

Truth, Falsehood, and Reciprocity in Pindar and Aeschylus

Arum Park

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Approved by:

Advisor: Peter M. Smith

Reader: James J. O'Hara

Reader: Owen E. Goslin

Reader: Cecil W. Wooten

Reader: Sharon L. James

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ABSTRACT

ARUM PARK: Truth, Falsehood, and Reciprocity in Pindar and Aeschylus
(Under the direction of Peter M. Smith)

The numerous studies of truth and falsehood in Greek thought are quite varied in scope and methodology but tend to fall into one of two categories: detailed word-studies that identify and explicate terms for truth and falsehood, usually in the poetry of Homer and Hesiod, or general explorations of the nature of truth and the processes for its formation across Greek literature.

This study seeks to fill the gaps left by these two approaches by combining meticulous examination of Aeschylus' and Pindar's terms for truth and falsehood with a broader discussion of how truth and falsehood operate in their poetry. The focus is on passages that explicitly mention truth and falsehood, an approach that generates conclusions both about the use of these terms and about the influence of these concepts on a poet's self-conscious purpose. The major claims are that Aeschylean and Pindaric truth and falsehood are generically determined concepts and are incorporated in relationships or cycles of reciprocity integral to each poet's genre.

Thus truth and falsehood cannot be understood without adequate consideration of genre and purpose. As a praise poet, Pindar's aims are twofold: he must convince his audience of his devotion to the person he is tasked with praising (the *laudandus*), and he must persuade them that his claims about the *laudandus* are accurate. He thus incorporates truth into the relationship he constructs between himself and the *laudandus*

by espousing a truth that combines sincerity with accuracy and by denouncing falsehood for the threat it poses to this relationship.

Aeschylus likewise assimilates truth and falsehood to his poetic purpose. Since his primary concern as a tragedian is to present plots of retributive violence, ideas about truth and falsehood appear in contexts of belief or disbelief. Thus characters who speak truth are believed or disbelieved in accordance with what will facilitate plots about violent reprisal; similarly, whether characters successfully or unsuccessfully enact a deception depends on what is required to tell a story of reciprocal aggression.

To Oma and Dori

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation addresses the topics of truth and falsehood in the poetry of Pindar and Aeschylus. Studies of *aletheia* in Greek thought have been abundant, probably because of a modern fascination with the idea of truth, but most of the work has focused on Homer and to some extent Hesiod. For example, Luther's 1935 book examines Homeric and Hesiodic terms for truth and lies,¹ while Levet follows up forty years later with a more detailed study of such words and their contexts in Homer.² Luther makes a valuable contribution with his implicit argument that *aletheia* can cover a range of meanings, as Heidegger himself pointed out,³ and his insight that truth has wide-ranging implications for speech, poetry, and justice. Levet argues that *aletheia/alethes* denotes an absence of concealment; his word-study concludes that the various Greek words for truth and falsehood reflect the psychological disposition of the Greeks and thus cannot find exact equivalents in modern languages.⁴

The scholar most persistently focused on *aletheia* is Detienne, whose influential 1960 article "La notion mythique d'Ἀλήθεια" argues forcefully for an opposition between

¹ Luther 1935.

² Levet 1976.

³ See Luther 1935, 14: "Heidegger... unterscheidet zwischen ἀλήθεια als „Charakter der Aussage“ und ἀλήθεια, die die „Sachen selbst“ bedeutet, „das Seiende im Wie seiner Entdecktheit“."

⁴ Levet 1976, 17. Adkins 1972, 12 seems to disagree: "True statements about present events which fall within the experience of the person making them have the same relation to 'the facts' in any society, literate or non-literate and are confirmable in the same manner; and if an individual wishes to know the truth about an important (recently) past event in a non-literate society, the fact that he is a member of a society makes it possible for him to ask other members about the event; and if different people give him the same account, their agreement will be more in the forefront of his mind than the fact that, had they forgotten what happened, they would be unable to tell him anything. These situations are surely the majority, and certainly suffice to produce a concept of truth quite familiar to ourselves."

ἀλήθεια and λήθη in the mythical thought of the ancient Greeks. Seeking to contribute to Heidegger's well known observations about *aletheia*'s etymology, Detienne adds a new dimension by examining the imagery surrounding *aletheia* in mythical representations such as in Plato's *Phaedrus*. His argument further points out similarities between *aletheia* and Hesiod's Muses and thus concludes that truth and memory are nearly equivalent.

Detienne's article precedes a series of discussions concerning the semantic fields of words for truth, of which one of the most cited is Krischer's 1965 article clarifying the differences of perspective between *etumos* and *alethes* in Homer.⁵ Snell and Cole have written more recent studies of *aletheia*, both of which similarly focus on its *leth*-root and the perspective therein.⁶ The somewhat myopic preoccupation of these studies has been with the etymology of *aletheia* from *lethe*, which is probably correct, but not unquestionably so, and thus remains a problematic focus. In Plato's *Cratylus* 421b Socrates posits *ale* and *theia* as possible roots of *aletheia*, which would therefore etymologically mean "a wandering that is divine." He is being ironic of course, but even the playful *Cratylus* with its tongue-in-cheek etymologies usefully reminds us to question our own assumptions. Aside from the (slight) possibility that *aletheia* does not derive from *lethe*, an additional problem is that Greek words in context, just like English words, do not always reflect their etymological meanings. Just as modern English "idiot" does not retain its original Greek sense, there is no reason to assume that *aletheia* must always convey the opposite of forgetting or concealment. If that were indeed the case, *aletheia* would appear most often in tandem with ideas of memory and perhaps bear some discernible relation to time as a factor in preserving or hindering memory, but it does not.

⁵ Cf. Krischer 1965, 167: "Diese Stellen zeigen allesamt, daß der Bezug auf den Sprecher, der für ἀληθής charakteristisch ist, bei ἔτυμος fehlt."

⁶ See Snell 1975 and Cole 1983.

For example, Pindar’s aphorism about the way of truth in *Pythian* 3 bears little relevance to a lack of forgetting or oblivion: εἰ δὲ νόῳ τις ἔχει θνατῶν ἀλαθείας ὁδόν, χρὴ πρὸς μακάρων | τυγγάνοντ’ εὖ πασχέμεν (“If any mortal has in mind the way of truth, he must suffer well what happens from the gods,” *Pyth.* 3.103-105). *Aletheia* here designates “what generally happens” and shows no sense of time or reference to historical record.

Previous *aletheia*-studies include sparse—if any—reference to epinician or tragedy. No extensive study of Aeschylean terms for truth and falsehood has been published, and there is only one devoted solely to Pindar: Komornicka’s work examines the nuances of various words, some that obviously and expectedly denote truth or falsehood (e.g., ἀλάθεια, ἔτυμος, ψεῦδος), while others are less commonly associated with these concepts (e.g., μαχανά, τέχνα, βουλά). She identifies eight possible aspects of truth, each of which, she argues, Pindaric ἀλάθεια denotes at one time or another.⁷ Her valuable and meticulous work demonstrates that *aletheia* has a much wider range in Pindar than in Homer or Hesiod and thus merits further attention. As I will discuss in Chapter Two, *aletheia* in Homer has largely to do with spoken utterances;⁸ although context may indicate a desire for sincerity or authenticity when one speaks of *aletheia*, these senses are not inherent in the word itself.⁹ Hesiod’s poetry presents a greater range for *aletheia/alethes*—for example, the use of these words to characterize speakers and not

⁷ These possible aspects are: “le réel,” “l’authentique,” “l’essentiel (opposé à l’illusoire, à l’apparent),” “le vrai dans toute oeuvre poétique qui s’appuie sur l’imitation de la réalité (opposé à fiction pure),” “le vrai sur le plan moral de la véracité (sincère, véridique, fidèle) par rapport à l’homme, à ses paroles et à ses actes et par rapport à la divinité,” “le vrai c’est-à-dire ce qui est propre, correct (right, appropriate),” “le vrai, ce qui est vérifiable, ce qui se laisse prouver par rapport,” and “le vraisemblable (verisimile, wahrscheinlich et scheinbar).” Komornicka 1979, 252.

⁸ Cf. Cole 1983, 9, who also observes that ἀλήθεια/ἀληθής in Homer refers to spoken truths.

⁹ Cf. Adkins 1972, who examines Homeric situations of truth-telling and concludes that pleasantness, indicated by phrases like κατὰ κόσμον, is a more valued component of truthful speech than ἀλήθεια and may even denote truthfulness or veracity. One example Adkins cites is Odysseus’ praise of Demodocus’ song in *Od.* 8.487-491.

only their utterances—but again falls short of this full range of meanings, perhaps partially as a consequence of the limited number of examples. Komornicka leaves for other scholars to determine how these different aspects of truth might be related to generic tendencies of epinician poetry, a topic that I will probe in this dissertation. Her work is strictly a word-study and does not explicitly try to explain her findings in terms of genre.

Scholarship that discusses truth and falsehood beyond the limits of a word-study does not pay focused attention to these issues in Pindar or Aeschylus. Within a much larger volume Bremer devotes several pages to Pindaric truth that amount to a survey and summary of the various references to truth in the odes. He makes some notable points, particularly on the role of the poet as a seer who interprets and clarifies a hidden or obscure truth,¹⁰ but leaves room for future scholars to deepen his observations. The two most influential works on truth and falsehood in Greek poetry are Detienne's seminal *The Masters of Truth* and Louise Pratt's *Lying and Poetry from Homer to Pindar*. The central premise of Detienne's book, like his earlier article, is the equivalence he posits between truth and memory that is based on the etymology of *aletheia*. Reasoning that modern conceptions of truth should not cloud our understanding of *aletheia*, he argues that in the pre-literate societies of archaic Greece, the role of truth-tellers (who, for Detienne, are oral poets, seers, and kings) is to preserve existence through memorialization of people or events: not to be talked about is to be forgotten and thus, in the absence of written historical record, to cease to exist.¹¹ Detienne's work is not without its detractors,

¹⁰ Bremer 1976, 301-310.

¹¹ See Detienne 1996, esp. 39-52.

notably Adkins, who argues that the archaic Greeks had a conception of truth similar to a modern one, regardless of their illiteracy.¹²

Pratt's work explores the other side of the truth-falsehood dichotomy by examining the relationship between poets and liars and focusing on the idea of fiction in early Greek poetry. She engages with the prevailing notion of poets as truth-tellers¹³ to argue that self-consciously fictional elements appear in Greek poetry:

The way reflection on truth and lies is formulated in archaic poetry leaves room for archaic appreciation of fictional narrative, narrative that is acknowledged to be made-up, invented, a product of the poetic imagination. (Pratt 1993, 7)

Her chapter on epinician poetry takes up this thesis, pointing out that Pindar and Bacchylides make claims to truth to validate their praise, but noting that these claims do not amount to

a rejection of fictional elements in mythical narrative. Rather, the way truth claims are handled in epinician creates a distinction between victor praise and mythical narrative, so that separate standards are applied to each...mythical narrative must conform not so much to the truth...as to the standards of decorum that regulate traditional narrative poetry. (Pratt 1993, 8)

Both Pratt and Detienne have a fondness for neatly aligned oppositions: Pratt identifies truth and falsehood as important issues in epinician only insofar as they enable accurate praise and blame,¹⁴ a dichotomy that, according to Detienne, parallels *aletheia-lethe*.¹⁵ These oppositions correctly imply that praise is the primary goal of epinician and thus adhere to Bundy's view that "there is no passage in Pindar and Bakkhulides that is not in

¹² See Adkins 1972, esp. 11.

¹³ Proponents of this notion include Luther 1935, Ortega 1970, and Detienne 1996.

¹⁴ Pratt 1993, 115. Cf. Hubbard 1985, 100-106.

¹⁵ Detienne 1996, 49.

its primary intent encomiastic—that is, designed to enhance the glory of a particular patron.”¹⁶ I aim, however, to add more detailed explanation than what Pratt and Detienne offer in their respective works. Furthermore, neither scholar significantly incorporates Aeschylus into his discussion, but as I will explain below, what Aeschylus’ characters say about truth and falsehood can provide critical *comparanda* for Pindar’s treatments of these topics.

Despite comparative inattention to Pindar and Aeschylus, both poets’ treatments of truth and falsehood warrant more focused study. In Pindar the sheer frequency of truth-telling claims indicates the importance of truth to his epinician program, as does the variety of forms these claims take: the poet professes truth through denials of falsehood (cf. *Ol.* 4.17, 13.52; *Pyth.* 2.83; *Nem.* 1.18, 7.49), metaphors designating accuracy,¹⁷ oaths or wishes (*Ol.* 2.92, 6.20-21, 7.20-21, 13.98-100; *Pyth.* 1.42-45; *Nem.* 7.70, 8.35-36), declarations of friendship (*Nem.* 7.61-63), and occasional invocations to a goddess Alatheia (*Ol.* 10.4, Fr. 205), in itself a striking and unusual personification (as I will discuss in Chapter Three).

In addition to his own claims of truthfulness Pindar implies that the duty of poets in general is to combine artistry with accuracy. In *Nemean* 7 he praises Homer’s skill,

¹⁶ Bundy 1986, 3.

¹⁷ E.g., ἔπεχε νῦν σκοπῶ τόξον, ἄγε θυμέ (“Now hold the bow to the target, come, my heart,” *Ol.* 2.89); γνῶναί τ’ ἔπειτ’, ἀρχαῖον ὄνειδος ἀλάθεσιν | λόγοις εἰ φεύγομεν, Βιωτίαν ἔν. ἐσσί γὰρ ἄγγελος ὀρθός, | ἠυκόμων σκυτάλα Μοισᾶν, γλυκὺς κρατήρ ἀγαφθέγκτων αἰοιδᾶν (“and then to know if we escape the ancient taunt of Boeotian pig with our true words, for you are a true messenger, a message stick of the fair-haired Muses, a sweet bowl of songs that ring clear,” *Ol.* 6.89-91); ἐμὲ δ’ εὐθὺν ἀκόντων | ἰέντα ρόμβον παρὰ σκοπὸν οὐ χρή | τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα καρτύνειν χερσῶν (“But when I hurl the whirling javelins on a straight path, I must not hurl those many missiles from my hands and miss the mark,” *Ol.* 13.93-95); αὐξεται καὶ Μοῖσα δι’ ἀγγελίας ὀρθᾶς (“The Muse also is exalted through true reporting,” *Pyth.* 4.279); ἔλπομαι | μέγα εἰπὼν σκοποῦ ἅντα τυχεῖν | ὅτ’ ἀπὸ τόξου ἰεῖς (“I hope to speak a great claim and to hit the mark head on, as if shooting from a bow,” *Nem.* 6. 26-28); μαθῶν δέ τις ἀνερεῖ, | εἰ πᾶρ μέλος ἔρχομαι ψάγιον ὄαρων ἐννέπων (“One who knows me will declare if I come and speak a crooked utterance out of tune,” *Nem.* 7.8-69); πολλὰ γὰρ πολλᾶ λέλεκται, νεαρὰ δ’ ἐξευρόντα δόμεν βασάνῳ ἐς ἐλεγχον, ἅπας κίνδυνος (“For many things have been said in many ways, but it is complete danger to discover new ones and put them to the test on a touchstone,” *Nem.* 8.20-21).

but faults his mendacity (7.20-23), while in *Olympian* 1 he famously criticizes previous accounts of the Tantalos and Pelops myth as untrue while seeming to praise the *charis* of such accounts:

ἦ θαύματα πολλά, καί πού τι καί βροτῶν φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον
δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι
Χάρις δ' ἄπερ ἅπαντα τεύχει τὰ μείλιχα θνατοῖς,
ἐπιφέρεισα τιμὰν καὶ ἄπιστον ἐμήσατο πιστὸν
ἔμμεναι τὸ πολλάκις. (*Ol.* 1.28-32)

Indeed, there are many wonders, and somehow the speeches of mortals, stories, have been embellished beyond the true account and deceive with intricate falsehoods; for Charis, who provides mortals with all pleasant things, often renders the incredible credible by bringing honor.

These statements are in and of themselves unsurprising, but they are undermined by a subsequent

assertion that poets ought to speak well of the gods: ἔστι δ' ἀνδρὶ φάμεν εὐικός ἀμφὶ δαιμόνων καλά· μείων γὰρ αἰτία (“It is fitting for a man to say good things about the gods, for the blame is less,” *Ol.* 1.35). The idea that a poet ought to do what is fitting (εὐικός) seems incongruous with Pindar’s immediately previous criticism of inaccuracy in other poetry, and thus raises the interpretive question of what role truth and falsehood must play in poetry. Similar questions are raised when the poet circumvents full disclosure in *Nemean* 5:

στάσομαι· οὐ τοι ἅπασα κερδίων
φαίνοισα πρόσωπον ἀλάθει' ἀτρεκές·
καὶ τὸ σιγᾶν πολλάκις ἐστὶ σοφώτατον ἀνθρώπῳ νοῆσαι. (*Nem.* 5.16-18)

I will stand back; indeed, not every truth is more profitable when it shows its precise face. And often keeping silent is wisest for a man to think.

The poet’s hesitation to speak ill of Peleus and Telamon ostensibly showcases his desire to speak the truth only when expedient, yet in other contexts he purports to be a truthful

poet. The abundance and variety of his truth claims must be reconciled with these questionable statements about the relationship between truth and poetic content.

Some of this incongruity can be explained with recourse to Plato, whose recommendations about poetry in the *kallipolis* echo Pindar's comments about poetic duty. Socrates in the *Republic* prescribes how stories will be chosen in the ideal state:

Then we must first of all, it seems, supervise the storytellers. We'll select their stories whenever they are fine or beautiful (καλόν) and reject them when they aren't. And we'll persuade nurses and mothers to tell their children the ones we have selected, since they will shape their children's souls with stories much more than they shape their bodies by handling them. (*Rep.* 2.377b-c)¹⁸

According to Socrates the aesthetic quality of stories must determine their inclusion in the *kallipolis*; he qualifies such stories as truthful when he later excludes much of Homer, Hesiod, and other poets for being untrue (οὔτοι γάρ που μύθους τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ψευδεῖς συντιθέντες ἔλεγόν τε καὶ λέγουσι, 377d). His criterion that stories be fine or beautiful (καλόν) and not false (ψευδεῖς) resemble Pindar's comments in *Olympian* 1 about combining art with truth, but he then makes a surprising point about the importance of a true account:

First, telling the greatest falsehood about the most important thing doesn't make a fine story—I mean Hesiod telling us about how Uranus behaved, how Cronus punished him for it, and how he was in turn punished by his own son. *But even if it were true* (οὐδ' ἂν εἰ ἦν ἀληθῆ), *it should be passed over in silence* (σιγᾶσθαι), *not told to foolish young people*.¹⁹ (*Rep.* 2.377e-378a)

The implication is that unflattering stories about the gods are likely untrue, but whatever truth they may have to them should be edited for the sake of decency.

¹⁸ From C.D.C. Reeve's 1992 revision of G.M.A. Grube's translation.

¹⁹ Emphasis mine.

Like Plato, Pindar seemingly privileges silence over truth in certain contexts, and the similarities between their respective instructions about the truth of myth and its ultimate importance are striking.²⁰ But Pindar's rationale for speaking well of the gods and heroes differs from Plato's. While Socrates in the *Republic* argues that poetry should play an educative role by depicting models of good behavior, Pindar's hesitation to slander the gods and heroes seems to stem from self-interest, for he makes reference to the blame and impoverishment that await the unflattering poet. These differences alone indicate that a strictly Platonic explanation of Pindar's relationship to truth is insufficient.²¹

The complexity of truth in Pindar is further deepened by the poet's unusual uses of words for truth, which, aside from his two invocations to *Alatheia*, are for the most part separate from his truth claims. At the very least Pindar's conception of truth and its role in poetry is rather complicated: he does not wholeheartedly embrace the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, but he does not completely subordinate truth to his praise either. Pindar's putative adherence to accuracy, coupled with his distinctive language of truth, begs examination both of his terms for truth and falsehood and of the contexts in which they appear.

²⁰ For further discussion of Pindar's and Plato's views of poetry, see Komornicka 1984. For a biographical comparison between Pindar and Plato, see des Places 1949.

²¹ Furthermore, a Platonic interpretation of any body of work is untenable if for no other reason than that the breadth and concomitant inconsistencies within the Platonic corpus itself make any firm notion of a "Platonic reading" highly problematic. The density and profundity of Pindaric thought are certainly remarkable and, I believe, inherently consistent, but if any philosophical bent occurs in the poetry, it is unique to Pindar and cannot be narrowly identified with only one branch of philosophy. A truly thorough examination of Pindaric "philosophy" would have to take into account many philosophical branches, and such a project was beyond the scope of this dissertation. Finally, even if possible, a strictly Platonic interpretation would have detracted and distracted from a deeper understanding of Pindar's poetry and its internal complexity.

Aeschylus too has been given short shrift in scholarly discussions of truth and falsehood, even though his treatments of these concepts raise many unanswered questions. As I will discuss in the next chapter, Aeschylus pays homage to his Homeric predecessor by treating truth and falsehood as verbal entities, but he expands the scope of application of words for truth and falsehood: *aletheia* or *alethes* in Aeschylus can refer to accuracy or to sincerity, whereas Homeric uses are limited to the former application; furthermore, Homer reserves *aletheia/alethes* for statements about the past, but Aeschylus expands the time dimension of truth by designating statements about either past or future as true or false. The contexts in which truth and falsehood appear also demand examination, as they point up the issue of who possesses the truth. Without the third-person narrator of epic or first-person of lyric, tragedy less clearly indicates where authority over truth and falsehood lies, thus engendering an interplay of doubt and belief. Moreover, tragedy's point-counterpoint interaction between characters forms an interesting way in which to view truth and falsehood, for it allows us to examine these concepts through the lens of credibility and to consider which criteria mark characters as inherently truthful or not. When the Chorus of the *Agamemnon* question Clytemnestra's knowledge of Troy's fall, do they demonstrate Aeschylus' adherence to traditional prejudices against female credibility or his challenge to them? In both Pindar and Aeschylus gender is a considerable factor as something to be considered in contexts of truth and falsehood, yet the scholarly treatment of gender in Pindar is effectively nonexistent, while scholarship on gender in tragedy has not included much discussion of truth and falsehood.

