge their source of inspiration:

κύριός εἰμι θροεῖν ὅδιον κράτος αἴσιον ἀνδρῶν
ἐντελέων· ἔτι γὰρ θεόθεν καταπνεύει
πειθό, μολπᾶν ἀλκάν σύμφυτος αἰών· (Aesch. Ag. 104-106)

I have the authority to tell out the auspicious command of full-grown men; for still from heaven breathes down **persuasion**, and my time of life is naturally adapted to a song of valorous deeds.

\(^{155}\) Smyth 1926 renders it “convinced by what report.” So also Raeburn and Thomas 2011, 77.
Here πειθώ again functions in a non-erotic context referring to a “winning over” of those who are listening to the song. This also may be a case where the translation “persuasion,” is most appropriate.

Few scholars can agree on a single translation for these lines. In the first place, the noun πειθώ can be taken as either the subject or object of the verb καταπνεύει. Denniston and Page assert that while most of the Greek in this passage remains obscure, one can be certain of the text and meaning of the phrase ἕτε γὰρ θεόθεν καταπνεύει / πειθώ as “For still from heaven Persuasion breathes down…” Raeburn and Thomas completely reverse this translation by making πειθώ the object of καταπνεύει: “For still by divine favor the life born within me breathes over me persuasion, the vigor of song.” Πειθώ’s relationship to μολπᾶν is also a vexed question. Raeburn and Thomas conflate the two words, whereas Fraenkel makes a clear distinction between the two, translating the phrase as follows: “For still from the gods the age that has grown within me breathes down upon me the persuasiveness of song to be my warlike strength.” At most, scholars agree that in Aeschylus’ Ag. 104-106, πειθώ refers to a Muse-like power which certifies the Chorus’ tale and/or renders the song convincing to their audience.

While it is worthy of note that the abstract noun πειθώ here is somehow perceived as an abstract power connected with the persuasiveness of song, Aeschylus’ portrayal of the goddess Peitho is even more remarkable and innovative with regard to the history of rhetoric.

B. Personifications

In ancient Greece, personified gods like Peitho were in fact embodied abstract concepts,
which functioned—particularly during the fifth century BCE—as vehicles for the development of
thought. Personified deities arose from the sense of mystery with which people perceived facets of the human experience. Cicero explains: *quarum omnium rerum quia vis erat tanta ut sine deo regi non posset, ipsa res deorum nomen optinuit* (“Because the power of all these things was so great that it could not be governed without godhead, the things themselves acquired the title of gods,” *Cic. Nat. D.* 2.23.61, tr. Stafford). Yet after their conception, personifications also become tools—as it were—for thinking more about the world and human affairs. Shapiro describes the nature of personified deities as follows:

> For us the animation of inanimate things and ideas is purely an intellectual exercise, intended, like all figurative language, to produce a momentary and calculated effect, often simply one of greater vividness and intensity. But the Greeks and Romans, who felt themselves surrounded by countless divine and supernatural powers, naturally made things and ideas into gods, durable and individualized divinities who might take their place in the great pantheon.  

Not only was the fifth century a time of great intellectual ferment in ancient Greece, but it was also when the use and development of personifications was, according to Smith, “most prevalent.” For this reason, these divinities are a rich source for the study of intellectual development in ancient Greece at this time.

The personified goddess Peitho seems to have embodied that complex human experience whereby one person wins over another in an erotic situation, and often without use of logical

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160 See particularly the entire article by Webster 1954, together with Shapiro 1993, 12-22 and Smith 2011, 1-3. One of the few scholars who does make a connection between Peitho and rhetoric is Bers 1994, who argues that when one finds rhetoric in tragedy, “Here is where we meet persuasion, the abstraction or incarnate deity *Peitho*, in its (or her) protean attributes: aggression, seduction, irresistable power, weak sister of physical force and deceit. Persuasion on the tragic stage inherits all these modes and purposes from earlier literature and cult.” (Bers 1994, 183). It is worth noting that Bers defines rhetoric broadly as “anything that is said with the intent to persuade any person who shares the stage with the speaker,” (Bers 1994, 183).

161 There are no early Greek commentaries on personifications; as a matter of fact, an equivalent word did not even exist until much later (Dem. *De Eloc.* 265; Stafford 2000, 5). For more on personifications and intellectual development in general, see Smith 2011, 2; Pepe 1967, 144-145; Webster 1954, 13; Usener 1896, 9.

162 Shapiro 1993, 12.

163 Smith 2011, 3.
argumentation. According to the etymological dictionaries, the name Peitho (in Greek, Πειθώ or πειθώ) is derived from the present stem of the verb πείθω (to make someone obey/to get someone to acquiesce), or, more specifically, from the notion of the present middle πείθομαι (to obey). Peitho therefore symbolizes or embodies some power involved in making people willing to acquiesce. And, based on the cult and literary tradition, the Peitho received by Aeschylus seems to have been a complex figure, predominantly erotic and yet bridging the private and public, the mythological and the secular spheres.

Throughout his Oresteia Aeschylus presents Peitho several times in recognizably divine form: with a genealogy, companions, and human-like functions. She thus fulfills the three standard criteria for identifying a personified deity in Greek art and literature. Also, while previous poets or artists seem to have faithfully received and transmitted Peitho’s traditional mythological heritage with little or no alteration, Aeschylus changes Peitho radically. He depicts her as unambiguously evil (Ag. 385), associates her with Hermes and trickery (Cho. 726), and then gives her a clear civic role as patroness of political speech (Eu. 885; 970). In these ways, this playwright becomes the first to endow Peitho with specific features which later Greek prose writers and theorists will identify with rhetoric itself.

II. A New Genealogy and Persona (Ag. 385)

In the Agamemnon, Aeschylus gives Peitho a new genealogy, replacing her traditionally ambiguous status with dark, irresistible, and forceful characteristics. In this first reference, the

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164 See Chapter One Section III.
165 See also Buxton 1982, 31.
166 See Shapiro 1993, 14; Webster 1954, 28.
167 Pepe comments: “It is mainly Aeschylus’ own manipulation and alteration of the traditional status of peitho which lends the concept significance” (Pepe 1967, 191).
168 Previous scholars on Ag. 385 have remarked on Aeschylus’ daring to describe “peitho in terms of its traditional
Chorus sings about Peitho as the force behind Paris’ abduction of Helen, and an important agent in the general ruin and destruction which ensues.

\[\text{βιᾶται δ’ ἁ τάλαινα Πειθώ} \]
\[\text{προβούλου παῖς ἄφερτος Ἄτας. (Aesch. Ag. 385-386)} \]

Wretched Peitho compels him, the unbearable daughter of deliberating Ruin.\footnote{169}

Before Aeschylus, no author or artist had ever depicted Peitho with Ate as a mother. It is Alcman, in fact, who first gives Peitho a slightly unusual genealogy, but he assigns her Prometheia as a mother (Alc. fr.64 PMGF). Aeschylus reverses this relatively benevolent lineage as Pepe describes it: “in one case she [Peitho] is the child of forethought, in the other of fore-planning infatuation.”\footnote{170} Aeschylus’ Peitho has become wretched (τάλαινα); her mother is now Ate; and her works amongst men, unambiguously destructive.

At first glance, one might argue that the context of Ag. 385, Paris’ abduction of Helen, is a standard erotic context for Peitho.\footnote{171} Yet in retelling the myth, Aeschylus does not at all highlight the erotic dimension of this event. The choral song in which these lines are ensconced focuses much more on the destructive consequences of Peitho’s influence upon Paris, the Trojans, Agamemnon, and the house of Atreus itself.\footnote{172} Aeschylus involves Peitho in clear act of force (βιᾶται), ordered by Ruin (Ἄτη), causing ruin, and provoking more ruin upon families, cities, and citizens for generations to come.

Genealogically, however, Peitho is more often seen with Aphrodite in ambiguous contexts rather than as a forceful daughter of evil Ruin. In the Suppliants, a drama which seems to have antithesis, bia” (Pepe 1967, 200; see also Conrad 1956, 15). Yet, although the existence of a clear polarity between peitho and bia has been argued at length (Buxton 1982, 58-63), recent studies have argued that ambiguity is not only fundamental to her (which Buxton does admit: 1982, 66) but it is even more essential to her nature than any apparent opposition to force. See also Stafford 2000, 131.
}\footnote{169} Ἄτας could also be translated “Infatuation.”
\footnote{170} Pepe 1967, 194.
\footnote{171} See Chapter One Section III on vases with Peitho in this scene.
\footnote{172} For a more detailed analysis of this choral song, see Chapter Three Section III.
been performed before the *Oresteia*,
Aeschylus himself provides an example of Peitho’s
traditional mythological companions and ambiguous features. In this passage, the Danaids, who
have spent the entire play seeking refuge from the violence of the Aegyptoi, now beg for the help
of Peitho together with her family and friends: Aphrodite, Pothos, Harmonia and Eros.

μετάκοινοι δὲ φίλὰ διάματι πάρεισιν
Πόθος δ’ οὐδὲν ἀπαρνον
tελέσθαι θέλκτορι Πειθοῖ.
δέδοται δ’ Αρμονία μοῖρ’ Ἀφροδίτας
ψεδυρᾶ τρίβῳ τ’ Ἐρώτων. (Aesch. *Suppl.* 1037-1041)

In the train of their beloved mother [Aphrodite] are
Desire and she to whom nothing is denied,
the charming Peitho;
and the inheritance of Aphrodite has been given to Harmony
and to the whispering touch of the Loves.

While her family members here seem relatively benign, Peitho is given a vaguely sinister and
forceful mien: ἥ τ’ οὐδὲν ἀπαρνον / τελέσθαι… (“she to whom nothing is denied,” Aesch. *Suppl.*
1038-1039). The ambiguity of this semi-forceful Peitho is further complicated by how the story of
the Danaids plays out. With Peitho’s help, the Danaid suppliants convince the resident king
Pelagius to protect them, but only by effectively forcing him with a threat of suicide. Also, in
the lost third play of the drama, the Danaids end up murdering the Aegyptoi on their wedding
night, thereby employing the very force which they had been supposedly rejecting all along.
This passage provides yet another example of how, before the *Oresteia*, Peitho embodied both a
gentle, positive persuasive process with certain aspects of force. In a radical move, however,
Aeschylus changes this tradition by associating Peitho in the *Agamemnon* with the unambiguously

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173 “The generally agreed re-dating of *Suppliants* [is] to 467-456[BCE].” (Buxton 1982, 67).
174 See Pepe 1967, 164.
175 For the story of the murder of the Aegyptoi, see Apollodorus II.1.5 and Aesch. *PV.* 844-876.
176 Since there are very few vase paintings which depict Peitho before the Oresteia, we may wish to note a vase dated
to some years after Aeschylus, which may be representative of ideas about Peitho’s ambiguity during his time. In this
vase painting, the Meidias *hydria* in London (c. 410-420 BCE), Peitho is depicted fleeing in horror from the rape of
Eriphyle. For more on this vase see Smith 2011, 159-160, 59.
forceful and the ineluctable nature of a new mother, Ate.

While a genealogical connection between Peitho and Ate does not seem to have been perpetuated after the _Oresteia_’s performance, Peitho’s threatening and forceful image persists in many passages of ancient drama. In _Prometheus Bound_, for instance, Peitho reappears as a deity who tries to use force in order to effect the will of Zeus. Prometheus defiantly asserts:

καὶ μ᾽ οὐτὶ μελιγλώσσοις Πειθοῦς
ἐπαισιδαίσιν θέλξει, στερεάς τ᾽
οὔποτ᾽ ἀπειλῶς πτήξας τὸδ᾽ ἐγὼ
καταμηνύσω, πρὶν ὁν ἐξ ἄγρίον
δεσμῶν χαλάς σε ποινάς τε τίνειν
τῇσδ’ αἰκείας ἐθελήσῃ. (Aesch. _PV_ 172-77)

Not even by Peitho’s honey-tongued enchantments will he charm me, nor will I, having cowered from his threats, make known this thing, until he loosens me from these savage bonds and is willing to pay for this outrage.

While Peitho may not be as sinister or irresistible as in the _Agamemnon_, neither does she seem adverse to the use of threats, bonds, and general savagery.

The characteristics with which Aeschylus endows Peitho at _Ag._ 385 are precisely the qualities which will be given to later depictions of Peitho and rhetoric in drama. For instance, on the stage of Sophocles’ (fragmentary) _Nausicaa_, Odysseus, the Homeric rhetorician par-excellence, makes the following comments about Peitho: δεινὸν τὸ τᾶς Πειθοῦς πρόσωπον (“terrible is the face of Peitho,” Soph. fr. 865) and ταχεῖα πειθὼ τῶν κακῶν ὄνομα ὀδοιπόρει (“Peitho travels about swiftly for evil,” Soph. fr. 870). In like manner, Euripides’ Hecuba dubs Peitho

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177 In the TLG, there are no references to Peitho with Ate before the first century CE.
178 See Buxton 1982, 114.
179 See also Pepe 1967, 176, 187.
180 The word δεινός is also used by Socrates to refer to the speech presented to him by _Phaedrus_ (Pl. _Phdr._ 242a3); it may be a bit of a tongue-in-cheek comment and a play on the word, which can mean either terrible (as in the Sophocles fragments above), or clever, or both.
181 These fragments are quoted by Plutarch _De Herod. Malign._ 854, when he refers to Peitho’s presence in speech. See also Sophocles fr. 786 as cited in Plutarch’s _Vita Artaxerxae_ 28 and the most famous occurrence of the word at Soph.
“the only tyrant over men” (τὴν τύραννον ἀνθρώποις μόνην, Eur. *Hec.* 816) in a line where she (Hecuba) is bewailing her inability to win over Agamemnon in speech:

> τί δῆτα θνητοὶ τἄλλα μὲν μαθήματα μοχθοῦμεν ὡς χρὴ πάντα καὶ ματεύομεν, Πειθὼ δὲ τὴν τύραννον ἀνθρώποις μόνην οὐδέν τι μάλλον ἐς τέλος σπουδάζομεν μισθοὺς διδόντες μανθάνειν, ἵν᾽ ἦν ποτε πείθειν ἂ τις βούλοιτο τυγχάνειν θ᾽ ἅμα; (Eur. *Hec.* 814-819)

Why, oh! why do we mortals toil, as we must, and seek out all other sciences, but *Persuasion*, the only real mistress of mankind, we take no further pains to master completely by offering to pay for the knowledge, so that any man could *convince* his fellows as he pleased and gain his point at once? (tr. Coleridge).

In her despair and distress, Hecuba realizes that there is no better art than that which, through irresistible Peitho, can make others do one’s bidding through eloquent speech purchased at any price. Her reference to paying for training in this art (817-819) is no doubt an oblique nod to the practice of paying sophists for their services.

Peitho’s irresistible qualities merge with ideas about rhetoric even more explicitly in later fifth and early fourth century prose authors. The sophist Gorgias presents the most evident example of this in his *Encomium of Helen*, which highlights the irresistibility of rhetoric and Peitho.\(^{182}\) For this reason, Pepe traces a direct link between Aeschylus’ Peitho and that of Gorgias.\(^{183}\) Gorgias puts Peitho in a list with other ineluctable and divine forces which act upon persons without their willing it: the wishes of Fortune, the plans of the gods, Necessity, and force (_hero γὰρ τύχης βουλήμασι καὶ θεῶν βουλεύμασι καὶ ἀνάγκης ψηφίσμασιν ἔπραξεν ἢ ἐπραξὼν, ἢ βίαι ἀρπασθεῖσα, ἢ λόγοις πεισθεῖσα, Grg. *Enc.* 6). Further on in the passage, Gorgias describes

\(^{182}\) *Ant.* 332f.
\(^{183}\) Within Gorgias, however, there is a lack of clear distinction between Peitho, Λόγος, and the art of rhetoric. Most scholars on Peitho seem to be comfortable generally equating the three (Buxton 1982, 56).
\(^{183}\) Pepe 1967, 206.
rhetoric as compelling and constraining (ἡνάγκασε, ἀναγκάσας, Grg. Enc. 12) as well as shaping
or, more literally, “hammering out,” the soul however it might wish (ἐτυπώσατο ὅπως ἐβούλετο, Grg. Enc. 13). In a similar fashion, he describes Peitho as a vile force that exerts influence through
black magic and noxious drugs: οἱ δὲ πειθοῖ τινι κακῇ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐφαρμάκευσαν καὶ
ἐξεγοήτευσαν (“Others, by a certain vile P/peitho drug and bewitch the soul,” Grg. Enc. 14, 10).
In the end, moreover, Gorgias excuses Helen from all guilt due to the omnipotence of rhetorical
speech and sinister Peitho.184

In Plato’s Philebus also, while Socrates is discussing the superiority of dialectic,
Protarchus contradicts him by saying that Gorgias considers πειθὼ to be the best of all the arts (ὡς
ἡ τοῦ πείθειν πολὺ διαφέροι πασῶν τεχνῶν, Pl. Phil. 58a8) because it can make all things a slave
to itself (πάντα γὰρ ύφ᾽ αὐτῆς δοῦλα...ποιοῖτο, Pl. Phil. 58b1-2). In the Gorgias, Plato puts similar
words into the mouth of Gorgias himself:

καίτοι ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ δυνάμει δοῦς μὲν τὸν ἰατρόν, δοῦλον δὲ τὸν
παιδοτρίβην: ὁ δὲ χρηματιστής οὗτος ἄλλῳ ἀναφανήςεται χρηματιξόμενος καὶ οὐχ
αὐτῷ, ἄλλα σοὶ τῷ δυναμένῳ λέγεῖν καὶ πείθειν τὰ πλῆθη. (Pl. Grg. 452e4-8)

And I tell you that by virtue of this power you will have the doctor as your slave,
and the trainer as your slave; your money-getter will turn out to be making money
not for himself, but for another—in fact for you, who are able to speak and persuade
the multitude (tr. Lamb).

The power of rhetoric is that of being able to force other persons (even a whole multitude) into
slavery.185 Plato even has have Gorgias boast about rhetoric as something supernatural and
all-powerful (Pl. Grg. 456a; 457a).

Plato’s Socrates, moreover, rejects contemporary rhetoric precisely because it appears to
be an imposition on human freedom and intelligence (Pl. Grg. 459b-c; Phdr. 260a-d). So, in the

184 See Conrad 195, 86; Futter 2011; Segal 1962, 121.
185 See also Plato’s Soph. 265d7 which refers to the art of rhetoric as working μετὰ πειθοῦς ἀναγκαίας (“by the
constraint of persuasion”).
Phaedrus, Socrates conjures up—with his own sort of prosopopoeia—the gentle figure of “Lady Rhetoric” (τῇ τῶν λόγων τέχνῃ, Pl. Phdr. 260d4, tr. Scully) as a fittingly beneficent philosophical replacement for Aeschylus’ Peitho τάλαινα.

III. Peitho’s Companions (Cho. 726)

In the Choephoroi, Aeschylus alters the traditional Peitho by giving her an atypical working partner, Hermes, and a corresponding share in his deceptive qualities. The lines in question occur immediately after the disguised Orestes has entered his mother’s house. The Chorus, seeing the events of the play about to become deadly, exclaim:


Now is the moment for tricky Peitho to go down (into the arena), and for Hermes of the underworld, gloomy as night, to watch over contests of death by the sword.

Aeschylus’ choice of Hermes as a companion is noteworthy since personified gods often take up different roles and shades of meaning depending on the major deity with whom they are paired.\(^{186}\) Peitho often appears with Aphrodite or with other erotic deities such as the Graces, the Seasons, or Harmony and Eros.\(^{187}\) Peitho and Hermes, on the other hand, are much less frequently associated.

In Hesiod’s Works and Days, Hermes appears just a few lines before Peitho at the adornment of Pandora; but they do not specifically work together. Hermes gives Pandora “a dog’s mind and a thievish character” (κύνεόν τε νόον καὶ ἐπίκλοπον ἥθος, Hes. Op. 67-68); and, later, he

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\(^{186}\) See Shapiro 1993, 17; Smith 2011, 16-17.

\(^{187}\) As mentioned above, even in the Suppliants, Aeschylus depicts her as a companion to Harmonia and Eros, daughter of Aphrodite, and sister to Pothos (“Desire,” Suppl. 1037-1042). Although the text here is uncertain, the presence of these divinities with Peitho is clear.
puts in her breast “lies and guileful words” (ψεύδεά θ᾽ αἵμυλίους τε λόγους, Hes. Op. 78).\(^{188}\) Peitho, on the other hand, arrives with Aphrodite, the Graces, and the Seasons, bringing beauty and attractiveness symbolized by “golden necklaces” (ὅρμους χρυσείους, Hes. Op. 74). Stafford comments: “Persuasions’ gift is not one of eloquence—that comes from Hermes—but of sexual attractiveness, expressed in visual terms.”\(^{189}\) Also, while a late Mytilenean inscription exists which refers to a joint-cult of Aphrodite Peitho and Hermes, Peitho here is not an individual autonomous deity, but a cult-title of Aphrodite.

\[\text{θέος. τόχα ἀγάθα.} \\
\text{ὅ κε θέλη θύην ἐπὶ τὸ βώμ[ω] } \\
\text{τὰς Αφροδίτας τὰς Πείθι—} \\
\text{θως καὶ τὸ Ἐρμα, θυέτω} \\
\text{[— — — — — — — ——]} \\
\text{ἱρήιον ὅτι κε θέλη καὶ} \\
\text{ἐρσεν καὶ θῆλῳ πλ[ά]γ χοί[ρω],} \\
\text{kai ὀρνι[θα] δ[τ]υ[νά κε θέλη].} \]

\[IG \text{ XII (2).73}\]

The god. Good fortune.
Whoever wishes to sacrifice on the altar
of Aphrodite Peitho
and to Hermes, let him sacrifice
[…]
whatever victim he wishes,
both male and female, except a pig,
and whatever bird he wishes  […] (tr. Stafford).

Even if Peitho does appear beside Hermes before the fifth century BCE, Aphrodite’s influence remains predominant.\(^{190}\)

In Aeschylus’ Oresteia, however, tricky Peitho joins forces with Hermes in a completely non-erotic context. Indeed, the words present in the passage deal more with athletic contests than

\(^{188}\) Assistance in the translation was from Yona 2015.
\(^{189}\) Stafford 2000, 112.
\(^{190}\) Further evidence for Hermes’ presence with Peitho in ancient times lies in the testimony of much later authors such as Plut. Conjug. Praec. 138d and Pausanias 2.19.6; 2.21.1, both of whom show Hermes and Peitho together with Aphrodite, and operating in erotic situations.
the works of Aphrodite. Hermes and Peitho, for example, “go down into the arena,”
(ξυγκαταβῆναι, Cho. 727) and “watch over contests of death by the sword,” (ἔφοδεῖσατ
ξιφοδηλήτοισιν ἀγῶσιν, Cho. 728-729).\(^{191}\) Also, here Hermes’ most characteristic trait, trickery,
is transferred to Peitho for the first time in an extant text.

Peitho and Hermes do not often appear together during the fifth and fourth centuries except
a few times in drama. In *Prometheus Bound*, Hermes, as an ambassador of Zeus, approaches
Prometheus to try to make him reveal his secrets. During their exchange of harsh and yet cleverly
spoken words, Prometheus explicitly rejects “the honey-tongued charms of Peitho”
(μελιγλώσσοις Πειθοῦς / ἐπαοιδαῖσιν, Aesch. PV 172-173). Prometheus sees Hermes’ guileful
words and Peitho’ trappings as nearly identical to various forms of sinister and tricky speech.
Therefore when Hermes’ persist in his attempts to win over the captive god, Prometheus retorts:
όχλεῖς μάτην με κῦμ᾽ ὧσπερ παρηγορῶν (“You are troubling me in vain, as though trying to appease
a wave,” Aesch. PV. 1001).\(^{192}\) Peitho also works obliquely with trickery (but not explicitly with
Hermes) in Sophocles’ *Trachiniae* as the goddess who charms the deadly robe that Deineira will
offer to her husband. The Chorus, in their ignorance, sing of Peitho as a deity who can erotically
help attract Heracles towards his wife: ὁθὲν μὸλοι †πανάμερος, / τὰς Πειθοῦς παγχρίστῳ /
συγκραθεὶς ἐπὶ προφάσει θηρός† (“May he [Heracles] come from there full of desire [for
Deineira], steeped in love on the pretext of the robe by Persuasion’s all-powerful ointment,”
Soph. Trach. 660-662, tr. Jebb). Ironically, the robe anointed by Peitho turns out to be a trick, a
false pretext (προφάσει, 662), through which first Heracles and then Deineira will be destroyed.

Aeschylus gives Peitho the unusual title δολίαν and also associates her with a god who has

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\(^{191}\) The word “contests” finds a loose connection with the fact that the sophists engaged at length in eristic contests. See Plato *Lesser Hippias* 363c-364; Protagoras 335a; DK 82B11-11a; Diog. Laert. IX.52. Two of Protagora’s works on argumentative strategies apparently had the alternative titles of “On Wrestling” and “Kataballontes.”

\(^{192}\) See Pepe 1967, 186.
a long tradition of association with trickery in speech. Commenting on a passage of Pausanias 7.27.1, Garvie notes that the word δόλιος “appears as a cult title of Hermes at Pellene in Achaea.”193 Yona also comments that in Hesiod’s Catalogue of Women (Hes. fr. 65, 68), even Hermes’ offspring are associated with thievery, trickery, and deception.194 Hermes’ deceitful qualities likewise form the basis for his connection with the work of the sophists. Yona suggests that “Hermes may symbolize the birth of sophistry within the context of human civilization.”195 In Homeric Hymn to Hermes (469), Hermes craftily makes stolen cattle walk backwards so that their tracks seem to lead in a different direction; the author calls this a δολίης τέχνης (“a tricky device,” Hymn. Hom. Merc. 62). At the same time, he escapes along a δολιχὴν ὁδόν (“a tricky road,” Hymn. Hom. Merc. 85, 143) by wearing shoes that erase his footsteps.196 Through these and other means, the baby god prevails over the stronger gods with his deceitful actions and tricky speech, just as the sophists (such as Protagoras) would endow the weaker argument with superior strength through clever twists of phrase (Arist. Rhet. 1402a23–5 (=DK 80B6b)). By associating Peitho with Hermes, therefore, Aeschylus draws out her deceptive qualities and thus links her even more closely to the newly emerging ideas about the art of rhetorical speech in society.