I have determined that there is need for studies of truth and falsehood in Aeschylus and in Pindar, but what justifies discussion of both in one work? Comparison

of these two poets is not unprecedented: John Finley published his lectures on Pindar and Aeschylus in one volume (1955), and the Oresteia myth in *Pythian* 11 has occasioned at least one critical essay comparing Pindar's rendition with that of Aeschylus²² as well as a commentary on the ode that includes similar comparison between the two treatments of the myth.²³ On the simplest level there is the coincidence of time period: both poets were composing during the same decades of the 5th century BCE, a contemporaneity that invites comparative study and elicits observations of differences between the poets in terms of focus. The traditional view is that Pindar, as a Boeotian praise poet, looks backward to preserve aristocratic and heroic ideals, while Aeschylus, an Athenian during the city's golden age, exalts progressivism and democracy. The broad truth of this view can be explained partly by differences of genre. Pindar's epinician task demands praise that is easily recognizable as such and thus draws on the familiar heroes of old as models for the present athletic victors. Tragedy, by contrast, presents irresolvable conflicts that undermine tradition and challenge the status quo. Although some would argue that Aeschylus ultimately upholds tradition,²⁴ his tragedy at the very least problematizes and perhaps overtly criticizes it.

The primary claim of this dissertation is that both Pindar's and Aeschylus' treatments of truth and falsehood must be understood within the context of their respective genres. While Pindar's underlying purpose, as Bundy says, may be to praise the victor, he expresses this purpose as a duty to tell the truth. Pindar couches his claims in terms of truth and falsehood, but these terms in turn are defined as part of the

²² Herington 1984.

²³ Finglass 2007.

²⁴ E.g., Thomson 1941, Jones 1962, Vickers 1973 on the sexual conflicts of the *Oresteia*. See Betensky 1978, 11 for a summary of their specific arguments and further discussion.

relationship of obligation and reciprocity between poet and victor. He thus defines truth in terms of praise to the victor by implicating *aletheia* as part of his poetic duty.

Aeschylus, on the other hand, has a different purpose, which is to tell the story of a mythical or historical change of fortune, as Aristotle would say. He incorporates truth and falsehood as part of this storyline by creating issues of credibility in the dialogue between characters. Whether various characters are perceived as truthful or not furthers the plot, which often centers on retributive justice.

This dissertation represents an amalgam of various approaches and is heavily indebted to an eclectic mix of scholarship. The first chapter seeks to emulate the rigorous scrutiny of a word-study, but subsequent chapters aim to synthesize the data into a unified thesis. I endeavor to deepen and broaden the studies of Pratt and Detienne, both of whom pay little attention to Pindar and none to Aeschylus. Pratt discusses epinician poetry more extensively than Detienne, but she examines primarily passages that refer directly to poetry. I expand on her discussion by including examination of the mythical content as also applicable to Pindar's views on truth and falsehood in relation to poetry. At times I differ from Pratt's interpretations, particularly in my discussion of falsehood in Pindar where my argument relies on the premise that Pindar's mythical narratives can provide valuable insight into his conception of praise poetry. Pratt, by contrast, does not discuss the parallelism between praise poetry and mythical narrative.

My general approach to Pindar borrows from a number of scholars including Bundy, Race, and Kurke who differ greatly in many respects but share at least one commonality: all seem to presume a connectivity or coherence of thought and purpose in Pindar's poetry, which is manifested through his imagery, ideas, rhetorical devices, and language. This dissertation is premised on the consistency of Pindaric thought, a

consistency that allows for explanation of one difficult passage to be sought in another. Bundy aims to demonstrate that Pindar's many diffuse elements can be explained as matters of generic convention. He thus argues that the stylistic and rhetorical features of *Isthmian* 1 and *Olympian* 11 are emblematic of epinician's generic patterns and provides as evidence comparison to similar elements in other odes.²⁵ Kurke, on the other hand, attempts to situate Pindar's odes in their socio-historical context and refers to her book *The Traffic in Praise* as a "sociological poetics."²⁶ To that end she focuses on the images and metaphors of poetry as a social function and draws on the work of economic theorists to argue that Pindar's mixture of metaphors reflects the transition of archaic Greece from an "embedded economy" based on symbolic wealth (e.g., fame or *kleos*) to a "disembedded economy" that is currency-based and therefore less intertwined with social institutions.²⁷ My dissertation is informed by her work to some extent, particularly her observations about the poet-patron relationship and the language of exchange that characterizes it. This relationship is often construed as one of friendship or guest-friendship (cf. *Pyth.* 1.93, *Ol.* 1.103, *Nem.* 7.61) or likened to a marriage alliance (cf. *Ol.* 7.1-10).²⁸ Where my project is both indebted to and differs from Kurke is in its focus on *aletheia* as it relates to Pindaric *xenia*. Louise Pratt hints at a connection between *aletheia* and poetic obligation when she asserts that praise, blame, and propriety are more central to epinician poetry than truth and falsehood are, but I believe her observations can be clarified by close examination of what truth and falsehood mean, and how these concepts

²⁵ Bundy 1986, 4-7.

²⁶ Kurke 1991, 10.

²⁷ Kurke 1991, 166-167.

²⁸ For Kurke's discussion of these passages, see Kurke 1991, 47, 86, 100, 118-122, 140.

help define the goals of epinician poetry. To some degree I synthesize the work of Kurke and Pratt while providing a fresh look at passages or aspects of Pindar's poetry that neither scholar examines, particularly in my discussion of falsehood and deception in Pindar.

My approach to Aeschylus is similarly eclectic: the specific nature of my topic demands close examination of certain passages key to discussions of truth and falsehood, but I have endeavored as well to consider each passage within the larger context of the play in which it appears. I have been influenced by a number of scholars who run the gamut between general studies of Aeschylus (e.g., Gagarin 1976, Winnington-Ingram 1983) to specialized studies focusing on gender in tragedy (e.g., Goldhill 1984, Zeitlin 1996, Foley 2001). My interest in a gender-conscious approach grew both from my observations about Pindar's treatment of women and deception (see Chapter Three) and from a realization that Aeschylus often depicts sexual conflicts or uses gender differences to represent the various conflicts within his tragedies and that this gender dynamic affects his presentation of truth and falsehood as well.

My two major purposes are to clarify what Pindar and Aeschylus mean when they speak about truth and falsehood and to show how these meanings are manifested in their poetry. To those ends the next chapter examines terms for truth and falsehood in Pindar and Aeschylus, Chapter Three discusses specific contexts for truth and falsehood in Pindar, and Chapter Four provides a corresponding discussion for Aeschylus. The contexts in which *aletheia* appears in Pindar demonstrate the specificity of his genre, for the meaning of *aletheia* is colored by its association with ritualized relationships of obligation. I consequently examine Pindaric truth and obligation in Chapter Three, arguing that the poet's adherence to a "true" account stems from a notion that truth is

connected to the poet's obligation to praise: the poet may claim to tell the truth by suggesting that a truthful account is one that depicts its subject in a flattering light. As I hope to demonstrate, Pindar embraces both truth and praise simultaneously by defining truth as inextricably linked to his obligation to his patron. I then examine the relationship of falsehood and deception to Pindaric *xenia*. I hope to elucidate not only that falsehood and deception are considered negative qualities—this should be obvious—but that Pindar construes their negativity as stemming from their harm to the stability of sacred social institutions. Furthermore, gender figures into the relationship of deception and falsehood to *xenia*, for Pindar often associates the corruption of social institutions with deception by a female character. He thus exploits a familiar misogyny by incorporating it into his own genre.

The fourth chapter deals with truth and falsehood in Aeschylean tragedy, for which, of course, it is not as easy to determine the poet's conception of truth and falsehood since tragedy, unlike epinician, lacks a first-person voice that reflects the persona of the poet. It is possible, however, to make conjectures based on examinations of the characters who claim to speak the truth and how such characters affect, and are treated within, the overall tragedy. This chapter includes a discussion of gender, which, as in Pindar, plays a role in how Aeschylus presents issues of truth and falsehood. Many of Aeschylus' female characters, for example Clytemnestra, Cassandra, the Chorus of Danaids, and the Chorus of the *Seven*, must grapple with the problem of not being believed or heeded, despite telling the truth. Like Pindar, Aeschylus develops the motif of female deception, but he complicates this by putting true yet disbelieved statements and judgments in the mouths of his female characters. Unlike Pindar, who incorporates truth into a system of *xenia*, perhaps even redefining truth in the course of doing so,

Aeschylus incorporates truth into the inevitability of retributive violence, employing both truth and falsehood as propagators of retribution.

Throughout the dissertation I use the text of Snell and Maehler's Teubner edition of Pindar and Page's Oxford Classical Text of Aeschylus. Translations of all Greek texts are my own unless otherwise indicated.

CHAPTER TWO: TERMS FOR TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will examine some key terms for truth and falsehood in Aeschylus and Pindar. I begin with a general discussion of definitions provided by LSJ and various word-studies, then move outward to consider particular instances in Aeschylus and Pindar in order to determine what context may tell us about the two poets' applications of terms for truth and falsehood.²⁹ The assumption underlying this method is that any use of a word is governed by an understanding of its socially recognized definition and that individual instances reflect this definition by their adherence to, variance from, or variation of it. Accordingly, the definitions I mine from the lexica are a starting point for what a word's recognized, "normal" definition might be, and I compare these definitions to individual examples in context. My assumptions are informed by Saussure and, I suspect, other semiologists who posit a distinction between utterances themselves and the underlying conventions that make such utterances possible and comprehensible. Saussure articulates this difference with the terms *parole* ("speech") and *langue* ("language"). At the level of the individual word the relevant Saussurean distinction would be that between value and meaning (*signification*), where "meaning" refers to a word's simple definition, i.e., the object or concept that a word represents, and "value" encompasses a word's *signification*, but additionally refers to the word's function within the system of language and can be understood only in comparison or opposition to

²⁹ At some points I refer to a word's etymology, for which I rely on Chantraine.

other words.³⁰ In my study “meaning” corresponds to the definitions supplied by Chantraine, LSJ, Italic, and Slater, while “value” corresponds to the designations conveyed by their contexts. In a sense when I compare terms for truth and falsehood, I am attempting to determine Pindaric and Aeschylean values for these terms, treating each poet’s oeuvre as a system of language, even though both poets, obviously, compose in Greek.

These distinctions may seem forced since it is impossible to understand a word without recourse to an examination of individual uses in context; the distinction between meaning and value might thus be a moot point since meaning can never be fully determinable without recourse to context. Indeed, the definitions proposed in the lexica of LSJ, Italic, and Slater are derived from studies of individual words in context. My use of various lexica as starting points, however, should not undermine my method, as lexical definitions are themselves theories of usage, and my examination of particular words in context tests those theories. In the absence of absolutely extra-contextual definitions, I turn to the lexica as reasonable starting points, and I have used Saussure to explain why I take context into consideration. I begin with a summary of LSJ’s various definitions and the scholarship related to them before I devote a section each to Aeschylus and Pindar.

LSJ

I have focused on five key terms for truth and falsehood—*ἀλήθεια*, *ἔτυμος/ἑτήτυμος*, *ἀπάτη*, *δόλος*, and *ψεῦδος*—and supplement with etymological information where necessary.

ἀλήθεια

³⁰ Cf. Saussure 1983, 13-14, 112-114.

LSJ note that in Homer ἀλήθεια is used only in the sense of “opposite to a lie,” i.e., as an indication of verbal veracity. Accordingly, ἀλήθεια and the neuter substantive ἀληθεία appear primarily as direct objects of verbs of speaking.³¹ Post-Homeric uses of ἀλήθεια indicate its opposition to mere appearance, hence designating something akin to reality or on the personal level, a disposition towards truthfulness and sincerity. Its adjectival form reflects a similar history and range and may necessitate a translation other than simply “true,” depending on what it describes. For example, when applied to an oracle ἀληθής has two definitions cited by LSJ: “true, unerring” or “realizing itself, coming to fulfillment.” As an example of the first definition LSJ cites Pindar, *Pythian* 11.6 where Ismenion is called “the true seat of seers” (ἀλαθέα μαντίων θῶκον) for providing prophecies that do not err. The second application of ἀληθής appears in Aeschylus’ *Seven Against Thebes* 944, where, as I will discuss below, the key factor in this second application of ἀληθής is time and whether the event predicted by the oracle has occurred yet. Furthermore, the use of ἀλήθεια/ἀληθής with verbs of speaking has drawn attention from a number of scholars,³² including Krischer who argues that the word inherently conveys the perspective of the truth-teller.³³

The *communis opinio* regarding ἀληθής is that it derives from an alpha-privative of λήθη, thus etymologically designating something devoid of oblivion or concealment. Scholars have made much hay over this apparent etymology, each attempting to identify ever more precisely how it ultimately affects the use of ἀληθής. Heitsch has argued that

³¹ Cf. Starr 1968, 349, Cole 1983, 9.

³² Cf. Starr 1968, 349: “Homer employed [*alethes*] almost exclusively with verbs of saying as an object to connote precision and clarity.”

³³ Krischer 1965.

ἀλήθεια designates what is evident and not concealed,³⁴ while Detienne seems to focus on the perspective of the perceiver rather than what is perceived, as he promotes a near equivalence between ἀλήθεια and memory.³⁵ Several other scholars have similarly tried to identify the perspective of the root λήθη: Snell argues that the root refers to forgetfulness in the perceiver of an object rather than to a quality of concealment in the object described,³⁶ while Cole further qualifies Snell’s observation by arguing that ἀλήθεια involves or results “from a transmission of information that excludes *lêthê*, whether in the form of forgetfulness, failure to notice, or ignoring.”³⁷ Studies of ἀλήθεια have been so abundant that nearly every scholar who studies truth and falsehood in Greek thought has been compelled to weigh in on the topic, however briefly. Pratt has found that the opposition between truth and forgetting, suggested by the etymology of ἀλήθεια, is only one of many such oppositions: “Aletheia...excludes not only forgetfulness but also invention, falsehood, fiction, intentional omission, insincerity, equivocation—anything that might prevent the hearer’s perceiving accurately the subject matter under discussion, anything that might interfere with the process of communication.”³⁸ My own examinations of ἀλήθεια in Aeschylus and Pindar have led me to conclude with Pratt that whatever the correct interpretation of the etymology, memory and oblivion are only somewhat apparent in, and largely irrelevant to, the contextualized use of ἀλήθεια; ἀλήθεια must be understood in relation to its context and whatever comparisons or oppositions context might reveal. What I attempt in this word study is thus an

³⁴ Heitsch 1962. Cf. Levet 1976, 17 who argues that *aletheia/alethes* denotes an absence of concealment.

³⁵ Detienne 1960.

³⁶ See Snell 1975, 17.

³⁷ Cole 1983, 8.

³⁸ Pratt 1993, 21.

examination, in Saussurean terms, of the “value” of ἀλήθεια, rather than its “meaning” or “signification.”

ἔτυμος/ἐτήτυμος

Defined by LSJ as “true,” ἔτυμος in its neuter singular form comes to be used as a substantive designating “the true sense of a word according to its origin.” This use of ἔτυμον derives from the idea of reality or authenticity inherent in ἔτυμος.³⁹ Krischer articulates the difference between ἔτυμος and ἀληθής as one that centers on the perspective of the speaker: while Homer uses ἀληθής or ἀλήθεια to indicate “the type of truth which may be communicated by an individual on the basis of his own experience,”⁴⁰ ἔτυμος does not contain this experiential aspect and more broadly refers to factual reality.

ἀπάτη, δόλος

These terms can refer either to a specific trick or act of deception or can more abstractly designate treachery, guile, craft, or cunning. The verbal forms ἀπατάω/ἐξαπατάω and δολόω correspondingly mean “to cheat, deceive” and “to beguile;” the passive, however, of ἀπατάω may remove the idea of an exterior agent of deception and denote self-deception or misapprehension instead.

ψεῦδος

This noun has two English equivalents, “lie” or “falsehood,” as the degree of intention underlying the falsehood varies. The term ψεῦδος has received much less scholarly attention than ἀλήθεια, perhaps as a result of its less remarkable etymology: it may derive ultimately from a root meaning “blow,” which is used idiomatically to

³⁹ Chantraine 1983-1984, s.v. “ἔτεός.”

⁴⁰ Kromer 1976, 425, summarizing the argument of Krischer 1965.

designate a lie.⁴¹ Although ἀλήθεια has more intriguing origins, the word ψεύδος is comparatively complex and has a considerably broad range. Contextually, the word can indicate a purposeful deceit, as in *Pythian 2* where the word is used of the Hera-apparition concocted by Zeus to deceive Ixion, or it can be used of anything false, whether intentionally or unintentionally so. As Pratt notes, “The noun *pseudos* and the related verbs and adjectives do not necessarily imply that the speaker deliberately seeks to deceive the hearer; they denote only the objective falsity of what is said.”⁴²

The corresponding verb ψεύδω, defined by LSJ as “cheat by lies, beguile,” conveys intention much more pointedly than the noun, at least in its active voice. Like ἀπατάω, its passive form can denote misperception on the part of its subject, thus focusing on the deceived rather than a separate deceiver who may or may not exist. The older and more common middle form ψεύδομαι shows a range of application similar to the noun, denoting alternatively the actions of lying, saying what is untrue (whether intentionally or not), or deception. The middle form, then, is flexible as to whether it conveys intentional falsehood or not. Because of its broad nature, ψεύδος and its cognates function as antonyms to several words for truth. The famous words of Hesiod’s Muses best exemplify this flexibility of ψεύδος: ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα, | ἴδμεν δ’, εὔτ’ ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι (*Theog.* 27-28).

AESCHYLUS

TRUTH

⁴¹ Chantraine 1999, s.v. “ψεύδομαι” summarizes this hypothesis.

⁴² Pratt 1993, 56.

The words ἀληθής and ἔτυμος and their variants overlap a great deal in Aeschylus and are nearly synonymous. For both adjectives Italiane’s primary definition is *verus* (“true”), with ἀλήθεια corresponding to *veritas* (“truth”), and the contexts in which both sets of terms appear involve messages or statements that accurately convey reality, either specific or general. The difference between the two adjectives seems to lie primarily in usage: ἀληθής is largely used of verbal messages,⁴³ while ἔτυμος describes accurate non-verbal signals. By and large Aeschylean instances of ἀλήθεια and its cognates and compounds (e.g., ἀληθεύω, ἀληθόμαντις) consist of references to verbal statements, a usage pattern that reflects a variation of Homeric usage and characterizes a direct verbal interaction between two parties. When Clytemnestra speaks of her qualities as a faithful, loyal wife, she claims that her boasts are teeming with truth (τῆς ἀληθείας γέμων, 613), although she is lying, of course.⁴⁴ Similarly, the Herald describes his report to the Queen in the *Persians* as ἀληθής:

ταῦτ’ ἔστ’ ἀληθῆ, πολλὰ δ’ ἐκλείπω λέγων
κακῶν ἃ Πέρσαις ἐγκατέσκηψεν θεός.

These things are *true*, but I omit many of the woes a god has hurled against the Persians. (*Pers.* 513-514)

⁴³ This is not a hard and fast distinction: Aeschylus applies the adjective ἀληθής to the message of the beacon-fires in the *Agamemnon* (491) and to accurately foreboding dreams in the *Seven Against Thebes* (710), but only the second instance serves as a real exception; as I will discuss in Chapter Four, *Ag.* 491 applies ἀληθής to the beacon-fires only when their accuracy is to be confirmed by the verbal report of the Herald.

⁴⁴ Goldhill 1984, 56 observes that this phrase τῆς ἀληθείας γέμων (“full of the truth”) “implies the possibility of its opposite, that the language may have no truth content—as indeed in this case it has not.”

There is some debate about the speaker of these lines, which belong to the herald in the manuscripts. Most scholars, following Fraenkel, Hermann, and Wilamowitz, make Clytemnestra the speaker of these lines, but Thomson 1966 *ad* 613-616 argues for following the manuscripts. Given the general scholarly acceptance that the manuscripts are wrong here and the play’s tendency to associate the female characters with incredibility, which I will discuss in Chapter Four, I am inclined to follow Fraenkel et al.

The adjective ἀληθής notably does *not* imply that the account is complete, as the Herald himself acknowledges, but only that none of the words uttered by him is patently false. Describing events that have already occurred, the Herald applies ἀληθής to statements about the past. The adverb ἀληθῶς adheres closely to its adjectival form; the Chorus of the *Agamemnon* thus apply this adverb to their comprehension of Cassandra’s prophecies and use the term to confirm the veracity of what she has said (τὴν μὲν Θυέστου δαῖτα παιδείων κρεῶν | ξυνῆκα καὶ πέφρικα, καὶ φόβος μ’ ἔχει | κλύοντ’ ἀληθῶς οὐδὲν ἐξηκασμένα, “Thyestes’ feast upon his children’s flesh I understand and shudder at, and fear takes hold of me as I hear it *truly told* and not in images,” *Ag.* 1242-1244).

Similarly, the term ἔτυμος/ἐτήτυμος denotes accuracy in reporting, but is more likely than ἀληθής to be applied to non-verbal representations of what has happened. As such, it characterizes interpersonal communication less often and reflects an individual’s understanding of something rather than a communication between two people. When the Chorus of the *Agamemnon* wonder about the accuracy of the beacon-fires or the Chorus of the *Seven Against Thebes* interpret a dust-cloud as signaling an advance of troops, they use the terms ἐτήτυμος and ἔτυμος to specify the accuracy of their respective signals (εἰ δ’ ἐτήτυμος, | τίς οἶδεν, ἢ τι θεῖόν ἐστὶ πη ψύθος; “Who knows if it is *true* or somehow some godly lie?” *Ag.* 477-478; αἰθερία κόνις με πείθει φανεῖσ’ | ἀναυδος σαφῆς ἔτυμος ἄγγελος, “A cloud of dust on high appears and persuades me, a messenger clear and *true*, though voiceless,” *Sept.* 81-82). Although Aeschylus departs from the Homeric formulae for ἀληθής, his application of it to verbal statements and his contrasting use of ἔτυμος for nonverbal signals parallels the Homeric distinction between ἔτυμος and ἀληθής that

Krischer discusses,⁴⁵ for ἔτυμος refers to messages that do not carry the subjectivity of a specific speaker so much as of the interpreter of the message.

There are some instances where ἀλήθεια, ἀληθής, and ἔτυμος designate accurate prophecies of events that have not yet occurred. For the adjective ἀληθής, Italic distinguishes these instances under the separate definition *ratus* (“fixed, settled”), but does not create similar sub-headings for ἀλήθεια or ἔτυμος. When these words refer to future events, they involve individual prescience or interpretation of divine will. For example, Clytemnestra confirms that certain predictions are in line with ἀλήθεια:

Χο. ὄνειδος ἦκει τόδ’ ἀντ’ ὀνειδούς,
δύσμαχα δ’ ἐστὶ κρῖναι.
φέρει φέροντ’, ἐκτίνει δ’ ὁ καίνων·
μίμνει δὲ μίμνοντος ἐν θρόνῳ Διὸς
παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα· θέσμιον γάρ.
τίς ἂν γονὰν ἀραῖον ἐκβάλοι δόμων;
κεκόλληται γένος πρὸς ἄτα.
Κλ. ἐς τόνδ’ ἐνέβης ξὺν ἀληθείᾳ
χρησμόν. (Ag. 1560-1568)

Chorus: This reproach meets reproach, and it is difficult to judge. Someone plunders the plunderer, and a murderer pays the price. It awaits that the doer suffer while Zeus abides on his throne, for it is the law. Who would cast out the cursed stock from the home? The race is bound fast to ruin.

Clytemnestra: You have come upon this prophecy *with truth*.

The Chorus’ prophecy is deemed ξὺν ἀληθείᾳ because of what generally happens in such cases. Although neither Clytemnestra nor the Chorus knows the specifics of what is to occur, both acknowledge that the law of Zeus dictates retributive events to come, and Clytemnestra attaches the term ἀλήθεια to this law.

⁴⁵ Krischer 1965.

Both ἀληθής and ἔτυμος can similarly be used to specify the accuracy of injunctions regarding the future. This use of ἀληθής occur in the *Seven Against Thebes* in reference to Oedipus' curse on his sons:

κάρτα δ' ἀληθῆ πατρὸς Οἰδιπόδα
πόντιν Ἐρινὺς ἐπέκρανεν. (*Sept.* 885-886)

The dread Fury of father Oedipus brought exceedingly *true* things to fulfillment.

πικρὸς λυτῆρ νεικέων ὁ πόντιος
ξεῖνος ἐκ πυρὸς συθείς,
θηκτὸς σίδαρος, πικρὸς δ' ὁ χρημάτων
κακὸς δατητὰς Ἄρης, ἀρὰν πατρώ -
αν τιθείς ἀλαθῆ. (*Sept.* 941-946)

The stranger from over the sea is a bitter decider of strife, hastened by fire, Ares, a sharpened steel, bitter, evil distributor of possessions, making their father's curse true.

The actions of Eteocles and Polyneices demonstrate the prescience of Oedipus' curse on his sons. In these lines the Chorus frame their story as one that has essentially been written by the previous generation. What has already been said is ἀληθής even though the statements precede the event.

An analogous use of ἐτήτυμος appears in an inquiry posed to Cassandra by the Chorus of the *Agamemnon*: εἰ δ' ἐτητύμως | μόρον τὸν αὐτῆς οἴσθα, πῶς θεηλάτου | βοὸς δίκην πρὸς βωμὸν εὐτόλμως πατεῖς; (“But if *truly* you know your fate, how do you walk courageously toward the altar like a god-driven cow?” *Ag.* 1296-1298). The adverb ἐτητύμως serves the emphatic function of English “really” or “truly”; in this context, particularly with its syntactical proximity to μόρον, the Chorus' question effectively becomes, “If you know your fate truly” or “If you know your true fate.” In the special case of Cassandra, whose prophetic ability allows her clear sight of events regardless of when they occur, ἐτητύμως now comes to qualify accurate knowledge of the future, as it

is applied here to a situation that has not yet played itself out. Italic does not identify this instance as a distinct application of ἐτητύμος, but it is comparable to ἀληθής-*ratus*, where ἀληθής refers to the fulfillment or accomplishment of a statement; what this example of ἐτητύμος does demonstrate is its similar applicability to events not yet unfolded.

Secondarily, terms for truth can underscore interior truthfulness, i.e., sincerity or the tendency toward matching word with disposition and deed, but such uses are relatively rare. Aeschylean ἀλήθεια in one instance does show the post-Homeric application to sincerity or truthfulness, as Italic identifies:

τίς δ' ἐπιτύμβιον αἶνον ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ θείῳ
σὺν δακρύοις ἰάπτων
ἀλήθεια φρενῶν πονήσει; (*Ag.* 1548-1550)

Who will send forth with tears and, *with the truth* of his mind, labor at praise over the tomb for the godly man?

The Chorus utter these lines to Clytemnestra, specifying ἀλήθεια as a quality desired in a loyal eulogist of Agamemnon. This instance thus differs from Clytemnestra's earlier use (613), where ἀλήθεια qualified a statement rather than a disposition. The difference between these two applications of ἀλήθεια is comparable to an interior-exterior contrast: while ἀλήθεια is predominantly used of statements that accurately represent events exterior to the speaker, this secondary use of ἀλήθεια refers to the inner disposition of a speaker and how this disposition affects the quality of his words. Furthermore, the contrast between the Chorus' and Clytemnestra's respective uses of this word cannot be denied: the Chorus' use of ἀλήθεια encompasses both accuracy and sincerity, while Clytemnestra uses ἀλήθεια more narrowly to denote accuracy. Of course, in her case neither her disposition nor her actions match her words, and she is neither accurate nor sincere. She knows what a good wife ought to do and say in her circumstances, and she

consequently claims to act accordingly, attaching the term ἀλήθεια to these claims. The Chorus’ desire for a eulogist with *aletheia* in his mind demonstrates their more expansive understanding that merely saying what is suitable for the occasion is not sufficient, but must be accompanied by a similar disposition, a sentiment familiar from epinician poetry.⁴⁶

The adverbial form ἐτύμως can also denote sincerity, although slightly differently from ἀλήθεια. Italic cites two instances where ἐτύμως denotes sincerity (*Sept.* 919 and *Supp.* 81), but I would argue that both these passages showcase the use of ἐτύμως for emphasis along the same lines as English “really” or “very,” and their conveyance of sincerity is more a function of the high emotional context than of the word’s inherent meaning. The Saussurean *value* of a word is a helpful tool here for understanding since it is the relationship between ἐτύμως and its surrounding context that conveys sincerity. When the Chorus of the *Seven Against Thebes* report to Ismene and Antigone the deaths of their brothers, the language is rife with emotionally charged terms and syntax:

προπέμπει δαϊκτῆρ
 γόος αὐτόστονος αὐτοπήμων,
 δαιόφρων, οὐ φιλογα-
 θής, ἐτύμως δακρυχέων
 ἐκ φρενός, ἃ κλαιομένας μου μινύθει
 τοῖνδε δυοῖν ἀνάκτοιν. (*Sept.* 916-921)

A heartrending lament sends them forth, for one’s own griefs, for one’s own woes, miserable, not mirthful, *truly* shedding tears from the mind, which diminishes as I weep for these two lords.

The adverb ἐτύμως, which I have translated “truly,”⁴⁷ reinforces the tone of sincerity of those lamenting through emphasis of its surrounding context. The passage as a whole stresses interiority (ἐκ φρενός) and mournfulness with a series of words for lament in

⁴⁶ I will discuss Clytemnestra and ἀλήθεια in more detail in Chapter Four.

⁴⁷ Cf. Hutchinson 1985, *ad*919, who provides “in truth.”

asyndeton and a chiasmic ordering of repeated roots (δαϊκτῆρ |...αὐτόστονος αὐτοπήμων, | δαϊόφρων, 916-918).

Similarly, the other instance of ἐτύμως-*sincere* appears in another emotionally charged passage, this time from the *Suppliants*:

ἀλλὰ θεοὶ γενέται κλύετ' εὔ τὸ δίκαιον ἰδόντες
+ἦβρα μὴ τέλεον+ δόντες ἔχειν παρ' αἴσαν,
ὑβριν δ' ἐτύμως στυγοῦντες
πέλοιτ' ἂν ἔνδικοι γάμοις. (*Supp.* 79-82)

But ancestral gods, listen and behold justice well. Granting nothing contrary to pronounced decree and *truly* hating insolence you would be righteous to marriage.

In the Chorus of Danaids' appeal to the gods the adverb ἐτύμως emphasizes the emotive excitement already present in the vivid language. This passage effects a similar tone with its use of imperatives and loaded words such as ὑβριν and στυγοῦντες. In each passage the adverb ἐτύμως connotes sincerity because it appears in and reinforces such psychologized contexts.

Where Aeschylean ἔτυμος differs from ἀλήθεια/ἀληθής is in its much broader range of uses. Italic specifies *verus*, *sincere*, and *recte* as possible applications of ἔτυμος/ἐτήτυμος and their adverbs. In addition to veracity and sincerity the word may designate accuracy in the sense of suitability, appropriateness, or aptness. When Athena promises to select a jury for Orestes' trial in the *Eumenides* and to pronounce the best verdict possible, she characterizes her intent to do so as ἐτητύμως: κρίνασα δ' ἀστῶν τῶν ἐμῶν τὰ βέλτατα | ἦξω διαιρεῖν τοῦτο πράγμα' ἐτητύμως ("After choosing the best of my citizens, I will come to judge this affair correctly," *Eum.* 487-488). Italic rightly defines this instance of ἐτητύμως as *recte* rather than *vere*, for Athena does not mean to make a factually accurate judgment so much as one that is fair and just.

The adjective ἔτυμος can designate proper lineages of abstract concepts. Likewise, when the Chorus of the *Eumenides* exclaim, “How *truly* is Hubris the child of Impiety” (δυσσεβίας μὲν ὕβρις τέκος ὡς ἐτύμως, 534), it does not assert Hubris’ descent from Impiety as a matter of scientific, historical, or theological fact;⁴⁸ rather, the Chorus convey the close association between δυσσεβία and ὕβρις and the natural tendency to think of these two concepts as interconnected. Likewise, the choral ode to Justice following Orestes’ and Clytemnestra’s last exchange of the *Choephoroi* incorporates the term ἐτήτυμος in its discussion of Justice’s pedigree:

ἔμολε δ’ ἧ μέλει κρυπταδίου μάχας
 δολιόφρων Ποινά,
 ἔθιγε δ’ ἐν μάχα χερὸς ἐτήτυμος
 Διὸς κόρα, Δίκαν δέ νιν
 προσαγορεύομεν
 βροτοὶ τυχόντες καλῶς,
 ὀλέθριον πνέουσ’ ἐν ἐχθροῖς κότον. (946-952)

The crafty goddess of Vengeance has come, who concerns herself with the secret battle, and the *true* daughter of Zeus took hold of her hand in battle. Justice is what we mortals call her, hitting the mark well, since she breathes deadly rancor on her enemies.

The Chorus etymologize Justice’s name Δίκη from Διὸς κῶρα, although there is some debate as to whether ἐτήτυμος actually refers to an etymology or simply describes the aptness of Justice’s descent from Zeus as the accomplisher of his work.⁴⁹ In either case ἐτήτυμος designates accuracy in the sense of appropriateness, whether of Dike’s name or her descent.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Pace Sommerstein 1989, ad 533-7 who translates ὡς ἐτύμως “in reality,” contending that Aeschylus means to correct traditional proverbial thought, which posits κόρος as the mother of ὕβρις. Given the flexibility of parentage for abstract concepts, I find it improbable that Aeschylus would reference and rectify a hard and fast family tree for *hubris*.

⁴⁹ See Garvie 1986 ad 948-51 for a discussion of these lines and for relevant bibliography.

⁵⁰ According to Headlam 1891, 152, ἐτήτυμος “is frequently used in later Greek in connexion with *descent*.” Cited in Garvie 1986 ad 948-951.

In Aeschylus we can see the precursor to the later use of τὸ ἔτυμον as “etymology,” for the adjective designates appropriateness in naming.⁵¹ In the famous choral ode about Helen in the *Agamemnon*, the Chorus etymologize, albeit falsely as in the case of Dike in the *Choephoroi*, the name Helen as originating from a root meaning “to kill.” The use of ἔτυμος again designates accuracy in the sense of aptness rather than historical or linguistic fact, as Italic notes by defining this instance as *recte* rather than *vere*:

τίς ποτ' ὠνόμαζεν ὧδ'
 ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐτήτυμος,
 μή τις ὄντιν' οὐχ ὀρῶμεν προνοί-
 αισι τοῦ πεπρωμένου
 γλῶσσαν ἐν τύχῃ νέμων,
 τὰν δορίγαμβρον ἀμφίνει –
 κῆ θ' Ἑλέναν; (681-686)

Who ever so *truly* named this bride of battles, wooed all round, Helen?
 Someone unseen with knowledge of the foreordained successfully using
 his tongue?

The Chorus proceed to provide an etymology of Helen’s name as a derivation from a root ἐλε- meaning “kill” and list a string of words with similar roots (ἐλένας, ἔλανδρος, ἐλέπτολις, 689-690). The etymology provided here is appropriate for the context, for the meaning of Helen’s name, whether real or imagined, matches the destruction she causes.⁵²

FALSEHOOD

The range of ψευδος and its various forms is large, although Italic provides simply *falsus* for the adjective ψευδής and *falsa loqui, vates falsa, and falso nominatus* for the compounds ψευδηγορέω, ψευδόμαντις, and ψευδώνυμος, respectively. Italic is

⁵¹ There is one instance where ἀληθῶς is used instead to designate an apt name: Ἐπαφος, ἀληθῶς ῥυσίων ἐπόνυμος (“Eraphos, truly named after deliverances,” *Supp.* 312).

⁵² The importance of etymology and naming is a recurrent theme in the *Oresteia*; see Goldhill 1986, 19-21.

more precise with the verb ψεύδω, designating deception (*fallere*) in the active and either deception or lying (*fallere, mentiri*) in the middle. While Aeschylus uses two distinct words for “true,” ἀληθής and ἔτυμος, the single root ψευδ- designates the opposite of all their applications. The word ψεῦδος thus encompasses a much broader range than either ἀληθής or ἔτυμος. Moreover, through its compounds ψεῦδος conveys a wider variety of applications than ἀληθής or ἔτυμος, the latter of which does not appear in compounds at all.

As opposites to spoken truth uncompounded ψευδ-forms appear only three times in the extant Aeschylus plays, each time as the adjective ψευδής, and each time describing untrue speech,⁵³ whether concerning past occurrences or future events. Two of those instances appear in close proximity to one another and are spoken by the herald of the *Agamemnon* attesting to the veracity of his report (*Ag.* 620, 625). These two lines are the only applications of the adjective ψευδής to reports that inaccurately represent what has already happened. The other instance of ψευδής describes speech concerning future events. When Io appeals to Prometheus to tell her truthfully what lies in store for her, she requests that he not deliver false stories out of pity for her (μύθοις ψευδέσιν, *PV* 685), i.e., stories of events that will not happen. The dual application of ἀληθής, ἔτυμος, and ψευδής to reports about either past or future events is a function of the Greek conception of prophecy as knowledge of past, present, and future, as Calchas claims in *Iliad* 1 (ὄς ἦδη τὰ τ' ἐόντα τὰ τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα, 70). When Cassandra accurately reports the past ills of the house of Atreus, she challenges the Chorus to deem her a

⁵³ The noun *pseudos* does not appear at all in Aeschylus.

ψευδόμαντις (*Ag.* 1195), yet she can use its opposite, ἀληθόμαντις, to refer to her prediction of future events (*Ag.* 1241).⁵⁴

Accordingly, *pseudos* in this application to prophecy appears in connection with what Zeus speaks or wills: ψευδηγορεῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταται στόμα | τὸ Δῖον, ἀλλὰ πᾶν ἔπος τελεῖ (“For the mouth of Zeus does not know how to speak falsely, but accomplishes every word,” *Pr.* 1032-1033). As Hermes warns Prometheus about his ill-fated future, he gives voice to the predominant assumption that Prometheus aims to derail the overarching power of Zeus. This short line reveals that for Zeus, ψεῦδος would not simply be a lie as opposed to the truth, but rather the inability to effect a future occurrence. The line introduces Zeus’ relationship to truth and falsehood, for Hermes equates Zeus’ will with the formation of events. For Zeus to speak falsely (ψευδηγορεῖν) would entail the ineffectuality of his will; ψευδηγορεῖν is thus something outside the domain of Zeus Teleios.⁵⁵

Compounds of ψεῦδος are also used to negate *etumos* in its application to naming. Aeschylus uses the adjective ψευδώνυμος three times to describe names that either do or would ill fit their bearers:

ἦ δῆτ’ ἄν εἴη πανδίκως ψευδώνυμος
Δίκη, ξυνοῦσα φωτὶ παντόλμῳ φρένας. (*Sept.* 670-671)

Indeed, Justice would be falsely named, if she were linked with a man
audacious in his mind.

ἦξις δ’ Ὑβριστὴν ποταμὸν οὐ ψευδώνυμον. (*PV*717)

⁵⁴ I am compelled here to discuss briefly the authorship of the *Prometheus Bound*. Of course, the whole scholarly community in Classics is well aware of the basics of this controversy, each Classicist taking a stance, or refusing to, as appropriate for her aims. For now, I belong to the latter category, as my word examination has revealed nothing unusual about terms for truth and falsehood in *Prometheus* as compared to the other Aeschylean plays, and a discussion of its authorship would be irrelevant to my particular study. For a fuller discussion, see Griffith 1977, who himself is skeptical about Aeschylean authorship of this play.

⁵⁵ Griffith 1983 *ad* 1032-3. Cf. *Suppliants* 524-526 and *Agamemnon* 973.

You will have come to Insolence, a river not falsely named.

ψευδωνύμως σε δαίμονες Προμηθέα
καλοῦσιν· αὐτὸν γάρ σε δεῖ προμηθείας,
ὅτω τρόπῳ τῆσδ' ἐκκυλισθήσῃ τέχνης. (*PV* 85-87)

The gods name you Prometheus falsely; for you yourself are in need of forethought as to how you'll be extricated from this trap.

In each of these cases ψευδώνυμος marks a name that belies the actions or character of its bearer. Hutchinson's explanation for *Sept.* 670, “ὄνομα and ἔργον should naturally be one, particularly with a personified abstraction,”⁵⁶ could double as a definition of a name that is ἔτυμος, which when applied to naming posits a relationship of equivalence between word and deed.⁵⁷ A person's very actions could prove his name false, regardless of his inclination toward either truth or falsehood.

As for the verb ψεύδω, Italic divides Aeschylean uses into two categories, those that designate deception and those that refer to lying. What is striking about this verb is the varying degree to which it indicates intention on the part of the instigator of the ψεύδος. In three of the four instances intention is ascribed to a speaker or agent (*Pers.* 472, *Eum.* 615, *Ag.* 1208). By contrast, the nurse in the *Choephoroi* compares the knack for intuiting a young child's needs to prophecy and refers to her errors in judgment as deception, but declines to name any agent: τούτων πρόμαντις οὔσα, πολλὰ δ' οἶομαι | ψευσθεῖσα (“Being a prophetess of these things, I suppose I was deceived often,” *Cho.* 758-759). In the passive ψεύδω naturally emphasizes the perceiver of the *pseudos* rather than the agent, yet here there is not even an implied agent other than, perhaps, Loxias, if

⁵⁶ Hutchinson 1985 *ad* 670.

⁵⁷ Cf. Griffith 1983 *ad Pr.* 85-6: “Such play on proper names...is common in Greek poetry...It stems from the widespread popular belief that things, or people, and their names are linked by more than accident or convention: the name reflects their true nature.”

we are to entertain the metaphor of prophecy to that extent. Instead, the nurse is the source for her own experience of ψευδος, which refers to her confusion and error in intuition, and indeed, the passive of ψεύδω is used in such a way as to imply that the one who errs is the agent of her own deception.

Furthermore, even when there is a supposed actor behind a *pseudos*, this actor is unspecified, as in the *Persians* where Atossa's exclamatory wails bemoan the defeat of Xerxes' troops: (ὦ στυγρὸν δαῖμον, ὡς ἄρ' ἔψευσας φρενῶν | Πέρσας ("O hateful god, how you deceived the minds of the Persians!" *Pers.* 472-473). While superficially Atossa attributes the Persian defeat to a god's deception, her lament primarily concerns the Persians' miscalculated decision to engage the Athenians. Moreover, in Aeschylus and elsewhere the ascription of unfortunate or inexplicable events to an unnamed deity⁵⁸ does not expropriate all causality and responsibility from mortals to the gods. Rather, such exclamations reflect double determination or motivation whereby both gods and mortals equally cause what happens.⁵⁹ The point is that the use of the verb ψεύδω here points up the misapprehension of the perceiver more than misdirection by any deceiver.