While Hermes and Peitho do not seem to be coupled again in the fifth century,197 examples of tricky cleverness and its association with πειθόω through speech can be found in fifth and fourth century poetical prose and philosophy. Gorgias, for example, speaks at length about both Peitho

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194 Yona, 2015, 367.
195 Yona 2015, 383. The discussion of the rhetorical significance of Hermes’ actions in the Homeric Hymn which follows is largely taken form Buxton 1982, 63-64.
196 The adjective appears twice more at the end of his escapade describing how he craftily re-wraps himself in swaddling clothes and pretends to be waking from a nap after he accomplished the theft (Hymn. Hom. Merc. 245, 361, 391).
197 The next time we see Peitho and Hermes will be in erotic depictions and texts about marriage cults. Plut. Conjug. Praec. 138d; Maximus of Tyre, Diss. 19.1.1-4; Nonnus Dion. V. 574, VIII. 220. See also Stafford 2000, 136. This is to be expected considering both Peitho’s traditional representation and—after the trend of erotic political terminology during the 5th century—her re-association with private amatory situations.
and Logos in his *Encomium of Helen*, and concludes at one point about his art: ὅσοι δὲ ὅσους περὶ ὅσων καὶ ἐπεισάν καὶ πείθουσι δὲ ψευδῆ λόγον πλάσαντες (“Those who **have persuaded** and **do persuade** anyone about anything are shapers of lying discourse,” Gorg. Hel. 10-11, tr. Donovan). The deceitful potential of rhetoric is another reason why Socrates rejects the sophistic art in Plato’s *Gorgias*. Comparing rhetoric to cookery, flattery, and the self-adornment of makeup (ἡ κομμωτική), he says

> …κακοῦργός τε καὶ ἀπατηλὴ καὶ ἀγεννὴς καὶ ἀνελεύθερος, σχήμασιν καὶ χρώμασιν καὶ λειτοτη καὶ ἐσθήσι αὐτάτασα, ὅστε ποιεῖν ἀλλότριον κάλλος ἐφελκομένους τοῦ ὅικεου τοῦ διὰ τῆς γυμναστικῆς ἀμελέη. (Pl. *Grg.* 465b3-6)

> …with its rascally, deceitful, ignoble, and illiberal nature it [makeup/ rhetoric] deceives men by forms and colors, polish and dress so as to make them, in the effort of assuming an extraneous beauty, neglect the native sort that comes through gymnastic (tr. Burnet).

In the *Republic*, rhetoric is again condemned because of its deceitful aims. In this passage under consideration, Socrates asks: “Is it by justice or by crooked deceit” (πότερον δίκᾳ …ἢ σκολιαῖς ἀπάταις, Pl. *Rep.* 365b3) that one should live his life and achieve success? But he condemns those who live and teach trickery:

> Ἐπὶ γὰρ τὸ λανθάνειν συνωμοσίας τε καὶ ἑταρίας συνάξομεν, εἰσὶν τε πειθοῦς διδάσκαλοι σοφιαν δημηγορικήν τε καὶ δικαιοκρίνειν διδοῦντες, ἐξ ὧν τὰ μὲν πείσομεν, τὰ δὲ βιαστεῖμα, ὡς πλεονεκτοῦντες δίκην μὴ διδόναι. (Pl. *Rep.* 365d2-6)

> …with a view to lying hid we will organize societies and political clubs, and there are teachers of **cajolery** who impart the arts of the popular assembly and the court-room, so that, partly by **persuasion**, partly by force, we shall contrive to overreach with impunity. (tr. Shorey).

When referring to “teachers of cajolery” (πειθοῦς διδάσκαλοι) he no doubt means the sophists.199

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198 It is no wonder, then, that in Sophocles’ *Philoctetes* (a play about the ethical dimensions of persuasive speech), when Odysseus demands that the young Neoptolemus use persuasion—like a sophist—on Philoctetes, his line is as follows: λέγω σ’ ἐγὼ δόλῳ Φιλοκτήτην λαβεῖν (“I tell you to overcome Philoctetes by deceit,” Soph. *Phil.* 102).

199 See also Lys. 12.32-33 where the use of βία is less punished than the use of πείθω due to the common perception of πείθω’s corrupting influence. See also Stafford 2000, 30. Ironically, Socrates himself is accused of this crime of trickery, a crime of this deceitful species of rhetoric. See Pl. *Ap.* 18b-c.
Aristotle will continue using the terminology of trickery and theft to describe an effective piece of rhetoric, although with a slightly different wording:

ἔτι τοῖς ἀνάλογοι μὴ πᾶσιν ἀμα χρήσασθαι (οὕτω γὰρ κλέπτεται ὁ ἀκροατής): λέγω δὲ οἶον ἔαν τὰ ὀνόματα σκληρᾶ ἦ, μὴ καὶ τῇ φωνῇ καὶ τῷ προσώπῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀρμόττουσιν: εἰ δὲ μὴ, φανερὸν γίνεται ἐκαστὸν ὁ ἐστιν. (Arist. Rh. 1408b5)

Further, do not use all analogous effects [of sound and sense] together; for thus the hearer is tricked. I mean, for example, if the words are harsh, do not deliver them with a harsh voice and countenance. Otherwise, what you are doing is evident. (tr. Kennedy).

Another example from Aristotle is as follows: κλέπτεται δ’ εὖ, ἐὰν τις ἐκ τῆς εἰωθυίας διαλέκτου ἐκλέγων συντιθῇ (“The ‘theft’ is well done if one composes by choosing words from ordinary language,” Arist. Rh. 1404b24-25; tr. Kennedy). Many years later, Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes Lysias’ narrative in similar terms:

ὁστε μὴ ῥᾴδιον ἔναι μὴθ’ ὀλὴν διήγησιν μηδεμίαν μήτε μέρος αὐτῆς ἑνυδές ἦ ἀπίθανον εὑρεθῆναι· τοσαίτην ἔχει πειθῶ καὶ ἀφροδίτην τὰ λεγόμενα καὶ οὕτως λανθάνει τοὺς ἀκούοντας εἴτ’ ἀληθῆ ὅντα εἴτε πεπλασμένα. (Dion. Hal. Lys. 18)

It is difficult to find a narrative that appears false and unconvincing, either in whole or in part, such is the persuasive charm of the story as he tells it, and his power to deceive his audience as to whether it is true or fictitious. (tr. Usher).

Particularly interesting in this last passage is the presence of Peitho with Aphrodite, but now, four hundred years later, as an abstract concept referring to the tricky power of rhetoric. It seems then, that a synthesis has occurred. Peitho doesn’t entirely lose her connection with the erotic; yet, by the time of the fifth and fourth century sophists, orators, speech writers, and philosophers, she also began to assume deceitful qualities connected with artful argument. It is this development then, to which Aeschylus’ depiction of tricky Peitho contributes.

IV. Peitho's Role and Function (Eu. 885, 970)

In the last play of the trilogy, the Eumenides, Aeschylus alters and expands Peitho’s sphere
of influence even further, associating her with an explicitly political situation and giving her power to influence the sophisticated civic-minded speeches of the goddess Athena.

A. Peitho in Civil Society

Throughout *Eumenides* 778-891, Peitho works on behalf of Athena, the non-erotic goddess patroness of the city, daughter of Zeus. Peitho’s task is to procure the common good for the *polis* by assuaging the anger of the Erinyes who threaten to destroy it. Peitho’s actions, moreover, take place against the supposed backdrop of the Acropolis, near the Areopagus where the reforms of Ephialtes had just recently taken place in Athens (c. 460’s BCE). Orestes’ trial has just finished; the Athenian jury is still in attendance, watching to see whether the results of the trial will take effect or whether the Erinyes’ anger will nullify their work and wreak even greater havoc. Athena first invokes Peitho when addressing the Erinyes themselves, beckoning them to worship Peitho and let go of their wrath: ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν ἁγνόν ἐστί σοι Πειθοῦς σέβας / …σὺ δ᾽ οὖν μένοις ἄν· (“But if you have holy reverence for Peitho…then you certainly might remain;”Aesch. *Eu*. 885, 887). Athena calls upon Peitho to help persuade the Erinyes to let go of their anger and integrate themselves into Athenian society as benevolent deities.

Aeschylus seems to have begun associating Peitho with the political sphere in earlier dramas as well. For instance, in the *Suppliants*, Aeschylus has King Pelasgus invoke Peitho and Tyche before going to address his people on behalf of the Danaids. At the end of his speech to the Danaids, he departs with these words to the suppliants:

πρὸς ταῦτα μίμνε καὶ θεοὺς ἐγχωρίους
λειταῖς παρατεῦ τῶν σ’ ἔρως ἐχει τυχεῖν.
ἔγω δὲ ταῦτα πορσυνὸν ἔλεύσομαι.

Remain here and with prayers beg the native gods...
That the things you desire may happen.
But I will go to arrange these things.
May Peitho follow and efficacious Tyche.

Aeschylus also places Peitho in a clear civic role in some fragments of the play about Dike. Here Dike (Justice) is explaining her plan for carrying on and administering human affairs:

Δίκη
τοῖς δὲ μὲν δ[ι]καῖοις ἐνδικον τεῖνω βίον.

Δίκη

Χορὸς
Πειθοῦς ἐπωδαῖς ἢ κατ’ ἵσχὺος τρόπον;

Δίκη
gράφουσα] τάπλακήματ’ ἐν δέλτῳ Διός. (Aesch. fr. 281.17, 19, 20-21)

Justice:
For the righteous I prolong their righteous life.

Justice:
For the wicked, on the other hand, [I cause them to change their ways (]

Chorus:
By the charms [of Peitho], or by the method of force?

Justice:
[By writing down] their transgressions on the tablet of Zeus (tr. Sommerstein).

The text is uncertain, of course, since the word Πειθοῦς (line 20) is supplied by an editor (Pohlenz). Nonetheless, one can see a rationale behind his suggestions: namely, that the presence of ἐ]πωδαῖς (magic charms) is contrasted with κατ’ ἵσχύος (by force/might) as a way of administering human affairs for the cause of justice in political society. This passage thus presents another example of a secular Peitho with the particular role of serving Dike (Justice) in

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200 This may not be an instance of the personified Peitho by the standards articulated by Shapiro and others (Shapiro 1993, 14-16) because she is being paired with ἴσχύος, not Bia, who is a clearer example of a personification. Perhaps for these reasons this reference to Peitho is not mentioned in Pepe 1967 or Buxton 1982. In Suppliants 523, by contrast, there seems to be good grounds for assuming that the personified goddess is meant; part of the reason for this is that her companion, Tyche, is an attested personification as well.
the civic community.

There is a general consensus, as stated by Buxton, that “by the middle of the fifth century, the political dimension of Peitho became more prominent.” During the fifth and into the fourth century BCE, for example, more representations of Peitho on vases appear coupled with political divinities such as as Eudaimonia, Eukleia, Eunomia, Hygieia, and perhaps Themis. A civic Peitho, perhaps distinct from the cult of Aphrodite Pandemos and Peitho, also began to be worshiped by Athenians during this time. Demosthenes alludes to this cult in the beginning of his Exordium 54, when he reassures his audience that before beginning his speech the appropriate sacrifices have been to Peitho and other deities who watch over the good of the city. He says:

καὶ δίκαιον, ὦ ἄνδρες Αθηναίοι, καὶ καλὸν καὶ σπουδαῖον, ὅπερ ὑμεῖς εἰώθατε, καὶ ἡμᾶς προνοεῖν, ὅπως τὰ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς εὐσεβῶς ἔξει. ἢ μὲν οὖν ἣμετέρα γέγονεν ἐπιμέλειαν ὑμῖν εἰς δέον: καὶ γὰρ ἐθύσαμεν τῷ Δίῳ τῷ σωτῆρι καὶ τῇ Αθηνᾷ καὶ τῇ Νίκῃ, καὶ γέγονεν καλὰ καὶ σωτηρία ταῦτα ὑμῖν τὰ ἱερά. ἐθύσαμεν δὲ καὶ τῇ Πειθοῖ καὶ τῇ Μητρὶ τῶν θεῶν καὶ τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι, καὶ ἐκαλλιεροῦμεν καὶ ταῦτα. (Dem. Exord. 54)

It is just and right and important, men of Athens, that we too should exercise care, as you are accustomed, that our relations with the gods shall be piously maintained. Therefore our commission has been duly discharged for you, for we have sacrificed to Zeus the Saviour and to Athena and to Victory, and these sacrifices have been auspicious and salutary for you. We have also sacrificed to Persuasion and to the Mother of the Gods and to Apollo, and here also we had favorable omens (tr. DeWitt).

Since the sacrifice to Peitho and these other civic deities produced favorable signs and portents, Demosthenes is confident that his appeal will be in the best interests of the citizenry of Athens. On this passage, Stafford comments: “Although we can gather little new information about Peitho from this, it does suggest that her cult was sufficiently well known by this period to be included

201 Buxton 1982, 42.
202 See Smith 2011, 59. Also, Icard-Gianolio 1994, 249-250; Stafford 2000, 139; and the following vases: MMA 09.221.40; London BM 1859.572.15 & BM 1893.11-3.2; Berlin Museums 30036.
203 See Conrad 1955, 15- 16, n.17; for more on Aphrodite Pandemos and Peitho see Chapter One Section III above.
without comment.”

Others use the terminology of πειθώ as a verb to describe general programmatic and philosophical views on how to live properly as a human being in political society. Democritus (c. 460-370 BCE) uses the term in a civic and ethical context as the best way to promote upright living.

... κρείσσων ἐπ' ἀρετήν φα- νεῖται προτροπῆι χρόμενος καὶ λόγου πείθοι ἔπερ νόμωι καὶ ἀνάγκη. λάθρη μὲν γὰρ ἁμαρτέειν εἰκὸς τὸν εἰρ- γμένον ἀδικίας ὑπὸ νόμου, τὸν δὲ ἐς τὸ δέον ἠγμένον πείθοι οὐκ εἰκὸς οὔτε λάθρη οὔτε φανερῶς ἐρδεῖν τι πλημμελές....

(Democr. DK fr. 181.1-6)

The man using exhortation and reasonable persuasion leads better to virtue than he who uses law and force. For the man who is prevented by law from wrongdoing will likely do wrong in secret, whereas the man led towards what is right by persuasion is not likely to do something out of tune either secretly or openly (tr. Berquist).

Isocrates writes about the importance of πειθώ more generally for the humanizing of mankind:

...ἐγγενομένου δ᾽ ἡμῖν τοῦ πείθειν ἀλλήλους καὶ δηλοῦν πρὸς ἡμᾶς αὐτούς περι ὁν ἂν βουληθῶμεν, οὐ μόνον τοῦ θηριωδῶς ζῆν ἀπηλλάγημεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ συνελθόντες πόλεις ὁφλίσαμεν καὶ νόμους ἥθεμεθα καὶ τέχνας εὗρομεν...

(Isoc. Antid. 254)

...but, because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts...(tr. Norlin).

Even the orator Lysias in his funeral orations says something similar about how πειθώ makes man human by enabling him to live in a democratic society.

...ἡγησάμενοι θηρίων μὲν ἔργον εἶναι ὑπ᾽ ἄλληλαι βίᾳ κρατεῖσθαι, ἀνθρώπους δὲ προσήκειν νόμῳ μὲν ὀρίσαι τὸ δίκαιον, λόγῳ δὲ πεῖσαι, ἔργῳ δὲ τούτοις υπηρετεῖν, ὑπὸ νόμου μὲν βασιλευόμενον, υπὸ λόγου δὲ διδασκομένου... (Lys. 2.19)

204 Stafford 2000, 128; also Conrad 1956, 15. Bers, in a person correspondence, notes that these Exordia are regarded as spurious or stitched together out of existing speeches. This, however, does not necessarily damage the argument.

205 The only caveat with these references is that, as mentioned in Chapter One, terms such as λόγος and ῥητορική gradually gained predominance in describing the art of speaking persuasively in public.
For they deemed that it was the way of wild beasts to be held subject to one another by force, but the duty of men to delimit justice by law, to convince by reason, and to serve these two in act by submitting to the sovereignty of law and the instruction of reason (tr. Lamb).

In sum, civic πειθώ differentiates men from beasts and gives them the ability to live ethically and promote the common good of the larger political entity. Given all these examples with the others mentioned previously, Peitho seems to find increased employment in the public sphere during the years following her dramatic debut as a civic divinity in Aeschylus’s Eumenides.

B. Peitho and Speech

Aeschylus’ second innovation with Peitho at Eu. 885 and 970 lies in the new role which he gives her with regard to carefully crafted political speech. Athena seems to depend heavily on Peitho’s intercession for her eloquent work of persuasion. In the first reference, Athena is appealing to the Erinyes through Peitho:

アルバ. εἰ μὲν ἁγνόν ἐστί σοι Πειθοῦς σέβας; γλώσσης ἐμῆς μείλιγμα καὶ θελκτήριον, σὺ δ᾽ οὖν μένοις ἄν· … (Aesch. Eu. 885-887)

But if you have holy reverence for Peitho regarding the soothing charm and enchantment of my tongue, then you certainly might remain.

In the second instance the Erinyes have been won over, and are now blessing the land; Athena sings of Peitho in thanksgiving.

…στέργω δ’ ὀμματα Πειθοῦς, ὃτι μοι γλώσσαν καὶ στόμ᾽ ἐπωπᾶ πρὸς τᾶσθ’ ἀγρίως ἀπανηναμένας: (Aesch. Eu. 970-972)

I am grateful to Peitho, that her glance kept watch over my tongue and mouth, when I encountered their fierce refusal.
Speculating on these passages, Zweig writes that Peitho "appears...as the handmaiden of Athena, that rational and reasoned form of persuasion that [she] comes to mean in the rhetoric of the 5th century." In other words, Athena acknowledges a new function and power which has been given to Peitho: significant influence over speech in a civic situation. Words for “tongue” and “mouth” are repeated in both passages. Peitho grants to these speech organs “soothing charm and enchantment” (μείλιγμα καὶ θελκτήριον, 886) and, with her eyes, has “kept watch” over them (ἐπωπᾷ, 971) so that they take effect. With these lines, Aeschylus gives Peitho a role in civic life with explicit reference to the persuasive power of the spoken word.

Yet pre-Aeschylean Peitho often operated with instruments. A list of her tools from early vase paintings and lyric poetry could include jewelry, golden nectar, magic spells, charms, her eyes, whips, and keys. Until Aeschylus, there is no extant evidence of the goddess Peitho explicitly influencing or working with the spoken word. In the Eumenides, Aeschylus gives Peitho powers over well-argued, civic-minded, and effective speech in the cause of justice.

Interestingly, however, Aeschylus’ civic Peitho remains associated with a beneficent sort of magic, as expressed by several words in the above passages: μείλιγμα (Eu. 886), θελκτήριον (Eu. 886) and ὄμματα (Eu. 970). These words, together with an additional one—ἐπαοιδή (or ἐπῳδή)—also appear with Peitho in Prometheus Bound. Prometheus defiantly speaks against Zeus’s attempt at persuasion with the following words: καὶ μ᾽ οὔτι μελιγλώσσοις Πειθοῦς/ἐπαοιδαῖσιν θέλξει (“Not even by the honey-tongued enchantments of Peitho will he charm me,” Aesch. PV 172-77). An ἐπαοιδή/ἐπῳδή is a song or an incantation, or quite simply, a charm or enchantment. It is found with reference to Peitho in Pind. Pyth. 4.215 and also in a fragment from

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206 Zweig 1982, 171.
207 See Chapter One Section III. For jewelry and nectar, see Hes. Op. 74; Sapph. fr. 96.29V. See also Pind. Pyth.4. 212, 219; Pyth. 9. 39-40.
208 Chapter Four examines the rhetorical sophistication of the speeches in Eumenides 778-891 in detail.
Aeschylus’ play about Dike (Πειθοῦς ἐπισπάδξ, Aesch. fr. 281.20, ed. Pohlenz). Words with the root μελγιχ- denoting soothing gentleness and a wheedling quality aimed at appeasement.209 One such word occurs in Pythian 9, where the Centaur instructs Apollo to go to Peitho for help in carrying out “the gentle impulses [of love]” (μείλιχος ὀργά, Pind. Pyth. 9.43) which he feels towards Cyrene. Thirdly, the root θελγιχ- can refer to either soothing offerings to the gods or to the beguiling power of desire; it is often translated as “charm.” Aeschylus applies a word from this root (θέλκτορι) directly to Peitho in Suppliants 1040. Conrad also points out that Peitho’s most frequent epithets in vases contain the θελγιχ- root.210 Additionally, after Peitho has worked her magic and Athena has won over the Erinyes in the Eumenides, these goddess will exclaim: θέλξειν μ´ ἔοικας καὶ μεθίσταμαι κότου (“It seems likely that you will charm me, and I am shifting from my wrath,” Eu. 900).

Aeschylus’ reference to Peitho’s eyes (ὅμματα Πειθοῦς, 970) is also an allusion to her magical erotic powers. The association of Peitho with eyes has precedent in earlier literature, although often in a strictly private, erotic, and non-rhetorical context.211 Ibycus refers to Peitho as ἄγανοβλέφαρος (“gentle-eyed,” Ibyc. fr. 288 PMGF). In Pindar fr. 123 Snell, the poet rebukes anyone who, after looking (δρακείς, line 3) upon Theoxenos—a youth in whom Peitho dwells (Πειθώ τ´ ἔναιεν, line 14)—does not esteem him.212 In describing this passage, Pepe writes: “Thus Peitho is an interior quality, residing in the person of extreme physical beauty and performing an erotic function.”213 Peitho seems to exercise her power through the eyes in order to make a person

209 See Rynearson 2013, 9; 13.
212 Pindar condemns such a blind and hardened person to being dishonored by bright-eyed Aphrodite herself (Αφροδίτας ἐλλαγ' λεφάρου, line 6). He also describes the Peitho-blessed youth as someone whose beauty shines forth from his eyes (ὅσσων, line 2).
213 Pepe 1967, 149.
lovely and beloved. By contrast, the eyes of Peitho in Eumenides 970 do not bestow beauty upon Athena, but, rather lend effectiveness to her speech. All in all, by using the terms μείλιγμα, θελκτήριον and ὄμμα Aeschylus preserves some of Peitho’s magical and erotic characteristics, characteristics which persist in later, more rhetorical depictions of the goddess and of the art of rhetoric itself.

Not long after Aeschylus, one finds several instances of a magical Peitho who is also associated with civic and political speech. For example, Eupolis (446-411 BCE) claims that Peitho helped Pericles excel beyond all others in speech:

Πειθώ τις ἐπεκάθιζεν ἐπὶ τοῖς χείλεσιν· οὕτως ἐκήλει καὶ μόνος τῶν ῥητόρων τὸ κέντρον ἐγκατέλειπε τοῖς ἀκροωμένοις. (Eupolis fr. 94)

A Persuasion of sorts perched upon his lips.
That’s how he could cast a spell, and he alone of the speakers left a sting in his audience (tr. Storey).

In other words, Pericles, a famed political figure in Greek history, was gifted by Peitho with the ability to work magic upon his listeners. Several sophists after Aeschylus likewise incorporated magic into their idea of Peitho and rhetoric. Gorgias is a prime example of this trend. According to him, the power of persuasion lies precisely in its magical qualities, as can be seen in the following lines of the Encomium of Helen:

αἱ γὰρ ἔνθεοι διὰ λόγων ἐπωιδαὶ ἐπαγωγοὶ ἡδονῆς, ἀπαγωγοὶ λύπης γίνονται· συγγινομένη γὰρ τῷ ὁποίῳ τῆς ψυχῆς ἡ δύναμις τῆς ἐπωιδῆς ἔθελξε καὶ ἔπεισε καὶ

214 Blank also analyzes Parmenides’ mention of Peitho in relationship to the symbolism and eyes and the unveiling of the sun-maidens which had taken place a bit earlier in the proem. See Blank 1982, 174.

215 Longinus will also use the imagery of the eyes in his description of effective rhetoric. When discussing the proper way to effectively persuade those who do not want to be persuaded (πρὸς τὴν πειθώ τῶν λόγων πάντως ἀντιδιατίθεται, Long. Subl. 17.1), Longinus concludes that one must speak in brilliantly concealed figures, so that their brightness attracts the eyes first and primarily rather than the rhetorical device itself: οὕτως καὶ τῶν λόγων τὰ πάθη καὶ τὰ ῥήη ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἥμων ἐγγυτέρω κείμενα διὰ τὸ φυσικήν τινα συγγένειαν καὶ διὰ λαμπρότηταν, ἀεὶ τῶν σχημάτων προεμφανίζεται καὶ τὴν τέχνην αὐτῶν ἀποσκιάζει καὶ οἷον ἐν κατακαλύπτει τηρεῖ (“So it is in writing. What is sublime and moving lies nearer to our hearts, and thus, partly from a natural affinity, partly from brilliance of effect, it always strikes the eye long before the figures, thus throwing their art into the shade and keeping it hid as it were under a bushel,” Long. Subl. 17.2-3, tr. Halliwell).
μετέστησεν αὐτὴν γοητείαν. (Gorg. Hel. 10)

By means of words, inspired incantations serve as bringers-on of pleasure and takers-off of pain. For the incantation's power, communicating with the soul's opinion, enchants and persuades and changes it, by trickery (tr. Donovan).

As a result of these and other passages, de Romilly calls Gorgias “the theoretician of the magic spell of words.”

Isocrates also recognizes Peitho as goddess of civic rhetorical speech in Athenian culture although he himself understands persuasion as something disconnected from magic, being one of the few sophists to avoid using words such as thelkerion in his program. In one of his speeches, moreover, Isocrates complains how the Athenian citizenry worship Peitho and yet do not seek to exercise her rhetorical arts. To him, they presumably have an incorrect view of Peitho:

δ ὦ ὑ μόνον ταραχῆς σημεῖόν ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς περὶ τούς θεούς ὀλιγωρίας: τὴν μὲν γὰρ Πειθώ μίαν τῶν θεῶν νομίζουσιν εἶναι, καὶ τὴν πόλιν ὀρώσι καθ’ ἕκαστον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν θυσίαν αὐτῇ ποιομένην, τοὺς δὲ τῆς δυνάμεως ἢς ἢ θεός ἔχει μετασχεῖν βουλομένους ὡς κακοῦ πράγματος ἐπιθυμοῦντας διαφθείρεσθαί φασιν. (Isocr. Antid. 15. 249.1-6)

But as a symptom, not only of their confusion of mind, but of their contempt for the gods, they recognize that Persuasion is one of the gods, and they observe that the city makes sacrifices to her every year, but when men aspire to share the power which the goddess possesses, they claim that such aspirants are being corrupted, as though their desire were for some evil thing (tr. Norlin).

By Isocrates’ time, therefore, it seems that Peitho has effectively become an accepted—if slightly suspect—goddess of rhetoric. An Athenian red figure kylix (c. dated 400 BCE) also seems to present the goddess Peitho engaged in persuasive speech. Here she dialogues eagerly with

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216 De Romilly 1975, 55.
217 Ironically, Aristotle uses many magical terms to describe Isocrates’ use of poetical terms and homoeoteleuton, describing it as follows: φθέγγονται τε τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐνθουσιάζοντες, ὡστε καὶ ἀποδέχονται δῆλον ὅτι ὁμοίως ἔχοντες. διὸ καὶ τῇ ποιήσει ἡμᾶς ἐνθουσιάζοντες ἐνθηθον γὰρ ἡ ποιήσις (“Thus do people speak when possessed, and listeners accept it because they are in a similar state. That is why it is appropriate in poetry, for poetry is inspired,” Arist. Rh. 1408b11, tr. De Romilly). Possession (ἐνθουσιάζοντες) and inspiration (ἐνθηθον) are words from the realm of magic. It is doubly surprising that these words appear in Aristotle, the philosopher who had so stripped rhetoric of any association with magic. Also see de Romilly 1975, 74-75.
218 Although her name is not inscribed (and therefore her identity is uncertain) the following scholars consider this
Demonassa, the bride-to-be of Phaon, no doubt exhorting her to embrace the imminent marriage (Fig. 5).

The *kylix* is also unusual because Eros stands in Peitho’s more typical role as a silent onlooker while Peitho works not with jewelry, but possibly, one might imagine, with logical argumentation.