As for ψευδος and its compounds as a whole, the idea of intention may be explicit or implied in many of its uses, but the focus is on the perception of the ψευδος as a deception or falsehood regardless of its intent. The uses of ψευδ-words tend to indicate focalization through the perceiver rather than through the agent, whether or not an explicit agent is present. The term ψευδος thus introduces a different angle in the study of truth and falsehood, namely the perspective from which something is deemed true or

⁵⁸ Cf. *Pers.* 158 and Hall 1986, *ad loc.* This is a recurrent theme in the *Persians*, for Darius' ghost repeats this sentiment at *Pers.* 743.

⁵⁹ For a lucid explanation of double motivation in Homer and in Aeschylus, see Gagarin 1976, esp. 17-18 and 49-50.

false. Krischer articulated this aspect of perspective with his comparison of ἀληθής and ἔτμος, but parallel studies have not been done for the various words for falsehood and deception.

Unlike ψεῦδος, the other main words for deception in Aeschylus, ἀπάτη and δόλος, consistently indicate intentional deception. The term ἀπάτη appears only three times in the extant plays (*Supp.* 110, *Pers.* 93, *Eum.* 728), each time reflecting calculated guile. The word δόλος appears much more often, and in fact surpasses all other words for falsehood or deception in its frequency in Aeschylus. Despite this frequency my discussion of δόλος will be brief, for this term in Aeschylus shows the least variation of the deception words, as it very consistently refers to a specific trick or to guile in general and always connotes intention on the part of its agent. Furthermore, the focalization of this term is very even between deceiver and deceived, reflecting both guileful intent as well as the perception of guile. The one possible exception is at *Ag.* 273 where Clytemnestra refers to her possibly excessive credulousness of the beacon-fires as the deception of Hephaestus, the god of fire (ἔστιν, τί δ' οὐχί; μὴ δολώσαντος θεοῦ).⁶⁰ This statement resembles Atossa's exclamation at *Pers.* 472 and may similarly couple a god's deception with a potential error of the perceiver, but in Clytemnestra's case the physical manifestation of a beacon-fire puts the blame squarely on someone other than herself if the fire's report turns out to be inaccurate.

CONCLUSIONS

My discussion thus far has meant to illuminate the wide range of applicability of terms for truth and falsehood, a range that the lexica cannot fully reveal. A simple equation between “true” and ἀληθής or ἔτμος does not identify the largely interpersonal,

⁶⁰ Hephaestus is explicitly named at 281.

communicative nature of ἀληθής nor the function of ἔτυμος as a marker of suitability or appropriateness. Lexical definitions also do not show how relative time affects the various applications of ἀλήθεια, ἀληθής, and ἔτυμος and the role of time in revealing truth. Aside from the usual hints of veracity or accuracy, truth and falsehood words touch on ideas of prophecy, suitability, and sincerity, although the latter is much less prevalent than in English. The wide range of applications manifests itself in various ways: for ἔτυμος, the word's various contexts showcase its different applications, whereas ἀληθής and ψευδής broaden their range of applications through appearance in compounds. Furthermore, ψεῦδος is most likely to obscure any agency behind it, transferring the focus instead to the perceiver. The privileging of experience over agent is particularly appropriate for tragedy, in which forces larger than individual actions or agency are the focus, although certainly this sense of ψεῦδος is not exclusive to tragedy. In Chapter Four I will argue that Aeschylus employs these various applications of truth and falsehood to reinforce the major themes of his tragedy, primarily the theme of reciprocal or retributive violence. While truth-telling is valued by individual characters, the presiding force over the tragedies is the perpetuating cycle of retribution. Truth and falsehood thus reinforce this cycle so that characters may suffer no direct or immediate consequences for individual acts of deception or truthfulness, but are instead subject to experiences in accordance with what the plot of retribution demands.

PINDAR

TRUTH

On the whole Pindar uses ἀλήθεια/ἀληθής and ἔτυμος much more narrowly than Aeschylus. The main word for truth in Pindar, ἀλήθεια (Doric ἀλάθεια), Slater defines

simply as “truth,” without further elaboration than to note its various instances in Pindar and its personification in *Olympian* 10 and Fragment 205. Komornicka has written several detailed studies of terms for truth and falsehood in Pindar, which list the various terms designating truth and falsehood and elucidate the range of applications for these terms.⁶¹ Race provides the most lucid starting point for a discussion of truth in Pindar with his brief yet precise statement, apropos of the invocation to Olympia as a mistress of truth in *Olympian* 8 (Οὐλυμπία, | δέσποιν’ ἀλαθείας, 2-3), that “this ἀλάθεια denotes ‘how something actually turns out to be,’ a sense it *always* has in Pindar.”⁶²

I agree with Race, and add that this sense of ἀλήθεια, however obvious it may seem, reflects a marked departure from Homer and Aeschylus. A key difference between Pindaric and Homeric or Aeschylean ἀλήθεια is the manner in which Pindar articulates the relationship between ἀλήθεια and verbal statements. As I have noted, Homer uses ἀλήθεια and the substantive neuter plural ἀληθέα interchangeably as objects of verbs of speaking, thus applying these terms to the accuracy of an utterance, while Aeschylus likewise retains the close connection between ἀλήθεια and what is said (e.g., *Ag.* 613, *Ag.* 1567), thus emphasizing verbal accuracy as the defining feature of ἀλήθεια.

Pindar preserves this connection between ἀλήθεια (“how something actually turns out to be”) and statements reflecting it, but makes clear that the two are distinct:

τελεύταθεν δὲ λόγων κορυφαί
ἐν ἀλαθείᾳ πετοῖσαι. (*Ol.* 7.61-69)

The chief points of the words fell *in with truth* and were brought to completion.

νῦν δ’ ἐφίητι <τὸ> τῶργείου φυλάξαι

⁶¹ Komornicka 1972, 1979, and 1981.

⁶² Race 1990, 144. Cf. Adkins 1972, who argues in part that Homeric *aletheia* is not very different from a modern conception of truth.

ῥῆμ' ἀλαθείας < ~ - > ἄγγιστα βαῖνον,
“χρήματα, χρήματ' ἀνήρ” ὃς φᾶ κτεάνων θ' ἅμα λειφθεῖς καὶ φίλων. (*Isth.*
2.9-11)

And now she bids us to guard the Argive's saying *which comes closest to truth*: “Money, money is man,” says he who is bereft of both possessions and friends.⁶³

While the contextual differences between the two passages are many—the first refers to a specific event, Rhodes' emergence from the sea, while the second refers to a saying that describes the general tendency of human nature—Pindar's phrasing in both passages is strikingly similar in that each passage uses ἀλήθεια to refer directly to “what happens” without speaking of verbal communication as an intermediary step between an event and its perception. By using ἀλήθεια thus, Pindar proposes the existence of an objective reality that is antecedent to the words describing or relaying that reality.

Pindar also, unlike Homer and Aeschylus, uses ἀλήθεια to convey reality itself. In such passages as *Pythian* 3.103 and *Nemean* 7.25 Pindar does not explicitly articulate a verbal aspect of ἀλήθεια, instead using the term to represent directly “what happens” or “reality.” By doing so, he asserts his superior knowledge of what actually happens, either specifically or generally, and subtly removes any question of subjectivity. Furthermore, he suggests that not all that appears to be ἀλήθεια can be assumed to be true:

ὃ τ' ἐξελέγχων μόνος
ἀλάθειαν ἐτήτυμον
Χρόνος. τὸ δὲ σαφανὲς ἰὼν πόρσω κατέφρασεν... (*OI.* 10.53-55)

Time alone puts *genuine truth* to the test. As it progressed further, it openly declared what was clear...

The passage refers to the first Olympic festival as established by Herakles, whose actions are detailed in the lines immediately following. The application of ἔτυμος to ἀλήθεια

⁶³ Because of the circumscribed nature of this project, I unfortunately do not discuss the monetary language that pervades this ode, which is key to understanding it as a whole. See Kurke 1991, 240-256, Nisetich 1977, and Woodbury 1968.

can, with Krischer's help, be understood as Pindar's attempt to emphasize that for him, truth extends beyond the perspective of its speaker and reflects objective reality. As I summarized above, Krischer convincingly identifies the distinction between ἀληθής and ἔτυμος as one of perspective: the perspective of the speaker inheres in ἀληθής but not in ἔτυμος. By describing ἀλήθεια as ἐτήτυμος and by using it to refer not to an accurate verbal account of an event, but rather to the event itself, Pindar doubly removes the subjectivity of a speaker in favor of the objective reality of the occurrence.

I do not mean to say, however, that Pindar completely dismisses verbal accuracy as an important application of ἀλήθεια. Three of the five instances of ἀληθής⁶⁴ in Pindar mean "true" in the sense of accurate reporting. When Pindar does combine ἀλήθεια with verbal manifestations of it, he often sheds light on his conception of epinician poetry as a genre and thus encompasses verbal and dispositional truth (accuracy and sincerity). Slater's simple definition "true" cannot convey the genre-oriented sense of Pindar's truth-telling, which implicates ἀλήθεια in the poet's relationship to his patron by incorporating ἀλήθεια/ἀληθής in a system of reciprocal give and take, emblemized in principles of *xenia*, *philia*, and *charis*. The relationship Pindar constructs with his patron, as many have noted, is one of friendship, devotion, loyalty, and obligation.⁶⁵ Accordingly, the adjective ἀληθής describes both statements (or metaphors for statements) and speakers' dispositions, thus meaning both "true" and "truthful." Pindar applies the adjective once to the herald's shout as a "true witness" (ἀλαθής τέ μοι | ἔξορκος ἐπέσσεται ἐξηκοντάκι

⁶⁴ Slater lists a dubious sixth instance of *alethes* in Fr. 30.6, where Boeckh conjectures a reading of ἀλαθέας Ὠρας based on a fragment of Hesychius; an alternate reading posits ἀγαθὰ σωτήρας. Even if Boeckh's reading is correct, the fragmentary nature of this passage prohibits its inclusion in a consideration of ἀληθής in Pindar.

⁶⁵ Cf. Bowra 1964, 387-388. In using the name "Pindar," I refer, of course, to the persona of the epinician poet presented in the odes, and not to the historical author. See Lefkowitz 1991 for a comprehensive discussion of this persona.

δὴ ἀμφοτέρωθεν | ἀδύγλωσσος βοὰ κάρυκος ἐσλοῦ, “the sweet-tongued shout of the good herald, indeed heard sixty times from both places, as a true witness under oath will lend weight to me,”⁶⁶ *Ol.* 13.98-100), which demonstrates the first application of ἀληθής to the accuracy of a report. By contrast, when Pindar describes his mind as ἀληθής (ἀλαθεῖ νόφ, *Ol.* 2.92), he applies ἀληθής to his disposition rather than to his report. These two applications need not be mutually exclusive, for ἀληθής tends to be used in quite personal contexts where Pindar claims to speak the truth, a usage pattern necessarily implies his disposition towards true reportage. When Pindar expresses his hope in that his “true words” will aid his evasion of Boeotian stereotype (ἀρχαῖον ὄνειδος ἀλαθέσιν | λόγοις εἰ φεύγομεν, Βοιωτίαν ὕν, *Ol.* 6.89-90), he thus claims both that his words are true and, implicitly, that he as the one uttering those words is truthful.

The term ἀληθής, then, as Pindar uses it contains within it a sense of accuracy as well as sincerity. By “sincerity” I mean the poet’s self-conscious commitment to praising his *laudandus* in a way both loyal and accurate. Part of Pindar’s credibility as a praise poet rests on conveying authenticity: his praise appears accurate if it comes from a willing source. The traditional approach to Pindar-patron relations has been to understand either implicitly or explicitly that Pindar’s priorities lie in praising his patron.⁶⁷ As Pratt notes, Pindar and Bacchylides are concerned with truth only insofar as it affects the apportionment of praise.⁶⁸ I would qualify Pratt’s assertion to argue that Pindar’s primary encomiastic purpose is reflected in his incorporation of ἀλήθεια into the

⁶⁶ Following Slater 1969; alternatively, “vouches for” (Nisetich 1980) or “my true witness under oath shall be the noble herald’s...” (Race 1997).

⁶⁷ Cf. Bundy 1962, 3: “There is no passage in Pindar and Bakkhulides that is not in its primary intent encomiastic—that is, designed to enhance the glory of a particular patron.”

⁶⁸ Pratt 1993, 115.

epinician genre, so that he may express an equal level of commitment to both praise and truth.

For example, the beginning of *Olympian* 8 reflects truth that both broadly means “what happens” as well as specifically points to an occasion suitable for Pindar’s poetry:

Μᾶτερ ὦ χρυσοστεφάνων ἀέθλων, Οὐλυμπία,
δέσποινα’ ἀλαθείας, ἵνα μάντιες ἄνδρες
ἐμπύροις τεκμαιρόμενοι παραπειρῶνται Διὸς ἀργικεραύνου,
εἴ τιν’ ἔχει λόγον ἀνθρώπων πέρι
μαιομένων μεγάλην
ἀρετὰν θυμῷ λαβεῖν,
τῶν δὲ μόχθων ἀμνησάν·
ἄνεται δὲ πρὸς χάριν εὐσεβίας ἀνδρῶν λιταῖς. (O. 8.1-8)

O mother of the golden-crowned games, Olympia, *mistress of truth*, where men who are seers examine burnt offerings and test Zeus of the bright thunderbolt, to see if he has any word concerning mortals who are striving in their hearts to gain a great success and respite from their toils; but men’s prayers are fulfilled in return for piety.

The truth that seers seek at Olympia involves the outcome of athletic contests, which will be determined by Zeus.⁶⁹ By identifying Olympia as a place of truth and qualifying this truth to be specifically concerned with athletic ability, the poet contextualizes ἀλήθεια and explains its relevance to his poetry. He introduces his subject matter, the Olympic victory of his *laudandus*, as a matter of truth, thus aligning the story of the *laudandus* with truth and communicating his devotion to this truth simultaneously. This passage demonstrates how Pindaric ἀλήθεια can be both objective and subjective, for the term here primarily designates reality, but is also colored by its specific context of athletic competition, which points to Pindar’s role as a poet of praise. These generic considerations can help shed light on Pindar’s more unusual uses of ἀλήθεια, particularly in its personified forms in *Olympian* 10 and Fragment 205, which I will discuss in the

⁶⁹ Cf. Komornicka 1972, 238 and Slater 1969, s.v. “δέσποινα,” who posit that Olympia’s epithet stems from the function of Olympic games as the true proof of athletic ability.

next chapter. Just what Pindar means when he appeals to Truth can be understood when we take into consideration how much generic awareness informs his use of terms for truth and falsehood.

FALSEHOOD AND DECEPTION

Words for falsehood and deception in Pindar include *ψεῦδος*, *ἀπάτα*, and *δόλος*, along with their corresponding compounds and verbal forms. Slater defines *ψεῦδος* as “lie, falsehood,” presumably providing these two definitions to indicate varying degrees of intention inherent in the word. The term *ψεῦδος* has a narrower range than in Aeschylus and is largely used of intentional falsehood, particularly when the poet denies that he is lying,⁷⁰ but the term, as in Aeschylus, is also used in instances where falsehood is not intentional and indeed, in several cases where no agent of *ψεῦδος* is even mentioned, as the focus is on the perceiver or receiver of the *ψεῦδος* rather than on any speaker or agent.

This is particularly so in cases where *ψεῦδος* is used in a non-verbal sense. In Fragment 124 and *Olympian* 12 Pindar uses a form of *ψεῦδος* to refer to some misunderstanding on the part of the perceiver rather than an intention to deceive on the part of the agent of the *ψεῦδος*. In neither case is any agent named, the focus being on the failure of the perceiver to comprehend something correctly:

αἶ γε μὲν ἀνδρῶν
πόλλ’ ἄνω, τὰ δ’ αὖ κάτω ψεύδη μεταμόνια τάμνοισαι κυλίνδοντ’
ἐλπίδες. (*Ol.* 12.5-6)⁷¹

And the hopes of men often roll up, and then roll back again as they cleave
vain falsehoods.

πελάγει δ’ ἐν πολυχρύσοιο πλούτου

⁷⁰ E.g., see *Ol.* 4.17, *Nem.* 1.18.

⁷¹ See Crotty 1982, 9 for a discussion of the antithetical pairs that permeate the opening of *Olympian* 12.

πάντες ἴσα νέομεν ψευδῆ πρὸς ἄκταν. (Fr. 124ab.6-7)

And we all alike sail on the sea of gold-rich wealth toward an unreal shore.

In *Olympian* 12 Pindar uses ψεύδη to refer to hopes that prove to be unfulfilled, while in Fragment 124 Pindar refers to the effects of alcohol brought on by Dionysus, which induce blissful delusions. The word ψεῦδος in these cases thus designates something more along the lines of “delusion” or “misapprehension” than “lie.”

When Pindar refers to verbal ψεῦδος, however, intention comes to the fore, but his criticism is not unwaveringly decisive. This is because some cases of verbal ψεῦδος reflect misdirection rather than outright lying and thus make the assignment of blame less clear, for such misdirection can occur even without any patent falsehood. As Bernard Williams observes, patently true statements still have the potential to deceive by producing a disposition in the hearer that would lend itself to misapprehension. Williams illustrates this point with the example of a person going through another’s mail, then claiming, “someone has been opening your mail.” Such a statement is not a lie, for it does not convey patently false information, but it does mislead the listener into believing that the culprit is someone other than the speaker.⁷² Williams’ discussion calls attention to the unsavory tendency for a successful deception to elicit a certain receptiveness to being duped and thus to violate a tacit agreement of trust between speaker and listener.

It is in this light that I view Pindar’s criticism of Homer:

ἐγὼ δὲ πλέον’ ἔλπομαι
λόγον Ὀδυσσέος ἢ πάθαν διὰ τὸν ἀδυεπῆ γενέσθ’ Ὅμηρον·
ἐπεὶ ψεύδεσὶ οἱ ποτανᾶ <τε> μαχανᾶ
σεμνὸν ἔπεστί τι· σοφία δὲ κλέπτει παράγοισα μύθοις. (*Nem.* 7.20-23)

⁷² Williams 2002, 96.

I expect that Odysseus' story has become greater than his experience on account of sweet-talking Homer, since something holy lies upon his lies and his soaring resourcefulness. Skill deceives, misleading with stories.

Pindar praises Homer's skill as a poet, but points out that the aesthetic quality of his poetry distracts the audience from the truth. The language suggests misdirection rather than actual lying (κλέπτει, παράγοισα), and the appearance of ψεῦδος in this context reinforces a notion of misapprehension rather than deception. Similarly, the famous passage from *Olympian* 1 that introduces Pindar's rendition of the Pelops myth presents the presence of ψεῦδος in accounts of the myth as the result of elaborate embellishment:

ἦ θαύματα πολλά, καί πού τι καί βροτῶν φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον
δεδαϊδαλμένοι ψεῦδεσι ποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι. (*Ol.* 1.28-9)

Indeed, there are many wonders, and somehow the speeches of mortals, stories, have been embellished beyond the *true* account and deceive with intricate *falsities*.

Pindar's later characterization of his own poetic activity as embellishment (δαϊδαλωσέμεν, 105) makes clear that embellished poetry itself does not lie. Rather, Pindar points out the potential for embellishment to produce a misperception,⁷³ and subsequently attributes this misperception to the power of Charis,⁷⁴ which can make incredible things believable. I would argue that this statement is as much a general explanation about human credulity as it is a criticism of deceptive poetry. Like the non-verbal instances of ψεῦδος, these statements about poetry and ψεῦδος focalize at least partly through the perceiver. Pindar refers to the use of language that the audience understands incorrectly.

⁷³ I should note that Pindar attributes the false Pelops myth to two distinct parties: here he faults his poetic predecessors for embellishment to the point of falsehood, which I argue is not necessarily intentional; later, however, Pindar does charge intentional falsehood, but this time on the part of Pelops' envious neighbors (46ff.).

⁷⁴ I will discuss these passages at greater length in the next chapter.

In contrast with Aeschylus Pindar’s other words for deception show varying degrees of agency and intention.⁷⁵ In addition to the *Olympian* 1 passage above, the one instance of the verb ἀπατάω appears as a passive form that Slater defines as “be mistaken,” for it refers to a misapprehension rather than an intentional act of deception: ὦ πόποι, οἳ’ ἀπατᾶται φροντίς ἐπαμερίων οὐκ ἰδυῖα (“Alas, how the mind of those who live day by day is deceived when it does not know,” Fr. 182). Likewise, three times does a form of δόλος reflect the error of the person deceived rather than an action taken by a deceptive agent (*Isth.* 8.14, *Pyth.* 1.92, *Pyth.* 4.140), and two of these times the source of deception is imputed to gain, thus indicating a dispositional flaw in the perceiver: μὴ δολωθῆς, | ὦ φίλε, κέρδεσιν ἐντραπέλοις (“Friend, do not be deceived by shameful gains,” *Pyth.* 1.91-92); ἐντὶ μὲν θνατῶν φρένες ὠκύτεραι | κέρδος αἰνῆσαι πρὸ δίκας δόλιον τραχεῖαν ἐρπόντων πρὸς ἔπιβδαν ὅμως (“The minds of mortals are rather quick to praise tricky gain before justice, despite that mortals creep toward a rough reckoning the next day,” *Pyth.* 4.139-140).

CONCLUSIONS

Pindar’s use of *aletheia* reflects a truth that exists prior to and independently of verbal statements, a truth which he incorporates in his overall conception of poetry. This conception views poetry as a system of reciprocity between poet and *laudandus* but also implicitly between poet and audience and incorporates truth into these relationships. The principle of ἀλήθεια thus characterizes both an objective reality as well as a personal agreement between two parties. This agreement entails the poet’s duty to the *laudandus*, which involves both accuracy and truthfulness in his praise, a praise that flatters, but

⁷⁵ Pace Rosenmeyer 1955, 228 n. 9, where he discusses the difference between *apate* and *pseudos* in Pindar, arguing that “roughly, the following distinction might be hazarded: *apate* involves active distortion, . . . whereas *pseudos* designates objective falseness, regardless of whether it is due to error or lying.”

believably so. The varied focalizations of ψεῦδος and other terms for deception, I surmise, reflect the reciprocity of this relationship involving both the speaker's violation of trust, as well as the listener's propensity towards being deceived. I do not mean to say that Pindar faults the listener for being deceived; rather, the dual or ambiguous focalization of some of these terms illuminates the violation of these contractual relationships on both sides of a communication. I will discuss the interplay between truth, falsehood, and relationships of reciprocity in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: TRUTH, FALSEHOOD, AND *XENIA* IN PINDAR

PART ONE: TRUTH AND *XENIA*

In the first half of this chapter I will argue that the relationship between praise and ἀλήθεια in Pindar is connected to principles of friendship and obligation such as ξενία and φιλία and that the poet negotiates the potentially contradictory forces of truth and obligatory praise by defining truth in terms of poetic obligation to his *laudandus*. Furthermore, Pindar conveys the impression that his commitment to praising the victor will yield a truthful account in the traditional sense of an accurate representation of events and that the commitment to the *laudandus* is part of a greater commitment to the truth. The problem with Pindar's conception of truth is that its two main aspects, accuracy and sincerity, are potentially contradictory. As I noted in the previous chapter, Pindar, unlike his predecessors and contemporaries, speaks of truth outside of contexts of verbal accuracy, thus proposing a reality antecedent and external to its verbal accounts and removing some of the subjectivity that inheres in the word ἀλήθεια (cf. Krischer 1965). Secondly, Pindar uses the adjective ἀληθής to convey accuracy but in some contexts also to convey sincerity, i.e., a speaker's assertion that what he expresses is what he believes. The aspect of sincerity inherent in some contexts of truth presents a subjectivity problematic in light of the objectivity conveyed by ἀλήθεια. But these two applications of ἀληθής do not have to be at odds with one another. In his book *Truth and Truthfulness* Williams identifies sincerity and accuracy as the two main "virtues" of truth, referring to the former as the tendency of a speaker to express what he believes,

whereas accuracy aims directly at truth.⁷⁶ He effectively demonstrates that truth-telling requires both of these virtues, the intention to represent accurately and the ability to do so.

Pindar's use of ἀληθής likewise demonstrates that the potential conflict between the two applications of the word can be reconciled when considered within a generic framework: as an epinician poet, Pindar's first and foremost concern is to praise his *laudandus*; thus every abstract concept he speaks about—ἀρετά, glory, athleticism, and truth—must be understood in reference to this laudatory purpose. Pindar's praise narrative develops around a personal relationship between the poet and his *laudandus*, which is conveyed by references to the *laudandus* or to the poet himself as a guest-friend (ξείνος; cf. *Pyth.* 6.48) or at times more closely as a friend (φίλος; cf. *OI.* 1.92) and by the use of terms designating reciprocity such as *charis*, which is variously used to convey reciprocal exchange.⁷⁷ As Bundy observes, the athlete's ἀρετά represents a contribution that must be repaid, and the epinician ode is a reciprocal return for this contribution.⁷⁸ The ode itself forms part of a reciprocal exchange between poet and *laudandus*.

Pindar incorporates ἀλήθεια into this type of poet-victor relationship, a ritualized friendship governed by certain expectations of reciprocity. For a working definition of guest-friendship or *xenia*, I rely on the work of Herman:

For analytical purposes ritualised friendship [i.e., *xenia*] is here defined as a bond of solidarity manifesting itself in an exchange of goods and services between individuals originating from separate social units. This definition encompasses the most distinctive features of the institution and supplies criteria for postulating its existence even if it is not named explicitly in the evidence. . . . Excluded are relationships between strangers that involve payments for goods and services—as,

⁷⁶ Cf. Williams 2003, 84-148.

⁷⁷ Cf. Kurke 1993, 67; MacLachlan 1993, 87-123.

⁷⁸ Bundy 1986, 57: "...ἀρετά creates a debt that must be paid in the true coin of praise."

for example, those between merchants and their customers, or mercenary soldiers and their employers. People trading specific goods and services for payments would hardly classify their relationship as one of friendship.⁷⁹ (Herman 1987, 10)

As Slater notes, when Pindar claims to be a guest-friend of the victor, he agrees to the obligation “a) not to be envious of his *xenos* and b) to speak well of him. The argumentation is: *Xenia* excludes envy, I am a *xenos*, therefore I am not envious and consequently praise honestly.”⁸⁰ To demonstrate the role of ἀλήθεια within such a relationship, I will examine *Olympian* 1, *Olympian* 10, and *Nemean* 7 as odes that reveal the intricate connections between truth and poetic obligation.

TRUTH AND PRAISE: *OLYMPIAN* 1

In his treatment of the Pelops myth in *Olympian* 1 Pindar makes perhaps his most famous statements about truth and poetry. He presents the usual rendition—that Tantalos slaughtered his son and fed him to the gods—but claims that this version is untrue, and that Pelops’ disappearance is actually attributable to Poseidon’s love for him. Pindar’s defense of his version rests on a claim that previous false versions are shaped by a mortal tendency to believe what is pleasant:

ἦ θαύματα πολλά, καὶ πού τι καὶ βροτῶν φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον
δεδαϊδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι·
Χάρις δ’ ἄπερ ἅπαντα τεύχει τὰ μείλιχα θνατοῖς,
ἐπιφέροισα τιμὰν καὶ ἄπιστον ἐμήσατο πιστὸν
ἔμμεναι τὸ πολλάκις·
ἀμέραι δ’ ἐπίλοιποι
μάρτυρες σοφώτατοι. (*OI.* 1.28-34)

Indeed, there are many wonders, and somehow the speeches of mortals, stories, have been embellished *beyond the true account* and *deceive with intricate falsehoods*; for Charis, who provides mortals with all pleasant

⁷⁹ Herman’s work is on the actual practice of *xenia* in the ancient Greek world. See also Kurke 1991, 135-159, who focuses on the metaphorical *xenia* that pervades Pindar’s poetry.

⁸⁰ Slater 1979, 80. On the convention of guest-friendship in Pindar, see Bundy 1986, 24-26; Race 1986, 90-91; Hubbard 1985, 156-162; and Kurke 1991, 135-159.

things, often renders the incredible credible by bringing honor. But days to come are the wisest witnesses.

The contrast here is between mortal communications and the “true account,” a contrast underscored by the plurality of falsehoods as opposed to the singularity of truth. Mortals falsify the truth through embellishment, a tendency that stems from *charis*, which seems to represent poetry’s charms.⁸¹ Pindar implies that he himself has access to the “true account,” which, coupled with his awareness of embellishment’s risks, ensures the truthfulness of his own account. The tendency both to generate falsehood and to believe it is depicted as a mortal problem (βροτῶν, 28; θνατοῖς, 30). The reason for this becomes clear when Pindar explains the role of poetry.

These lines have been taken to refer to poetry and even as statements of praise for the capacity of well-crafted poetry, including Pindar’s, to persuade.⁸² The ambiguity of his attitude toward persuasion and aestheticism prompts the question of how his poetry is fundamentally different from that of others. The next sentence provides a possible answer: ἔστι δ’ ἀνδρὶ φάμεν ἔοικὸς ἀμφὶ δαιμόνων καλὰ μείων γὰρ αἰτία (“It is fitting for a man to say good things about the gods, for the blame is less,” *OI.* 1.35). Pindar suggests that his proper function is to portray the gods favorably and expresses concern that he might incur blame from an unfavorable portrayal. The aphorism about the revelatory effects of time connects the two concerns shaping his account, piety and truth,

⁸¹ Cf. Gildersleeve 1885, 132 *ad* 30: “Χάρις: The charm of poetry;” Kirkwood 1982, 52: “Here the context indicates that χάρις is specifically the charm of song, as it often is in Pindar;” Instone 1996, 101 *ad* 30: “The charm or grace that makes poetry sweet;” Verdenius 1988, 20 *ad* 30: “Χάρις: ‘Charm’ is an indispensable but ambivalent element in poetry.” This, like Socrates’ alleged ability to make the weaker argument stronger, may not necessarily be a negative quality of *charis*. Cf. Gerber 1982, 59: “Even though Pindar is critical of the false tales recorded by earlier poets, he is at the same time praising the power of poetry to make ‘the unbelievable believable.’” Kurke’s assertion that *charis* always designates a willing, reciprocal exchange (1993, 67) is complementary to this particular instance of *charis*: its charms are part of a poem’s gift to its subject and its audience.

⁸² Pratt 1993, 124 and Gerber 1982, 59-60. Cf. *OI.* 1.105 where Pindar refers to his own poetry as embellishment (δαιδαλωσέμεν).

and suggests that the two may complement one another. Furthermore, the conjoining of these two concerns has a number of implications, the foremost of which is that a true account is ultimately controlled by the gods it portrays, for an account favoring the gods is more likely to be true. The details of an account are thus of slight importance in the overall assessment of its truth-value.⁸³ This line has been interpreted as Pindar's unwillingness to privilege truth-telling above piety,⁸⁴ but his criticism of inaccuracy in other poetry makes it unlikely that he would risk such a criticism of his own. Rather, he asserts that his own account is both true and pious, thus implying that truth coincides with what is appropriate to say about the gods. Pindar quite pragmatically suggests that while his favorable portrayal of the gods protects him from charges of blame, truth and appeasement of the gods need not be mutually exclusive.

Inherent in Pindar's criticism of inaccuracy is the implication that he is privy to the true account about the gods, yet he does not here cite direct communication with them as the basis for this knowledge.⁸⁵ Instead, the source of authority for Pindar's version of this myth lies in his implications about true accounts. By suggesting that the true account

⁸³ Such a definition, of course, may not satisfy a modern sensibility of truth, which, at a minimum should be "(1) independent of belief; (2) immutable; and (3) public" (Kleiman and Lewis 1992, 92). Pindar's account, particularly juxtaposed against his expressed fears of retribution, does not draw authority from any source other than his own belief, nor is it publicly acknowledged as truth.

However, Pindar's assertions in *Olympian* 1 could arguably conform to the second criterion. A statement that is true for only a particular context can be considered immutable, if it is stipulated that the statement must be understood within its context. Thus, however much wiggle room Pindar allows himself to change his account elsewhere, its iteration here is considered immutably true for the context in which it appears.

⁸⁴ Pratt 1993, 126: "Here again Pindar does not justify his refusal to speak ill of the gods by appealing to the truth or to what the gods deserve."

⁸⁵ Cf. Scodel 2001, 123: "[Pindar] never cites [the Muses] as an authority for his versions of a story, or for any other point of truth. Instead, they render songs beautiful and appropriate." The Muses are by no means absent from his poetry, but his later reference to the Muses suggests corroboration with, rather than subordination to, them: ἐμοὶ μὲν ὄν | Μοῖσα καρτερώτατον βέλος ἄλκιᾷ τρέφει ("And so the Muse tends a most mighty missile in strength for me," *OI.* 1.111-112). Cf. *OI.* 13.97 where Pindar claims to be an ally of the Muse and the Olgeithidai.

coincides with the pious one, Pindar creates room for fabrication of a myth whose accuracy of particulars does not matter so long as the depiction generally favors the gods. His subsequent rejection of slander is superficially motivated by self-interest (ἐμοὶ δ’ ἄπορα γαστρίμαργον μακάρων τιν’ εἶπεῖν· ἀφίσταμαι | ἀκέρδεια λέλογχεν θαμινὰ κακαγόρους, “It is useless for me to say one of the blessed gods is gluttonous—I stand aloof. Lack of gain is often allotted to slanderers,” *OI.* 1.52-53), but must be read in light of this earlier passage conjoining truth and praise. Pindar alleviates potential tension between truth-telling and piety by suggesting that the two complement one another.⁸⁶

He thus constructs a framework of credibility for his favorable depiction of the *laudandus*, for he establishes that a loyal account is also a true one. According to *Olympian* 1.28-34, telling the truth is not only fitting but also practical since Pindar’s true account happens to depict the gods more favorably than false accounts. Furthermore, his observations about Charis, ψεῦδος, and embellishment reflect an awareness of poetry’s persuasiveness and express an assurance that the present poem will not employ *charis* and embellishment to the same effect. Pindar is consequently able to characterize his own ode as an embellishment of Hieron’s qualities without sounding disingenuous:

ἐμὲ δὲ στεφανῶσαι
κεῖνον ἰππίῳ νόμῳ
Αἰοληίδι μολπᾷ
χρή· πέποιθα δὲ ξένον
μὴ τιν’ ἀμφότερα καλῶν τε ἴδριν ἅμα καὶ δύναμιν κυριώτερον
τῶν γε νῦν κλυταῖσι δαιδαλωσέμεν ὕμνων πτυχαῖς. (*OI.* 1.100-105)

⁸⁶ Pace Pratt 1993, 126-127 who cites this passage as well as *OI.* 9.35-41 and *Nem.* 5.14-17 as further evidence that Pindar values tact and appropriateness above truth. I would argue that Pindar’s assertion in *OI.* 9.35-41 that to slander the gods is hateful and inappropriate (*παρὰ καιρόν*, *OI.* 9.38) reinforces my interpretation of *OI.* 1.28-35 that Pindar construes piety and truth-telling as complementary and uses the language of tact (εὐκόσ, καιρός) to bridge the potential gap between the two. As for *Nem.* 5.14-17 where Pindar ostensibly shies from telling the “exact truth” (ἀλάθει’ ἀτρεκές, *Nem.* 5.17) about Peleus and Telamon’s murder of Phokos, his allusions to this deed are sufficiently clear to recall the story without providing full narration; thus, in this passage too the poet makes a show of tactfulness while still communicating discomfiting truths.

I must crown that man with a horse-tune in Aeolic song. I trust that there is no host alive today *to embellish* with glorious folds of songs, who is both acquainted with good things and more authoritative in power.

The language of embellishment recalls his similar characterization of deceptive stories (δαιδαλωσέμεν, 105; δεδαιδαλμένοι, 28) and points up a similarity between his own poetry and stories that ultimately prove to be false. The difference is that the accounts Pindar has earlier criticized are perpetuated by those with no loyalty to the subjects they depict. Pindar, by contrast, openly expresses his obligation to his patron Hieron (χρή, 103; ξένον, 103) and to the gods (ἔστι δ' ἀνδρὶ φάμεν ἔοικὸς ἀμφὶ δαιμόνων καλὰ μείων γὰρ αἰτία, 35). The latter statement of obligation occurs after a claim that other accounts to the contrary are untrue (28). The juxtaposition of these two claims of truth and loyalty has implications for Pindar's similar declaration of loyalty to Hieron, for it suggests that loyalty to one's subjects provides a basis for a true account. This insinuation about "true" accounts may not be altogether believable or satisfactory to us,⁸⁷ but it is one that allows for poetic obligation to coincide with truthful reporting.

The passage from *Olympian* 1 gives us insight into the character of epinician poetry and how it relates to ἀλήθεια, which forms part of the poet's duty to his patron. I argue that ἀλήθεια is part of the poet's duty to his subject matter, and that his statements about poetry suggest a relationship between truth and obligation. My interpretation of *Olympian* 1 has presented a Pindaric notion of truthfulness that balances an external, objective truth with internal, subjective concerns by claiming that a truthful account takes into consideration one's obligation to his subject. These two aspects of epinician truth-

⁸⁷ Indeed, Pratt discusses the problems of Pindar's claims in *Olympian* 1 and argues, along with Gerber (1982, 59-60) that Pindar's praise of poetry's power to persuade, albeit by deception (*Ol.* 1.28-32) suggests that his own poetry could be persuasive, but untrue. I interpret the passage differently, however, for I do not think that Pindar questions the accuracy of his own poetry here, instead creating a context in which truth and praise can coexist.

telling, reality and obligation, are combined by Pindar as part of his program of praise. By combining these two aspects of truth, the poet lends authority to his praise poetry, for he declares his devotion to the patron while mitigating his bias, encompassing both devotion and objectivity in his poetic program.

TRUTH PERSONIFIED

Pindar especially combines reality and obligation in his personifications of ἀλήθεια. Two passages explicitly connect ἀλήθεια with obligation, each showcasing ἀλήθεια personified and thus providing insight as to how Pindar envisions and defines it. The first I will consider is a fragment, quoted by Stobaeus:⁸⁸

Ἀρχὰ μεγάλας ἀρετᾶς,
ὄνασσ' Ἀλάθεια, μὴ πταίσης ἐμάν
σύνθεσιν τραχεῖ ποτὶ ψεύδει. (Fr. 205)

Beginning of great excellence, Queen Truth, do not cause my good faith to stumble against rough falsehood.

By personifying and invoking Truth, Pindar suggests that this passage has been composed with the aid of, and thus in obligation to, divine Truth.⁸⁹ He does not claim that the words are spoken by the divinity herself, but he does adopt the stance of a truth-teller by expressing reverence for a goddess who embodies truth and will therefore aid his truthfulness.

He explains his choice to invoke Alatheia by claiming that she is the beginning of great achievement. The meaning of μεγάλας ἀρετᾶς is unclear without context,⁹⁰ but ἀρετὰ probably refers to athletic achievement and its subsequent poetic praise or to some

⁸⁸ Stob. *eccl.* 3.11.18 (3.432 Wachsmuth-Henze).

⁸⁹ Cf. MacLachlan 1993, 101: “As *alatheia* served the sovereign Olympia in proving/revealing victors (*Ol.* 8.1-2), so the poet serves the queen *Alatheia* in giving an accurate testimony of the victory event.”

⁹⁰ MacLachlan 1993, 101 glosses simply “great deeds of excellence.”

mythical event associated with athletic achievement.⁹¹ The term σύνθεσις presents a problem of clarity. Slater translates σύνθεσις in this passage as “my good faith”;⁹² Farnell translates “pledge”;⁹³ MacLachlan and Gentili interpret σύνθεσις as a reference to the poet’s commission for composing a victory ode.⁹⁴ These various translations point to at least two possible meanings of σύνθεσις: it refers either to the poet’s promise to produce an ode⁹⁵ or to the ode itself as a particular object of pledge. Even with more context the referent of σύνθεσις might not be certain, but it is possible to read it as referring to both the original agreement to compose an ode and to the ode itself. This type of ambiguity would not be surprising in Pindar, whose poetry’s many qualities do not usually include superficial clarity.⁹⁶ If σύνθεσις can have this double meaning,⁹⁷ then Alatheia is both a testament to the poet’s reliability in keeping obligations as well as assurance that the words of the poem are true. Alatheia works on two levels, to ensure

⁹¹ Cf. similar language in *Olympian* 8.6-7 (μεγάλαν ἀρετὰν) and *Nemean* 1.8-9 (ἀρχαὶ δὲ βέβληνται θεῶν | κείνου σὺν ἀνδρὸς δαιμονίαις ἀρεταῖς). The latter passage has drawn much attention from commentators. Fennell 1899, 7 translates, “Its [i.e., the chariot of Chromios and Nemea] first courses are laid with gods (for stones).” Bury 1890, 11 prescribes this translation: “First hymning the gods, and withal the heroic excellences of that man (Chromius), I have laid a foundation for my song.” Kirkwood 1982, 251 opts for “The foundations of my song, which lie in the gods, are set down with the aid of...”

On *areta* and poetry, see Norwood 1945, 49: “[Pindar] uses [ἀρετά] both of excellence and of the success won thereby.” Cf. Race 1986, 64: “[S]ong needs deeds to celebrate, and success needs song to make the ἀρετά last.”

⁹² Slater 1969, 480 s.v. σύνθεσις.

⁹³ Farnell 1932, 452.

⁹⁴ MacLachlan 1993, 101; Gentili 1981, 219-220.

⁹⁵ Cf. the opening of *Olympian* 10.

⁹⁶ On ambiguity in Pindar, see Stanford 1939, 129-136.

⁹⁷ Pindar’s poetry certainly does not preclude the possibility for double meaning, particularly through his use of gnomes. For example, see *Nem.* 10.54, where the gnome (καὶ μὲν θεῶν πιστὸν γένος, “And indeed, the race of gods is trusty”) refers both to the preceding lines about the Tyndaridai’s consistently favorable position toward the victor’s family, while also looking forward to the themes of loyalty that pervade the rest of the poem.

the composition of the promised poem and to guarantee its veracity. Pindar's poem thus represents an obligation, and part of that obligation involves telling the truth.

Moreover, Pindar, in requesting protection from Alatheia against falsehood (ψεύδει), ascribes agency to her and emphasizes the power she wields over his σύνθεσις. By personifying ἀλήθεια and constructing her as an active agent, Pindar situates truth as his master; it is controlled by neither the poet nor the Muses, unlike in Hesiod, *Theog.* 26-28. Attribution of agency to concepts that might otherwise be thought of as passive is well attested in Pindar⁹⁸ and illuminates the striking degree to which Pindar differs from others poets previous or contemporary, of whom only Parmenides and Bacchylides also personify ἀλήθεια. In the Parmenidean example Aletheia is not a personification on the same level as Pindar's Alatheia, for it is a passive rather than active entity.⁹⁹

χρεὼ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι
ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμέξ ἦτορ
ἦδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθῆς. (Fr. 1.28-30)

It is proper that you should learn all things, both *the unshaken heart of well-rounded Truth*, and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true reliance.

⁹⁸ For example, Pindar makes *chronos* the active subject of a verb in *Nem.* 1.46, *Pae.* 2.27, *OI.* 10.8, *OI.* 6.97, *Nem.* 4.43, and Fr. 159. For further discussion see Gerber 1962.

⁹⁹ Parmenides' conception of ἀλήθεια is not completely divergent from Pindar's and indeed shares some similarities with Pindar's ideas of truth. For example, Parmenides' distinction between ἀλήθεια and mortal opinion (βροτῶν δόξας) resembles Pindar's opposition between "the true account" and the utterances of mortals in *Olympian* 1.28 (ἦ θαύματα πολλά, καὶ πού τι καὶ βροτῶν φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι). Both Parmenides and Pindar express a distrust of mortal opinion or utterance and claim a preference for ἀλήθεια.