In dramas performed after Aeschylus, Peitho becomes more fully involved with civic speech as well. In Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, the women protagonists of the drama invoke Peitho before swearing an oath to renounce sexual intercourse in order to obtain, as Stafford notes, a political end.\(^{219}\) Lysistrata leads their pledge with the following lines: δέσποινα Πειθοῖ καὶ κύλιξ φιλοτησία, / τὰ σφάγια δέξαι ταῖς γυναιξίν εὐμενής (“O Peitho our Mistress and Loving Cup,

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\(^{219}\) See Stafford 2000, 126. Stafford also thinks that this may also be an allusion to the temple of Aphrodite Pandemos and Peitho, which would have been quite near the set of this play (the main gate to the Athenian Acropolis).
receive this sacrifice, thinking kindly upon these women,” Ar. Lys. 203-204). We find a similar request in New Comedy: Menander stages a character calling upon Peitho for aid in speech. In the *Epitrepon tes*, Habroton, the slave woman, comes up with a scheme to pose as the lost mother of her master’s baby. In this way, she hopes to win his love and, more importantly, to win freedom for herself. In order to accomplish this task, she calls upon Peitho: φίλη Πειθοῖ, παροῦσα σύμμαχος / πόει κατορθοῦν τοὺς λόγους οὗς ἄν λέγω (“Dear goddess Peitho, come near as an ally and make straight the words which I speak,” Men. Epit. 555-556). In response to her prayer, Habroton’s friend and fellow slave Onesimus observes: τοπαστικὸν τὸ γύναιον· ὡς ᾔσθηθ᾿ ὅτι / κατὰ τὸν ἔρωτ’ οὐκ ἐστ’ ἔλευθερίας τυχεῖν, / …τὴν ἑτέραν πορεύεται / ὁδὸν (“That girl’s a wizard! Realizing that she can’t win freedom by the lure of love…she now takes the other route,” Men. Epit. 557-560, tr. Arnott). Habroton’s appeal to Peitho is not so much to a love goddess as to a clever and effective artist of words.

Peitho appears in even less erotic contexts affiliated with political and civic speech. The Chorus of Aristophanes’ *Clouds* at one point calls upon Pheidippides to demonstrate his sophistic learning. They challenge him: σὸν ἔργον ὦ καινῶν ἐπῶν κινητὰ καὶ / πειθώ τινα ζητεῖν, ὅπως δόξει λέγειν δίκαια (”It is your business, you author and upheaver of new words, to seek some Peitho, so that you shall seem to speak justly,” Ar. Nub. 1397-1398, tr. Hickie). Pheidippides responds in kind, using the language of the sophists to exult his new knowledge about how to speak rhetorically, i.e.: γνώμαις δὲ λεπταῖς καὶ λόγοις…καὶ μερίμναις (“with subtle thoughts and arguments and speculations,” Ar. Nub. 1404, tr. Hickie). Another example comes from the orators themselves. At one point, in a fit of frustration, the orator Aeschines accuses the Athenians of trusting his competitor Demosthenes so much that they look upon him as the goddess Peitho

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220 For a more complete selection of such passages, see texts of Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato and Aristophanes in Chapter One Section III.
herself, and not as the sycophant (συκοφάντης) that (in Aeschines’ mind) he really was:

οἶεται γὰρ ὑμᾶς εἰς τοσοῦτον εὐηθείας ἢδη προβεβηκέναι ὥστε καὶ ταῦτα ἀναπεισθῆσεθαι, ὡσπερ Πειθώ τρέφοντας, ἀλλ’ οὐ συκοφάντην ἄνθρωπον…(Aeschin. In Ctes. 256)

For he supposes that you have by this time come to such a pitch of folly that you will credit even this, as though it were the goddess Persuasion that you have been nurturing…and not a slanderer [professional swindler]! (tr. Adams).

Even from this translation, one can see that to the Athenians of the Aeschines’ and Demosthenes’ time, Peitho seems to have become a goddess patroness of rhetoric itself.

In sum, although Aeschylus in the Eumenides associates Peitho with both civic speech and magic, by the end of the Oresteia, a certain amount of purification has occurred.221 She has changed from an evil force to become a goddess who, through her magic, effects the good of the entire Athenian society. Kane writes: “At the end of the trilogy, Peitho has been transformed into a benign deity, the goddess of political persuasion.”222 She charms the Erinyes, but it is only under the auspices of Zeus “Agoraios” (Aesch. Eu. 973) and through the reasonable words and arguments of Athena. She may still work magic; but, after having been “redeemed,” as Rynearson puts it,223 and purified through the course of the trilogy, the magical Peitho of the Eumenides is fit for the political and civic role which rhetoric will hold in the near future for Athenian society.

V. Conclusion

Aeschylus’ Oresteia marks a transition point for the Greek understanding of goddess

Peitho in connection with the art of civic, political speech (rhetoric) in the fifth and fourth


222 Kane 1986, 101.

223 Rynearson 2013, 19.
centuries. In the Agamemnon, Peitho appears with that irresistible quality adopted by Gorgias’ idea of rhetoric and rejected by Plato. As the deceitful co-worker of Hermes, Peitho in the Choephoroi becomes co-patron and model for the sophists and other craftsmen of words. Finally, after assisting the political arguments of Athena in the Eumenides, Aeschylus’ Peitho takes up an established role in civic society, ensuring her direct involvement and influence on the political speech of orators, politicians, and philosophers for years to come. In these ways, Aeschylus takes this deity from her mythological tradition and opens her up to connection with new and developing ideas about the art of persuasion. As Wright suggests: “later theories of rhetoric can be seen in part as a working and partial endorsement of the implications of the mythic-poetic tradition.” 224 In other words, from Aeschylus’ dramatic manipulations with Peitho, one can trace a direct line to Greek conceptions of the art soon to be called “rhetoric.”

CHAPTER THREE: The Centrality of Πείθω to the Oresteia

I. Introduction

The uniqueness of Aeschylus’ preoccupation and emphasis on πείθω can be seen through Rosenmeyer’s general comments on the nature of tragic drama. He writes: “no Attic tragedy can do without the awareness that men are easily moved by persuasion, though in some of the plays the power of persuasion is more prominent and more overtly identified than in others.” 225 Such a drama, I would argue, is the Oresteia, where the primacy of πείθω emerges with remarkable clarity. 226 In the hands of Aeschylus, the dynamic complexity and nuanced meanings which he attaches to πείθω (as a noun, goddess, and verb) are readily developed on stage. In fact, Aeschylus uses his new ideas about πείθω to structure the entire dramatic performance of the Oresteia. In particular, I argue in this chapter that Aeschylus highlights πείθω as a central structural principle, an important theme, and a term which describes the main actions of the entire trilogy and thereby presents his ideas of πείθω as worthy of his audience’s close attention.

The importance of πείθω to Aeschylus’ Oresteia has been discussed by many scholars. 227 The most common assessments limit their scope to πείθω’s thematic development from evil and ruinous towards a gradually purified, beneficent and civilized state. In other words, πείθω’s development mirrors the general movement of the trilogy from the sinister, private and blood-thirsty actions of the Agamemnon and Choephoroi towards the redemptive establishment of the court system, the righteous acquittal of Orestes, and the integration of the Furies into Athenian

225 Rosenmeyer 1982, 350.
226 Rosenmeyer also asserts: “The Oresteia, and especially the Eumenides, is virtually unique in its terminal strategy of stripping away everything dubious from the successful exercise of persuasion,” (Rosenmeyer 1982, 351).
227 See list in n. 217 above.
society in the *Eumenides.* While this is a worthy and helpful analysis for literary interpretation, it does not suffice for an assessment of the drama as a site of rhetorical innovation. Two important treatments of the topic, Buxton 1982 and Pepe 1967, trace πείθω’s development in the *Oresteia,* but without reference to its/her influence on the main action of the play. Conversely, Bers 1994 speaks about how the play occurs through “tests of persuasion,” but does not discuss πείθω as a theme. The scholar who comes closest to the present analysis is Zweig 1982, who considers various personified gods in the *Oresteia* as agents of dramatic action. She focuses most extensively on the personifications Ate and Dike; and, her discussion of the goddess Peitho in the *Choephoroi* is minimal. This chapter complements these and other such studies by analyzing πείθω from a variety of perspectives throughout the *Oresteia.*

What is more, I examine πείθω as a force, theme, and concept present in central moments of the dramatic action, in sung “para-narratives,” and in references to the personified Peitho which mirror and emphasize those main actions. Although “parallel” or “mirroring” narratives have been discussed in works on Greek drama in general and on Sophocles or Euripides in particular, few scholars have used narratology to analyze such myths throughout Aeschylus’ *Oresteia.* Also, I am not aware of any scholarship that has combined such an analysis in the *Oresteia* with a structural and thematic study of πείθω. Yet several of these scholars affirm that both personified deities and staged narration can effectively guide audience interpretation and focus their attention on concepts of the playwright’s choosing. My work uses methodologies which reveal the significance of πείθω throughout the drama and the possible impression which this concept made

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229 Bers 1994, 185.
232 See Sommerstein 2005, 173-175; Barrett 2007, 260-263 for examples of such analyses.
233 Mastronarde claims that both the structural techniques and the use of themes are important ways by which the playwright manipulates audience responses (Mastronarde 2010, I).
upon its audience.

In sum, there are three ways in which I argue for the prominence of πειθώ in the *Oresteia.* In the first place, Aeschylus constructs his entire trilogy not on a predetermined fate, but on instances where one character “wins over” another (πειθώ). Aeschylus highlights these actions further by staging the singing of parallel myths at moments crucial to the main actions of each play. Each of these myths features a reference to the word and action of πειθώ. Finally, Aeschylus gives these turning points even greater dramatic prominence by having the Chorus or other characters invoke the goddess Peitho herself. Through these strategically timed invocations and the parallel choral narratives featuring πειθώ, Aeschylus not only crafts a persuasive drama, but subtly invites his audience to ponder that very persuasiveness.

II. Definitions

In order to best observe how Aeschylus, working within the limits of his medium, invites his audience to think about πειθώ throughout the *Oresteia,* we must first define the concepts through which this analysis will take place, namely: dramatic prominence, significant action, personification and mirror narrative.

**Dramatic Prominence**

Dramatic prominence is a quality which the playwright gives to certain actions or scenes such that the ideal audience interprets them as important and is prompted to reflect on the nature of that importance. Usually the playwright signals the dramatic prominence of a scene or action by using certain techniques, as Mastronarde points out:

…when tragedians want their audience to make inferences about psychological motivations and processes which lie behind words or action (or behind silence or
inaction), they are careful to give in almost every case explicit clues as to what inferences should be made."

Aeschylus gives dramatic prominence to scenes and actions which suggest the centrality and importance of πειθώ. There seem to be two main “clues” which Aeschylus uses in order to prompt “inferences” about the “psychological motivation or process” called πειθώ. The first is the presence of the personified deity Peitho. The second is the appearance and centrality of πειθώ both in the main action of each play and in mythic narratives which parallel that main action.

**Main Action**

Rather than define the “main or significant actions” of a drama in terms of character exit and entrance, changes in fortune, or traditional Aristotelian ideas of plot, I identify them as staged interactions which trigger moments of change and lead directly to the end results of each play. The end results in the *Oresteia* are two deaths (Agamemnon’s and Clytemnestra’s), and a transformation (of the Erinyes). According to this definition, the main or significant action of the *Agamemnon*, for instance, consists of the persuasion of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra, who convinces him to walk into the house to his doom. These verbal conflicts are what the playwright stages, what the audience watches, and what we should analyze as the most important moments of the drama. In the *Oresteia*, Aeschylus often marks these conflicts with the presence of the verb πείθω (or a close derivative), thereby highlighting πειθώ as a core theme and structural principle.

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234 Mastronarde 1979, 114; Taplin argues similarly that “in the whole of Greek tragedy there is no single indubitable case of significant stage action which is not indicated at the same time in the words,” (Taplin 1977, 278).

235 “The very process of personification...emphasizes and solemnizes the speaker's intent and by its nature provides a dramatic intensity that the common words cannot hope to convey,” (Zweig 1982, 6). Personifications and their influence on audience reception and interpretation will be discussed further below.

236 Compare Rosenmeyer: “For Aeschylus, we may wish to distinguish between plot and action. By action we mean the sequence of entries and exits and the various ways in which actors associate with one another on the stage; by plot, the sequence of changes in the fortunes of the characters, the advancement of an argument, via struggles and confusions, to its deadlock or resolution. The two go hand in hand.” (Rosenmeyer 1982, 311).

237 On the essence of Aeschylean drama being “decision” see Snell 1953, 106.

238 These “end results” most often occur off stage, as if they are less significant than their cause.
Personification

While it can be difficult to distinguish among images, themes, and personified deities in Greek tragedy, Zweig defines personification as: "the animation of something inanimate so that this entity needs nothing other than its own self-consciousness to perform some activity." I identify personification as a kind of deified abstraction which, like a theme, can guide audience interpretation, and yet, like a divinity, can also exert a certain influence on dramatic action.

Since Personifications like Peitho have a contemporaneous cult in society outside of the drama, they can influence the audience in different ways. In the first place, they immediately capture the audience’s attention by their familiarity. As a result of the connection between the play and real life, the dramatic appearance or invocation of a personified god creates an impression on the audience’s imagination. Even if the audience does not immediately recognize the divinity, Rutherford argues that “where the divine or daemonic bursts into the human sphere, there the audience is forced to see events in a new light.” A personified god can also come alive, as it were, and play a part in the drama itself “with the vitality of a full-fledged dramatic character,” as Zweig describes it. By their nature, personifications were tools for ancient Greek thought about complicated phenomena of human experience. When a goddess such as Peitho would come on the scene of a tragic drama, she would prompt the audience to think about her involvement with or influence upon the dramatic action.

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239 Zweig 1982, 22; see also Roscher 1965, 2068.
240 Rutherford 2012, 152, 130.
241 Zweig 1982, 12. This is a particularly Aeschylean usage of personifications, according to Zweig. See also Rutherford 2012, 130-131.
242 See Chapter Two for more on personifications as tools of abstract thought and on personifications in general.
Parallel or Mirroring Narratives

Scholars tend to categorize narrative myths told by characters on the dramatic stage as paradigmatic, etiological, or parallel/mirroring.\textsuperscript{243} While these categories often intersect, paradigms are typically used in instances where one character is exhorting another to adopt a given course of action.\textsuperscript{244} As Alden explains, these persuasive \textit{exempla} provide practical wisdom through a situation “remarkably similar to that of the addressee.”\textsuperscript{245} Rutherford notes that this is “the simplest use of the device…[and] Aeschylus has already gone beyond this.”\textsuperscript{246} Aeschylus generally uses myths to provide a lens through which the audience can interpret the larger action of the drama itself.\textsuperscript{247} The myths which perform this function do this in either an etiological or parallel way.\textsuperscript{248} According to Anderson, etiological myths often call to mind “the beginning of evils,” thereby “locat[ing] the present action and its principal thematic concerns within the wider mythic context”\textsuperscript{249} and, as Buxton comments, “explaining the present in terms of its origins.”\textsuperscript{250}

\textsuperscript{243} Scholars also identify myths as a dramatic tool for creating suspense on the stage. For more on this use of myths, see especially Markantonatos 2002, 13, 221, 222, who writes from a narratological point of view. For Aeschylus’ prowess in the creation of suspense, see Goward 1999, 58-60; also Herington 1985, 141-42; Else 1967, 78-102.
\textsuperscript{244} See Goward 1999, 61; Lohmann 1970, 183-212; Willcock 1964, 142.
\textsuperscript{245} Alden 2000, 26; see also Groningen 1953, 86. For \textit{exempla} as a type of persuasion or argumentation, see Buxton 1994, 179-180. Commenting on Arist. \textit{Rh.} 1356b2; 1394a17; 1394a1-8, Alden notes that mythological \textit{exempla} are actually a type of argument from induction which is very helpful for example in political oratory (Alden 2000, 292). For ancient views of mythology as a source of wisdom, see Strabo 1.1.10; 1.2.3; 1.2.8-9; Heraclitus \textit{All.} 70.13; Dion of Hal. \textit{Ant. Rom.} 2.20. See also Buxton 1994, 171-72; 174.
\textsuperscript{246} Rutherford continues, “The embedded myth may mean one thing to the choral singers, something else to the ideal audience; foreshadowing and ironic double meanings are common. Aeschylus’ choruses rarely move from the narration of events related to the events of the play, and when he does so (\textit{Suppl., Cho.}) the procedure involves explicit indication of the illustrative nature of his narratives,” (Rutherford 2007, 31). The myths in the \textit{Choephoroi} and the \textit{Eumenides} also fall partially within the paradigmatic category of myth, although they perform a wider function as well.
\textsuperscript{247} Alden, discussing such myths in the \textit{Iliad}, writes:”...all the narratives which do not advance the main plot of the \textit{Iliad} are nevertheless related to it or to an episode within it, and shed light on its interpretation” (Alden 2000, 10). On the use of these myths in tragedy, see also Anderson 2005, 133.
\textsuperscript{248} For this distinction, see Rutherford 2007, 4. These could also be considered under the broad categorization of “para-narratives” as discussed in Alden 2000, 1. A further categorization is between \textit{proleptic} and \textit{analeptic} myths. See, for example, Goward 1999, 2. Given that the myths under consideration are only \textit{analeptic} (dealing with the past) the distinction is not very important for our purposes.
\textsuperscript{249} Anderson 2005, 133.
\textsuperscript{250} Buxton 1994, 177. “Aeschylus’ narratives of the past are experienced as crucial to gaining an understanding of the present,” (Goward 1999, 60).
Other myths in Aeschylus function as mirrors of dramatic action. Sommerstein identifies these myths as “secondary mythical allusions” whereby “the characters or choruses in a drama try to illuminate the story being enacted by referring or alluding to a different story that can be seen as in some way related to it.” Through these parallel narratives, Markantonatos explains: "a new perceptual screen is introduced through which the staged events are evaluated or even explicated." These myths can also guide the interpretation of the audience by reinforcing certain themes of the play. As Goward writes: “Where the poet lingers, we are entitled to look for his particular concerns.” He continues:

…however tense and thrilling the dialogues between stage figures may be, with their displays of aggression (hubris), persuasion (peitho), friendship (philia) or advice (parainesis), it is often rightly left to the extraordinary capacities of continuous narrative to convey the heart of the matter.

While there are a number of important mythic stories narrated by the Chorus in the Oresteia, my analysis will focus specifically on parallel or mirroring myths which feature a central action described by the verb πείθω. The three narratives I examine are the myth of Paris and Helen at Agamemnon 385-411, the myth of Minos and Scylla at Choephoroi 613-622, and the myth of Apollo and the Fates at Eumenides 723-730. Each of these myths, occurring closely before the decisive moments in the dramatic action, contain a centralized reference to the verb πείθω, thus serving to highlight the importance of this concept for the audience.

251 The term “mirror” is used by De Jong 1987, 66, 86, but also by Alden 2000, 11; Mastronarde 2010, 66. See also Létoublon 1983, 27.
252 Sommerstein 2007, 174. See also Segal 1986, 64.
253 Markantonatos 2002, 13. Alden writes that these myths "exert influence, directly or indirectly, on the audience's reception of the text," (Alden 2000, 13).
254 On the subject of paradigms as mirrors, Anderson explains how the mythological paradigms of the Iliad mirror or correspond to something in the main narrative, reflecting its elements with a different cast. The connection is established not through content, but through theme...that is, the elements of the two stories mirror each other," (Alden 2000, 296, referring to Anderson 1987, 8-9).
257 These myths are also significant because, with the exception of the last one (in the Eumenides), they occur early on in the Choral songs to which they belong. Mastronarde argues that choral song often uses mythic narrative openings in
To sum up, then, in creating his work, the playwright highlights certain scenes and actions in a given performance, thereby inviting his audience to think about certain ideas and themes such as πειθώ. Scenes with such an effect have been endowed with dramatic prominence. Some of the specific clues which a playwright uses to create this effect consist of his choice of the drama’s central conflict or main action, and his strategic positioning of influential personified deities and mirroring choral narratives. Aeschylus, as shall be seen, employs all of these dramatic techniques in his efforts to present πειθώ as a concept deserving of special consideration.

III. The Dramatic Prominence of Πειθώ

Throughout the Agamemnon, Choephoroi, and Eumenides, Aeschylus presents and dramatically highlights πειθώ through his use of mirroring myths, the personified goddess, together with new and convincing story lines marked by main actions which are scenes of persuasion rather than plot movement marked by the inevitability of fate. Additionally, each of the references to πειθώ in the individual plays highlights the precise kind of action which is simultaneous unfolding on the stage of each respective drama. Aeschylus, therefore, presents as central to the trilogy his own particular aspects of πειθώ, namely: its evil forcefulness, trickery, and potentially benevolent but beguiling qualities.

A. Πειθώ in the Agamemnon

order to highlight certain relevant themes to which the playwright wishes to draw attention (Mastronarde 2010, 148). The myth of Paris and Helen and, then, Minos and Scylla both take place within the first twenty lines of the Chorus’ first stasimon within their respective plays (Ag. 355-487; Cho. 585-651). For more on how position can affect the weight and importance of a given narrative myth, see Rutherford 2007, 22; Markantonatos 2002, 14. De Romilly writes that “quite often Aeschylus keeps for the center of his play the most distant ‘flashback’ as we should say now, and joins it there with an anticipation and prediction about future events so that the whole sequence of events stands there in the middle, as one great unity, where time’s continuous course is gathered into a legible pattern,” (De Romilly 1968, 72-73).
In the *Agamemnon*, Aeschylus stages the homecoming of the Greek hero and the treacherous welcome of his wife Clytemnestra. What takes place on the stage is a combat of wills, a clash which is only resolved with πειθώ. The quality of πειθώ in this play is a forceful and ruinous one, which Aeschylus highlights with a choral song about a wretched Peitho and the story of Paris and Helen.

**Main Action (Ag. 931-943)**

The most significant moment for the action of the *Agamemnon* takes place at Ag. 931-943, where the embittered Clytemnestra convinces her husband to obey her and tread on the tapestries to his doom. After some cunning speeches, Clytemnestra’s attempt to win over her husband culminates in an intense stichomythic exchange at the end of which she utters: πιθοῦ· κρατεῖς μέντοι παρεῖς ἑκὼν ἐμοί (“Give in! You are the winner, you know, if you willingly hand it over to me,” Ag. 943). At this, Agamemnon does indeed yield, muttering: ἀλλ’ εἰ δοκεῖ σοι ταῦθ’ (“But if you insist on these things,” Ag. 944), and walks into the house. The presence of the word πιθοῦ, the aorist imperative of πείθομαι, marks the climax and conclusion of the main conflict in the play, a conflict which ends in Agamemnon’s death.

Although adherence to a fundamental story line requires that Agamemnon die, it is Aeschylus’s genius that the events leading up to his death become complicated, and only resolved with the power expressed by the verb πιθοῦ in Ag. 943. Aeschylus alters several details of the *Agamemnon* myth such that his version will necessitate the presence and action of πειθώ in the

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258 Raeburn and Thomas: “The emended line still lacks a main caesura, but its division into six disyllabic words could be a special effect to mark Clytemnestra’s final insistence which causes Agamemnon to yield,” (Raeburn and Thomas 2011, 168). My translation is inspired by Denniston and Page 1957, 153. On the seductive potential of the word πιθοῦ, Raeburn and Thomas also comment that “the dipthong of πιθοῦ and its circumflex accent can be delivered with a seductive cooing effect,” (Raeburn and Thomas 2011, 168); this observation may seem dubious to some (cf. Victor Bers, personal correspondence). For more on the quality of entreaty in this line, see Fraenkel 1950, 428-429.

259 See Dawe 1963, 48-49 n.2; Easterling 1973, 5; Buxton 1982, 107.
play. The earliest known version of *Agamemnon* is the story found in Homer’s *Odyssey* Books 3, 4, and 11. By contrast with the Homeric tradition, Aeschylus’ play omits two details of note. In the first place, Aeschylus does not mention any magical mythological events such as those surrounding the story of Thyestes and Atreus. Sommerstein writes: “By omitting the golden ram and the portent, Aeschylus has turned a tale of myth and magic into one of power, revenge and cruelty.”

Aeschylus also elevates Clytemnestra’s role whereas Homer and the lyric poets make Aegisthus the killer and Clytemnestra as his assistant. In the *Oresteia*, however, Sommerstein continues: “What we find nowhere before Aeschylus is what he has given us: Clytemnestra as sole killer, with Aegisthus not even there.” With these alterations, Aeschylus stages a play of striking human interaction, undetermined by previous magical occurrences and uncluttered by multiple human agents. The focal point of the *Agamemnon* becomes the deadly conflict between two individuals, Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, an encounter encapsulated in Clytemnestra’s definitive and climactic πιθοῦ.

The scene between Clytemnestra and Cassandra in the *Agamemnon* also contains frequent use of πείθομαι and its derivatives (πείθοι’ ἄν, εἰ πείθοι’, ἀπειθόης, Ag. 1049; πείθω, Ag. 1052; πείθου, Ag. 1054). Yet, their staged encounter depicts the failure of persuasion. Cassandra enters the house to her death not because Clytemnestra has won her over, but because she sees (among other tragic visions) that this is her fate (Ag. 1290). Thus, the remarkably dense frequency of words related to πείθω seems to serve another function: perhaps as a characterization or, better yet, as a foil to the more essential (and successful) πιθοῦ uttered between Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. Ultimately Cassandra enters into the house not because of the seductive qualities of Clytemnestra, but because of the inescapable force of Ate which seems to have extended its power not only over

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261 Ibid., 139.
Agamemnon, but also over the other *dramatis personae* as well.\(^{262}\) In that sense, it is also according to the will and workings of Peitho, daughter of Ate, that Cassandra submits and enters into the house as her master did.

**A Ruinous Goddess (*Ag. 385*)**

The ruinous persuasion of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra at *Ag. 943* (and all that follows) is anticipated by the Chorus’ mention of a wretched and forceful Peitho at *Ag. 385*.\(^ {263}\) Peitho here, at the service of Ate, represents the evil force behind Clytemnestra’s action and its ruinous consequences, not only for Agamemnon but for the entire house of Atreus.\(^ {264}\) This first reference to a fully personified Peitho occurs towards the beginning of the Choral stasimon which divides act one (featuring the news of Agamemnon’s arrival) from act two (depicting his defeat and destruction at the hands of Clytemnestra).\(^ {265}\) At this point, the Herald has already announced the news of Agamemnon’s homecoming. Clytemnestra has entered into dialogue with him and with the Chorus about this event and the destruction of Troy. Now Aeschylus is about to stage the most crucial encounter of the play: Agamemnon’s arrival, Clytemneste’s welcome, and their fatal encounter.

Peitho therefore occurs in a transitional moment within the song. Up till now, the Chorus has been singing about how man brings about his own destruction through Κόρος (“Insolence,”

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\(^{262}\) Cassandra herself attributes the destruction of Agamemnon (*Ag. 1267*) and of herself (*Ag. 1226-1230*) to the power of Ate, who, in this play, has Peitho as her primary assistant.

\(^{263}\) Note that this may contradict or, rather, disprove, Smith’s observation that with Aeschylus, thematic development “is introduced with a verbal idea and continued in nominal form,” (Smith 1965, 70). Here, it seems to be the other way around. For confirmation of the personified Peitho’s presence here, see Buxton 1977, 880; Headlam 1906, 118; Bailey 1962, 74.

\(^{264}\) On the goddess Peitho as dangerous power and important theme for the drama of the *Agamemnon*, see Goward 2005, 95-97.

\(^{265}\) In my identification of act dividing songs, I adhere to Taplin 1977.
Ag. 382), a hubristic attitude engendered by the possession of excess wealth (Ag. 367-384). The Chorus continues to sing about this with the first lines of the antistrophe:

βιᾷται δ' ἁ τάλαινα Πειθώ
προβούλου παῖς ἀφερτὸς ἄτας. (Aesch. Ag. 385-386)

Wretched Peitho compels him,
the unbearable daughter of deliberating Ruin.

The Chorus shifts from commentary on Κόρος to the workings of the goddess Peitho, daughter of Ate (Infatuation/Ruin). On this passage, Goward explains that “[i]f a man does not use his wealth with justice, slowly but surely he will be persuaded into some disaster.” Raeburn and Thomas comment: “Ate…uses her daughter Πειθώ as her instrument to effect the come-uppance: the sinner, through folly, can be persuaded to horrendous actions.” While Ate is the one who plans and dictates what must be done, Peitho effects it. Aeschylus also modifies Peitho with the neologism ἀφερτὸς (“unbearable,” Ag. 386). Peitho emerges from this passage as an insufferable, unavoidable force, described by Rutherford as “tinged with tragic fatality,” and actively at work: in Bailey’s words, an “agent provocateur” who induces and seduces with a menace. And in her, Aeschylus presents a divine agent working behind the human affairs and actions central to the Agamemnon’s plot.

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266 Rosenmeyer 1982, 315.
267 Goward 2005, 75. See also Headlam 1906, 118.
268 Raeburn and Thomas 2011, 112. Looking forward to the rest of the choral song, Fraenkel explains that Peitho either “overpowers a man by persuading him that he is obliged to do what it is not right for him to do, and at the same time talks him out of his resistance…or… she works through another person (her instrument) and thereby “persuades the doer of the crime to his action,” (Fraenkel 1950, 201).
269 On the meaning of προβούλου as “setting up the agenda” or “exercising forethought” see Raeburn and Thomas 2011, 113. On the significance of this adjective in terms of its connection with the legal body of Athens at the time, see Fraenkel 1950, 200. For more on legal terminology throughout the Oresteia, see Rutherford 2012, 131-132. Such terminology appears in the following passages: Ag. 41, 47, 451, 534, 537, 813-17, 1412-1413, 1421; Cho. 987, 989-990, 1026-1033; Eu (trial scene and compensation of Erinys).
270 Fraenkel 1950, 200 n. 2 notes that this term is found eight other times throughout the Oresteia, five of those being in the Agamemnon. See also Dodds 1973, 56 n. 2.
271 Rutherford 2012, 156.
272 Bailey 1962, 75.
273 Aeschylus “fashions his personified being so as to be engaged in the action independently and from the outset and
**Parallel Myth (Ag. 387-411)**

Peitho also functions as the agent behind the mythological events recounted in the song which follows at Ag. 387-411. This song tells the story of Paris and Helen, a narrative which mirrors the conquest of Agamemnon by Clytemnestra and evokes consideration of an earlier defeat to which he had submitted when he allowed himself to be persuaded to kill his daughter Iphigenia.

Wretched Peitho compels him,
The insufferable daughter of deliberating-beforehand Ruin;
And every remedy is vain; its bane is not hidden, but is conspicuous, a horrid-gleaming light;

not as a description in retrospect or from a distance," (Zweig 1982, 7).
and in the way that cheap bronze,
with rubbing and with the application of a touchstone,
It comes out black-clotted
After having been punished, since
He is chasing, as a boy, a bird on the wing,
having placed on the city unbearable affliction.
And none of the gods hears his prayers
   But since he deals with these things
They destroy him, as a man unjust.
Such a one was Paris, who came
to the house of the sons of Atreus
And dishonored the table of guest-friendship
   By theft of a woman.
And leaving to her townspeople shielded-warriors,
crashing throngs of spears, and
seamen preparing for war,
And bringing to Ilium destruction instead of a dowry,
she [Helen] stepped forth lightly through
the gates, having dared an insufferable thing. But the prophets groaned much
for the house [of Atreus] when speaking of this:
   “Alas, alas, for the house and its princes,
Alas for the marriage bed and for the footsteps of lovers!”

After emphasizing the irremedial (ἀκός δὲ πᾶν μάταιο, 387) and baneful (σίνος, 388) nature of Peitho’s actions, this myth describes how under her influence, a man’s crimes incur punishment both for himself and his city (393-395).274 The thought concludes: “such a one was Paris,” (οἷος καὶ Πάρις, 399). Having been seduced by the insufferable (ἀτλητα, 408) Peitho, Paris transgresses against guest friendship (Ἕσχυε ξενίαν τράπεζαν, 401-402); and, bringing his prize home, she becomes his destruction (φθοράν, 406). In this story, Helen appears to be a mere instrument for Peitho who works upon Paris. Helen herself, however, is not depicted as the guilty seductress; nor is she forced. She goes along with Paris freely and lightly (βέβακε Ρήμα ψεύτα / πυλᾶν, Ag.
407-408) and departs swiftly, thoughtless of impunity.275 In Aeschylus’ version of the myth,

274 Note the occurrence of the word ἄφερτον again in line 395.
275 See Raeburn and Thomas 2011, 114. See also Ag. 394, 420-426, 690-692; Blondell 2013, 130; Fraenkel 1950, 270;
214. In Hesiod, the abduction of Helen is presented ambiguously (Hes. Catalogue of Women 204. 81-84; Blondell 2013, 35-36); so also in the Cypria (Blondell 2013, 26). Gantz writes: “No source...goes so far as to argue that she is actually kidnapped against her will, although this may be implied in some of the versions in which she never arrives at
Peitho is the seductress who uses Helen to bring Paris to his doom. A ten-years’ war, Paris’ own death, and the ruin of Troy are the results.

The story of Paris and Helen ends not long before Agamemnon’s conflict and engagement with his wife before his death. As a mirroring narrative, this myth tells of the same kind of forceful and destructive allurement, embodied in Peitho, by which both Paris and Agamemnon are seduced. Headlam writes: “Agamemnon falls from precisely the same causes, by precisely the same means, as Trojan Paris.” Bailey posits that just as with Paris, “[i]n the case of Agamemnon, Peitho is working from within as well as from without. His own pride and ambition spur him on to action to which Clytemnestra is also moving him.”

Raeburn and Thomas summarize: “Paris was rich, sinned, and has been punished. Agamemnon is rich, has blood on his hands, and…[t]he Chorus can draw the conclusion, but dare not voice it.” The result of both their crimes is, moreover, a ruptured marital relationship (Ag.411, 208-210); and, as Bailey continues: “as Paris will pay the penalty for his sin at the hands of Agamemnon, so will Agamemnon pay for his sin at the hands of Clytemnestra.” Just as with Paris, Agamemnon’s transgression and submission result not only in his own death, but in the destruction of many others. A continued cycle of murder, blood, and vengeance threatens to destroy not only his

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276 On Helen as the instrument of Ate, Headlam refers to the next lyric passage (Ag. 717-736): “Helen is the instrument of Ate; and the point is enforced by a technical device widely practiced in the choral lyric. The stress of the last sentence, which of course would be accentuated in the singing, falls upon the word Ἀτας,” (Headlam 1906, 120).
277 Even Helen’s name, as mentioned in the choral song which follows later (especially Ag. 687) can be understood to mean “to take, capture, or kill.” Therefore, Blondell argues that Helen is “actively destructive in her very essence,” (Blondell 2013, 130). Also, see Ag. 819-820 for reference to the destruction of Troy as an effect of Ate, mother of Peitho.
278 One could argue that this myth also suggests a close parallel between Helen and Clytemnestra, but Aeschylus fleshes out this comparison more in the second stasimon (Ag. 681-809). For more on parallels between the two half-sisters, see Blondell 2013, 123-124; 127.
279 Headlam 1906, 119.
280 Bailey 1962, 58.
282 Bailey 1962, 49.
283 See the connection between Ate and Agamemnon’s fate in the words of Cassandra at Ag. 1226-1230.
progeny (Orestes) but through the wrath of the Erinyes, the city of Athens as well (Eu. 810-817). Aeschylus underscores the contention that without Peitho, none of this would even have happened, either to Paris or to Agamemnon.

Through meter and context, this myth is also linked with the story of Iphigenia at Aulis, which the Chorus sings in the parodos of the play (Ag. 191-257). Through its reference also to πείθω, this song commemorates Agamemnon’s earlier action (the sacrifice of his daughter) as another instance of the power of Peitho working upon him for ruin. The main action of Agamemnon in this earlier story is also marked by the presence of the verb πείθω. The Chorus notes that when confronted with the choice between submission to Artemis (with her promise of favorable winds for the voyage to Troy) and the death of his daughter, Agamemnon fatally chooses to obey (πιθέσθαι, Ag. 206) the goddess. While deliberating over this decision, he laments:

\[
\begin{align*}
\betaαρεία\ \muέν\ \κήρ\ \tauο\ \muή\ \pi\iotaθέσθαι \\
\betaαρεία\ \delta',\ \epsilonι \\
\tauέκνον\ \dαίξω,\ \dόμον\ \dαγαλμα, \\
\muαίνον\ \pαρθενοσφάγοισιν \\
\pρείθροις\ \pατρόφους\ \χέρας\ \pέλας\ \βο- \\
\muο.\ \tauι\ \τόνδ'\ \ανευ\ \kακόν; (Aesch. Ag. 205-211)
\end{align*}
\]

A grievous fate it is to not obey, but grievous if I should slay my child, the delight of the house, staining with streams of a slaughtered maiden’s blood these father’s hands near the altar. What of these things is without evils?

This depiction is uniquely Aeschylean in its emphasis on the individual nature of Agamemnon’s decision. The image of Agamemnon donning the yoke of Necessity (ἀνάγκας… λέπαδνον, Ag.

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284 On how Helen and Clytemnestra become Erinyes thematically and dramatically, see Blondell 2013, 138 who references Ag. 749. Also, Bailey 1962, 236; Rutherford 2012, 225-26.
285 Raeburn and Thomas comment: “The Chorus’ track of lyric utterance and movement has led it to another ominous conclusion. This is not just mood-setting; its words considered as speech-acts have moved the drama on towards Agamemnon’s destruction.” (Raeburn and Thomas 2011, 119).
286 See Raeburn and Thomas 2011, 109-110. Sommerstein 2010, 149 calls the meter of this song the “Aulis rhythm.”
287 Sommerstein says that “no one before Aeschylus had envisaged Agamemnon as killing Iphigenia with his own
218) fits well with his forceful depiction of Peitho in the play.\textsuperscript{288} Agamemnon, here, allows himself to be persuaded by the omen as interpreted by Calchas, a sign of the anger of Artemis. In this way, he perpetuates the cycle of death as it would soon be inflicted through the πειθώ of Iphigenia’s vengeful and bitter mother.\textsuperscript{289} And, with the verb πιθέσθαι (Ag. 206), Aeschylus again points to the ultimate origin of these evils: the ineluctable power of πειθώ.

\section*{B. Πειθώ in the Choephoroi}

By depicting the personification Peitho as an agent of dramatic action (through her invocation and through the mirror myth at Ag. 385-411), Aeschylus highlights the importance of πειθώ in the \textit{Agamemnon} as a menacing, forceful power bringing about the ruin of Clytemnestra’s husband. In the \textit{Choephoroi}, πειθώ appears with a similarly sinister mien, but in the main action, a parallel narrative, and as a deified abstraction but wielding forces of trickery, deception and deceit.\textsuperscript{290}

\begin{flushright}
δολόμητιν δ᾽ ἀπάταν θεοῦ τίς ἀνὴρ θανατὸς ἀλύξει; \\
tίς ὁ κραινψ νοῦλ πεδήματος αὐπετέως ἀνάγεσσων; \\
φιλόφρων γὰρ ποτισαίνουσα τὸ πρῶτον παράγει \\
βροτὸν εἰς ἄρκυας Ἀτα, \\
tόθεν οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπὲρ θανατὸν ἀλύξαντα φυγεῖν. (Aesch. Pers. 94-100)
\end{flushright}

But what mortal man can escape the guileful deception of a god? Who is so light of foot that he has power to leap easily away? For Ruin begins by fawning on a man in a friendly way and leads him astray into her net. from which it is impossible for a mortal to escape and flee (tr. Sommerstein).

Aeschylus conflates the action of Ate and, by association, Peitho with δολόμητιν δ᾽ ἀπάταν (guileful deception) and...
Actions of Trickery (*Cho.* 556-557)

The turning-point action of the *Choephoroi* takes place at *Cho.* 652-718 when the disguised Orestes artfully uses cunning persuasion to gain access to his mother’s home and accomplish his revenge. From the moment when he first reveals his plan to the audience, Orestes describes it in terms of δόλος:

\[ \text{ὡς ἂν δόλῳ κτείναντες ἄνδρα τίμιον δόλοισι καὶ ληφθῶσιν ἐν ταὐτῷ βρόχῳ θανόντες, …} \]  

(Aesch. *Cho.* 556-557)

Just as, by trickery, they killed an honorable man  
In trickery also will they be seized in the same net and die,…

After this, at *Cho.* 674 Orestes arrives at the door pretending to be a stranger from Phocis. He refuses provide any identification to the porter. When Clytemnestra emerges to inquire about him, he claims to have come from Strophius, adding a false report about his own (Orestes’) death (*Cho.* 682). Seemingly taken in, Clytemnestra opens the door to her son. After realizing her fatal error later on, however, Clytemnestra protests: “we are destroyed by trickery” (δόλοις ὀλούμεθ, *Cho.* 885). In other words, the central action and conclusion (Clytemnestra’s death) in

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with ποτισαίνουσα (fawning). Aeschylus uses this latter term (at *Ag.* 681-809) to describe Helen, ruinous agent of Peitho, as a lion cub who acts with “the fawning blandishments of simulated friendliness,” (Headlam 1906, 134, 126). For a similar image in Pindar, see *Pyth.* 2.83. For more on the lion cub image in the *Agamemnon*, see *Ag.* 725-726, 735-736. The main action of the *Choephoroi* consists in a kind of trickery, and the primary agent is a tricky Peitho at the service of Ate [N.B. The last word of the *Choephoroi* is ἄτης (*Cho.* 1076).] But instead of using the forceful inducement of Peitho, Orestes uses her powers of deception to enter into his mother’s house and effect her ruin. Headlam 1906, 176-177 considers the main actions of both the *Agamemnon* and *Choephoroi* a species of doloi; Pontani 2007, 207 points out the differences.

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291 See also Bailey 1962, 100.  
292 See *Cho.* 679. The first reference to Orestes and his stay in Phocis with Strophius is made by Clytemnestra to Agamemnon. Her last comment on Orestes’ current state foreshadows the deception with which he will involve himself when he returns. She asserts to Agamemnon, words dripping with irony: τοιάδε μέντοι σκῆψις οὐ δόλον φέρει ("But such is my excuse, and it is not a trick," Aesch. *Ag.* 386). Lebeck comments: "The woman who welcomes him tricks the man who returns; a man who returns tricks the woman who welcomes him," (Lebeck 1967, 182). See also Rosenmeyer 1982, 350.  
293 On the significance of this see McCall 1990, 25.  
294 Pontani 2007 points out that Clytemnestra must not have been entirely taken in by Orestes’ deceptive tale, for at *Cho.* 768-782 she did tell Aegisthus to come in the company of his body guards (Pontani 2007, 212). Nonetheless, his deception worked sufficiently to gain him entrance into the house, so, for our purposes, the argument still holds.
this play result from the deceptive and destructive “winning-over” carried out by Orestes against his mother.

As if to emphasize the centrality of the tricky action of πειθώ in the Choephoroi, Aeschylus once again makes adjustments to the plot. Pontani, in particular, notes that Orestes’ mention of Strophius (Cho. 679) hints at his tricky motives, since this name is connected with Hermes’ epithet Στροφαῖος, which in turn is linked to Hermes’ deceitful modus operandi: στρέφεσθαι καὶ πανουργεῖν (“to turn about and play the knave”).\(^{295}\) Aeschylus’ Orestes also approaches Clytemnestra with a false report about his own death, a verbal deceit which Sommerstein considers to be quite innovative, at least within the context of the play:

Aeschylus makes no mention beforehand of the idea of giving a false report of his own death...because Aeschylus wants to keep it from the audience—which suggests that it is an innovation, overlaid on an earlier conception in which Orestes and Pylades sought admission to the palace simply as travelers from abroad.\(^{296}\)

Compared with the story in Homer’s Odyssey, Aeschylus has Orestes engage directly in a personal encounter with his mother; then, he kills her in cold blood.\(^{297}\) These changes focus attention on the charged and emotional one-on-one conflict between mother and son. With these innovations, Aeschylus creates a version of the Orestes myth which highlights the important role of trickery in the main action of the play: a moment of persuasive deception between Orestes and Clytemnestra which sets in motion the entire plan of destruction and revenge.

While Orestes’ deceptive gaining of entry into the palace is the main action of the

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\(^{295}\) ‘This name could also be connected with Hermes’ role with door hinges and with the goal of Orestes’ trickery: to gain access to his victims through entering the main door. See Garvie 1970: 87-88. For the other Greek phrase mentioned in the text, see schol. vet. Ar, Plut. 1153-54; 1154a; Suid. σ1218 from Pontani 2007, 205 n.5. Pontani also suggests a possible connection with Laertes’ servant Dolios from the Odyssey, who appears in the lying recognition scene at the end of this poem (Pontani 2007, n.5).

\(^{296}\) Sommerstein 2010, 143. Pontani agrees (2007, 212 n.31), but Käppel thinks this tale was just a spontaneous reaction to the situation which presented itself with the appearance of Clytemnestra (Käppel 1998, 221, 230).

\(^{297}\) In Odyssey 3.309-10, Homer only mentions that Orestes “made a funeral feast over both of them…and that on the day of this feast Menelaus came home,” (Sommerstein 2010, 136). See also Pontani 2007, 209, 213-222. On Aeschylus’ depiction of an unarmed Clytemnestra, see Sommerstein 2010, 143.
choephoroi, other acts of trickery follow upon the first. Take for instance, the events leading up to the death of aegisthus. reiterating orestes’ deceit, the chorus prompts the nurse, cilissa, to carry out her own work of deceit. in response to the chorus, moreover, cilissa responds with an explicit use of the verb πείθομαι. she says: ἀλλ᾽ εἶμι καὶ σοῖς ταῦτα πείσομαι λόγοις (“all right, i’m going and i will obey your words with respect to these things,” cho. 781). she then fetches aegisthus on the false premise that orestes has died and that the visiting strangers would tell him more if he would only come in to meet them. remarkably, aegisthus heeds her summons and its deceptive message (cho. 838-841), which is corroborated by the chorus (cho. 848-850). then aegisthus comes to orestes uttering these last words: οὔτοι φρέν᾽ ἂν κλέψειεν ὠμματωμένην (“these men could not deceive a mind that has its eyes open,” cho. 854). yet this is precisely what happens. aegisthus succumbs to the deceit of orestes and his nurse: going in to meet the “strangers” he goes to his death, as arranged by the craftiness of orestes and the deceitful complicity of cilissa and the chorus.

tricky peitho (cho. 726)

as if to signal peitho’s key role behind the action of the choephoroi, aeschylus has the chorus sing to her just as orestes makes his way into the house after winning over his mother:


now is the moment for tricky peitho to go down (into the arena) and for hermes of the underworld, gloomy as night, to watch over

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298 some scholars even say that the nurse demonstrates precisely how deceitfully peitho works in this play (cho. 726; zweig 1982, 131; kitto 1959, 50). bailey goes so far as to say that “the nurse is peitho. what sort of peitho she will employ is clearly indicated by the epithet δολίαν—she will deliver the false message dictated by the chorus (770sqq.),” (bailey 1962, 95).
contests of death by the sword.

Not only does this passage further develop the theme of πειθώ, but it happens at precisely at the moment when the audience is about to witness the completion of Orestes’ deceitful act. Aeschylus explicitly links Peitho with δολίαν (726) and Hermes (727). Hand in hand with the god of cunning craft, Peitho enters into the arena of the stage (ξυγκαταβῆναι, 727) as Orestes enters into his mother’s house. Peitho watches over (ἐφοδεῦσαι, 728) and aids Orestes in his struggle (ἀγῶσιν, 729). Her presence here also clearly indicates that the main action of the Choephoroi involves persuasion through deceit. It is under the influence of Πειθώ δολία influence that Orestes will accomplish his vengeful task.

Parallel Myth (Cho. 613-622)

Immediately before Orestes approaches the house and tricks his mother, Aeschylus stages a choral song (Cho. 613-622) which features the myth of Nisus, Minos, and Scylla. This myth not only mirrors Orestes’ deception of his mother, but it also points to the ultimate “origin of evils” for the Choephoroi: Apollo’s deception of Orestes. Like the story of Paris and Helen in the Agamemnon, the story of Nisus, Minos and Scylla occurs within a stasimon at the center of the drama which functions as an act-dividing song. In the Choephoroi this song separates act one (at the tomb of Agamemnon, where Orestes renews his resolve) from act two (when Orestes makes

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299 “The prayer for the help of deceitful Persuasion is obviously in place as Orestes’ plot develops,” (Garvie 1986, 240, 242); compare Verrall: “The power of Persuasion (or Deception) is to prevent premature discovery of the fraud,” (Verrall 1893, 104).

300 Buxton thinks that Peitho in the Choephoroi is really just “deception masquerading as peitho,” (Buxton 1977, 85). For more on the significance of Peitho’s companionship with Hermes, see Zweig 1982, 131 and Chapter Two Section III.

301 There is controversy over the translation of ἔφοδεσσαι, 728. Compare Verrall 1893, 104, for instance, with Garvie 1986, 242-43 (who is in favor of discarding the word altogether and using something else). On ἀγῶσιν, see Ag. 1377 and Ag. 1528, instances where Clytemnestra and her crime are similarly described. Garvie comments: “Once again the language links the various crimes, each being seen as retribution for the last,” (Garvie 1986, 243).

302 Kranz 1933, 169 calls it a “Verbindungsstück.”
good on his resolve and murders Clytemnestra). As Garvie puts it, the Chorus sings this song “while we wait for the actors to develop the intrigue.”

The entire choral ode (Cho. 584-651) features three stories recounting the murderous deeds of evil women. The first mythical reference recounts Althaea’s killing of her son Meleager; the second, Scylla’s murder of her father Nisus; and the third, the destructive deaths imposed by the Lemnian women upon their husbands. While the ostensible purpose of this song as a whole is to bewail inter-family perversions and strife (particularly those involving women), inner dynamics of the story about Nisus, Minos, and Scylla also mirror aspects of what takes place between Orestes and his mother.

The story of Minos, Nisus and Scylla would have been particularly well known to an Athenian audience because the victim, Nisus, was the brother of Aegeus, an Athenian king. In the myth, Minos from Crete besieges Megara, but in order to win the kingdom he seduces (and/or bribes) the king’s daughter, Scylla. She, in turn, kills her father Nisus by cutting off his magic lock of hair while he sleeps. The Chorus sings the myth as follows:

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ἄλλαν δεῖ τιν᾽ ἐν λόγοις στυγεῖν
φοινίαν κόραν,
ἀτ᾽ ἐχθρῶν ὑπαὶ
φῶτ᾽ ἁπόλεσεν φίλον Κρητικοῖς
χρυσοκμήτοισιν ὅρμοις
πιθήσασα δώροισι Μίνω,
Νῖσον ἀθανάτας τριχὸς
νοσφίσασι ἀπροβούλως
πνέονθ᾽ ἁ κυνόφρων ὑπνῳ.
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304 Garvie notes that this is the “first choral ode in extant tragedy…and the only one in Aeschylus in which we find the illustrative use of myth on anything like this scale,” (Garvie 1986, 202).
305 On ruthlessness in these myths, see Stinton 1979, 257. For the reference to family murders and the crimes of the house of Atreus in these myths, see Garvie 1986, 203. Sommerstein claims that the audience would assess the entire ode as one depicting “feminine ‘desires’”…which are not “exclusively or even mainly sexual,” (Sommerstein 2007, 177). See also Rutherford 2007, 19.
306 The meter of the mythic strophic pairs, incidentally, is that of syncopated iambics with aeolic clausula, reminding one of the rhythm of the stories in the Agamemnon which also involved, for example, that of Agamemnon and Iphigenia, and of Paris and Helen.
κιγχάνει δέ μιν Ἑρμῆς (Aesch. Cho. 613-622)

One should hate another woman from the legends, the murderous girl who under the influence of enemies destroyed a close relative, since with Cretan necklaces wrought with gold, the gifts of Minos, she was seduced; And the immortal hair from Nisus she removed, while thoughtlessly he breathed in sleep—this dog-minded woman!—but Hermes took him.

While a parallel between Scylla and Clytemnestra may have been the Chorus’ more overt intention in this song, the ode is open to interpretation on other levels, such as a comparison between Scylla and Orestes. Here as in the play, a child enters a parent’s quarters to murder them “treacherously by stealth,” as Stinton puts it. Helpless, Nisus dies while sleeping unawares (ἀπροβούλως, 620), so Clytemnestra dies baring her breast to Orestes’ knife.

This myth also mirrors the main action of the Choephoroi by its explicit mention of Hermes at the end of the tale and by the ambiguity surrounding the object of Hermes’ action in this line (622). While many scholars assume that the “μιν” whom Hermes took refers to Nisus, some point out that it could also refer to Scylla herself. In most of the later versions of the myth, Garvie explains, Scylla ends miserably: either murdered by a disgusted Minos or transformed into a sea-bird and chased forever by her vengeful father. In like manner, Orestes, another

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307 Scholars often point out parallels between the ways that both Scylla and Clytemnestra are compared to a dog. Compare Cho. 622 with Cho. 420-422, for example. Garvie also notes that Aeschylus seems to be playing with the etymology of her name as Homer did in Od. 12.85: the word Σκύλαξ means a young dog (Garvie 1986, 214). See also Ag. 1233, where Aeschylus compares Clytemnestra with the Homeric Scylla.

308 Lebeck writes: “The first two exempla give back a looking-glass reflection of the parallel crimes committed by Agamemnon and Orestes….Thus there is a triplicate reference which calls up the murder of Iphigenia, of Agamemnon, of Clytemnestra,” (Lebeck 1967, 183). In fact, many scholars agree that the women in the first two myths, Althaea and Scylla, do not properly mirror Clytemnestra at all (Sommerstein 2010, 128; Rutherford 2007, 6; Garvie 1986, 202). Garvie points out that Aeschylus (like Sophocles in Electra 837ff) could easily have thought of better parallel myths such as the stories of Eriphyle and Amphiarus or that of Aerope and Atreus (Garvie 1986, 203).

309 Stinton 1979, 253.

310 On the parallel between Scylla and Orestes, see Lebeck 1967, 183-184; also Stinton 1979, 256.

311 See Garvie 1986, 214.
“unpardonable”\textsuperscript{312} parent-killer, will be chased to the brink of destruction throughout the next play, the \textit{Eumenides}.