Parmenides' instructions to his addressee, however, differ slightly from Pindar's proclaimed stance in relation to truth in that Parmenides prescribes knowledge of both ἀλήθεια and δόξα, although criticizing the latter, while Pindar does not assert the necessity of obtaining mortal knowledge. Furthermore, the heart of Parmenides' Aletheia is "unmoved" or "calm" (ἀτρεμέξ), an epithet that implies stationary stability as an immovable reference point that will not change. Pindar's "true account" in *Olympian* 1.28 is defined in accordance with favorable depiction of the gods (*OI.* 1.35), which does not strongly preclude variability. Pindar diverges from the Parmenidean position by demonstrating knowledge of mortal utterances, but denouncing them as untrue for their unfavorable depiction of the gods.

For further discussion on the term δόξα in the Parmenides fragment, see Papadis 2005.

Although Aletheia's possession of a heart (ἦτορ) qualifies her as a personification, she is something to be handled. She does not instigate learning herself; instead, she, along with δόξα, is what should be learned by the addressee of Parmenides' poem. Pindar, by contrast, calls upon Alatheia to take an active role in his poetry. This difference could be attributed to a difference in purposes prescribed by differing poetic genres, but Bacchylides, whose genres parallel Pindar's, demonstrates a similar disengagement from truth as a poetic obligation.

Personified ἀλήθεια is a more active entity in Bacchylides than in Parmenides, but still critically differs from Pindar's Alatheia: Ἀλάθεια θεῶν ὁμόπολις | μόνα θεοῖς συνδιαιωμένα ("Truth alone inhabits the same city as the gods," Fr. 57). Alatheia's association with the gods is expressed with a metaphor of inhabitation rather than a full-scale, active personification of the type seen in Pindar, Fragment 205. The Bacchylidean Alatheia here has no direct connection with poetry or poetic obligation. Of course, the absence of context allows us to surmise that this Alatheia could have had such a connection in the original context, but even if that were the case, Bacchylides' Alatheia still lacks the syntactical proximity to obligation that Pindar's has in Fragment 205 and is thus, at the very least, much less closely associated with poetry and poetic obligation than Pindar's Alatheia.

What this means is that Pindar defines truth in a new way as part and parcel of the contractual relationship between himself and his *laudandus* or subject matter. My interpretation of Fragment 205 has been hindered by its fragmentary nature and has required frequent supposition or assumption about the original context, but the other Pindaric personification of ἀλήθεια confirms what Fragment 205 suggests and fortunately appears in a complete ode:

Τὸν Ὀλυμπιονίκαν ἀνάγνωτέ μοι
Ἀρχεστράτου παῖδα, πόθι φρενός
ἐμᾶς γέγραπται· γλυκὸ γὰρ αὐτῷ μέλος ὀφείλων ἐπιλέλαθ'· ὦ Μοῖσ',
ἀλλὰ σὺ καὶ θυγάτηρ
Ἀλάθεια Διός, ὀρθᾷ χερὶ
ἐρύκετον ψευδέων
ἐνιπάν ἀλιτόξενον. (*Ol.* 10.1-6)

Read me the name of the Olympic victor, the son of Arcestratos, where it has been written in my mind, for owing him a sweet song, I have forgotten. O Muse, you and the daughter of Zeus, *Truth*, with a correcting hand ward off from me the charge that I harm a guest-friend with broken promises.

These lines are usually taken to refer to the poet's composition of *Olympians* 1, 2, and 3, which has taken priority over this ode and ostensibly caused him to neglect his duties to the present victor Hagesidamos. Immediately after confessing his negligence, the poet invokes the Muse and Alatheia for help. Whether or not they are the addressees of the imperative ἀνάγνωτε,¹⁰⁰ they have at least been invoked in connection with the poet's need for a reminder and his manifold request to protect his reputation from reproach (ἐνιπάν) and to prove that he neither harms his friends (ἀλιτόξενον) nor tells lies (ψευδέων).¹⁰¹

The first opposition between the Muse and Alatheia on the one hand and forgetfulness on the other is highlighted by the wordplay between ἐπιλέλαθ' and Ἀλάθεια, but here a distinction between the Muse and Alatheia may be drawn, for the Muse more than Alatheia is appropriate to the task of remembrance. Although it is not

¹⁰⁰ Verdenius 1988, 55 collects the various scholarly conjectures as to the addressee of ἀνάγνωτε, concluding that "the imperative is used 'absolutely' and has rhetorical force." Cf. Hubbard 1985, 67, who says the imperative is addressed to the audience, and Kromer 1976, 423, who speculates the addressee to be "someone else." As I have intimated above, identifying the addressee of ἀνάγνωτε matters less than recognizing the conceit of forgetfulness that the imperative helps to construct.

¹⁰¹ The *pseudea* here are usually taken to refer to promises (i.e., by the poet to produce an ode) that, when broken, have the appearance of falsehood. See Gildersleeve 1885, 214, Kromer 1976, 422, and Pratt 1993, 119-120.

altogether possible to isolate the one from the other,¹⁰² it is possible to surmise the role of the Muse in light of her role in other odes where she is the daughter of Mnemosyne (*Isth.* 6.74-75)¹⁰³ and “loves to remind” (*Nemean* 1.12; cf. *Pae.* 14.35). If the Muse is, then, more responsible for the task of remembrance, the connection between Alatheia and memory is at best a weak one, especially in light of the number of other charges the two goddesses have been asked to forestall.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the poet’s own purported forgetfulness is not entirely believable since the request to read something that has been written on his heart suggests that he has not really been forgetful so much as inattentive. If there is such a connection between Alatheia and memory here, it is the poet’s own memory,¹⁰⁵ rather than public consciousness, so the current discussion about truth and memory would have to be enlarged beyond the poet’s role in shaping public memory.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Although some scholars have tried, e.g., Gildersleeve 1885, 214: “Memory is to find the place and Truth is to discharge the debt;” Nassen 1975, 223: “While he invokes the Muse for inspiration, he will rely on Truth, who is the daughter of mighty Zeus, for endorsement of the claims which he is about to make regarding the victor and his city;” Verdenius 1988, 56: “The help of the Muse sufficiently guarantees the poet’s truthfulness. . . , but in the present case, where sincerity of his promise to the victor might be doubted, the assistance of Aletheia provides extra security.”

¹⁰³ Cf. Gildersleeve 1885, 214 *ad* Μοῖσα: “The eldest of the old three was Μνήμη.”

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Pratt 1993, 119: “Here Pindar clearly plays on a notion of aletheia as a kind of forgetting. But this passage does not make truth synonymous with memory, for Pindar also opposes lies (pseudea) to truth here.”

¹⁰⁵ Kromer argues that Alatheia refers to the subjective, experiential truth of the poet and is thus to be contrasted with Atrekeia in this poem: “Alatheia. . . is to be contrasted with Atrekeia and therefore with the commercial aspect of the poet’s song. Its function is suggested by its proximity to ἐπιέλαθ’ whose meaning indicates that the poet’s memory, his perception of past events, is faulty. Alatheia is allied with the poet’s persona, with the self and with personal experience, and comes to represent the possibility of evaluating the song in non-economic terms” (Kromer 1976, 425).

¹⁰⁶ Detienne, who argues the most unwaveringly for an equivalence between truth and memory, focuses largely on the role of the poet in preserving public memory, although he does seem to specify two kinds of memory, individual and collective, in praise poetry: “The ‘memory’ of a man is precisely ‘the eternal monument of the Muses,’ that is, the same religious reality as the speech of the poet, grafted on memory and actualized in praise. At the level of sung speech, memory thus has two meanings. First it is a gift of second sight allowing the poet to produce efficacious speech, to formulate sung speech. Second, memory is sung speech itself, speech that will never cease to be and that is identified with the being of the man whom the speech celebrates” (Detienne 1995, 48-49).

The more significant request is for the Muse and Alatheia to vindicate the poet against charges of guest-friendship violation.¹⁰⁷ This concern about guest-friendship is a matter of convention, but also helps to define what Alatheia could mean and what her role is.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, her placement in an interpersonal relationship reflects an innovative idea that has only one near precedent, in Mimnermus (ἀληθείη δὲ παρέστω | σοὶ καὶ ἐμοί, πάντων χρῆμα δικαιοτάτων, “Let the truth be present between you and me, the most just possession of all,” Fr. 8.1). The poet’s incorporation of the Muse and Alatheia into a guest-friendship is unprecedented. If we examine Alatheia in relation to *xenia*, the designation “daughter of Zeus” (θυγάτηρ Ἀλάθεια Διός, 3-4) becomes clearer, for Zeus is the patron god of the guest-host relationship. This formulation of *xenia* couples poetic obligation with poetic truth in a way that was hinted at in Fragment 205, but receives fuller explication here.

The language Pindar uses makes clear his obligation to the victor (ὀφείλων, 3; ἀλιτόξενον, 6; χρέος, 8; τόκος, 9), but he situates this obligation in a context of friendship by fusing it with a spirit of willingness. He cites concern for friendly *charis* (φίλαν... ἐς χάριν, 12) as one factor motivating his composition of the ode, thus bringing together obligation and friendship (φίλαν) with *charis*, a term that Leslie Kurke asserts “designates a willing and precious reciprocal exchange.”¹⁰⁹ This emphasis on willingness amongst

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Hubbard 1985, 67 n. 165, where he argues against the notion that the imperative ἀνάγνωτε is directed at the Muse and Alatheia and adduces as evidence the shift in addressee signaled by ἀλλά in line 3. If the conjunction ἀλλά does introduce a new topic, it is possible that the address to the Muse and Alatheia has little or no connection with the admission of forgetfulness that opens the ode (1-3).

¹⁰⁸ Kromer 1976, 422 expresses the role of Alatheia succinctly: “At the end of the strophe the poet calls upon the Muse and Alatheia, who, by helping him to compose the song, will bring about the realization of the action prescribed by the contract. If the poet keeps his promise he will be freed from ‘the reproach of lying’, for his pledge will be seen in retrospect to have predicted a real event. It will become ‘true.’”

¹⁰⁹ Kurke 1993, 67. For a discussion of epinician *charis*, see MacLachlan 1993, 87-123, where she discusses *charis* in epinician poetry as the gratification of the victor.

parties in a relationship of obligation recurs later in the ode where Pindar reminds his victor Hagesidamos to give thanks to his trainer (χάρην, 17), just as Patroklos did to Achilles.¹¹⁰ By merging obligation with friendship and asking Alatheia to guide these relationships, Pindar constructs a truth-goddess who informs his relationship to his patron along with his rhetoric.¹¹¹

This model of contractual relationships is mirrored in the mythical exemplum of Herakles and Augeas. Pindar presents their story as a point of origin for the Olympic games, which are founded (in this version) after Herakles prevails over Augeas. This story serves as a mythical exemplum of the guest-host relationship. While the opening invocation depicts a guest-host relationship based on promised payment and follow-through of that promise, line 12 suggests that a spirit of willingness should also accompany the obligation. Herakles and Augeas represent positive and negative models of the *xenos*, as determined by how well they exhibit the willingness and reliability that characterize *xenia*. Pindar depicts Augeas as someone who undermines the guest-host relationship by refusing Herakles his promised fee for cleaning the stables. *Olympian* 10 does not include a full account of this myth, but alludes to Augeas' failure to pay (λάτριον...μισθόν, 29) and consequently dubs Augeas a guest-cheater (ξεναπάτας, 34) with a term that recalls the earlier charge against the poet (ἀλιτόξενον, 6); the poet thus

¹¹⁰ Cf. Nicholson 1998, 28, who similarly notes the personal tone of Pindar's truth-telling rhetoric, focusing on the pederastic imagery of the odes: "...any suggestion...that this truth is the production of a disinterested eyewitness is belied by the strongly pederastic flavor of Pindar's epinician poetry...[In *Ol.* 10.99-105] Pindar's testimony is, as Pratt observes, validated by his status as an eyewitness (*eidon*, "I saw"), but this is not the testimony of a dispassionate observer. Far from being the truth of a modern court, Pindar's truth is implicated in his adoption of a pederastic persona."

¹¹¹ Cf. Adkins 1972, 17 on truth-telling in Homer: "Truth-telling—the telling of desired, useful truths, at all events—is to be expected only from φίλοι, those who are for one reason or another within the same co-operative group; and even there it is only to be told when ἀρετή and status-considerations do not forbid it.

uses Augeas as a negative example for his own character. Like the poet-patron relationship, this relationship of payment for service is labeled guest-friendship.

Fulfillment of this obligation, however, is insufficient evidence of good guest-friendship, for Pindar also faults Augeas for his *unwillingness* to pay, which is in stark contrast to Herakles' willingness to perform the task: ὡς Αὐγέαν λάτριον | ἀέκονθ' ἐκῶν μισθὸν ὑπέρβιον | πράσσοιτο ("so that he [Herakles], as a willing man, might exact his payment for service from powerful Augeas, an unwilling man," 28-30). The adjective ὑπέρβιον, here describing Augeas, echoes the description of Herakles at line 15, an echo that emphasizes the symmetrical nature of the guest-host relationship and further indicts Augeas for his maltreatment of an equal.¹¹² Furthermore, the wordplay in ἀέκονθ' ἐκῶν underscores the expected parity and the actual disparity between Herakles' and Augeas' dispositions and echoes similar verbal emphases on reciprocal exchange in Pindar (e.g., φιλέων φιλέοντ', ἄγων ἄγοντα προφρόνως, *Pyth.* 10.66; οἴκοθεν οἴκαδε, *Ol.* 7.4). Pindar's slight variation of such phrases serves simultaneously to elucidate the symmetry and reciprocity expected of a guest and host and the failure of Augeas to fulfill this expectation.

With the myth of Herakles and Augeas, Pindar reinforces his portrayal of poet-patron relations in lines 1-12, which similarly couple obligation with friendship and willingness. Through the figure of Augeas Pindar illustrates what it means to be a bad guest-friend—failure and unwillingness to keep promises to a friend of equal stature—and expresses hope not to seem such a figure himself. By portraying his attitude toward

¹¹² Note also that ὑπέρβιος appears in the odes only in *Olympian* 10.

the victor as one of willing obligation and reinforcing this stance with an illustrative example from myth, Pindar claims that he is not only reliable, he is also sincere.

Having outlined the terms of poetic obligation, the poet opens another question: obligation to whom? While the system of debt and repayment he has set forth ostensibly centers on the patron, his invocation to the goddess at least implies an obligation partly to her, thus opening the possibility of obligations other than to the *laudandus*.¹¹³ Later in the ode the poet speaks of his decision to sing of this contest and claims this decision is impelled by the ordinances of Zeus: ἀγῶνα δ' ἐξαίρετον ἀεῖσαι θέμυτες ὄρσαν Διός (“The ordinances of Zeus prompt me to sing the choice contest,” 24).¹¹⁴ He refers to his obligation to the patron as a divine rule (θέμυτες) that is governed by Zeus himself, therefore suggesting that his relationship with his patron is part of a structure of obligation that involves more than only himself and the *laudandus*, for failure to uphold this obligation is tantamount to a defiance of Zeus. Moreover, this structure of obligation relates to the opening of the ode where Pindar calls on the Muse and Alatheia, calling the latter the daughter of Zeus. Pindar recalls Alatheia’s association with Zeus with this explicit reference to obligations mandated by Zeus.

¹¹³ Cf. MacLachlan 1993, 101, who senses a similar servile tone toward Alatheia in Fragment 205: “As *alatheia* served the sovereign Olympia in proving/revealing victors (*Ol.* 8.1-2), so the poet serves the queen Alatheia in giving an accurate testimony of the victory event.”

¹¹⁴ *Olympian* 8.21-30 lays out the specific relationships between Zeus, *xenia*, and *themis*: ἐνθα σῶτειρα | Διὸς ξενίου | πάρεδρος ἀσκεῖται Θέμις | ἐξοχ' ἀνθρώπων. ὅ τι γὰρ πολὺ καὶ πολλᾶ ῥέπη, | ὀρθᾶ διακρῖναι φρενὶ μὴ παρὰ καιρὸν | δυσπαλές· τεθμὸς δέ τις ἀθανάτων καὶ τάνδ' ἀλιερκέα χώραν | παντοδαποῖσιν ὑπέστασε ξένοις | κίονα δαιμονίαν – | ὁ δ' ἐπαντέλλων χρόνος | τοῦτο πρᾶσσων μὴ κάμοι – | Δωριεῖ λαῶ ταμειουμέναν ἐξ Αἰακοῦ (“[Aigina,] where Savior Themis, the partner of Zeus Xenios is honored more than among other men. For when much swings in the balance in many directions, it is difficult to judge appropriately with a straight mind. Some ordinance of the gods set even this sea-girt land beneath strangers of all kinds as a divine pillar—and may time as it rises up not weary of doing this— a land kept in trust for the Dorian people from the time of Aiakos”). Themis personified is the associate of Zeus Xenios. These lines highlight the duality of *xenia* as a system instituted by gods for men, whose careful observation of *xenia*-relationships constitutes service to the gods Themis and Zeus.

The significance of *xenia* as a sacred system of hospitality, whose participants are obligated not only to one another but also to the gods who govern this system, cannot be underestimated. Disregard of *xenia*, exemplified by Augeas in *Olympian* 10, flouts not only the luckless strangers who may encounter a corrupt host, but also the very gods who implemented the system of *xenia* in the first place. The extreme ramifications for one who violates *xenia* are clear: Augeas suffers the destruction of his homeland and death at the hands of Herakles, the guest whom he has cheated (*Ol.* 10.34-42) and who later establishes a precinct for Zeus in Augeas' former kingdom (43-45). The establishment of this sacred precinct is the ultimate response to Augeas' guest-cheating and signals the triumph not only of his cheated guest Herakles, but also of Zeus, the god of *xenia* whom Augeas' maltreatment of Herakles also offends.

REALITY AND POETRY: *NEMEAN* 7

I argue that this sense of overarching duty is one way the poet validates his truth-telling claims, for he may avoid ostensible bias if he can establish that his obligation to the victor stems from a greater one to represent the truth. In this section I examine *Nemean* 7 as an ode expressing dual obligations to represent deeds accurately and to praise the victor, which together form a truthful account. The poet makes numerous claims to truth (68-69, 77-79), all the while openly expressing his own role as helper to the *laudandus* (33-34, 61, 75-76). He is able to reconcile his obligation to the victor with his truth-telling rhetoric by making the case that an obligation to tell the truth should inform all poetry and by basing this argument on an examination of perception and reality which opens the ode.

The truth-telling function of the epinician poet has been most succinctly summarized by Louise Pratt:

Pindar and Bacchylides, more explicitly than any of their poetic predecessors, make claims to truth in their poetry. These claims are limited, however, to asserting the validity of the praises they sing. They serve an encomiastic function and should not be taken as statements about the way all poetic narrative operates. Aletheia becomes important when the poet's responsibility for accurate representation becomes essential to the poet's function as a poet of praise. But neither these assertions of truth nor the frequent rejections of lies that complement them should be taken to imply that fictional elements should not enter into mythical narrative. Both poets are interested in aletheia only insofar as it means the accurate apportionment of praise, and they reject *pseudea* only when these entail the improper attribution of blame, that is, when slander and envy are involved. (Pratt 1993, 115)

Pratt correctly emphasizes the significance of truth to encomium, but elides the critical attitude Pindar takes to poets who do not tell the truth. As I will endeavor to demonstrate, Pindar's criticism of other poets seems to be partly based on an explicit contrast between epinician and other types of poetry. More specifically, I will argue that Pindar criticizes Homer for composing poetry that irresponsibly privileges audience reaction over accurate praise. I will also try to deepen and extend Pratt's observations to include the sphere of obligation and how the aspect of obligation shapes Pindar's truth-telling.

Nemean 7 begins with an invocation to Eleithyia, detailing the integral role she plays in enabling human existence and articulating this existence with metaphors of light and darkness (ἄνευ σέθεν | οὐ φάος, οὐ μέλαιναν δρακέντες εὐφρόναν | τεὰν ἀδελφεὰν ἐλάχομεν ἀγλαόγυιον Ἥβαν, "Without you, we do not look upon light nor black night, nor do we gain the lot of your beautiful-limbed sister Hebe," 2-4). This invocation works on two levels: Eleithyia provides a suitable metaphor for an ode's beginning, and a means for introducing the *laudandus* Sogenes, whose birth is mentioned in lines 7-8.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ See Young 1970 for the function of Eleithyia in *Nemean 7*. Young argues that the opening of this ode is a typically Pindaric type whereby the poet introduces a universal human experience before moving to the specific case of the *laudandus*.

The opening lines focus on all aspects of existence, light and dark, which are enabled by Eleithyia. The poet then shifts the focus to light, which in this extended metaphor comes to represent existence that is made known through poetry:

εἰ δὲ τύχη τις ἔρδων, μελίφρον' αἰτίαν
ροαῖσι Μοισᾶν ἐνέβαλε· τὰ μεγάλα γὰρ ἀλκαί
σκότον πολὺν ὕμνων ἔχοντι δεόμεναι·
ἔργοις δὲ καλοῖς ἔσοπτρον ἴσαμεν ἐνὶ σὺν τρόπῳ,
εἰ Μναμοσύνας ἔκατι λιπαράμπυκος
εὔρηται {τις} ἄποινα μόχθων κλυταῖς ἐπέων ἀοιδαῖς. (12-16)

If someone happens to do well, he throws a honey-minded cause into the streams of the Muses, for great deeds of courage have much darkness when they lack songs. We know of a mirror for good deeds in one way, if someone finds recompense for toils in the famous songs of poetry because of Mnemosyne with her bright headband.