A final and perhaps most obvious connection between this myth and the tricky \textit{πείθω} of the \textit{Choephoroi} lies in Aeschylus’ use of the verb \textit{πιθήσασα} (617) to describe how Minos convinces Scylla to kill her father.\textsuperscript{314} Although \textit{Cho.} 613-622 is the first extant occurrence of the story of Minos and Scylla in ancient Greek literature,\textsuperscript{315} Aeschylus’ version of the story contains elements which are absent from later accounts and yet which bring to the fore the presence of \textit{Πειθώδια}.\textsuperscript{316} While there has always been great ambiguity surrounding Scylla’s motives for this evil deed,\textsuperscript{317} no later version of the story mentions the bribe (616-617) made by Minos to win Scylla over to his plan.\textsuperscript{318} The golden necklaces, however, call to mind Peitho’s typical iconography.\textsuperscript{319} Thus, while some scholars may argue the contrary, I do not believe that the bribe here negates the possibility of an erotic motivation for Scylla’s evil deed.\textsuperscript{320} Rather, these necklaces thematically connect her accomplishment to the powerful and tricky seductiveness of the goddess Peitho.\textsuperscript{321} With the necklaces, Minos seduces and tricks Scylla into carrying out a deceitful and evil deed. In like manner, the god Apollo convinces Orestes to perform his own act of tricky Peitho, the central

\textsuperscript{312} Stinton 1979, 255. By contrast with Althaea in the previous myth, Stinton considers Scylla to be “guilty but unpardonable;” this latter description is quite apt for Orestes as well, considering the pursuit of the Erinyes in the \textit{Choephoroi} and into the \textit{Eumenides.}

\textsuperscript{313} He is also accompanied by Hermes throughout the next play, although not to Hades (\textit{Eu.} 90).

\textsuperscript{314} According to Garvie, this epic form of the aorist participle is found only here in tragedy (Garvie 1986, 213). Also Sideras 1971, 107.

\textsuperscript{315} Garvie 1986, 212.

\textsuperscript{316} Later accounts include Pseudo-Apollodorus 3.15.8; Pausanias 2.34.7; scholar to Euripides \textit{Hippolytus} 1200 and to Lycophron \textit{Alexandra} 650; Propertius 3.19.21-28; Ovid \textit{Metamorphoses} 8.6-151; Hyginus \textit{Fabulae} 198.

\textsuperscript{317} See March 1998, 335.

\textsuperscript{318} See Sommerstein 2007, 17.

\textsuperscript{319} See Buxton 1982, 36 for details on these “traditional instruments of erotic enticement” used frequently by Peitho. Also see Chapter Two.

\textsuperscript{320} Sommerstein 2007, 176-177 argues the contrary.

\textsuperscript{321} Orestes, by comparison, also speaks to the inducements of Apollo using erotic terminology in the word \textit{φίλτρα} (\textit{Cho.} 1029-1033). Interestingly, much much later the author Nonnus will describe Scylla’s deed precisely with reference to Peitho. Here, however, she is working with a brazen spear, rather than with golden necklaces: \textit{Πειθώ / χάλκεον ἔγχος ἔπαλε καὶ ἐπέλευ Παλλάς Αθήνη, / μαρναμένῳ Μίνωι συνέμπορος, ἐν δὲ κυδοιμοῖς (“Peitho shook a brazen spear and turned into Pallas Athena to stand by Minos in the fray,” Nonn. \textit{Dion.} 25.150-152. tr. Rouse).
dramatic action in this play. All in all then, this story serves as a thematic echo of the main action and the origin of evils—rooted as they are in a tricky πειθό— in the plot of the *Choephoroi*.

While earlier poets might not give clear reasons behind Orestes’ choice of action, Aeschylus clearly indicates that Orestes acted under the deceitful influence of someone greater than himself: Apollo. In both the *Choephoroi* and the *Eumenides*, Aeschylus points to Apollo’s tricky manipulation of Orestes with words related to πειθό, δόλος, or both. Towards the beginning of the *Choephoroi*, Orestes explains his submission to Apollo’s commands in this way:

τοιοῖσδε χρησμοῖς ἄρα χρὴ πεποιθέναι;
κεὶ μὴ πέποιθα, τοὔργον ἔστ᾽ ἐργαστέον. (Aesch. Cho. 297-98)

It is necessary to trust such oracles, is it not?
And even if I do not trust them, this is the work that must be done.

Although πεποιθέναι may be translated “to trust,” the connection with the original sense of the middle πειθόμαι (“to acquiesce, to be persuaded, to yield”) is also present. When announcing his plan of action, Orestes not only mentions the trickery of the act, but insinuates that Apollo himself had prescribed the deceit. He says, finishing lines 556-557 from the passage above:

…καὶ Λοξίας ἐφήμισεν,

…and Loxias has decreed it,
The lord Apollo, a seer not false before.

Much later, when Orestes hesitates to kill his mother, it is Pylades’ reminder of his need to obey

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322 For Apollo’s responsibility for Orestes’ actions see Zweig 1982, 133; Kitto 1959, 53; and also Apollo’s own words in *Eu*. 579-80.
323 Sommerstein comments: “The result is that in Aeschylus, Orestes, while not exactly a reluctant avenger, is also not an eager one: he takes the vengeance because ‘the deed has to be done,’ (Cho. 298),” (Sommerstein 2010, 142).
324 Orestes is yet operating under a πειθό which implies a certain amount of negative force and necessity. This, however, is to be expected, for πειθό in the *Choephoroi* has not yet been “purified” or established within the more just and freedom-respecting setting of the Athenian courts as in the *Eumenides*. Also, since it is a relationship between unequals (cf. Agamemnon’s conundrum at Ag. 205-211), the element of necessity is not surprising.
326 See Pontani 2007, 206, 206 n.7.
Apollo that sets his resolve (Cho. 900-902). Apollo himself acknowledges that he had won Orestes over to this deed, saying at one point: καὶ γὰρ κτανεῖν σ᾽ ἔπεισα μητρῷον δέμας (“For, indeed, I convinced you to kill your mother,” Eu. 84). Later in this last play, Orestes again admits Apollo’s influence on his action, using the word πέποιθ’ (“I trusted,” Eu. 598). In short, if it were not for Apollo’s success in winning Orestes’ obedience, there would have been no deceptive murders in the first place.

Orestes’ trust in Apollo, however, turns out to be quite unfounded; for the god’s πείθω is, like the action he prescribes, an act of trickery. Apollo wins over Orestes by using threats of punishment (Cho. 269-296). Bailey comments that what Apollo does not reveal to Orestes is that “the very instruments with which [he] threatens Orestes if he fails to avenge his father, will be awakened against him if he slays his mother.” Apollo also seems to have promised Orestes protection. Yet, as shall be seen, he cannot and does not keep to this promise. Here lies the irony of Orestes’ supposition when he calls Apollo’s oracle “a seer no false before” (μάντις ἀψευδὴς τὸ πρίν, Cho. 558). Orestes, while he might have intimations of Apollo’s trickery, does not give much weight to these suspicions.

The Chorus, however, catches on to Apollo’s deceit, although perhaps too late. At the very

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327 The lines spoken by Pylades also contain a word distantly related to πείθωμαι, πιστὰ:

ποῦ δὴ τὰ λοιπὰ Λοξίου μαντεύματα
τὰ πυθόχρηστα, πιστὶ δ’ εὐορκώματα;
ἀπαντάς ἔχθροις τῶν θεῶν ἤγοι ἀπελεύ. (Aesch. Cho. 900-902)

But what about the rest: the oracles of Loxias declared by the Pythian, and trusted oaths? Consider all men enemies rather than the gods.

328 Orestes uses φίλτρα (“inducements,” Cho. 1029) when referring to Apollo’s persuasiveness.
330 See Gow 1999, 66-67. He does not take seriously Apollo’s close kinship with that master trickster Hermes or implications of having a surname as Loxias (Cho. 557) meaning “oblique, ambiguous.” Apollo is the half-brother of Hermes. But Zweig comments that the name Loxias “emphasizes the enigmatic and crafty quality of his oracles,” (Zweig 1982, 131).
moment when Orestes is killing his mother, the Chorus complains about Apollo (Cho. 953) and his trickery (ἀδόλως δόλοις, Cho. 955).\(^{331}\) The Chorus of Erinyes in the *Eumenides* likewise hold Apollo in suspicion, calling him a young thief of a god (ἐπίκλοπος, Eu. 149; ἐξέκλεψ, Eu. 153), and scorning Orestes’ trust in him. At the trial scene, they ask Orestes who had sanctioned his vengeful deed: πρὸς τοῦ δ᾽ ἐπείσθης (“And by whom were you persuaded?” Eu. 593). Then they cry: νεκροῖσί νῦν πέπισθι μητέρα κτανών (“Put your trust in corpses, having killed your mother!” Eu. 599). The Erinyes know that Apollo’s promises for purification at Delphi count for nothing: Orestes’ deeds will demand a vindication which Apollo cannot prevent. Hence, after accomplishing his deceitful revenge, Orestes finds himself hounded by the Erinyes and become, himself, the victim of Πειθώ δολία.

C. Πειθώ in the *Eumenides*

In the *Eumenides*, the vicious cycle of revenge comes to an end. This play makes Πειθώ a central plot element as well. Aeschylus stages a main action featuring Πειθώ, a mirroring narrative, and a beneficent and enchanting Peitho, who, through speech, now ensures reconciliation, peace and the common good for Orestes, for the Erinyes, and for the citizens of Athens.

Actions of Benevolence (*Eu. 778-891*)

In terms of the ultimate resolution and peaceful outcome of the trilogy, the main action of

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\(^{331}\) The text is very vexed. Following Page, it runs as follows:

τάνπερ ὁ Λοξίας ὁ Παρνασσίας
μέγαν ἔχων μυχὸν χθονὸς ἐπωρθία
ξεν ἀδόλως δόλοις… (Aesch. Cho. 953-955)

Which Loxias of Parnassus,
who holds the great cavern of the earth,
loudly proclaimed, guilelessly with guile…
the *Eumenides* consists in the appeasement of the Erinyes by Athena in several speeches which feature the verbal notion of πείθω. As a result of what had occurred in the *Choephoroi*, Orestes flees to Delphi and then to Athens, seeking asylum. The Erinyes follow in pursuit. A trial is held in which the two sides, Apollo for the defense and the Erinyes, the prosecution, present their arguments; but the *agon* ends in a stalemate. In the end, Orestes is legally acquitted by ballot, in the first ever homicide trial. But this hardly matters to the Erinyes. They threaten to destroy Athens and its people, no doubt including Orestes. In other words, the trial in itself does not bring about peace and resolution. Also, nowhere in the trial scene does Aeschylus use a word related to πείθω to describe the action taking place aside from the brief comment made by the Erinyes referring to Orestes’ submission to Apollo (*Eu. 593)*. While in contemporary Athenian society the court would have been the proper place for πείθω, this trial scene seems different. Indeed, after the final vote, there is still much need for persuasion. Only once the Erinyes are persuaded to accept the results of the trial can Orestes, can the people of Athens live out their lives in security.

The most significant action of the play consists of Athena’s work to appease these deities with beguiling speech. It is near the end of the play, at *Eu. 778*-891, that Athena embarks upon this task. Aeschylus marks this scene and Athena’s work of persuasion with the new, purified, and benign πείθω of speech. With four delicate, carefully wrought speeches, Athena addresses the Erinyes’ concerns, mollifies them, and ensconces them permanently beneath Athens as resident deities who will protect rather than destroy.

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332 Throughout the trilogy, there are several references to πιστός, but I have generally avoided discussion of this word, considering it a rather distant derivative of πείθω and therefore not adding much to the theme of the drama.

333 Buxton, however, argues that from the beginning of the trial, “By refusing to allow trial by oath, Athene puts her faith in the settling of disputes by argument,” (Buxton 1977, 106). Others comment that as soon as the Erinyes allow Athena to be their arbiter and Orestes to speak, Peitho is present and has won an initial victory. See Zweig 1982, 162; Kitto 1959, 61, 62-63.

334 See Rosenmeyer 1982, 350 for a pithy comparison of Athena’s πείθω with that of Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon*. Buxton calls the πείθω of the *Eumenides* the “true” πείθω (Buxton 1977, 85).

335 See Chapter Three Section V for more on these speeches and their rhetorical qualities.
Throughout this process, moreover, Athena several times refers to her own actions with words related to πειθώ. In the first line of her first speech to the angry goddesses, she says:

ἐμοὶ πίθεσθε μὴ βαρυστόνως φέρειν. (Aesch. Eu. 794)

**Be persuaded** by me to not bear it with heavy groaning.

She then provides the Erinyes with reasons why they should moderate their behavior. In her second speech, Athena uses an adjectival derivative of πειθό to explain that she herself submits and trusts (πέποιθα, Eu. 826) in someone—Zeus—and that the Erinyes should follow her example:

….σὺ δ᾽ εὐπιθής ἐμοὶ
γλῶσσης ματαίας μὴ ᾽κβάλῃς ἐπη χθονι
carpōn fēronta pάnta μὴ πράσσειν καλῶς. (Aesch. Eu. 829-831)

…and you, **obedient** to me

do not throw to the earth words from an idle tongue
that all fruit-bearing things should fare badly.

Athena ultimately does get the Erinyes to acquiesce through her continued verbal arguments, exhortations, promises and kindly speech. At the end, the fearsome goddesses become Semnai Theai and process off-stage singing in harmony and at peace beneath the rule of Zeus and his daughter Athena.

Innovative details in the plot of this last play further highlight the centrality of the Athena’s πειθό in the closing scenes. Other accounts tell the story that Orestes obtains purification at Delphi and/or wards off the Erinyes with a special bow and arrow given to him by Apollo. In the *Eumenides*, however, Orestes is stained, weaponless, and helpless: a marked man. He can neither overcome these angry goddesses nor absolve himself of guilt through force. Aeschylus’

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336 See Pindar’s account in *Pyth.* 11. 15-37 (c. 474 BCE). See also Stesichorus PMG 217; Sommerstein 1989, 5.
337 Although he is technically purified (*Eu.* 276-289), the Erinyes do not see his purification as a valid one.
Erinyes, moreover, are fearsome and implacable. Also, given their rightful claims in a play whose central interest is justice, the Erinyes can be neither destroyed nor easily dismissed. Instead, they must be assuaged and won over in a more delicate fashion than is recounted in earlier myths. The fact that the trial and/or physical force will not suffice for resolution in Aeschylus’ play further emphasizes the importance of Athena’s work with πειθώ at the end.

The appeasement of the Erinyes takes place, significantly, against the “backdrop” of a newly established court in Athens on the Areopagus. At this point in the play, the trial of Orestes is over (indeed, Orestes has already left the stage), but Athena lays the last stone—the most important one—still within the law court before the assembly of jurors. This setting itself re-emphasizes Athena’s πειθώ and invites connections with the proceedings of justice and reasonable spoken arguments common to a fifth century Athenian courtroom.

After Athena works her persuasion, the Erinyes agree to become Semnai Theai in Athens. This is again a remarkable innovation which points to the power of Athena’s πειθώ. Although the Semnai Theai were worshiped in Athens during the fifth century BCE, they had never been previously associated with the Erinyes. While the Semnai would watch over suppliants, the Erinyes never did so. The Erinyes were goddesses who avenged crimes against kin. More often than not, they would hound suppliants—such as Orestes—who had the blood of a family member on their hands. Aeschylus’ connection of the Erinyes with the Semnai Theai thus emphasizes the striking efficacy of πειθώ. Through Athena’s actions, achieved through πειθώ, the Erinyes embrace a role almost contrary to their original nature. As Semnai, moreover, the formerly implacable

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338 See Prag 1985, 48-51.
340 Previous accounts also tell of a trial which Orestes must go through, but the location of the trial is not explicitly Athens or the Areopagus, nor does it have any aetiological implications. In other versions of the myth which, though later, may refer to an earlier pre-Oresteia version of the myth, the trial also has a jury composed of Clytemnestra’s relatives and/or some divinities, see Eur. Or. 1650-1652; Dem. 23.66; Aristid. Or. 1.48.
Erinyes will continue to allow themselves to be prevailed upon by suppliants for ages to come. In Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*, then, Athena resolves the Orestes story only through πειθώ, and, in the process of placating traditionally implacable deities, he embeds this same πειθώ in the Erinyes’ new nature and function.

**Parallel Myth (Eu. 723-730)**

Athena’s persuasion at the end of the *Eumenides* seems to be foreshadowed in a narrative recounted at Eu. 723-730. In an emotionally-charged exchange, the Erinyes remind Apollo of his transgression—through a species of πειθώ—against elder divinities. Apollo, for the sake of Admetus, had beguiled the Moirae by getting them drunk.

This narrative forms part of an argument which takes place during the trial of Orestes. The Erinyes are trying—again—to prove Apollo wrong, this time by using an exemplum comparable to the present situation. Unlike the mirroring myths of the *Agamemnon* and *Choephoroi*, this story does not occur in extended song and, therefore, may not call the audience’s attention in the same way. Nonetheless, a closer examination of the scene and the entire passage in which this myth is framed reveals its impact and significance. It seems to both foreshadow and mirror the central action of the *Eumenides*: Athena’s persuasive beguilement of the Erinyes.

The context in which the Erinyes recount this tale could first invite the audience’s special attention. The story is told during the trial of Orestes in a moment of high suspense. While Apollo and the Erinyes bicker in these lines (Eu. 711-733), the jurors are casting their vote deciding Orestes immediate fate. Also, as a highly formalized set of couplets, these lines recall the frantic

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342 This might be identified as a paradigm myth “intended for exhortation” according to Willcock 1964, 142 and DeJong 1987.
343 For this reason, Rutherford omits this story from his examination of parallel myths (Rutherford 2007, 3-4). The ode of *Eu*. 490-565 is more comparable in size and position to the stasima of *Ag*. 385-411 and of *Cho*. 613-622; this ode, however, does not contain any narrative. See also Zweig 1982, 164.
and ineffective deliberation of the Chorus during the murder of Agamemnon (Ag. 1346-1371).\textsuperscript{344}

Similarly, here in the \textit{Eumenides} the speakers are powerless to affect the happenings being staged. The outcomes of their argument make no difference to the action of the play. Thus their conversation and the myth contained within it, functions rather as a set-piece inviting a reaction from the audience such as a sense of anticipation for the more momentous clash which is to come (between Athena and the Erinyes).

The first ten lines of the couplet prefigure the emotional dynamics between the Erinyes and the younger gods which reach their climax when Athena confronts them at \textit{Eu.} 778-891. In the couplet at \textit{Eu.} 711-712, for instance, Erinyes’ threaten—for the first time in the play—to destroy the city and people of Athens, a threat which increasingly escalates (\textit{Eu.} 780-787) until eventually met by Athena’s later responses. Answering this first couplet, moreover, Apollo argues in a way that demands fear and respect for Zeus (\textit{Eu.} 713-714); Athena will use an almost identical argumentative technique with the Erinyes (\textit{Eu.} 826-828), and with a similarly inconsequential result. In response to Apollo in this earlier passage, the Erinyes start to act in a contradictory and overwrought manner. The Erinyes deny Apollo the right to issue his oracles (\textit{Eu.} 715-716), and, after Apollo mentions Zeus’ just and compassionate treatment of the murderer Ixion (\textit{Eu.} 717-718), they reply with more threats upon the land (\textit{Eu.} 719-720).\textsuperscript{345} The Erinyes frenzied condition is something which will be perpetuated in their responses to Apollo’s half-sister, Athena, particularly at \textit{Eu.} 778-792.

When Apollo responds with confidence that the jurors will vote in favor of Orestes, the Erinyes break down with an \textit{ad hominem} argument. They accuse him with the story of his persuasive beguilement of the Moirae. This myth and Apollo’s response in the second half of the

\textsuperscript{344} This observation is made by Sommerstein 1989, 221.

\textsuperscript{345} Ixion was the first mythological murderer of a kinsman (his father-in-law Eioneus). He, however, was pardoned by Zeus. Ixion committed yet another infraction and in the end received punishment. See Sommerstein 1989, 227.
couplet even more clearly mirrors the action of Athena towards the Erinyes later in the play:

Chorus:
You did such things also in the house of Pheres:
you **convinced** the Moirae to make men immortal.

Apollo:
Is it not just to do well to the one who reveres you,
in all circumstances and especially when he is in need of luck?

Chorus:
You destroyed the ancient allotment
**After having beguiled** ancient goddesses **with wine**.

Apollo:
When you fail to gain the final victory in the trial,
you will spew out your poison, nothing grievous to your enemies.

Chorus:
Since you, a younger god, would trample upon me in my old age,
I must stay here listening to what becomes of the trial
Since I am undecided whether to be angry with the state.

The Erinyes tell their story about Apollo and the Moirae in a grossly exaggerated way.
Sommerstein comments that with the words ἀφθίτους…βροτοὺς (724), they “wildly accuse Apollo of making mortals immortal…when all he had done was to save one mortal from premature death.” In response to this untruth, Apollo responds in an uncharacteristically rational manner (729-730), foreshadowing yet again how Athena, another younger god, will approach the Erinyes with reason. While accusing Apollo through the story about the Moirae, the Erinyes themselves ignore logic, reason, and justice. They refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy of Apollo’s points about suppliants’ rights (717-718, 725-726), and in doing so forget their own supposed concern with justice and their own personal status as foreigners—and, indeed, as suppliants—in Athens. Athena, however, will pick up on these points later when she offers a warm welcome to them as resident aliens in exchange for their forgiveness of Orestes (851-852, 885-890). All in all then, these couplets and their mythological reference set the scene for the attitudes and arguments with which Athena and the Erinyes will clash before the end of the play.

The content of the story of the Moirae, Apollo, and Admetus (Eu. 723-724, 727-728) also parallels the relationship and actions among the Erinyes, Athena, and Orestes. The Erinyes describe Apollo’s deed with the verb ἔπεισας (“you convinced,” 724). This is the same verb that Athena uses to describe what she is doing to the Erinyes in Eu. 794. In the second couplet of the current passage, the Erinyes use a different word, παρηπάτησας (“you beguiled,” 728), to lay blame on the sinister and degrading means which Apollo used to manipulate the Moirae. Also, by mentioning Apollo’s use of wine (οἴνῳ, 728) to accomplish the deed, the Erinyes emphasize their disapproval of young divinities dishonorably trampling the rights and respect due their elders.

346 Sommerstein 1989, 221.
347 Sommerstein notes that this is the first time in the trilogy where suppliants’ rights are clearly articulated and in a rational way, by Apollo, no less (1989, 221).
348 They also increase the tension between the two generation of gods and marking a shift in the play’s focus from Orestes to the Erinyes.
349 Wine is not attested in earlier accounts of the same story. It is likely an innovation.
The Erinyes voice this same complaint many times from this point forward (Eu. 731, 747, 778-79, 837-846). But just as Apollo mollified the Moirae for the sake of Admetus, so also will Athena eventually convince the Erinyes to spare Orestes, accept his acquittal, and bring benefits to mankind. Just as Orestes, Admetus in the story is in danger of death because of a transgression against the gods. Also like Orestes, Admetus appeals to one of the younger gods, Apollo. Just as Apollo persuades the Moirae with wine, Athena will beguile the Erinyes with instruments which have a similar effect: γλώσσης…μείλιγμα καὶ θελκτήριον (“the soothing charm and enchantment of the tongue,” Eu. 886). In these various ways, the deliberative couplets and parallel narrative at Eu. 711-733 look forward to the central event about to take place: the work of a benevolent and magically beguiling πειθώ.

**Enchanting Peitho (Eu. 885, 970)**

Athena’s final and climactic work of beguilement in the Eumenides takes place under the auspices of a benign and relatively purified Peitho. She appears twice as a goddess in this last play and both times at crucial moments which highlight Athena’s persuasion at Eu. 778-891.

Peitho first appears in Athena’s last speech to the Erinyes, which takes place right before the stichomythia where the Erinyes submit to her entreaties (Eu. 892-902). Towards the beginning of her speech, Athena calls upon the Erinyes to reverence Peitho and to lay aside their anger in favor of her promises and their new honors as beneficent protective deities of the land:

> ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν ἁγνόν ἐστί σοι Πειθοῦς σέβας γλώσσης ἐμῆς μείλιγμα καὶ θελκτήριον,

350 Aeschylus suggests many parallels between the Erinyes and their sisters, the Moirae. In the first place, “One of the most persistent claims made by the Erinyes is that they hold their office by the dispensation of Moira,” (Bailey 1962, 126; see Eu. 171, 208, 227, 334, 385, 391, 727). Secondly, in the ending songs of the Eumenides, the Erinyes themselves almost become identified with the Moirae (See Conacher 1987, 173); when the Erinyes are completely reconciled with Athena, the city, and Zeus, the handmaidens, singing in procession, explicitly says that Zeus works closely with the Moirae as well (Eu. 1045-46).

351 See also March 1998, 197.
σὺ δ᾽ οὖν μένοις ἄν… (Aesch. Eu. 885-887)

But if you have holy reverence for Peitho
regarding the soothing charm and enchantment of my tongue,
then you certainly might remain;…

With these lines, Athena urges the Erinyes to adopt towards Peitho the same attitude of reverence
which they demand for themselves. This Peitho, however, is no longer a menacing deity but a
benevolent, holy one, who soothes, heals, charms, and bonds together. Thomson states:

This is the spirit which tempted Agamemnon to commit the crime we have seen
visited on him and his children; which tempted Paris to plunge the world in war;
which was embodied in Helen and again in Clytemnestra, and was summoned to
the support of Orestes when he plotted to kill his mother. Now the same spirit,
embodied in Athena, brings the sufferings of three generations to an end.

It is, indeed, the same Peitho who has accompanied the main actions of “winning over” which have
taken place throughout the trilogy, but now her mien is gentle and her influence for the good of the
house of Atreus (and the entire nation) rather than for its ruin. It is no wonder, then, that seven
lines after this invocation, the Erinyes open themselves up to reasoned discussion. Referring to
Peitho’s influence as described by Athena above (Eu. 886), they exclaim: θέλξειν μ’ ἔοικας καὶ
μεθίσταμαι κότου (“It seems likely that you will charm me, and I am shifting from my wrath,” Eu.
900). Peitho, in the end, prevails, and brings the trilogy to a happy end for all.

Once the Erinyes have finally submitted, they sing in harmony with Athena and process off
the stage. Their song (Eu. 916-1020) consists of six blessings in lekythion and syncopated

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352 At the same time, interestingly, Athena almost identifies herself (and her gentle speech) with this goddess.
353 This is part of a general trend, well commented upon, for the imagery of the Oresteia. Rutherford summarizes that
“in the earlier plays, the imagery is used to express something sinister or even repulsive…By contrast in the third play,
despite threatening signs at first, in the end the different images are purged of their dark associations,” (Rutherford
2012, 130-131).
355 “Persuasion, then, is the mechanism which overcomes heroism and heroes and reduces them to the status of
socially integrated citizenship. It accompanies love; it is wielded by demagogues, including tyrants. It implies bribery,
and instruction; it bewitches, and helps to secure insight. In using Persuasion and appealing to her power, Athena
employs the skills of an expert negotiator to break the resistance of the Furies and to apply the coup de grace to the old
order of heroism and clan loyalty,” (Rosenmeyer 1982, 352).
iambic-trochaic meters interwoven with five intervening recitative anapests from Athena. At the midpoint of these alternating songs, Athena mentions Peitho one more time. The Chorus has just sung a stanza about preventing the death of young men and about fostering marriage (Eu. 956-967). Athena responds with a song of thanksgiving for the Erinyes’ transformation:

\[ \text{...στέργω δ’ ὄμματα Πειθοῦς,} \\
\text{ὅτι μοι γλῶσσαν καὶ στόμ’ ἐπωπᾷ} \\
\text{πρὸς τάσδ’ ἀγρίως ἀπανηναμένας:} \] (Aesch. Eu. 970-973)

I am grateful to the eyes of Peitho,
that kept watch over my tongue and mouth
when I encountered their fierce refusal.