Pindar delineates familiar relationships between poetry, accomplishment, and memory when he describes athletic accomplishment's reliance on poetry for its glorification.¹¹⁶ By using imagery of darkness, he effectively equates poetry's failure to memorialize a great deed with the obliteration of that deed. He invokes the obligatory aspect of this memorialization when he refers to poetry as a recompense (ἄποινα, 16) afforded to athletes whose accomplishments are owed glorification.¹¹⁷ The opening lines acknowledge the objective reality of existence, which poetry then has the pivotal role of memorializing (or not) through accurate representation. Later, Pindar describes blame as dark (σκοτεινόν, 61), thus implying that blame is tantamount to obfuscation. In light of his earlier comments on the obligatory aspect of poetry (ἄποινα, 16), this reference to dark blame suggests that obfuscation ought have no role in poetry. The invocation to Eleithyia and the image of a mirror amount to a dual conception of poetry, first as an act

¹¹⁶ Many scholars discuss the relationship between poetry and memory. E.g., Bundy 1986, Kurke 1991, Detienne 1996, 48-49, and Pratt 1993, 115-129.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Bundy 1986, 57: "...ἀρετὰ creates a debt..." For a discussion of ἄποινα, see Kurke 1991, 108-134 and Finley 1981, 241.

of creation by the poet, but secondly, as an obligatory act of reflection on a deed already committed.¹¹⁸

Pindar criticizes Homer's failure to fulfill this dual function of poetry (creative and reflective) by pointing out his role in misrepresenting Odysseus and suggests that such misrepresentation, poetic or not, caused the injustice suffered by Ajax:

ἐγὼ δὲ πλέον' ἔλομαι
λόγον Ὀδυσσέος ἢ πάθαν διὰ τὸν ἄδυεπῆ γενέσθ' Ὀμηρον·
ἐπεὶ ψεύδεσιν οἱ ποτανᾶ <τε> μαχανᾶ
σεμνὸν ἔπεστί τι· σοφία δὲ κλέπτει παράγοισα μύθοις. τυφλὸν δ' ἔχει
ἦτορ ὄμιλος ἀνδρῶν ὁ πλειῆστος. εἰ γὰρ ἦν
ἔ τὰν ἀλάθειαν ιδέμεν, οὐ κεν ὄπλων χολωθεῖς
ὁ καρτερὸς Αἴας ἔπαξε διὰ φρενῶν
λευρὸν ξίφος. (*Nem.* 7.20-27)

I expect that Odysseus' story has become greater than his experience on account of sweet-talking Homer, since something majestic lies upon his lies and his soaring resourcefulness. Skill deceives, misleading with stories. The majority of men have a blind heart, for if they had been able to see the truth, mighty Ajax, angered over the arms, would not have fixed a smooth sword through his heart.

Although Pindar acknowledges and praises Homer's skill as a poet (ἀδυεπῆ, 21; ποτανᾶ τε μαχανᾶ, 22; σεμνόν, 23),¹¹⁹ he faults Homer for his inaccurate representation of Odysseus as disproportionate to Odysseus' actual experiences (πλέον'...λόγον Ὀδυσσέος

¹¹⁸ The implication here that poetry, as something at once new and a representation of something old, must balance its newness with its accuracy, becomes explicit in Nemean 8: πολλὰ γὰρ πολλᾶ λέλεκται, νεαρὰ δ' ἐξευρόντα δόμεν βασάνῳ | ἐς ἔλεγχον, ἅπας κίνδυνος· ὄψον δὲ λόγοι φθονεροῖσιν, | ἄπτεται δ' ἐσλῶν ἀεὶ, χειρόνεσσι δ' οὐκ ἐρίζει ("For many things have been said in many ways, and discovering new things to put to the touchstone for testing is wholly dangerous, since words are relish to the envious, and envy always grabs hold of good men, but does not contend with lesser men," *Nem.* 8.20-22). As he suggests in *Nemean* 7, the poet here expresses concern that newness can run the risk of compromising accuracy, this time using the image of the touchstone rather than the mirror. The metaphor of the touchstone implies that his praise is verifiable. The passage from *Nemean* 8 presents accurate reporting in terms of risk, rather than obligation, and underscores the laudability of the victor by suggesting that his susceptibility to attack by envious people marks his membership among the good (ἐσλῶν, 22). Pindar thus constructs a situation in which praise and truthful rhetoric are synonymous, for if envy comes only to men who are *esloi*, the attacks of envy, while loathsome, are actually proof of a man's laudability. For a discussion of the touchstone metaphor in Greek literature, see duBois 1991, 9-34.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Pratt 1993, 127 who entertains the possibility that "Pindar here slyly praises Homer's ability to confer more fame on Odysseus than he deserved as a positive attribute of poetry, a quality that a patron might well appreciate."

ἢ πάθαν, 21). The opposition between speech and sight (λόγον, ἄδυεπῆ, 21; τυφλόν, 23; ἰδέμεν, 25) points up the discrepancies between Homer's account and the truth.

Similarly, the comparison between an experience and its account recalls the prescribed symmetry between deeds and their reportage evoked by the image of the mirror (14).

Pindar criticizes Homer for a lack of such symmetry, which he himself has just presented as poetry's obligation. He has indicated that poetry must combine its two functions of creation and representation in a way that Homer's poetry does not.

Pindar seems at first to distinguish between Odysseus' account (λόγον Ὀδυσσέος, 21), which has been composed by Homer, and the truth (τὰν ἀλάθειαν, 25), thus pointing out an instance in which poetry has shaped memory falsely. He continues the language of vision by lamenting the inability of most men to see (ιδέμεν, 25) the truth. His reflection on deceptive skill (σοφία δὲ κλέπτει παράγοισα μύθοις, 23) seems initially to refer to poetry and to draw attention to the reception of poetic accounts (τυφλὸν δ' ἔχει | ἦτορ ὄμιλος ἀνδρῶν ὁ πλεῖστος, 23-24), but the γάρ clause in line 24 indicates an audience internal to the works of Homer rather than Homer's own audience. At this point Pindar has merged audiences, for he has described poetry in terms that liken it to a visual remembrance of noble deeds, and he has impugned Homer's poetry for being deceptive; the observation on the blind hearts of men acts as a pivot between Homer's audience and Ajax's.¹²⁰ Pindar thus widens the sphere of relevance for his assertions about truthfulness, pointing out the consequences of falsehood within the myth as well as outside of it.

¹²⁰ Cf. Pratt 1993, 128 who also makes this observation. Pratt notes the ambiguity of the pronoun οἱ in line 22, taking it, as I do, as a reference to Homer rather than Odysseus. Cf. also Segal 1967, 442 and Most 1985, 150-151 for discussion of the close association between Homer and Odysseus in these lines.

The consequence of this blindness is Ajax's suicide. *Nemean* 8.24-34 provides a more elaborate account, citing the preference of the Danaans for Odysseus rather than Ajax and similarly faulting deception as the cause of Ajax's downfall:

ἦ τιν' ἄγλωσσον μὲν, ἦτορ δ' ἄλκιμον, λάθα κατέχει
 ἐν λυγρῷ νεῖκει· μέγιστον δ' αἰόλω ψεύδει γέρας ἀντέταται.
 κρυφίαισι γὰρ ἐν ψάφοις Ὀδυσσῆ Δαναοὶ θεράπευσαν·
 χρυσέων δ' Αἴας στερηθεὶς ὄπλων φόνω πάλαισεν.
 ἦ μὰν ἀνόμοιά γε δόοισιν ἐν θερμῷ χροί
 ἔλκεα ῥῆξαν πελεμιζόμενοι
 ὑπ' ἀλεξιμβρότῳ λόγγα, τὰ μὲν ἀμφ' Ἀχιλεῖ νεοκτόνω,
 ἄλλων τε μόχθων ἐν πολυφθόροις
 ἀμέραις. ἐχθρὰ δ' ἄρα πάρφασις ἦν καὶ πάλαι,
 αἰμύλων μύθων ὁμόφοιτος, δολοφραδῆς, κακοποιὸν ὄνειδος·
 ἂ τὸ μὲν λαμπρὸν βιάται, τῶν δ' ἀφάντων κῦδος ἀντείνει σαθρόν. (*Nem.*
 8.24-34)

Yes, oblivion takes hold of someone tongueless but valiant of heart in deadly strife, and the greatest honor is held up to shifty falsehood. For the Danaans devoted themselves to Odysseus in secret ballots, but Ajax, robbed of the golden weapons, wrestled with death. Truly they did not equally strike wounds in the warm bodies of the enemy, as they drove them back with man-assisting spears, both over newly-slain Achilles and in the much-destroying days of other toils. Indeed, there was hateful deception even long ago, the fellow traveler of flattering stories, with treacherous thoughts, a maleficent disgrace, which violates the luminous and upholds the unwholesome renown of those who should not be seen.

These lines provide an explanation of the Odysseus-Ajax proximity in *Nemean* 7.20-27: while Odysseus represents inferiority with compensatory mendacity, Ajax embodies valor lacking adequate verbal glorification. The generally accepted interpretation is that these lines describe Odysseus' willful deception and manipulation of the Greeks, who subsequently express preference for him over the militarily superior Ajax.¹²¹ In neither

¹²¹ E.g., Carey 1976, 31, who points out that this is a Pindaric innovation; Miller 1982, 118; Nisetich 1989, 22. For a list of the different accounts about the awarding of Achilles' arms to Odysseus, see Most 1985, 153.

Most 1985, 150 has an interesting interpretation of the Odysseus passage from *Nemean* 7.20-23. He diverges from the traditional view that these lines about Odysseus refer to the judgment on Achilles' arms, arguing instead that "Pindar may be suggesting that Homer, instead of inquiring whether Odysseus'

this passage nor the one from *Nemean* 7, however, does Pindar explicitly fault Odysseus' mendacity for Ajax's suicide.¹²² Instead, he describes falsehood and deception in terms focusing on faulty perception, perhaps caused by envy, to which he alludes in earlier lines (8.20-22). Despite clear evidence to the contrary, the Greeks misjudge the relative merits of Ajax and Odysseus and inappropriately award Achilles' arms to the latter. Pindar again employs light and dark imagery, here to emphasize the blatant difference between Ajax, "the luminous" (τὸ μὲν λαμπρὸν, 34), and inferior men like Odysseus who are "the invisible" (τῶν δ' ἀφάντων, 34). While the terms ψεῦδος and πάρφασις must refer to Odysseus' misleading rhetoric, the lack of a clear agent of πάρφασις in lines 32-34 shifts focus from Odysseus¹²³ to the result of his deception, i.e., inappropriate bestowal of praise and blame.¹²⁴ Pindar thereby points out the destructiveness of an audience receptive to deception and the poet's responsibility to be aware of his audience's tendencies.

Nemean 7 similarly points to the importance of aligning perception with reality. Pindar contrasts perception with truth by citing the example of how Ajax was perceived by the majority as opposed to what he actually did, terming the latter situation "the truth" (τὰν ἀλάθειαν, *Nem.* 7.25). The prior lines highlight the difference between existence

narrative was truthful or not, simply repeated Odysseus' report in his own words." Although I do not go as far as Most does, I do see merit in his idea that Pindar merges Homer's and Odysseus' characteristics here.

¹²² Cf. Most 1985, 152: "Pindar is careful here [in *Nem.* 7] and elsewhere to avoid making the explicit claim that Achilles' arms were awarded to Odysseus only because Odysseus deceived and cheated the Greeks."

¹²³ Cf. Most 1985, 152 n. 78: "Only in two other places [other than *Nem.* 7.23-27] does Pindar allude to the ὄπλων κρίσις. In *I.* 4.35-36, the blame is explicitly given to the entire Greek army rather than to one individual. In *N.* 8, Ajax's defeat is attributed to the envious, who grasp the noble but have no quarrel with the ignoble (21-22): as the subsequent comparison between Odysseus and Ajax makes clear (28-32), these enviers cannot be Odysseus (for Pindar nowhere refers to someone who was χείρων than Odysseus) but instead only the Greek army, who grasped the noble Ajax but had no quarrel with the lesser Odysseus."

¹²⁴ By contrast, similar terms are used of Hippolyta in *Nem.* 5.29-32, but she is explicitly the agent of deception in those lines. See my discussion in the following chapter.

and knowledge with the figure of Eleithyia, who effects both light and darkness, and the mirror of poetry, which alone can publicize a deed; the significance of this difference is demonstrated by Ajax's suicide, the morbid consequence of perception incongruent with reality. Moreover, the ambiguity of Pindar's observation of men's blindness—does he refer to Homer's audience or to Odysseus and Ajax's?—places some responsibility for proper perception of truth on poets.

These lines are quite significant for what they suggest about how Pindar conceives of his poetic duty. With Eleithyia, Pindar highlights the whole of existence, then he narrows the focus to those aspects of existence involving knowledge and perception and what the poet's role should be in relation to these two concepts. He suggests that part of poetic obligation stems from the function of poetry as the *sole* means for knowledge of great deeds (ἔργοις δὲ καλοῖς ἔσοπτρον ἴσαμεν ἐνὶ σὺν τρόπῳ, 14). This conception of poetry as the only such source of knowledge contains a dual obligation, one to glorify the agent of great deeds (ἄποινα, 16), the other to propagate the knowledge of these deeds.

Although Pindar here criticizes Homer as the counter example for his own poetry, impugning his misleading falsehoods, in *Isthmian* 4.37-39 he lauds Homer for duly glorifying Ajax.¹²⁵ This contradiction begs consideration of what constitutes truth and falsehood for Pindar and what his poetic relationship to these two concepts is. The image of the mirror suggests that poetry and reality should have a symmetrical relationship to one another, and Pindar further suggests that Homer's poetry has somehow failed to preserve this symmetry. In contrast to Homer's exaggeration of Odysseus' deeds, Pindar

¹²⁵ In *Isthmian* 4.37-39, Pindar lauds Homer for duly glorifying Ajax. See Fitch 1924 for an explanation of the body of texts encapsulated by Pindar's use of the name "Homer." See also Nisetich 1989.

sets out to accomplish what Homer has not. His praise of Homer in *Isthmian* 4 suggests that Homer duly glorifies Ajax (it is Odysseus' audience, not Homer's, that fails to see the truth about Ajax), but over-glorifies Odysseus.¹²⁶

What Pindar's criticism of Homer implies about poetry becomes explicit when he specifically defines his poetry as part of a guest-host friendship:

ξεῖνός εἰμι· σκοτεινὸν ἀπέχων ψόγον,
ὔδατος ὥτε ῥοὰς φίλον ἐς ἄνδρ' ἄγων
κλέος ἐτήτυμον αἰνέσω· ποτίφορος δ' ἀγαθοῖσι μισθός οὔτος.
ἔων δ' ἐγγὺς Ἀχαιὸς οὐ μέμψεται μ' ἀνήρ
Ἴονίας ὑπὲρ ἄλως οἰκέων, καὶ προξενία πέποιθ', ἔν τε δαμόταις
ὄμματι δέρκομαι λαμπρόν, οὐχ ὑπερβαλῶν,
βίαια πάντ' ἐκ ποδὸς ἐρύσαις. (*Nem.* 7.61-67)

I am a *guest-friend*. Holding off dark blame, I will praise, leading genuine fame like streams of water to a man who is my *friend*, for this is suitable *payment* for good men. An Achaian man being nearby, dwelling over the Ionian Sea, will not blame me, and I trust in *hospitality*, and among townsmen my gaze is bright since I do not overstep the mark and I have removed all things forced from my path.

As in *Olympian* 10.3-12, Pindar borrows imagery from the various spheres of guest-host obligation, friendship, and monetary exchange (μισθός, 63) to characterize his relationship to his patron. The poet praises his patron (here, the victor's father Thearion) as his friend (φίλον, 62) and also someone to whom he is beholden in accordance with a systematic relationship between guests and hosts (ξεῖνος, 61; προξενία, 65¹²⁷), which, in terms of praise poetry, involves protection from blame (ἀπέχων ψόγον, 61). Yet these obligations to his patron do not preclude the accuracy of his praise,¹²⁸ for the poet

¹²⁶ Nisetich 1989, 9-23 argues that Pindar's varying attitudes towards Homer stem from the varying contexts and occasions in which the various odes were composed. Perhaps so, but I would also add that Pindar finds certain aspects of Homer more laudable than others.

¹²⁷ Cf. *Pyth.* 10.64 (πέποιθα ξενία) and *Oi.* 1.103 (πέποιθα δὲ ξένον).

¹²⁸ Cf. Kurke 1991, 136 (citing Slater 1979, 80) who argues that "The bond of *xenia* authenticates the poet's encomium, but it also participates in a precise social context."

qualifies the fame that he brings to his host as “genuine” (ἐτήτυμον), which creates the impression of sincerity and authenticity, rather than blind praise,¹²⁹ and this genuine fame constitutes payment in the guest-host relationship between poet and *laudandus*.¹³⁰

An explicit difference between Pindar and Homer, then, is that Pindar’s poetry reflects an obligation to his subject comparable to the stance of piety he takes toward the gods in *Olympian* 1.28-35. Furthermore, he has suggested in *Nemean* 7.14 that his poetry must accurately reflect noble deeds. Taken together, these statements suggest that a truthful account stems from a relationship of obligation between poet and patron, absent in Homer’s poetry, and adheres to praise that accurately reflects the *kleos* of the *laudandus*. Leslie Kurke has argued that Pindar’s description of guest-friendship between poet and patron involves reciprocity tantamount to equality;¹³¹ in the context of *Nemean* 7 I would argue that this equality between poet and patron is meant to reflect the parity between poetry and its subject matter, for each relationship is governed by obligation. At least two levels of obligation are outlined in *Nemean* 7: there is an obligation to reflect deeds accurately since poetry is their only “mirror,” and there is the obligation that the poet has to his patron-host. Pindar even addresses the possibility of excessive praise in his assurance that he does not “overstep the mark” (ὑπερβαλῶν, 66), thus recalling the contrasting example of Homer, who presents a λόγος that exceeds Odysseus’ πάθα.

¹²⁹ Cf. Carey 1981, 159 *ad* κλέος ἐτήτυμον: “ἐτήτυμον emphasizes the truth of Pindar’s words (in contrast to Homer and ὄμιλος ἀνδρῶν ὁ πλεῖστος).

¹³⁰ Kurke 1991, 93 can be helpful here. Kurke, following Bourdieu, has argued that this metaphor of payment does not suggest an impersonal monetary exchange; rather, the values of the archaic guest-host relationship continue in Pindar’s time, even though the language has broadened to reflect the increased use of real, rather than symbolic, currency.

¹³¹ See Kurke 1991, 140-141, where she discusses *Ol.* 1.103-105 and *Pyth.* 10.63-65. Both passages mention guest-friendship in a way similar to *Nem.* 7.65 (προξενία πέποιθ’).

There is also a subtle implication that these relationships of reciprocity between guest and host and of symmetry between experience and account should be preserved because of some duty to someone other than the patron. When Pindar points out a flawed relationship between the poet and the person he praises, the victim of this flaw is someone other than the object of praise. Homer's excessive praise of Odysseus is associated with the blindness of Odysseus and Ajax's peers, for *Nem.* 7.24 refers ambiguously to either Homer's or Odysseus' audience, and Pindar's characterization of Homer's poetry as deceptive (ψεύδεσι, 22; κλέπτει παράγοισα μύθοις, 23) echoes his characterization of Odysseus' deceptiveness in *Nemean* 8 (ψεύδει, 25; πάρφασις, 32; αἰμύλων μύθων, 33). Excessive praise of Odysseus is tantamount to falsehood that is harmful not to Odysseus but to Ajax. In light of Ajax' fate Pindar's assurance that he avoids excessive praise of Thearion (66) not only validates the accuracy of his praises, but also reassures his audience that no one could be harmed by excessive praise the way Ajax was harmed by hyperbolic praise of Odysseus. Such an assurance thus implies a consideration for the welfare of others besides the patron.

What I have examined in this section is the relationship between truth and poetic obligation, and I have argued that Pindar presents his obligation to the victor as certifying a true account. Furthermore, I have argued that part of the poet's obligation is to relay the truth. My study of Alatheia in Fragment 205 and *Olympian* 10 focused on the connection between Alatheia and obligation, while my examination of *Nemeans* 7 and 8 focused on Pindar's criticism of poets who are not bound to a program of accurate representation. The primary contrast that Pindar points up between himself and Homer is one of *xenia*: he, as a guest-friend to the *laudandus*, is able to provide a more accurate and balanced account than a poet who does not observe such constraints of obligation.

What Pindar's criticism of Homer and self-portrayed contrast with Homer suggest is that a poet's obligation, often articulated in terms of *xenia*, must be associated with truth and vice versa, and that poetry composed outside the bounds of *xenia* potentially yields falsehood and deception. A question then arises as to how deception and falsehood relate to relationships of *xenia*, a topic to which I now turn.

PART TWO: FALSEHOOD, DECEPTION, AND *XENIA*

The negativity with which we view $\psi\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ might stem from an intuitive reaction against falsehood or deception of any sort, and Pindar's use of $\psi\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ by and large falls in line with this modern sensibility.¹³² Pindar frequently denies that there is $\psi\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ in his poetry as part of his truth-telling rhetoric,¹³³ a rhetoric necessitated by the conventions of his genre, which casts his relationship with his patron as a friendship or guest-friendship in which he is obligated to speak the truth. Each instance of Pindar's refusal to tell a $\psi\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ about his *laudandus* occurs in an ode where he has also portrayed his relationship to the victor as one of guest-friendship or lauded the patron as a good host.¹³⁴ I argue that these disavowals of $\psi\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}\delta\omicron\varsigma$ are to be understood within a larger system comprising *aletheia* and *xenia* and excluding *pseudos* and deception.

I have observed that several depictions of deception, concealment, or distortion occur in Pindar's mythical digressions and, like his denials of falsehood, take place in contexts of perversion or violation of guest-friendship. Because Pindar's myths often provide a framework for studying the complicated relationship between *pseudos* and

¹³² Indeed, I cannot agree with Hubbard's assertion that "Pindar recognizes...that falsehood is not an absolute evil" (1985, 102).