Athena herself offers reverence and acknowledgment of Peitho’s agency in her task of persuasion. It is specifically due to to this now-gentle deity that she and the Erinyes can sing together as friends and co-beneficiaries of Athens.

Aeschylus then, not only again makes the main action of the Eumenides one of πειθώ, but he also emphasizes πειθώ through choral narratives and in these two invocations of the personified goddess at Eu. 885 and 970. Peitho appears at the climax of Athena’s persuasive process and then again at its fulfillment: the successful and joyous integration of the Erinyes into Athenian society. She is one of the last goddesses mentioned in the Oresteia and indeed, without her, the play itself could have hardly been conclusive or convincing.

**IV. Conclusion**

Through the main action, parallel narratives, and personified representation of the goddess Peitho in the Agamemnon, Chorephoroi, and Eumenides, Aeschylus gives dramatic prominence to πειθώ throughout the entire Oresteia. At the same time, he presents aspects of πειθώ which vary from ruin and trickery to enchanting benevolence. Aeschylus’ new conceptualizations of πειθώ
emerge as central to the theme and action of this important drama; and throughout the
performance, Aeschylus invites the audience to ponder them.
CHAPTER FOUR: Πειθώ and Athena’s Rhetoric at Eumenides 778-891

I. Introduction

Aeschylus stages the last scene of the Oresteia (Eu. 778-891) with distinct dramatic prominence as an extremely suspenseful and resounding conclusion to the entire trilogy. And in an unprecedented display of persuasion, Athena convinces the enraged Erinyes to change their entire worldview and submit to the jurisdiction of Zeus, herself, and the goddess Peitho, in a new regime. Aeschylus also presents Athena’s speeches as something to be understood in terms of the πειθώ which he has used and displayed throughout the trilogy: with force, trickery, and benign beguilement. Thus he frames Athena’s work by frequent and ostensible reference to πειθώ, both in verb form and as a goddess. Aeschylus constructs her speeches with such craft that they seem to anticipate, in practice, what Aristotle’s Rhetoric will later classify, in theory, as effectively-argued, well-structured, deliberative speech. With this self-consciously crafted work of πειθώ at Eumenides 778-891, Aeschylus resolves his entire dramatic trilogy.

II. The Prominence of Athena's Πειθώ in Eumenides 778-891

At Eumenides 778-891, Aeschylus dramatizes a face-off between the younger and older generations of gods, and the resolution of a seemingly endless cycle of blood guilt and revenge in the Oresteia. In this scene Athena addresses the Chorus of Erinyes, goddesses notorious for wreaking vengeance against those guilty of crimes against kin. Orestes has just been acquitted for the murder of his mother, Clytemnestra. The Erinyes lament the injustice of this verdict, consider it a personal offense, and threaten to retaliate by obliterating the city. Athena, then, must convince these goddesses to submit to the court decision and relent from their anger. At stake are the
establishment of the law court, the preservation of Athens, and a peaceful pact between variant generations of gods.\footnote{On the thematic resolution of this last act, see Lebeck 1971, 131-133; Taplin 1977, 409-415; Rehm 1992, 106-108; Sommerstein 2010, 180-181; for political implications see Porter 2005, 248; Pelling 2007, 83-100; Rynearson 2013, 2; for its resolving effect on the audience (whether or not the resolution is real) see Rosenmeyer 1982, 347; Rabinowitz 2008, 108; Mitchell-Boyask 2009, 88.} By virtue of this speech’s climactic placement and conclusive role, its significance is undeniable.

There are two specific ways in which Aeschylus highlights this scene and invites his audience to immerse themselves within it. First, he uses a number of staging techniques which focus attention on the scene itself. Secondly, he gives Athena’s task special prominence because of its great urgency and enduring effect: she must not only get the Erinyes to do something, but to acquiesce to a new role within the world. The Erinyes’ new role, moreover, will involve complete submission to the jurisdiction of Zeus, to herself, and to Peitho. The dynamics of this scene heighten its dramatic interest for the audience and prompt deeper engagement with the idea and action of πειθώ which Athena’s work displays.

A. The Scene in Performance

Aeschylus uses various dramatic techniques to prepare for the last scene in general, and to the encounter between Athena and the Erinyes in particular. Unexpected character exits together with the emotional tenor and prolongation of the conflict give Eumenides 778-891 an intensity which invites audience members to immerse themselves in the dialogue which ensues.

A New Section of the Play

The audience’s attention is first focused on the scene by an abrupt break in the action caused by the unexpected exit of Apollo and Orestes and the immediate shift to the Erinyes’
lament at *Eu. 778*. This break is noteworthy for two reasons. In the first place, as Taplin notes, between one act and another there would usually be an “act-dividing song;” but, instead of marking the event with a “detached stasimon,” the Chorus of Erinyes turn directly to their own concerns about the trial. This structural alteration is not only unique in the *Oresteia*, but in all of extant tragedy, and would thereby prompt greater audience attention to the next scene.

Secondly, the main protagonists, Apollo and Orestes, instead of remaining on stage until the end of the *Eumenides*, seem to exit at *Eu. 777*, immediately before this last scene. Taplin considers this abrupt exit to be:

> …a remarkable twist and reversal of the usual pattern of the suppliant play…For usually….the pursuer [in this case, the Erinyes] has to be rebuffed and sent packing out of the country, while the suppliant [here, Orestes] stays in the safe custody of the protecting city.

What follows is a new section, a final unit almost a third of the length of the entire play. Taplin comments: “Whether or not Aeschylus or his audience would see the transition as marking a new μέρος, they would recognize the formal shaping effect within the play.” With these dramatic techniques, Aeschylus shifts the focus from Apollo and Orestes to Erinyes and Athena, and prompts the audience to attend closely to the clash between with these deities.

**A Riveting Clash**

Aeschylus presents this scene as emotional in the extreme, thereby calling even greater attention to it. The degree of emotion present in this scene can be helpfully analyzed with conceptual tools developed in particular by Mastronade in *Contact and Discontinuity* (1979):

> The relationship of contact (or lack thereof) between a tragic character and other

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357 See Taplin 1977, 409.
358 Ibid.
359 Ibid, 407.
360 Ibid, 408.
characters or the chorus or the imaginary locus created by the dramatists’ words is frequently indicative of social and psychological forces important to the dramatic impact and meaning of a tragedy.\textsuperscript{361}

In an extreme case of lack of contact (what Mastronarde calls “discontinuity”), the Erinyes here wail and lament in frenzied lyrics while Athena responds with rational iambics. This remarkable clash, I argue, intensifies the audience’s suspense. Andujar states that this contrast in musical form is something which playwrights use as “a crucial frame within which to stage problems of communication.”\textsuperscript{362} As other scholars point out, Aeschylus further underscores the Chorus’ inability to conduct dialogue by having them repeat their howls verbatim, twice over.\textsuperscript{363} Rutherford, for instance, points out that these passages “include passionate exclamations and angry questions; there is no argument, only unconnected cries of outrage, with hardly a connecting particle in sight.”\textsuperscript{364} Athena herself draws attention to the stress of the situation by repeatedly remarking on the Erinyes’ frenzy (\textit{Eu.} 794, 848, 881).\textsuperscript{365} Extremely distraught, the Erinyes will not—or perhaps cannot—communicate.

Further emphasis on the lack of contact in this scene arises from the Erinyes’ failure to respond directly to any of Athena’s remarks. For example, in their first song, the Erinyes omit any reference to previous events and dwell on their own concerns: ιώ θεοί νεώτεροι, παλαιώς νόμους / καθιπάσασθε κἀκ χερῶν εἵλεσθέ μου (“Oh, younger gods, you have trampled underfoot the ancient laws and have snatched them from my hands for yourselves,” \textit{Eu.} 808-809). After two speeches from Athena, the Erinyes refuse to respond. Instead, they open their lyrics with laments:

\textsuperscript{361} Mastronarde 1979, 4.
\textsuperscript{362} Andujar 2011, 207. Cf. iambic trimeter and dochmiacs at \textit{Ag.} 1071-1197 between Cassandra and the Chorus. Thanks to Victor Bers for pointing this out in a personal correspondence.
\textsuperscript{363} On verbatim repetition, see Lloyd-Jones 1970, 62; Mitchell-Boyask 2009, 88. Mastronarde characterizes \textit{Eu.} 778-891 as an example of extreme discontinuity which communicates an emotion intensity that, in Aeschylus, is only matched perhaps in Aesch. \textit{Sept.} 250-257. See Mastronarde 1979, 2-3, 76. Rosenmeyer calls this “uneven/broken contact,” (Rosenmeyer 1982, 206). See also Sommerstein 1989, 240.
\textsuperscript{364} Rutherford 2012, 254.
\textsuperscript{365} See Taplin 1972, 58, 96-97; 1977, 318.
ἐμὲ παθεῖν τάδε, φεῦ (“For me to suffer these things—woe!” Eu. 837-839). Mastronarde terms opening lines which ignore the words of the other interlocutor “apostrophaic.” He suggests that apostrophaic choral openings affect the audience, prompting them to form their own judgment of the situation.  

While other instances of character interaction in Aeschylus also feature a discontinuous and vague interaction between characters, few are as sharply and emotionally discontinuous as this scene in the Eumenides. One possible exception is scene between Cassandra and Clytemnestra in the Agamemnon. Here, as with the Erinyes at Eu.778-891, Cassandra’s non-communicative status—caused by a trance, not a passing emotion—is repeatedly commented upon by characters on the stage (Ag.1050-1053,1060-1061). Such an exhibition of discontinuity prompts Taplin to remark that “Her silence…is the centre of dramatic attention.”  

Mastronarde suggests that as a result of this break in contact, the “mystified” audience will likely think more about Cassandra’s enigmatic behavior and speech. Others think that this scene prompts the audience to question the end results of Cassandra’s puzzling reports of visions. It seems that something similar could be said for the exchange between Athena and the Erinyes in Eu. 778-891: the high emotional level of the conflict likely aroused concern and wonder about the outcome of the conflict.

A Prolonged Conflict

Aeschylus extends this emotional conflict over a significant number of lines, another feature which calls attention to the scene. More commonly, Aeschylus relegates inter-character

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366 See Mastronarde 2010, 148-149; 1979, 74; also Taplin 1972, 78, 96; Fraenkel 1950, 485; Kitto 1939, 75-76.
367 Taplin 1977, 318. See also Mastronarde 1979, 78. Gow argues that the lack of communication in the Cassandra scene contributes to a major theme of the play (Gow 1999, 74-78).
368 Mastronarde 1979, 74.
369 Taplin 1972, 78; 96; Kitto 1939, 75-76; also Knox 1979, 39-55.
encounters to short, punctuated exchanges. At Agamemnon 931-94 Clytemnestra works her wiles upon Agamemnon primarily through stichomythia. Likewise, the Chorus of the Choephoroi persuades the nurse to fetch Aegisthus with a pithy exchange (Cho. 766-783); and Clytemnestra begs Orestes to spare her life in one-line pleas (Cho. 892-929). At Eumenides 778-891, however, Athena and the Erinyes address each other for over a hundred lines in full speeches or songs averaging about thirteen or fourteen lines each. Taplin points out that “Aeschylus signals the importance of the last scene (Eu. 778-1047) by making it longer than the trial itself.” The extended nature of the exchange between these goddesses is yet another indication of its significance. Through this technique, Aeschylus again invites his spectators to shift their attention from the previous scene, the trial of Orestes, to a riveting, drawn-out clash between Athena and the Chorus of Erinyes. This emotional engagement also displays a remarkable work of πειθώ.

B. Athena's Purpose and Approach

Among all the moments of persuasion in the Oresteia, Athena’s persuasion of the Erinyes stands out as unique. Athena’s task throughout Eumenides 778-891 is to convince the Erinyes to change their entire conviction whereby persons guilty of crimes against kin fully deserve punishment (and often, their descendants after them). She must get them to accept a different social order, and a newly established court system wherein such criminals can be acquitted by vote. Finally, she must implicitly convince them of the goodness of a regime where such a system of justice is central, where Peitho trumps force, and where younger deities hold sway. Finally, she

371 Athena’s speeches (Eu. 794-807, 824-836, 847-869, 881-891) are fourteen, thirteen, twenty-two, and eleven lines long, respectively. The Erinyes’ responding laments (Eu. 778-793, 808-823, 837-847, 870-880) are fifteen, fifteen, ten and ten. According to this count, the average amount of lines per speech comes to fourteen. Even if one counted Athena’s lines following Taplin, who eliminates lines 858-866 of Athena’s 22-line speech (Taplin 1977, 407), the average would still come to thirteen lines per speech.

372 Taplin 1977, 409.
must entice them to adopt a different way of life, residing beneath Athens in a predominantly beneficent role, rather than one that exclusively metes out vengeance. The immensity and depth of Athena’s persuasion project, together with the attentive approach which she takes in carrying it out, can hardly compare to the other instances of persuasion which Aeschylus has staged previously in the Oresteia. Aeschylus has carefully crafted Athena’s work to be especially noteworthy.

Some contrasting examples of persuasive encounters can be found in the Agamemnon. Clytemnestra’s persuasion of Agamemnon has been discussed at length above. In contrast with the grand purpose of Athena, Clytemnestra’s goal was relatively straightforward: to get her husband to walk on the tapestries. Also, her success is accomplished primarily through a short series of stichomythic lines by contrast with Athena’s drawn-out argumentation. The scene where Clytemnestra tries to persuade Cassandra to enter the house is a bit more lengthily. Yet this scene too pales before Eu. 778-891. In this scene, Clytemnestra issues a series of sharp commands (Ag. 1035, 1047-1049, 1053) which do not require crafted argument; and, again, her ultimate goal is simply to convince someone (Cassandra) to come inside the house. Cassandra will eventually perform this action, but not as a result of Clytemnestra’s persuasive wiles; rather, because Cassandra, as a prophetess, sees and accepts her fate.

The Choephoroi, too, offers little by comparison with Athena’s project in terms of its purpose and import as a work of argumentative persuasion. The speech segments of the kommos exceed the length of the speech exchange between Athena and the Erinyes; and, similarly, they aim at the persuasion of Orestes to affirm his murderous resolve against Clytemnestra. Yet, as a ritual lament, persuasion is not the primary end of the kommos. Also, the persuasion in which the

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373 See Chapter Three Section III.
374 Sansone writes in a personal correspondence that “The ostensible purpose of the kommos is to arouse the spirit of
Chorus and Electra engage does not involve a dramatic change in Orestes’ world view or lifestyle.\(^{375}\) For all of these reasons, the kommos stands as a significant exchange of speech, but one in which persuasion is a secondary concern.\(^{376}\)

The speeches of Athena at *Eu.* 778-891 also far surpass other attempts at persuasion in the *Eumenides.* Take, for instance, the argument between Apollo and the Erinyes at the trial of Orestes.\(^{377}\) Although at *Eu.* 609-673 the Erinyes and Apollo engage in a sharp and lengthy exchange over Orestes and his case, neither party seems to care for winning over the other.\(^{378}\) Part of the reason for this lies in the nature of the trial. As a trial by oath, the defense and the prosecution do not so much seek to persuade each other or offer evidence to support their claims for or against Orestes.\(^{379}\) Since the trial is going to be resolved by ballot, speeches at the trial are not aimed at convincing the other about wider considerations. Consequently, at the trial interlocutors hurl insults at each other, *ad hominem* arguments, claims of self-defense, and other generalizing assertions.\(^{380}\) Also, the arguments which Apollo presents in defense of Orestes are

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\(^{375}\) Rutherford 2012, 250 argues that Orestes was already pretty set on murdering his mother due to Apollo’s earlier persuasion. Bers (personal correspondence) points out, however, that Orestes does not seem fully resolved until his exchange with Pylades (*Cho.* 899-903).

\(^{376}\) For this reason, some scholars speculate that it must be by some other power, then, that Orestes emerges from the kommos more fully committed to his vengeful deed. This, according to Rosenmeyer, is some sort of vague “mutual influencing…understanding and contagion,” (Rosenmeyer 1982, 247). Several scholars also note the surprising lack of “contact” between the characters singing the kommos. This is most likely due to the ritual purpose of the piece. Rosenmeyer, for example, notes that the utterances of Orestes, Electra, and the Chorus “are not, for the most part, either formally or in their substance addressed to the partners,” (Rosenmeyer 1982, 247). Most of the questions which the singers ask could be classed as “aporetic” or “agnostic”: the types of questions which express doubt about contemplated action but function primarily as utterances about one’s puzzling predicament (*aporia*) which do not expect an answer (Mastronarde 1979, 10-11).

\(^{377}\) Kane (1986, 107) classifies both the trial scene and *Eu.* 778-891 as *agones.* The trial scene has been discussed briefly already in Chapter Three Section III.

\(^{378}\) Ireland claims that “Between Apollo and the Erinyes no resolution of the issue is possible; that much is ensured by the degree of antipathy that separates them,” (Ireland 1986, 29).

\(^{379}\) Thanks to Joel Lidov for clarifying this point in a personal correspondence. Kennedy 1963, 41-42 thinks that the trial scene actually recalls the time before democracy, where great oratory couldn’t really take place due, in part, to the question and answer format of the procedure.

\(^{380}\) On Apollo’s insulting comment at *Eu.* 644, Sommerstein writes: “The vulgarity of Apollo’s reaction is without parallel in tragedy,” (Sommerstein 1989, 204). Some scholars think that Apollo’s attempt at argument is a parody
specious at best, and, at worst, provocative towards the prosecution.\textsuperscript{381}

Whether or not Aeschylus intends Athena’s persuasive work at \textit{Eu}. 778-891 to be contrasted with other instances of persuasion throughout the \textit{Oresteia}, her persuasive speeches are recognizably distinct.\textsuperscript{382} Hence the movement of the drama shifts to focus on them and their results. The audience discovers, that, as Winnington-Ingram puts it, “[t]here is a problem to be solved in \textit{Eumenides} which lies deeper than the mere fate of Orestes.”\textsuperscript{383} Athena’s work of persuasion is momentous for the \textit{Oresteia} and outstanding in its scope. Athena must face and address Erinyes’ perception of the world and their place within it.\textsuperscript{384}

In order to measure up to the occasion, Athena must achieve an approach that is personal, attentive, and engaged. She gives the Erinyes full acknowledgment of their distress: ἐμοὶ πίθεσθε μὴ βαρυστόνως φέρειν (“Be persuaded by me to not bear it with heavy groaning,” \textit{Eu}. 794), and even seems to show empathy with their frustrations: ὀργὰς ξυνοίσω σοι· (“I will bear with you in your anger;” \textit{Eu}. 848).\textsuperscript{385} Sensitive to their frenzied state, Athena allows the Erinyes to emote before addressing the legitimate and objective issues which they raise.\textsuperscript{386} Athena’s contact with her interlocutors remains full and continuous throughout: she carefully responds to the Erinyes’ questions, even if they are not looking for a response. For instance, when the Erinyes in the first two laments repeat: τί ῥέξω; (“What shall I do?” \textit{Eu}. 788; 818), Athena gives them concrete

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(Rosenmeyer 1955, 258; 1982, 362; Lebeck 1971, 135).
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\textsuperscript{381} On Apollo’s arguments or lack thereof, see Sommerstein 1989, 204, 208. Also, Winnington-Ingram 1983, 124.
\textsuperscript{382} On a different note, Sansone observes: “The speeches of Athena have no counterpart in the actual practice of the law court, where the rhetorical expertise is brought to bear in persuading the jurors; here, the verdict has already been reached and what Athena needs to do is persuade one party to accept that verdict, a task unnecessary in an Attic court of law,” (personal correspondence).
\textsuperscript{383} Winnington-Ingram 1983, 164.
\textsuperscript{384} Through these speeches, Athena must effectively civilize and integrate the Erinyes into Athenian society. For discussion on the civilizing efficacy of Athena’s \textit{peitho}, see Porter 2005, 301-331; McClure 1997, 140; Winningtam-Ingram 1983, 169; Rosenmeyer 1982, 352; Rabinowitz 1981, 183. For more on this process and what it entailed, see particularly Rabinowitz’s 1981 treatment.
\textsuperscript{385} Also, she says: οὔτοι καμοῦμαί σοι λέγουσα τἀγαθά (“Indeed I shall not tire of telling you these good things,” \textit{Eu}. 881).
\textsuperscript{386} See Athena’ responses at \textit{Eu}.796-799, 804-807, discussed in Section V below.
imperatives: ἔμοι πίθεσθε (Eu. 794) and μηδὲ…σκήψητε…μὴ θυμοῦσθε, μηδ…τεύξητ᾽… (Eu. 801-802). Athena leaves no question unanswered and she provides specific directives and suggestions as part of her personal, deliberate and (ultimately) successful persuasion. In both her basic approach and long-term goal, Athena’s work of persuasion would likely strike the audience as particularly powerful.

C. Speeches Framed by Πειθώ

As an additional touch, Aeschylus frames the climactic encounter between Athena and the Erinyes in terms of πειθώ. In both verb form and as a goddess, πειθώ occurs several times throughout the scene.

Athena herself uses the verb πείθω to describe her action and its intended result in the Erinyes. In the first line of the speech, she says:

ἐμοὶ πίθεσθε μὴ βαρυστόνως φέρειν. (Aesch. Eu. 794)

Be persuaded by me to not bear it with heavy groaning.

Early on in her next speech, she again utters the verbal form, urging the Erinyes to “trust” (πέποιθα, Eu. 826)—as she does—in Zeus. Three lines later, Athena repeats her request, though a bit less explicitly, when she suggests that the Erinyes be εὐπιθής (“well-persuaded/obedient,” Eu. 829) to her in this matter.

In a sort of ring-composition, Athena will finish her persuasive work with a gracious nod and song of thanksgiving to the goddess Peitho. She asks the Erinyes to revere her with the phrase:

ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν ἁγνόν ἐστί σοι Πειθοῦς σέβας (“But if you have holy reverence for Peitho,” Eu.

See above and also Eu. 824-825, 830.
388 See Chapter Two Section III for an analysis of all the same passages to be discussed below. The previous analysis contains more of the surrounding text and presents these references to πειθώ with a different focus for the argument of the chapter.
885-887). With these words, Athena once more acknowledges Peitho’s crucial role in her work.

She further confirms her debt to Peitho in a lyric stanza after she has won over the Erinyes: στέργω δ’ ὄμματα Πειθοῦς ("I am grateful to the eyes of Peitho," Eu. 970). With these references, Aeschylus effectively frames Eumenides 778-891 in terms of πειθώ.

Athena’s work of πειθώ at Eu. 778-891 also seems also to anticipate the Aristotelian conception of well-structured and successfully-argued deliberative rhetoric. Aeschylus’ display of a sophisticated argumentation in speech framed by πειθώ, is, I argue, yet another way the playwright contributes to the development of rhetoric. He not only resolves a complicated civic and political issue through πειθώ, but he does it with πειθώ of carefully crafted public speech.

III. The Aristotelian Model

Before analyzing Athena’s persuasive work for the way it anticipates Aristotelian principles of rhetorical speech, a word must be said about Aristotle’s model. Aristotle’s Rhetoric holds a special position in the history of rhetoric as the earliest extant theoretical presentation of the art. His text is also one of the most comprehensive explications of rhetoric from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. 389 As a collection of scholarly notes on the topic composed between 350-336 BCE, Aristotle’s Rhetoric explicates or compiles the theory from practices of dramatists and sophists; he gives underlying principles for the techniques found in texts and the model speech handbooks of his predecessors. Aristotle compiled his Rhetoric from his knowledge of these older sources: the sophists, court speeches, and most extensively, tragic dialogue. 390 For this reason,

389 Aristotle’s Rhetoric may have been compiled by other authors or students of Aristotle; despite this possibility, I refer to the text as “Aristotle’s” for the sake of simplicity.

390 See also Bromberg 2009, 196, 240; Carey 1994, 27, 35. Aristotle himself says that the thought of a speaker in tragedy is a matter of rhetoric (Arist. Poet. 1456a34-35). Bromberg notes that Aristotle’s “audience-psychology is...described in terms of tragic precedents and the rhetorician’s success, like that of the tragedian, depends on his ability to exploit these precedents and their effects on his audience,” (Bromberg 2009, 223-224). See also Kennedy
Aristotle’s text is important and relevant to a study of Aeschylean speeches.

Aristotle’s theoretical conception of rhetoric also makes his text an excellent lens with which to examine speech in early tragedy.\textsuperscript{391} At the beginning of the \textit{Rhetoric}, Aristotle puts forth this definition: \textit{ἐστω δὴ ῥητορικὴ δύναμις περὶ ἕκαστον θεωρῆσαι τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν} (“Let rhetoric be the ability, in each case, to see the available means of persuasion,” Arist. \textit{Rh.} 1355b 25-26, tr. Kennedy).\textsuperscript{392} Sansone and Kennedy suggest that the theoretical perspective of his model is evident from the use of \textit{θεωρῆσαι} (to see), the root of the word “theory.”\textsuperscript{393} His conceptualization of this art and its exercise differs from that of those who merely compiled model speeches for memorization and imitation. Aristotle considers any art (\textit{τεχνή}), such as rhetoric, to be a virtue of thought (\textit{Nic.Eth.} 1139b15, 1140a20-21). He explains: \textit{ἔστι δὲ τέχνη πάσα περὶ γένεσιν καὶ τὸ τεχνάζειν καὶ θεωρεῖν ὅπως ἂν γένηται τι τῶν ἐνδεχομένων καὶ εἶναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι} (“All art deals with bringing some thing into existence; and to pursue an art means to study [theorize about] how to bring into existence a thing which may either exist or not,” \textit{Nic. Eth.} 1140a10-14, tr. Rackham). According to Aristotle, the \textit{δύναμις} of rhetoric, when acted upon with the appropriate knowledge and skill, will produce rhetorical speech.\textsuperscript{394} Aristotle gives pride of place to the conceptual abilities of a true rhetor; only at the end of the \textit{Rhetoric} does he append some practical details on structure, style, and delivery of the speech.

Soon after defining rhetoric, Aristotle discusses the content (or topics) appropriate to
different situations where speech is required. Aristotle names three different types of speech, deliberative, judicial, and epideictic (συμβουλευτικόν, δικανικόν, ἐπιδεικτικόν, Arist. *Rh.*1358b7-8) based on their different situations and audiences. Continuing, Aristotle says that deliberative, judicial, and epideictic speech also possess other characteristics: time (future, past or present), manner (exhortation, accusation or praise etc) and an ultimate end or purpose (to convince their audience of the advantageous, the just, or the honorable, respectively).395 Aristotle also expounds the specific topics that are appropriate to each kind of speech. Deliberative speech discusses topics of a political or ethical nature; judicial speech addresses issues of wrongdoing, justice, and injustice; epideictic speech deals with vice, virtue, the honorable, and the shameful (*Rh.*1359a30-1377b11).

After examining the classes of speech more generally, Aristotle discusses the πίστεις (*Rh.* 1355b35). These πίστεις396 are part of what he means by the “available means of persuasion” (τὸ ἐνδεχόμενον πιθανόν) at *Rh.*1355b26. Aristotle classes these means of persuasion as *atechnic* (αἱ ἄτεχνοι) otherwise known as “non-artistic” or “extrinsic;” and *entechnic* (αἱ ἔντεχνοι) often translated as “artistic” or “internal” (*Rh.* 1355b35).397 Extrinsic means of persuasion come from pre-existing external evidence such as laws, witnesses, contracts, tortures, or oaths (νόμοι, μάρτυρες, συνθῆκαι, βάσανοι, ὅρκοι, *Rh.*1375a24-25).398 Internal means of persuasion are “those which can be prepared by method and by us” (ὅσα διὰ τῆς μεθόδου καὶ δι’ ἡμῶν κατασκευασθῆναι δυνατόν, *Rh.* 1355b38). Aristotle classifies the three internal means of persuasion as *ethos, pathos, *

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395 See *Rh.* 1358b8-28.
396 While Kennedy merely transliterates this Greek word to *pisteis*, I will translate πίστεις as “arguments” or "means/modes of persuasion."
397 Kennedy generally keeps the words *atechnic* and *entechnic* untranslated, although he does occasionally provide the translations “non-artistic” and “embodied in art, artistic” respectively (Kennedy 2007, 38). I render *atechnic* as “extrinsic,” and *entechnic* as “internal.”
398 See also *Rh.* 1355b36-37, which omits mention of laws and oaths.
Of the *pisteis* provided through speech there are three species; for some are in the character of the speaker, and some in disposing the listener in some way, and some in the speech itself, by showing or seeming to show something… (tr. Kennedy).

Explaining further, Kennedy writes that these three means of persuasion are:

…derived from presenting the character (*ethos*) of the speaker in a favorable light, [from] awakening emotion (*pathos*) in the audience so as to induce them to make the judgment desired, [and from] showing the probability of what is said by logical argument (*logos*)[paradigms, enthymemes and other methods].

With mastery of these intellectual skills, the orator is fully equipped to thoughtfully utilize speech to persuade his interlocutors.

Aristotle relegates any discussion of speech structure or stylistic devices to the very end of his text (approximately between *Rh*. 1404a-1420b), almost as if it were an afterthought. Many scholars (and, indeed, also the early sophists and handbook writers) considered the parts of speech as essential to any presentation of rhetoric. Aristotle, however, begs to differ. He briefly skims delivery and style, and then ends with some discussion of the necessary parts of a speech: the *prooemium*, *refutatio* (ways of meeting a prejudicial attack or *diabole*), *narration*, the proof, interrogation, and the epilogue. But ultimately, as he lays it out in his *Rhetoric*, the only truly necessary parts of a speech are the propositions (the topics appropriate for deliberative, judicial or epideictic speech) and the means of persuasion discussed above (ἀναγκαῖα ἄρα μόρια πρόθεσις καὶ πίστις, *Rh*. 1414b7-8). Aristotle works from a broad definition of rhetoric where types of

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399 Since the terms *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* are well-known, I will keep them merely transliterated rather than translating them into an English equivalent.

400 Kennedy 2007, 111. Aristotle says that the two basic methods of argumentation by logos are enthymeme (ἐνθύμημα, *Rh*. 1356b8) and example (παράδειγμα, *Rh*. 1356b8).


402 These are all referred to and discussed throughout *Rh*.1414b1-1420a8.
speech and the basic modes of persuasion are primary. While he briefly touches on style, delivery, and the partitions of a speech, these elements—which are very often misconstrued as constituting the essence of rhetoric—take second place. For all these reasons, the Rhetoric can provide a retrospective lens for understanding the nuanced construction of Athena’s speeches in the Eumenides.

All this being said, Aristotle’s insights certainly cannot and do not fully describe the persuasive techniques of Aeschylean tragedy. My analysis does not attempt to measure Aeschylus in terms of a discipline which had not yet fully developed. Nor does it assume that the Aristotelian model is the only measure for rhetoric in antiquity. Nonetheless, due to its comprehensiveness and clear categorizations, Aristotle’s rhetorical model can shed light on the basic principles which seem to be illustrated by the speech presentation of Eumenides 778-891. More specifically, as shall be seen, the content of Athena’s speeches seems to anticipate what Aristotle would later call “deliberative rhetoric,” and the way in which she structures her approach to the Erinyes anticipates, as it were, Aristotle’s three internal means of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos.

IV. Athena's work as Deliberative Speech

At Eu. 778-891, Athena must convince the Erinyes to calm down, start thinking, and engage in fruitful dialogue about what will be most advantageous for all the persons involved in the present situation. In these and other ways, her speech anticipates what Aristotle will later call

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403 Style and delivery are discussed at Rh. 1403b1-1414b.
404 Not only does Aristotle refuse to give stylistic technique and speech pride of place, but he also does not consider logical enthymemes absolutely essential to rhetoric. As Kennedy comments, Aristotle admits that rhetoric often is “addressed to an audience that cannot be assumed to follow intricate logical argument,” (Kennedy 2007, 42). Also, throughout Rh. 1395b-1396a, Aristotle warns against using logical enthymemes when one needs to argue with greater clarity or, as he mentioned in Rh. 1418a7-8, in ethical and emotional cases. This is yet one more indication of how Aristotle’s presentation of rhetoric can be a useful one for examining early indications of rhetorical speech in Aeschylus.
deliberative speech. Other characteristics of her speech, including the topics Athena chooses to address, likewise support my assessment of Eu. 778-891 as a work of persuasion anticipating Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*.

While Aristotle will describe the time, manner, and end of deliberative speech theoretically, Aeschylus presents these qualities, in practice, in Athena’s speeches. Athena’s concerns are for the future. As shall be seen throughout her speeches, she presents the Erinyes with future goods and promises in order to win them over. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle considers such a forward-looking vision to be typical of deliberative speech (*Rh. 1358b14*). Athena also anticipates Aristotle’s deliberative speech because the manner of her approach consists both of exhortation and dissuasion, or as Aristotle would phrase it: protreptic and apotreptic (*τὸ μὲν προπρήπη, τὸ δὲ ἀποτροπή, Rh. 1358b15*). Finally, her ultimate goal or end is to convey and convince the Erinyes of what will be truly advantageous (*τὸ συμφέρον, Rh. 1358b22*) for all involved, particularly for the Erinyes. To this end, moreover, Athena emphasizes the benefit the Erinyes will reap from remaining as beneficent deities in Athens, but at the same time, she contrasts this offer with the harmful, namely, the Erinyes’ nostalgia for Athens if they leave.\(^405\) In order to further build up the advantageous, Athena presents the good that will result to the Erinyes and avoids discussing the justice of the court’s decision about Orestes. Aristotle notes that by making other factors merely “incidental” (*πρὸς τὸ ὁμοιπαράλλαμβάνει, Rh.1358b 24-25*) or perhaps by not even mentioning them at all, the speaker can make the συμφέρον that much more effective in deliberative speech.

Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* also discusses a number of topics common to deliberative speech:\(^406\)

\[\text{σχεδὸν γὰρ, περὶ ὅν βουλεύονται πάντες καὶ περὶ ὅν ἀγορεύουσιν οἱ συμβουλεύοντες, τὰ μέγιστα τυγχάνει πέντε τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὄντα· ταῦτα δ’ ἐστὶν περί τε πόρων, καὶ πολέμου καὶ εἰρήνης, ἐτι δὲ περί φυλακῆς τῆς χώρας, καὶ τῶν}\]

\(^405\) See Aristotle on the harmful, τὸ βλαβερόν, *Rh. 1358b22*.

\(^406\) Kennedy 2007, 52 entitles this section (*Rh. 1359b19-1360a25*): “Book One Chapter 4: Political Topics for Deliberative Rhetoric.”
εἰσαγομένων καὶ ἐξαγομένων, καὶ νομοθεσίας. (Rh. 1359b19-23)

The most important subjects on which people deliberate and on which deliberative orators give advice in public are mostly five in number, and these are finances, war and peace, national defense, imports and exports, and the framing of laws (tr. Kennedy).

Athena, the jurors and even the audience all share a concern for the city of Athens, whose fate the Erinyes threaten. They are in a distinctly political situation; the Athenian citizenry (both the jurors on the stage and the audience in the theater) watch Athena at work. Thus, a central topic of Athena’s speech is the defense of the city (περὶ φυλακῆς τῆς χώρας, Rh. 1359b20). She constantly rebukes the Erinyes’ desire to ruin Athens and its citizens. Athena, ultimately, must convince the foreign Erinyes to adopt and protect Athens as their own. The main way she does this is by promising the Erinyes that the Athenian people will welcome and love them if they acquiesce.

By proposing to the Erinyes what will bring them happiness, Athena again anticipates the Aristotelian model of deliberative speech. Aristotle claims that any attempt to exhort or dissuade must be rooted in an appeal to the interlocutors’ innate desire for happiness because what is good and brings happiness will be perceived by the interlocutors as the most advantageous.\(^\text{407}\) Aristotle states that to some people, happiness consists in “the pleasantest life combined with security” (ὁ βίος ὁ μετὰ ἀσφαλείας ἥδιστος, Rh.1360b1). Whether or not the Erinyes care for security, Athena does promise this to them, together with a pleasant life: εὖ δρῶσαν, εὖ πάσχουσαν, εὖ τιμωμένη / χώρας μετασχεῖν τῆς θεοφιλεστάτης (“acting well, being well, honored well, you can have a portion of this god-beloved land,” Eu. 868-69). Athena also appeals to Erinyes’ desire for possessions, reputation, honor, and friendship.\(^\text{408}\) As if closely tracking Athena’s efforts, the

\(^{407}\) Such topics of discussion are categorized by Kennedy 2007, 56 as “ethical.”

\(^{408}\) For Athena’s attempt to appeal to their desire for wealth see Aesch. Eu. 834, 857, 869, 890-91 and Arist. Rh. 1361a13-24); for her reference to their good reputation see Eu. 853; 868-69 and Rh.1361a25-27; for her emphasis on the honor they will receive, see Eu. 807, 834, 854, 891 and Rh.1361a28-1361b1; and for possible new friendships see Eu. 833, 855 and Rh. 1361b35-38.
Rhetoic continues:

καὶ τὰ ἴδια...καὶ τὰ ἁρμόττοντα αὐτοῖς; τοιαῦτα δὲ τά τε προσήκοντα κατὰ γένος καὶ δύναμιν...καὶ ὧν ἐλλείπειν οἴοντα... καὶ πρὸς ᾧ εὑρεῖς εἶσιν καὶ ἐμπειροὶ...καὶ μάλιστα ἐκαστοί πρὸς ᾧ φιλοτοίουτοι (Rh. 1363a 26-31, 35-37; 1363b1-2).

[people value] things that are peculiarly their own... and things that are suited to them and such things as are befitting their family and power...and things they think they are lacking in...and what they are naturally good at and experienced in;...and, most of all, each category of people [values] that to which their character is disposed (tr. Kennedy).

Long before Aristotle, Aeschylus had presented Athena tailoring her arguments to the Erinyes’ values precisely in the ways outlined above. At Eu.833 and 856, Athena offers the Erinyes something particularly their own: to be her special companion and to live near the halls of Erectheus. Athena also promises to give the Erinyes, “in justice, the underground thrones of this land” (ἐδρας τε καὶ κενθομονας ἐνδίκου χθονός, Eu. 805). The middle of this phrase includes the word ἐνδίκου, which could be taken adverbially to mean “in justice,” as translated above. It could also function as an adjective with χθονός. Either way, with this word Athena emphasizes that these things would be—as Aristotle puts it—both fitting and just (τὰ ἁρμόττοντα...τά τε προσήκοντα). Throughout her speeches, Athena offers the Erinyes the thing which they think they have lost (ὧν ἐλλείπειν οἴοντα): their honor. Finally, she extends to them a role which fits well with their character, experience and original realm and choice of action (πρὸς ᾧ εὑρεῖς εἶσιν καὶ ἐμπειροὶ...πρὸς ᾧ φιλοτοίουτοι): they are to watch over marriage, childbearing, and childbirth in the land, and will be honored accordingly (Eu. 834-836, 856-857, 890-891).

The content of Athena’s speeches, her topics, her approach, and other characteristics of her work all seem to point towards Aristotle’s later categories for deliberative rhetoric. In addition, the time of Athena’s speeches is future, her manner, exhortative, and her end, the advantageous. She

409 Sommerstein, however, thinks ἐνδίκου is corrupt since it comes so soon after the word πανδίκως in line 804, which, since it contains “-δίκ-,” could “suggest the idea that the honors being offered to the Erinyes are honours to which they are justly entitled (cf. 891),” (Sommerstein 1989, 244).
touches on what the *Rhetoric* considers common and effective political and ethical topics. In sum, Athena’s work in *Eumenides* 778-891 is representative of what Aristotle will later categorize as deliberative speech.

V. Structure and Argument in Athena's Speech

Similarly, Athena’s work at *Eu.* 778-891 anticipates Aristotle’s ideas about speech structure and the internal means of persuasion, namely, through *ethos, pathos, logos.* While Athena’s persuasion takes place over the course of four speeches, these speeches, I argue, effectively form an entire work. As such, The Erinyes’ interruptions between her speeches do not make the *Eu.* 778-891 an instance of real antithetical dialogue for they hardly respond to her words at all. Furthermore, the elements of deliberative speech fundamental to Aristotle’s exposition (time, manner, end, topics, etc) apply even when the skeletal structure does not take the form of a continuous uninterrupted speech. Additionally, Athena’s speech segments are internally unified by her single purpose and by a steady strengthening of her persuasiveness.

In this analysis, then, Athena’s speeches will be treated as a single instance of deliberative speech complete with a *proemium, refutatio,* and brief *narratio* in the first speech, with internal arguments throughout all of the speeches, and with various elements of epilogue in the last segment. I will also demonstrate that with each speech, Athena gradually modulates her persuasive technique so that she proceeds almost systematically through the three internal modes of persuasion: *ethos, pathos, logos,* and then—in the epilogue—with a combination of all three.

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410 Knudsen objects that herein lies the main difference between tragic and epic speech (and, hence, the greater importance of epic speech to the development of rhetoric). She says: "tragic persuasion often does not occur within a single, self-contained speech. More often, it comes about through an extended dialogue scene involving a series of challenges and responses by the interlocutors. Dialogue is integral to the rhetoric of tragedy in a way that it is not the rhetoric if epic," (Knudsen 2014, 136-137).


412 For ease of reference, I will call each section a “speech.”
A. Proemium, Refutatio, Narratio, and Logos (Eu. 794-807)

In her first response to the Erinyes (Eu. 794-807), Athena opens her speech project with what Aristotle will later term a *proemium*, a *refutatio*, a short quasi-*narratio*, and a careful use of the internal mode of persuasion through *logos*, that is, through reasonable *enthymemes* and examples (*Rh.* 1356b8).413

At the beginning of *Eumenides* 778-891, Athena finds the Erinyes in an emotional state that is hardly open to a reasoning dialogue. In their opening song (Eu. 778-792) they cry out: ἰὼ θεοὶ νεώτεροι, παλαιοὺς νόμους / καθιππάσασθε κἀκ χερῶν εἵλεσθέ μου ("Oh, younger gods, you have trampled underfoot the ancient laws and have snatched them from my hands for yourselves," *Eu.* 778-789). The juxtaposition of “θεοὶ νεώτεροι” with “παλαιοὺς νόμους” reveals the conflict as a battle between two generations of deities.414 The Erinyes claim that the younger gods (Apollo, Athena, Zeus) have trampled the old laws, which had previously upheld Erinyes’ honor. What is more, the positioning of the words καθιππάσασθε and εἵλεσθέ immediately before κἀκ χερῶν and then μου portray the decision of the trial as a deep degradation and unjust seizures of another’s goods. Then after calling to mind their utterly dishonored status (Eu. 780), the Erinyes’ speech deteriorates; they cry: ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἄτιμος ἁ τάλαινα βαρύκοτος / ἐν γᾷ τᾷδε, φεῦ, / ἰὸν ἰὸν ἀντιπενθῆ / μεθεῖσα καρδίας, σταλαγμὸν χθονὶ / ἄφορον· ("But I—without honor, wretched, heavy in wrath, on this land! Woe! Letting go from my heart poison—poison—a drop for the land, causing barrenness!" *Eu.* 780-84). The Erinyes’ words devolve into angry exclamations, threats and laments.

413 Most of these terms were also used before Aristotle, as can be seen in *Rh.* 1354b18 (Victor Bers, personal correspondence).
414 See also Heath 2005, 243.
In response to their distress, Athena paves the way for dialogue through reasoned argumentation in her opening proemium: ἐμοὶ πίθεσθε μὴ βαρυστόνως φέρειν (“Be persuaded by me to not bear it with heavy groaning,” Eu. 794). She tells them that the point of her speech is, before all else, to facilitate and prompt discussion about choosing advantageous options for their future. This opening line serves a double function. Firstly, it introduces the speech clearly so that the interlocutors can apply their mind to the topic at hand, if they wish. Aristotle later affirms this primary function of the proemium “to make clear what is the purpose for which the speech [is being given]” (ἵνα προειδῶσι περὶ οὗ ὁ λόγος, Rh. 1415a12-13). Secondly, Athena urges them to shift from groaning and instead cultivate an even-tempered openness.

Athena next suggests that the Erinyes calm down and try to understand her perspective on the trial. In order to do this, Athena begins with a refutatio, another technique which Aristotle will later note as appropriate to the beginning of such speeches (Rh. 1416a2). With the first γάρ (Eu. 795), Athena refutes the Erinyes’ complaint about their dishonor. She denies their claim directly: οὐ γὰρ νενίκησθ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ἰσόψηφος δίκη / ἐξῆλθ᾽ ἀληθῶς, οὐκ ἀτιμίᾳ σέθεν· (“For, you have not been conquered, but the trial came out in truth with an equal vote, not with any dishonor for you;” Eu. 795-796).415 At the end of this speech, as if to clinch her refutatio with ring-composition, she reaffirms their honored status by ending her speech with the word τιμαλφουμένας (“being honored,” Eu. 807).416

Additionally, lines 795-796 pose as a first form of internal argumentation through logos. In this mode of persuasion, Aristotle says, the person tries to win the other over “through proving or appearing to prove something” (διὰ τοῦ δεικνύναι ἣ φαίνεσθαι δεικνύναι, Rh. 1356a35-36). Athena

415 The veracity of Athena’s claim here may be compromised due to the fact that “in the Athenian court system, a plaintiff was penalized for not winning even a certain share of the votes; [and] the Erinyes have clearly passed this threshold,” (Joel Lidov, personal correspondence).
416 Many thanks to Andrew Miller for pointing out this detail (personal correspondence).
here proposes a sort of enthymeme operating on the premise that a trial which ends with a tie does not bring dishonor to either the prosecutor or the defendant. The trial was conducted fairly and Orestes was acquitted by equal vote (or perhaps, by Athena’s additional vote in his favor).\footnote{On the debate about the vote of Athena see Long 2015, 59-62. She summarizes scholarship on the number of jurors who voted. In general, there is simply disagreement about whether the number was odd or even, and whether Athena’s vote changed the verdict or merely affirmed it as previously decided upon.} As a result, Athena argues, the Erinyes have insufficient grounds for assuming they have been dishonored. The cause of their dishonor, in Athena’s view, is simply not present. Aristotle would classify this as an argument from cause and effect, an enthymeme topic proper to any kind of speech.\footnote{Aristotle lists a total of twenty-eight topics for enthymemes (Rh. 1397a-1400b).} Asserting its effectiveness, Aristotle says: ἅμα γὰρ τὸ αἴτιον καὶ οὗ αἴτιον, καὶ ἄνευ αἴτιου οὐθὲν ἔστιν (“The cause and that of which it is the cause go together, and without the cause there is nothing,” Arist. Rh. 1400a24-25). With this logical argument about the cause of the acquittal, then, Athena seeks, at the very least, to assuage the deep sense of injustice which the Erinyes still nurse.

With the second γάρ (Eu. 797), Athena begins a logical argument from authority. In the Rhetoric, such an argument falls under one of the common topics for enthymemes. Aristotle says that this kind of argument is:

…ἐκ κρίσεως περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἢ ὁμοίου ἢ ἐναντίου μάλιστα μὲν εἰ πάντες καὶ ἄει, εἰ δὲ μή…εἰ αὐτοὶ οἱ κρίνοντες, ἢ οὓς ἀποδέχονται οἱ κρίνοντες, ἢ οἷς μὴ καλὸν ἐναντίον κρίνειν, σὺν θεοῖς ἢ πατρὶ ἢ διδασκάλοις…(Arist. Rh.1398b21-26).

…from a previous judgment about the same or a similar or opposite matter, especially if all always [make this judgment]—but if not…if the judges themselves [have so decided], or those whom the judges approve, or those whose judgment cannot be honorably opposed, for example, the gods, a father, or teachers… (tr. Kennedy).

Athena appeals to Zeus’ testimony and to Apollo’s role as witness:

άλλ’ ἐκ Διὸς γὰρ λαμπρὰ μαρτύρια παρῆν,
αὐτός θ’ ὁ χρήσας αὐτός ἦν ὁ μαρτυρῶν,
ὡς ταῦτ᾽ Ὀρέστην δρῶντα μὴ βλάβας ἔχειν. (Aesch. Eu. 797-99)

But, from Zeus there was clear testimony
and the very one who gave the oracle that Orestes (although he did these things) would not suffer harm, was himself the witness.

This argument also seems to be a sort of truncated narratio: a glance back at the recent happenings in the trial of Orestes.

Yet soon afterward Athena apparently remembers that the authority of these younger gods will not carry much weight with the elder Erinyes. Instead of continuing with another attempt at an enthymeme, she again attacks the Erinyes’ insensate anger and urges their reasonable cooperation:

υμεῖς δὲ μὴ θυμοῦσθε μηδὲ τῇδε γῇ βαρὺν κότον σκήψητε, μηδ᾽ ἀκαρπίαν τεῦξητ’, ὧφεὶσαι δαμόνον σταλάγματα, βρωτῆρας αἰχμὰς σπερμάτων ἀνημέρους. (Aesch. Eu. 800-803)

But you—do not be enraged, do not let fall upon the earth your heavy wrath, and do not send down barrenness, hurling forth drops from the gods, savage spears that devour offspring!

Athena ends her speech with promises of a favorable and reasonable alternative (Eu. 804-807).

She has urged them to think, provided them with arguments which can be logically understood, and has repeatedly suggested that they turn away from emotion and rise to a more rational level of engagement.

419 According to Bers (personal correspondence), the validity of Zeus’ testimony (via Apollo) is questionable since he himself justified oath breaking (Eu. 213-218).

420 There is no other example of narratio in Athena’s speeches but this is not surprising since, as Aristotle puts it: ἐν δὲ δημηγορίᾳ ἥκιστα διήγησις ἔστιν, ὅτι περὶ τῶν μελλόντων οὐθεὶς διηγεῖται· ἀλλ’ ἐὰν περὶ διήγησις ἢ, τῶν γενομένων ἔστιν, ἴπτυς ἀναμνησθέντες ἔκειν ἐρρίπτων μεταφθάνουσαν περὶ τῶν ὑστερῶν. (“Narrative is least common in deliberative oratory, because no one narrates future events, but if there is narrative, it will be of events in the past, in order that by being reminded of those things the audience will take better counsel about what is to come,” Rh.1417b12-15).
B. Pathos (Eu. 824-836)

The next section of the speech, Eu. 824-836, reveals Athena’s versatility as a master rhetor who knows how to shift her persuasive approach to fit the circumstances. In response to the logical arguments of Athena’s proemium, the Erinyes repeat their lament word-for-word (Eu. 808-22) as if they had not even heard her. Continuing her work, then, Athena tries modes of persuasion which provoke pathos in the Erinyes. This is precisely the kind of internal argument which Aristotle later recommends for a speaker who needs to prompt a different type of judgment in the hearer. More specifically: ἔστι δὲ τὰ πάθη δι' ὅσα μεταβάλλοντες διαφέρουσι πρὸς τὰς κρίσεις…οἷον ὀργή ἔλεος φόβος καὶ ὀσα ἄλλα τοιαῦτα, καὶ τὰ τούτοις ἔναντια (“The emotions…are those things through which, by undergoing change, people come to differ in their judgments…for example, anger, pity, fear, and other such things and their opposites,” Rh. 1378a19-22). He then proceeds to discuss a number of different emotions and how they can be provoked by the orator. Some of the emotions Aristotle mentions are shame, fear, and friendly feelings, all of which can already be seen in this speech of Athena.

Athena provokes the emotion of shame in the Erinyes at the beginning of her speech. Aristotle later says: ἔστω δὴ αἰσχύνη λύπη τις ἢ ταραχὴ περὶ τὰ εἰς ἀδοξίαν φαινόμενα φέρειν τῶν κακῶν, ἢ παρόντων ἢ γεγονότων ἢ μελλόντων, ἢ δὲ ἀναισχυντία ὀλιγωρία καὶ ἀπάθεια (“Let shame [αἰσχύνη] be [defined as] a sort of pain and agitation concerning the class of evils, whether present or past or future, that seem to bring a person into disrespect,” Rh. 1383b12-15). Athena tries to prevent the Erinyes from venting their wrath upon mankind by subtly shaming them: οὐκ ἔστι ἀτιμοί, μηδὲ ὑπερθύμως ἄγαν / θεαὶ βροτῶν κτίσητε δύσκηλον χθόνα (“You are not without honor,

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421 Aristotle writes: διὰ δὲ τῶν ἀκροατῶν, ὅταν εἰς πάθος ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου προαχθῶσιν· οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἀποδίδομεν τὰς κρίσεις λυπούμενοι καὶ χαίροντες, ἢ φιλοῦντες καὶ μισοῦντες (“[There is persuasion] through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [pathos] by the speech: for we do not give the same judgment when grieved and rejoicing or when being friendly and hostile,” Rh. 1356a14-16).
and in your great wrath, goddesses, do not make the land troubled with disease for mortals,” *Eu.* 824-825). In the second of these lines, Athena is probably emphasizing the Erinyes’ role as goddesses by placing the word θεαί in the first position of the line. While everyone knows they are superhuman, Athena brings forward their divine status and immediately juxtaposes the word βροτῶν (“mortals”).

This comes across as a hint: the Erinyes have been threatening to treat mortals in a way that appears beneath the dignity to which they are entitled. One way to explicate this argument could be as follows: You are goddesses; it is inappropriate for divinities to harm mortals in excessive wrath. For shame, goddesses! Do not blight mortals. Most likely, Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* would affirm Athena’s choice of argument here, for he himself writes that persons are often ashamed when faced with their misdeeds, vice, cowardice, or injustice (*Rh.* 1383b18-22). By pointing out the injustice of the deed which they propose to do, Athena provokes the Erinyes to shame.

Athena also persuades by threatening, a technique which Aristotle considers particularly appropriate for the end of deliberative speech. He writes explicitly that “fear makes people inclined to deliberation” (ὁ γὰρ φόβος βουλευτικοὺς ποιεῖ, *Rh.* 1383a 6-7). Athena begins with a forceful κἀγὼ πέποιθα Ζηνί, καὶ τί δεῖ λέγειν; (“I also have trust...in Zeus...and why should I mention it?” *Eu.* 826-29). Instead of completing the line with an assertion such as “and Zeus is more powerful than you,” Athena breaks off and lets them ponder the potency of Zeus. She finishes the line with a rhetorical question: …καὶ τί δεῖ λέγειν; (“…and why should I mention it?” *Eu.* 826).

With this line and this question, Athena tries to emotionally rouse the Erinyes and

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422 Heath says that the juxtaposition makes us “focus on their separated and elevated status, as well as to suggest the new responsibilities to mortals,” (Heath 2005, 243).
423 Aristotle says that words can be positioned in this way in order to make an implicit argument: τάναντια γνωριμώτατα καὶ παρ’ ἄλληλα μᾶλλον γνώριμα, καὶ ὅτι ἔοικεν συλλογισμῷ· ὁ γὰρ ἐλεγχος συναγωγή τῶν ἀντικειμένων ἐστίν (“opposites are most knowable and more knowable when put beside each other and because they are like a syllogism...for refutation...is a bringing together of contraries,” *Rh.* 1410a21-23).
424 Mastronarde observes that this kind of rhetorical question is often used to elicit “silent agreement or assent,”
draw out from them a fear and respect for the awesomeness of Zeus which accords with her own
(Eu. 826). She continues:

καὶ κλήδας οἶδα δόματος μόνη θεῶν,
ἐν ᾧ κεραυνός ἐστιν ἐσφραγισμένος·
άλλα οὐδὲν αὐτοῦ δεῖ... (Aesch. Eu. 827-29)

I alone of the gods also know the keys of the chamber
in which his thunderbolt has been sealed;
but there is no need of it;...

With this threat, Athena hints at her power, but brushes it aside with ἀλλὰ οὐδὲν αὐτοῦ δεῖ (“but
there is no need of it,” Eu. 829). Such a twist of phrase likely startles the Erinyes, perhaps
stirring up in them a pang of apprehension such as they evince in their response: οἶ οἶ δᾶ, φεῦ. / τίς
Eu. 843). Athena concludes by switching suddenly to the second person singular “σὺ” as her mode
of address. In this way, she calls them to account: as it were, grabbing their leader by the collar
and glaring into her eyes with the words:

σὺ δ᾽ εὐπιθής ἐμοὶ / γλώσση ματαίας μὴ ἀκβάλῃς ἔπη
χθονί / καρπὸν φέροντα πάντα μὴ πράσσειν καλῶς
(“But you, obedient to me, do not throw words
from an idle tongue to the earth so that all fruit-bearing things fare badly,” Eu.829-31). Athena’s
approach has become fearsome and threatening.

But Athena next transforms into a benefactress, intending (as Aristotle might explain it) to
arouse the emotion of philia, or friendly feelings within the Erinyes. Aristotle will define this
attitude as: τὸ βούλεσθαι τινι ἃ οἴεται ἀγαθά, ἐκείνου ἑνεκα ἀλλὰ μὴ αὐτοῦ (“wanting for someone

(Mastornarde 1979, 7-8).

425 McDonald considers this an example of praeteritio (McDonald 2007, 476). The “thunderbolt threat” and the role it
plays in Athena’s success, has been much discussed in Aeschylean scholarship. Some claim that the force behind this
threat was crucial to the Erinyes’ capitulation (Pucci 1992, 522; Porter 2005, 324-325). By contrast, Gagarin argues
that Athena’s persuasion holds greater sway over the Erinyes than her threat of force (Gagarin 1976, 83; see also
Rynearson 2013, 2). Allowing for the duality of force and persuasion to exist simultaneously, Bers asserts that
Athena’s victory “both had to be, and still might have been allowed to fail, for Athena holds bolts of lightning in

426 Although it was common in tragedy to use the singular in addressing the Chorus or chorus leader, here it is a
startling change since Athena had previously been using the plural. See Sommerstein 1989, 247.
what one thinks are good things for him, and not what one thinks benefits oneself,”

*Rh. 1380b35-1381a1*. Athena hopes that the Erinyes may begin to desire something good for Athens, its citizens, and perhaps even for its patron deity. Athena must, however, first approach the Erinyes with the delicacy needed for persons whom Aristotle might class as people affected by power (δύναμις, *Rh.* 1391a21). According to him, such individuals are ambitious for honor, solicitous for their responsibilities, and willing to commit wrong on a large scale (*Rh.* 1391a 20-29).

Athena also seems keenly aware of the Erinyes’ touchiness as elderly deities accustomed to unquestioned power and privileges. As a result, her concluding words in this speech expand upon the specific benefits and sacrifices the Erinyes will receive if they comply. She begins a line of soothing alliteration:427

κοίμα κελαινοῦ κύματος πικρὸν μένος
ώς σεμνότιμος καὶ ξυνοικήτωρ ἐμοί·
πολλῆς δὲ χώρας τῆσδ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἀκροθίνια
θύη πρὸ παίδων καὶ γαμηλίου τέλους
ἐξουσ’ ἐς αἰεὶ τόνδ᾽ ἐπαινέσεις λόγον. (Aesch. *Eu.* 832-836)

Put to sleep the sharp might of dark swelling passion
as one who is reverently honored and a housemate to me;
And since from this large land you will forever have
the first-fruits of sacrifices before children and before marriage,
you will applaud this speech.

Throughout this passage, Athena prompts good will by demonstrating her own friendly attentiveness. She reiterates words and concepts central to the concerns which the Erinyes articulated in their twice-repeated, distraught speech (*Eu.* 778-792, 808-822). For instance, Athena’s mention of fruit (καρπόν, *Eu.* 831) references the Erinyes’ threat to destroy growing things (ἄφυλλος, *Eu.* 815). Instead of directly contradicting the Erinyes’ complaint about dishonor (ἄτιμος, *Eu.* 810; ἄτιμοπενθεῖς, *Eu.* 812) as she had earlier, Athena here uses the word σεμνότιμος

427 See, however, Stanford 1967, 112 with 120 n. 59; who argues that kappas are not soothing.
(Eu. 833) to emphasize, instead, the great reverence they will receive if they comply. Finally, Athena promises them a respected position in her country (χώρας, Eu. 834) if they will only forbear from wreaking destruction upon it (χώρα, Eu. 817). In doing this, Athena carefully addresses points of concern to the Erinyes and completes her attempt at cultivating *philia* with the goddesses. Throughout the entire speech she had shamed, threatened, cajoled, and even offered friendship, in the hopes that the irate goddess would respond emotionally and begin to open themselves to negotiation.

**C. Ethos (Eu. 848-869)**

Yet except for the fact that they sing a different refrain, the Erinyes’ response to Athena’s efforts is hardly encouraging:

ἐμὲ παθεῖν τάδε, φεῦ,
ἐμὲ παλαιόφρονα κατά τε γᾶς οίκεῖν,
ἀτίετον μύσος,
φεῦ.
πνέω τοι μένος ἀπαντά τε κότον.
οί οἱ ὅδα, φεῦ.
τίς μ᾽ ὑποδύεται πλευράς ὀδόνα;
ἀι, μάτερ Νύξ.
ἀπὸ γάρ με τιμᾶν δαναιᾶν θεῶν
δυσπάλαμοι παρ᾽ οὐδὲν ἦραν δόλοι. (Aesch. Eu. 837-46)

For me to suffer these things—Woe!
And for me, old and wise, to dwell in this land
a dishonored, defiled thing—
Woe!
I breathe fury and vengeance towards everything!
Ai! Ai! Alas! Woe!
What pain plunges beneath my ribs?
Ah, mother Night!
For the irresistible cunning of the gods have taken away
From me my ancient honors so that I count for nothing.

With even more emotion than before, in the opening lines (Eu. 837-839), the Erinyes cry out φεῦ
three times (“Woe!” Eu. 838, 841, 843) compared with the single instance in their first speech (Eu. 781, 811); also, new indecipherable cries arise: οἶ οἶ δᾶ…ἄιε (“Ai! Ai! Alas!...Ah!” Eu. 843, 845).

Although they have heard Athena speak, they dismiss her pleadings and promises as mere δοσπάλαμοι δόλοι (“hard-to-resist cunning and trickery,” Eu. 846). They protest the dishonor they have received (Eu. 839, 845-846), and in desperation, call upon their mother Night (Eu. 844). Athena has hardly persuaded them. At most, she has quieted their threats against Athens and has caused them some sort of pain (ὁδόνα, Eu. 843). Infuriated, they hold obstinately to their need for honor due to their wisdom and parentage (Eu. 844). Athena has not yet won them over.

Athena must come up with yet another mode of persuasion for addressing their new lament. In her third speech (Eu. 848-869), then, Athena uses argumentation through ethos: she tries to convince the Erinyes to trust her. Aristotle says that διὰ μὲν οὖν τοῦ ἤθους, ὅταν οὕτω λεχθῇ ὁ λόγος ὥστε ἀξιό πιστον ποιῆσαι τὸν λέγοντα (“[There is persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence,” Rh. 1356a4-6). The masterful decision of Athena to shift to this mode of persuasion is reflected in his further comment: τοῖς γὰρ ἐπιεικέσι πιστεύομεν μᾶλλον καὶ θᾶττον, περὶ πάντων μὲν ἁπλῶς, ἐν οἷς δὲ τὸ ἀκριβὲς μὴ ἐστίν ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀμφιδοξεῖν, καὶ παντελῶς (“we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others] on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt,” Rh. 1356a6-8). As shall be seen, Athena’s third speech to a great extent rests on these premises.

In order to present herself as favorably as possible, Athena portrays herself in the three ways which Aristotle will later categorize as the three basic components of ethical argumentation:

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428 See Schauer 2002, 150.
429 “Self-pity, not curses now predominates in the Chorus’ song,” (Conacher 1987, 171). Sommerstein suggests that these are slight signs that the Erinyes “may be being persuaded despite themselves,” (Sommerstein 1989, 248). Conacher comments that lines 838-39 may be “at least an oblique answer to Athena’s plea,” (Conacher 1987, 171). See also Konishi 1990, 252.
Athena begins her ethical mode of argumentation by rejecting and reversing the unpleasant opinion and suspicion which the Erinyes have expressed against her. Then Athena demonstrates her personal virtue (ἀρετή), specifically her patience and respect for her elders (Eu. 848). In the next two lines she argues for her own personal wisdom and understanding (φρόνησις): while she acknowledges verbally that they are wiser, she points out that she too possesses some of these and other qualities. Finally, Athena expresses her good will (εὔνοια) to prevent the Erinyes from making a decision they will later regret. With seemingly genuine concern, she says: ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ἐς ἀλλόφυλον ἐλθοῦσαι χθόνα / γῆς τῆσδ᾽ ἐρασθήσεσθε· (“But if you go to a foreign place, you will long for this land,” Eu. 851-852). Even in this first half of the speech, Athena shows herself to be a virtuous, understanding, and kindly younger deity who only wants the best for her elders.

In the rest of her speech, Athena continues her ethical argumentation by emphasizing the honor which she will procure for the Erinyes. On the various techniques which exist for presenting oneself as a good and trustworthy character, Aristotle comments: εἰς δὲ εὐμάθειαν ἄπαντα ἀνάξει, ἕαν τις βούληται, καὶ τὸ ἐπιεικῆ φαίνεσθαι· προσέχουσι γὰρ μᾶλλον τούτοις (“All sorts of things will lead the audience to receptivity if the speaker wants, including his seeming to be a reasonable person. They pay more attention to these people,” Rh. 1415a39-1415b1). Towards a similar end, no doubt, Athena promises the Erinyes seats of honor close to her own on the Athenian acropolis:
οὐπρέξων γὰρ τιμιώτερος χρόνος
ἔσται πολίταις τοῖσδε. καὶ σὺ τιμίαν
ἕδραν ἔχουσα πρὸς δόμοις Ἐρεχθέως
tεὔξῃ παρ᾽ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικείων στόλων,
ὅσων παρ᾽ ἄλλων οὐποτ´ ἂν σχέθοις βροτῶν. (Aesch. Eu. 853-857)

For onward-streaming time will confer more honor
on these citizens, and you, holding honored
seats near the halls of Erectheus,
will obtain from processions of men and women
as many things as you would never have from other mortals.

Athena further strengthens her image by offering them continual companionship and friendship
with her, as she had previously offered through her use of the word ξυνοικήτωρ (Eu. 833). She also
promises them an eternal share of the honors offered by those who come to the Acropolis to
worship. She ends with the following epilogue:

τοιαύθ᾽ ἑλέσθαι σοι πάρεστιν ἐξ ἐμοῦ,
εὖ δρῶσαν, εὖ πάσχουσαν, εὖ τιμωμένης
χώρας μετασχεῖν τῆσδε θεοφιλεστάτης. (Aesch. Eu. 867-869)

Such things as I promised you can take from me:
acting well, being well, honored well,
you can have a share in this god-beloved land.

With this eloquent conclusion, Athena depicts herself as a magnanimous benefactress. In line
868, moreover, she uses a 3-4-5 syllable tricolon crescendo to invite the Erinyes to dwell on three
wonderful components of their future existence. Athena shows herself to be a virtuous, wise,
and well-meaning goddess, ostensibly respectful towards her elders and desiring their good. In

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430 Even though I use Page’s OCT for my Greek text, I agree with Taplin 1977, 407 and Sommerstein 1989, 251 that
the middle portion of this speech (Eu. 858-866) seems to be an overlong and peculiar interpolation. Hence I omit it
from my commentary.
431 Athena has earlier “offered good things” in a section which I identified as the mode of persuasion based on pathos;
for, the distinction between the pathetic and ethical modes is often not very clear-cut. One could also argue that
Athena has already touched upon ethos in her first speeches, but here it is most clearly used. See Carey 1994, 35. Also,
Bers notes that Athena’s offering of a share in land, a sanctuary of their own (Eu. 869), is crucial to their eventual
capitulation of the Erinyes; for, the goddesses affirm their interest in this “seat” in their first trimeter line: ἄνασσα’
Ἀθάνα, τίνα μὲ φής ἔγειν ἔδραν; (“Queen Athena, what seat are you saying I have?” Eu. 892).
432 In his section of the Rhetoric on style, Aristotle calls this tricolon crescendo asyndeton, a technique quite suitable
to oral delivery (Rh. 1413b19-21) and even more effective towards the end of a speech, as Athena uses it above (Rh.
1420a6-8). For examples in other authors, see Marcovich 1984, 52 n.9.
doing so, moreover, she presents an excellent picture of Aristotle’s ethical mode of persuasion.

**D. Epilogue: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos (Eu. 881-891)**

Athena’s use of all three modes of persuasion, however, seems unavailing. The Erinyes persist obstinately, repeating again their laments and grievances, word for word (Eu. 870-879). Undaunted, in her last speech (Eu. 881-891), Athena again proceeds through each of the modes of persuasion in order to finally persuade the Erinyes to listen.

Athena crafts this last speech as an epilogue to her work of deliberative rhetoric. At *Rh.* 1419b, Aristotle says:

> Ὁ δ’ ἐπίλογος σύγκειται ἐκ τεττάρων, ἔκ τε τοῦ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν κατασκευάσαι εὔ τὸν ἀκροατήν;…καὶ ἐκ τοῦ αὐξῆσαι καὶ ταπεινῶσαι, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ εἰς τὰ πάθη τὸν ἀκροατήν καταστῆσαι, καὶ εἰς ἀναμνήσεως. *(Rh.* 1419b10-13)

The epilogue is made up of four things: disposing the hearer favorably toward the speaker;…amplifying and minimizing; moving the hearer into emotional reactions; and [giving] a reminder [of the chief points of the argument]. (tr. Kennedy).

This is precisely what Athena herself does throughout this last speech. Augmenting her efforts, she utilizes the *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* modes of persuasion to win the Erinyes over, to remind them of their dignity, to re-emphasize her promises and the import of their decision, and finally, to shame them into choosing the option which is most dignified and just.

In the first few lines of this last speech, for instance, she leads with a strong argument for her own trustworthiness—the mode of persuasion based on *ethos*—emphasizing her indefatigable patience and respect:

> οὕτωι καμοθώι κοι λέγουσα τάγαθα, ως μη ποτ᾽ ἐπίπης πρὸς νεωτέρας ἐμοῦ θεός παλαιὰ καὶ πολισσούχον βροτῶν

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433 Aristotle writes: ἄλλα σχεδὸν ός εἰπένει κυριωτάτην ἐχει πίστιν τὸ ἡθος (“character is almost, so to speak, the most authoritative form of persuasion,” *Rh.* 1356a13).
ἄτιμος ἔρρει τοῦδ᾽ἀπόξενος πέδου. (Aesch. Eu. 881-884)

Indeed I shall not tire of telling you of these good things, so that you may never say that by me, the younger, and by city-dwelling mortals, you, an ancient goddess, wandered dishonored and forced away from this land.

In the second and third lines of this passage, Athena juxtaposes her youth with the Erinyes’ age (νεωτέρας ἐμοῦ / θεὸς παλατὶ, Eu. 882-83) in order to flatter them. Athena then puts aside her commanding tone. Almost assuming victory, she makes a last offer, a last appeal to their trust.

With the word ἄποξενος in line 884, Athena insinuates that the real dishonor for them would be to leave banished against their will; she also implies that they actually want to stay, even if they are not aware or refuse to admit it. In this way, Athena hints that she knows their deepest desires and so can take the best care of them if they remain under her protection.

Athena then shifts to argument through emotion (pathos). In the next colon, she says: ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν ἁγνόν ἐστί σοι Πειθοῦς σέβας, / γλώσσης ἐμῆς μείλιγμα καὶ θελκτήριον, / σὺ δ᾽ οὖν μένοις ἄν· (“But if you have holy reverence for Peitho regarding the soothing charm and enchantment of my tongue, then you certainly might remain,” Eu. 885-87). With this line, almost an incantation, she leads them into an emotional submission, as later the Erinyes will admit (Eu. 900). But in the apodosis of this sentence, Athena breaks off with δ᾽ οὖν and moves to a polite potential optative. Sommerstein explains that Athena starts off with “eloquent appeal, couched in high-flown language,” but lest she aggravate the Erinyes, moderates her approach and ends with a

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434 This technique is used earlier at Eu. 778 (by the Erinyes) and Eu. 825 (by Athena) above.
435 Sommerstein writes that the word ἄποξενος “properly denotes one who is forced to depart (usually as an exile) from his own land (Ag. 1282, Ch. 1042; cf. Soph. El. 777, Eur. Hec. 1221); thus by using it here Athena is speaking as if (a) Attica were the Erinyes true home, (b) they (rather than she) were eager that they should dwell there. She presupposes the propositions that she wishes to persuade them to accept,” (Sommerstein 1989, 254).
436 The particle combination δ᾽ οὖν, according to Denniston, signifies “a break-off in the thought” [and] “a resumption of the main issue,” (Denniston 1954, 443).
437 Sommerstein explains that Athena starts off with “eloquent appeal, couched in high-flown language,” but lest she aggravate the Erinyes, moderates her approach and ends with a
gentle, “well, all that really matters is: please do stay.”

What follows is Athena’s strongest attempt at logical (logos) persuasion yet: a direct appeal to the Erinyes’ sense of justice.

εἰ δὲ μὴ θέλεις μένειν,
οὔτ ἂν δικαιῶς τῇδ’ ἐπιρρέποις πόλει
μὴνίν τιν’ ἣ κότον τιν’ ἢ βλάβην στρατῶ.
ἐξεστὶ γάρ σοι τῆσδε γαμόρῳ γαμόρῳ
εἶναι δικαίως ἐς τὸ πᾶν τιμωμένη. (Aesch. Eu. 887-891)

But if you do not wish to remain, you could not justly let fall upon this city any rage or any vengeance or harm to the people; for you have the power to be a land-holder of this place, justly, and altogether honored.

According to Aristotle, the argument in these lines could be classed as a refuting enthymeme (τὸ ἐλεγκτικὸν, Rh. 1396b26) of the type which comes “from [turning] what has been said against oneself upon the one who said it” (ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων καθ’ αὑτοῦ πρὸς τὸν εἰπόντα, Rh.1398a37).

According to the Rhetoric: τοῦτο τις [ἂν] εἴπειεν ἄλλος πρὸς ἀπιστίαν τοῦ κατηγόρου· ὅλως γὰρ βούλεται ὁ κατηγορῶν βελτίων εἶναι τοῦ φεύγοντος (“this [type of argument] should be used for discrediting the accuser; for the accuser always wants to be morally superior to the defendant,” Rh. 1398a10-11). Athena’s argument in the passage anticipates this description. One could abstract the argument as follows: We are offering you honor and a position in this land and it is right to respect those who offer you good things. Therefore, even if you leave, you should respect us and our offer. You cannot justly harm us, your benefactors. After having once more gone through the...

438 Sommerstein 1989, 255. Bers, however, observes that at Soph. El. 1491, Orestes uses a potential optative in ordering Aegisthus to move so that he can kill him (personal correspondence). Regardless, Athena’s avoidance of hyperbole here is particularly apt to this situation. Aristotle writes: εἰσὶ δ’ αἱ ύπερβολαὶ μετακινώδεις· σφοδρότητα γὰρ δηλοῦσιν (“hyperboles are part of adolescence; for they exhibit vehemence,” Rh. 1413a29). As such, then hyperbole is not appropriate for an older, mature person to use. As she has previously done, Athena soothes (pathos) the elderly Erinyes by talking to them gently and—at the same time—by impressing them with her maturity and respectful character (ethos).

439 Several scholars think that it is this last appeal to principle and justice which wins them over. See Sommerstein 1989, 255; Konishi 1990, 254.
modes of persuasion based on *ethos* and *pathos*, Athena concludes with a final appeal to reason through logical argumentation.

And in the end, she succeeds. The Erinyes’ response to this last speech is not a frenetic wail, but a fully engaged question in the conversational rhythm of iambic trimeter: ἄνασσ᾽ Ἀθάνα, τίνα μὲ φῆς ἔχειν ἔδραν; (“Queen Athena, what seat do you say I will hold?” *Eu.* 892). Once the Erinyes shift from their lyric laments to stichomythia, fruitful dialogue commences, and with it, Athena’s carefully crafted work is complete.\(^{440}\)

**VI. Conclusion**

By the end of the tense encounter staged throughout *Eumenides* 778-891, Athena has demonstrated what Aristotle will later classify as excellent, well-structured, and convincing deliberative speech. Aeschylus has given this scene and Athena’s work of persuasion a dramatic prominence highlighting the emotional nature of the conflict, the high stakes involved in the struggle, and the corresponding scope and quality of Athena’s persuasion. He likewise frames this display of rhetoric, this masterful moment of dramatic tension and resolution, in terms of πειθώ. Πειθώ has been central to the main action and theme of the entire drama. The goddess has been transformed to resemble a personified patroness of rhetoric, and here she presides over remarkably well-crafted deliberative speech, the kind which would fit seamlessly into Aristotle’s categories in the *Rhetoric*. This is yet one more example of how Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* contributes to the history of rhetoric: by setting up *Eumenides* 778-891 as a full realization of πειθώ’s meaning and importance.

\(^{440}\) Rutherford comments, “Athena has persuaded them to abandon song for speech” (Rutherford 2012, 256). See also Rabinowitz 1981,183.
CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I argue for the relevance of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* to the history of rhetoric by pointing out the various ways in which he transforms, displays, and connects his understanding of πειθώ with nascent ideas and practices of rhetoric in the fifth and early fourth centuries BCE. After Chapter One’s review of scholarship on the topic and a catalog of pre- and post-Aeschylean usages of πειθώ as a verb, a goddess, and abstract noun, I suggest the importance of Aeschylus’ work on the concept. In Chapter Two, then, I analyze each place where the goddess Peitho appears in the *Oresteia*: as a ruinous and forceful deity in the *Agamemnon*, a tricky companion of Hermes in the *Choephoroi*, and a guide to Athena’s reasonable, if still slightly magical, civic speech in the *Eumenides*. In these depictions, Aeschylus alters Peitho’s tradition in ways which specifically open her up to a later association with ideas about rhetoric, as it was beginning to be employed by other dramatists as well as philosophers, sophists, and orators of the time.

Chapter Three discusses Aeschylus’ use and display of his new conceptions of πειθώ throughout the main action and theme of each play of the trilogy. The goddess Peitho occurs actively engaged in the drama at key moments in the plot. Aeschylus describes the main action of each play with reference to πειθώ as a verb, and then reinforces this main action through parallel narratives as well. In these ways, Aeschylus’ πειθώ comes to the fore as central to drama as a whole and worthy of the audience’s close consideration. Finally, in Chapter Four, I examine the climactic scene of the drama, *Eumenides* 778-891. I first evaluate the dramatic prominence of this scene and the significance of Athena’s work within it. I then demonstrate how Aeschylus frames this entire section of the play in terms of πειθώ, and lends Athena’s persuasive speech qualities
which Aristotle would later consider genuinely rhetorical. Using the *Rhetoric* as a retrospective lens, I point out how Athena’s speeches at *Eu.* 778-891 seem to anticipate the content of what Aristotle will later call deliberative rhetoric and the form of an appropriately partitioned speech argued through *ethos, pathos,* and *logos.* Effectively, Aeschylus presents this last scene as a full realization of his idea of πειθώ, his word for the art of rhetoric.

Without imputing to Aeschylus the same self-consciousness as Euripides or Aristophanes, his staging of πειθώ is central enough to come to the attention of perceptive audience members. Also, as a result of the *Oresteia*’s continual re-performance throughout the fifth century and even after his death, the themes and issues which it dramatized likely had a lasting influence in ancient Greece.441 Yet, while later prose dialogues and displays of rhetoric form core chapters in modern surveys on the history of rhetoric, Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* rarely receives acknowledgment beyond a reference to his court scene in the *Eumenides.*

From my analysis in this dissertation, however, I believe it is clear that Aeschylus’ work with πειθώ should be given greater weight in terms of its potential for cultural influence and developing ideas about what will eventually be termed “rhetoric” in ancient Greece. Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* invites his audience to reflect on πειθώ as a concept, a goddess, and a practice. The reflections which he prompts, moreover, guide the audience to closely associate πειθώ with the art of rhetoric, the ideas and techniques used in fifth and fourth century prose discourse and aimed at persuasion in public, often political, speech. Given the cultural context and the longevity of Aeschylus’ work, the significance of πειθώ as staged in his drama should not be underestimated, but rather, be included in modern texts on rhetoric’s history and development in ancient Greece.

441 The repeated re-performance of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* has been defended by several scholars, particularly by Biles, who wrote an entire 2006 article on the subject. He argues for the re-performance of the drama based upon the ancient testimony of the following texts: *Vita Aeschyli* (=Test. 1 Radt, lines 48-49; Philostr. *Vita Apollonii* 6.11: scholia on Ar. *Ach.* 10 and on Ar. *Ran.* 868; Quint. *Inst. Orat.* 10.1.66. See also Biles 2006, 211-212; Slater 1990, 385-395.
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