¹³³ Cf. *Ol.* 4.17, *Ol.* 10.5, *Ol.* 13.52, *Nem.* 1.18, *Nem.* 7.49, Fr. 11, and Fr. 205.

¹³⁴ See *Ol.* 4.4, *Ol.* 10.6, *Ol.* 13.3, *Nem.* 1.20, *Nem.* 7.61.

xenia, I have chosen to examine examples of interaction between *pseudos* and *xenia* in the myths with the aim of understanding how *pseudos* affects the *xenia* between poet and patron. The numerous connections between Pindar’s encomiastic material and his inlaid mythical digressions have long been acknowledged. Furthermore, Pindar himself does not always delineate clear boundaries between his mythical *comparanda* and the outer praise narrative, for example in *Nemean* 7.23-24 or in *Olympian* 1, where Pindar attributes false Pelops stories both to poets (1.37) and to Pelops’ own neighbors (1.47). His deft and seamless maneuvering between myth and non-myth suggests that his attitudes toward truth, poetry, and obligation are not confined to statements explicitly about poetry, but can be elucidated by his presentations of myth as well. I will examine the Tantalos myth of *Olympian* 1, the Ixion myth of *Pythian* 2, the Koronis myth of *Pythian* 3, and the Peleus and Hippolyta myth of *Nemeans* 4 and 5, each of which demonstrates the incongruity of deception with ritualized sacred relationships such as *xenia* and marriage.¹³⁵

***PSEUDOS* AND *XENIA*: THREE TYPES OF OPPOSITION**

1. The Interweaving of Poetic Obligation and Myth in *Olympian* 1

Pindar’s reformulation of the Tantalos and Pelops myth is well-known, and I have already discussed it in some detail. In sum, Pindar dismisses the traditional accounts of Pelops’ disappearance as stories that “deceive with elaborate falsehoods” (ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι, *OI.* 1.29), presents his own version (36-45), recounts the traditional version that he has debunked (46-51), and provides his own explanation for Tantalos’ punishment (54-66). Tantalos’ crime in the traditional myth is serving up his son Pelops

¹³⁵ Hubbard has identified several mythical distortions or perversions of *xenia* that occur in Pindar, which include the stories of Tantalos in *Olympian* 1, Ixion in *Pythian* 2, and Ischys in *Pythian* 3. For Hubbard’s complete list and a discussion of *xenia* in Pindar, see Hubbard 1985, 156-158.

as a meal for the gods. Pindar finds this account unacceptable, asserting that he cannot depict the gods as gluttons (ἔμοι δ' ἄπορα γαστρίμαργον μακάρων τιν' εἰπεῖν, 52), and posits that Tantalos' true crime is his failure to recognize great fortune (μέγαν ὄλβον, 56) and stealing and sharing the gods' nectar and ambrosia as a result (60-64).

Scholarly focus on Pindar's variation of this myth tends to be on the fate of Pelops,¹³⁶ but I would like to examine some of the other differences between Pindar's rendition and the way he presents the traditional version. To reformulate the popular myth he changes key details concerning not only the fate of Pelops, but also the setting of interaction between Pelops and the gods. According to Pindar the traditional account of Pelops and Tantalos incorrectly portrays a gross perversion of the guest-host relationship involving the slaughter and consumption of Pelops by the gluttonous gods:

ὔδατος ὄτι τε πυρὶ ζέοισαν εἰς ἀκμάν
μαχαίρα τάμον κατὰ μέλη,
τραπέζαισί τ' ἀμφὶ δεύτατα κρεῶν
σέθεν διεδάσαντο καὶ φάγον.
ἔμοι δ' ἄπορα γαστρίμαργον μακάρων τιν' εἰπεῖν· ἀφίσταμαι. (48-52)

[One of the envious neighbors said] that they cut your limbs with a sword and threw you into the boiling height of the fire, and at the end of the meal around the tables, they divided up your flesh and ate it. It is useless for me to say one of the blessed gods is gluttonous—I stand aloof.

The details of cutting, boiling, and devouring are vividly and grotesquely violent. Moreover, it is grammatically ambiguous who performs the butchering, for the subject of τάμον and διεδάσαντο is unstated, thus leading us to assume the same subject as for φάγον, i.e., the gods.¹³⁷ Pindar's report of what others say about this myth makes it unclear who is ultimately at fault for the murder and consumption of Pelops and thus suggests that the gods are culpable for *knowingly* partaking in cannibalism. This

¹³⁶ See, e.g., Köhnken, 1974; Griffith 1990, 200.

¹³⁷ Cf. Gerber 1982, 85.

implication of culpability on the gods' part is a distortion of the traditional account and is not attested in any other known version of this myth.¹³⁸

Pindar presents Tantalos' meal as the pinnacle of proper guest-host hospitality in stark contrast to this image of the disordered, gluttonous, and willingly cannibalistic gods. Tantalos invites the gods to a meal to repay them for a similarly hospitable gesture on their part:

ὅπῳτ' ἐκάλεσε πατήρ τὸν εὐνομώτατον
ἐς ἔρανον φίλαν τε Σίπυλον,
ἄμοιβαῖα θεοῖσι δεῖπνα παρέχων. (*OI.* 1.37-39)

When [Pelops'] father called them to his most well-ordered feast and to friendly Sipylus, providing a meal for the gods in return for theirs....

The language emphasizes the friendliness of Tantalos' invitation (φίλαν, 38), the attention to good order (εὐνομώτατον, 37), and the participation in feasting (ἔρανος, 38, here translated as "feast," is more literally rendered "contribution to a feast"¹³⁹). Pindar recasts this interaction as a well-ordered, convivial, and respectfully hospitable event between gods and mortals, an event instigated by the gods' prior hospitality toward Tantalos (ἄμοιβαῖα θεοῖσι δεῖπνα, 39). It is in this context that Poseidon becomes smitten with Pelops and abducts him (40-42). The Pindaric version thus casts the gods as proponents of the guest-host relationship in contrast to the popular version where the gods themselves violate *xenia*. In Pindar's version Tantalos alone is to blame for violating *xenia* when he steals the nectar and ambrosia of the gods to give to his friends.

Pindar attributes the false version of this myth to two parties. Within the myth itself an envious neighbor is responsible for propagating the false story of Pelops'

¹³⁸ Gerber 1982, 85.

¹³⁹ According to Gerber 1982, 74, citing Vondeling 1961, 262, reciprocity is implied in this word. Alternatively, the word could suggest contribution; Tantalos' contribution would be his son Pelops.

consumption by the gods to the gossip of an envious neighbor: ὡς δ' ἄφαντος ἔπελες, οὐδὲ ματρὶ πολλὰ μαιόμενοι φῶτες ἄγαγον, | ἔννεπε κρυφῶ τις αὐτίκα φθονερῶν γειτόνων (“When you disappeared and men, although much-striving, did not lead you to your mother, one of the envious neighbors immediately said secretly that...,” *OI.* 1.46-47). But Pindar introduces the Pelops and Tantalos myth with a rumination on the mortal tendency toward exaggeration and falsehood (28-29) and later suggests that the external propagation of this myth is attributable to previous poets (σὲ δ' ἀντία προτέρων φθέγξομαι, 36). The distinction between poets and mythical characters is unclear, for Pindar blurs this distinction and in so doing aligns envy with falsehood as dual causes of a misrepresentative story. Falsehood and envy begin as corrupting forces within the myth, aimed specifically at distorting the careful hospitality that Tantalos provides to the gods in emulation of their own prior hospitality. Pindar then interweaves poets' motivations with those of Tantalos' neighbors and makes falsehood a relevant aspect of each. Falsehood becomes a key player within the myth of Tantalos as well as outside of it, for it is the envious neighbor who first starts the false tale that mischaracterizes the gods and the *xenia* in which they take part. A similar conflation occurs in *Nemean* 7.20-27, where Pindar moves seamlessly from criticism of Homer's representation of Odysseus to Odysseus' misrepresentation of Ajax, as I discussed in the first part of this chapter. These passages demonstrate the interconnectedness between myth and poetry and the applicability of myth's lessons to the obligation of the poet.

Pindar thus uses the Tantalos digression to show violations of *xenia* on several different levels, internal and external to the myth. Within the myth Tantalos violates *xenia* by failing to appreciate his extraordinary favor among the gods and misusing their

gifts to the point of betrayal, but he is not the only offender.¹⁴⁰ A second perversion of *xenia* occurs outside of the myth by the poets who slander the gods by depicting their disregard for *xenia*. In casting Tantalos as the sole violator of *xenia*, Pindar discredits the traditional version, which depicts a complete corruption of *xenia* by both gods and men. The two violations of *xenia* are interrelated, as this slander originates within the myth, by the envious neighbor of Tantalos (47), and continues without, by the poets who propagate this erroneous tale. Thus, the internal and external elements of the myth work in conjunction with one another, as the poets who tell the false version are akin to the gossiping neighbors who start the rumor that Pelops has been eaten. These poets' *pseudos* stems from presenting a picture of godly behavior that is out of line with *xenia* and from propagating this lying myth.

There are thus two issues of *xenia* at play here: the *xenia* between the poet and the gods is external to the myth, while the *xenia* between the gods and Tantalos is internal to the myth. The former is implied by the poet's expressed fears of blame and impoverishment (*αἰτία*, 35; *ἄκέρδεια*, 53). When the poet attributes these to *pseudos* and deception (28-29), he is implying his participation in a relationship of reciprocal benefit wherein he escapes these consequences by providing a favorable account about the gods. This *xenia* between the poet and the gods is intricately tied to the depiction of *xenia* within the myth, so that the poet's relationship with the gods is affected by how he portrays their relationship with Tantalos. When the poet aligns "the true account" with the favorable one, as I discussed earlier, it follows that *pseudos* would be anything that would weaken a favorable depiction. Moreover, Pindar implies that a reciprocal

¹⁴⁰ Scholarship that notes the ode's lessons of *xenia* (e.g., Hubbard 1985, 156) tends to focus on Tantalos rather than those who tell his story.

relationship between poet and subject embraces the true account (such as it is) and shuns deception and falsehood. By interweaving the internal details of the myth with the external motivations of poetic composition, Pindar intertwines content and obligation. Consequently, Pindar revises the traditional version to depict a violation of *xenia* without harming his own *xenia* with the gods. The other version, rife with falsehoods, distorts the very image of the gods' preservation of *xenia*, thereby harming the teller's own *xenia* with them. The contrast between Pindar and other poets is not merely a contrast between the details of their respective accounts, it is also an implicit contrast between their respective relationships with the gods and reflects Pindar's conception of poetic obligation and falsehood.

2. *Pseudos* as Punishment for Violating *Xenia*: Ixion in *Pythian 2*

The story of Ixion in *Pythian 2* provides a variant on the occurrence of *pseudos* outside a guest-host relationship. Pindar tells us the story of Ixion, a mortal man who, like Tantalos, has the rare privilege of living among the gods, but subsequently loses this privilege through his own error and suffers the torment of being permanently bound to a spinning wheel in the Underworld.¹⁴¹ He tells us of two specific crimes that result in Ixion's eternal damnation: the murder of a family member and the attempted seduction of Hera, in retaliation for which Zeus fashions a false Hera, a cloud bearing the appearance and sexual allure of the real one. Ixion couples with this Hera-cloud under the misapprehension that she is real and begets Kentauros, who in turn becomes the eponymous forebear of the half-man, half-horse creatures familiar from mythology.

Unlike his predecessors Pindar depicts the crime primarily as a violation of a special relationship between Ixion and Zeus. Having been accorded every blessing and a

¹⁴¹ Perhaps coincidentally *Pythian 2* and *Olympian 1* are both to the same victor Hieron.

pleasurable life among the Olympian gods (εὐμενέσσι γὰρ παρὰ Κρονίδαις | γλυκὸν ἐλὼν βίον, μακρὸν οὐχ ὑπέμεινεν ὄλβον, *Pyth.* 2.25-26), Ixion nevertheless squanders this life by overstepping the bounds of propriety and developing a lust for Hera. In so doing he disturbs the delicate balance of his relationship with Zeus, which is essentially a guest-host friendship in which the two participants are a god and a mortal. Ixion's lust is therefore a twofold offense since he has wronged both a host and a god. Thus does Pindar tell us that one must observe one's proper place among the gods (χρὴ δὲ κατ' αὐτὸν αἰεὶ παντὸς ὄρᾶν μέτρον, 34). In response to Ixion's violation, Zeus deceives him with the Hera-cloud, which formalizes the dissolution of *xenia* between himself and Ixion. Since Ixion has behaved in a manner unsuitable for a *xenos*, he effectively severs his relationship with Zeus, leaving Zeus free to enact a retributive deception.

The usual story, as Glenn Most summarizes, is that Ixion has promised his father-in-law gifts in exchange for the bride, but murders him when he attempts to collect the gifts. Madness overcomes Ixion, whom Zeus eventually purges of blood-guilt and invites to Olympus,¹⁴² only to expel him for his attempted rape of Hera. While Pindar makes specific reference to both of Ixion's crimes (30-34), his reference to the father-in-law's murder is vague and presupposes a precise familiarity with the rest of the myth.¹⁴³ Details of Ixion's bloodguilt are omitted or downplayed in Pindar's version, which focuses instead on the attempted seduction of Hera. Furthermore, it is Zeus more than Hera who is depicted as the victim of Ixion's crime. While the crime is clearly attempted rape, Pindar later includes Zeus as a victim along with Hera, who is relegated to a possession of her husband: (Ἡρας ὄτ' ἐράσσατο, τὰν Διὸς εὐναὶ λάχον | πολυγαθέες, "He

¹⁴² Most 1985, 77.

¹⁴³ Most 1985, 81-82.

fell in love with Hera, whom Zeus’ joyous acts of love possessed,” 27-28). By doing so, Pindar underscores Ixion’s action as a violation of Zeus and reformulates the rape as a different type of offense. Even Ixion himself understands his offense primarily to be a violation of his host rather than of Hera: the mythical digression opens with a description of Ixion’s punishment, and the admonition he is forced to utter from his wheel of torment focuses on his betrayal of Zeus instead of his other crimes (τὸν εὐεργέταν ἀγαναῖς ἀμοιβαῖς ἐποιομένους τίνεσθαι, “Go and pay your benefactor back with acts of gentle recompense,” 24).

In depicting Ixion’s crime as a violation of *xenia*, Pindar departs significantly from other versions of the myth. Ixion’s lust for Hera inverts Homer’s presentation, where it is Zeus who couples with Ixion’s wife (*Il.* 14.317). Furthermore, in casting Zeus as the fashioner of the Hera-cloud, Pindar again varies from an account in which Ixion’s crime is depicted as more directly against Hera, who invents her own retaliatory imitation.¹⁴⁴ These differences are significant, for they demonstrate Pindar’s shift in focus to the relationship between Zeus and Ixion and his incorporation of the Hera-cloud as a key component of that relationship. In addition to a punitive instrument of Ixion’s downfall, this cloud represents a symbolic act of communication by Zeus, a substitute for a verbal response to Ixion’s wrongful lust for Hera. Pindar refers to the Hera-cloud as a *pseudos*, a word he usually reserves for verbal falsehoods:

ἐπεὶ νεφέλα παρελέξατο
 ψεῦδος γλυκὺ μεθέπων ἄιδρις ἀνήρ·
 εἶδος γὰρ ὑπεροχωτάτα πρέπεν Οὐρανιαῖν
 θυγατέρι Κρόνου· ἄντε δόλον αὐτῷ θέσαν
 Ζηνὸς παλάμαι, καλὸν πῆμα. (*Pyth.* 2.36-40)

¹⁴⁴ See Carey 1981, 39 *ad* 40, who cites RE X 1376; see also Gildersleeve 1885, 260, citing Schol. Eur. *Phoen.* 1185.

...since he lay with a cloud, an unwitting man pursuing a sweet *lie*, for the image suited the highest of the gods in heaven, the daughter of Kronos. Zeus' guile set it as a trap for him, a beautiful bane.

The *pseudos* is the imitation of Hera that Zeus has fabricated as a trap (δόλον, 39) and a bane (πῆμα, 40) for Ixion. Through this Hera-cloud, Zeus conveys to Ixion a false message that seduction of Hera is permissible. Thus Zeus effectively “speaks” to Ixion through the Hera-cloud.

What this episode reveals in terms of *xenia* and *pseudos* is that the two forces are at odds with one another, but not necessarily in the ways one might expect. Ixion's crime is neither deception nor falsehood, but rather, inappropriate seduction. *Pseudos* occurs in this myth as a *response* to Ixion's violation and consequent dissolution of *xenia*. Ixion has effectively severed his relationship with Zeus by failing to recognize his proper place among the gods, thus leaving Zeus free to enact a deception and falsehood in retribution. Falsehood and deception can be introduced into the relationship only once the delicate balance of *xenia* has been disturbed. Thus Pindar speaks of this falsehood in a largely positive manner, attributing no wrong-doing to its creator, Zeus, and expressing disdain only for Ixion's own part in the affair.

What is striking about this case of *pseudos* is its focalization through its recipient rather than its creator, a phenomenon I discussed in Chapter Two. Pindar does not obscure Zeus' agency in creating the false Hera, who is introduced in the narrative as a trick created by Zeus' wives (39-40). But this brief reference to Zeus is embedded within a narrative that focuses increasingly on Ixion's reaction to and interaction with the Hera-cloud. The description of the false Hera-cloud as “sweet” (γλυκύ, 37) focalizes through Ixion and thus eclipses Zeus' role in crafting this falsehood. Similarly, the phrase “beautiful bane” (καλὸν πῆμα, 40) cleverly encapsulates Ixion's downfall with its cause,

for it is Ixion's favorable disposition towards this Hera-cloud as an object of beauty that will prompt his lust for it.

This focalization through Ixion has the effect of emphasizing Ixion's culpability—he is the one who has effectively severed his guest-friendship with Zeus and thus brought the Hera-cloud upon himself. Pindar even makes Ixion the agent of his own punishment (τὸν δὲ τετράκναμον ἔπραξε δεσμὸν | ἐὸν ὄλεθρον ὄγ', “*He fashioned that four-spoked fetter as his own destruction,*” 40-41). Of course, Ixion does not literally build the wheel himself, but the attribution of grammatical agency here reflects how Ixion's hybris (28) and inability to endure the blessings of living among the gods (25-26) have led directly to the wheel's creation.¹⁴⁵ Although in other contexts, Pindar criticizes the use of deception, here he censures Ixion for the pre-existing lust that makes him prone to being deceived. As Oates observes, “Ixion was αἰδρις in not recognizing his limitations and also αἰδρις in being deceived by the cloud.”¹⁴⁶

Moreover, the nature of this *pseudos* resonates with some ideas Pindar has elsewhere communicated about pleasure, perception, and poetry. The relevance of Ixion's story to the role of Pindar's poetry is implied by verbal echoes: Pindar tells us that Ixion made the four-spoked (τετράκναμον, 40) fetter his own punishment,¹⁴⁷ thus receiving a general message (τὰν πολὺκοινων ἀνδέξατ' ἀγγελίαν, 41). These phrases, which form the transition between the respective stories of Ixion and his descendants, echo the opening of the ode where Pindar refers to his poem as “a message of the four-

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Gildersleeve 1885, 260 *ad* ἔπραξε: “‘Effected,’ ‘brought about,’ and not ἔπραξατο.” Also, cf. Gantz 1978, 23: “Note too that it is not Zeus who binds Ixion, but Ixion who binds himself.” The notion of self-forged punishment persists at least until Dickens, whose Jacob Marley in *A Christmas Carol* haunts Scrooge with the words, “I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it.”

¹⁴⁶ Oates 1963, 379.

¹⁴⁷ On the significance of the four-spoked fetter, see Race 1997 vol. 1, 235 n. 2 and Faraone 1993.

horse chariot” (*ἀγγελίαν τετραορίας*, 4).¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, the Ixion episode, while not explicitly about poetry, does offer a view of falsehood and deception that explains Pindar’s general disavowal of them in his own poetry. Pindar frames the experience of Ixion as one that involves his interaction with a *pseudos*. As I have argued above, the poet tells the story of the *pseudos* from the point of view of the one who experiences it. This focalization through the perceiver resonates with some of Pindar’s observations in *Olympian* 1 concerning the relationship between falsehood and pleasure:

ἦ θαύματα πολλά, καὶ πού τι καὶ βροτῶν φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον
 δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι·
 Χάρις δ’ ἄπερ ἅπαντα τεύχει τὰ μείλιχα θνατοῖς,
 ἐπιφέρεισα τιμὰν καὶ ἄπιστον ἐμήσατο πιστὸν
 ἔμμεναι τὸ πολλὰκις·
 ἀμέραι δ’ ἐπίλοιποι
 μάρτυρες σοφώτατοι. (*OI.* 1.28-34)

Indeed, there are many wonders, and somehow the speeches of mortals, stories, have been embellished beyond the true account and deceive with intricate falsehoods; for Charis, who provides mortals with all pleasant things, often makes the incredible credible by bringing honor. But days to come are the wisest witnesses.

As I have already discussed, Pindar identifies falsehood and deception as problems in the propagation of stories and examines the psychology of believability. He attributes the credibility of a story to the pleasures afforded by Charis (τὰ μείλιχα, 29) and posits that all stories that possess this quality, regardless of their truth-value (ἅπαντα, 29), are persuasive. Moreover, he emphasizes that his observations apply to mortal beings: the tendency both to tell falsehoods and to believe them if they are pleasurable is a human one (βροτῶν, 28; θνατοῖς, 29). With these lines Pindar evokes the ancient idea that

¹⁴⁸ Oates 1963, 349 also notes these connections, as does Hubbard 1985, 136. Cf. Most 1985, 78: “In a certain sense, the ἀγγελία of Ixion (41) and the ἀγγελία of Pindar (4) are one and the same.”

verbal artfulness produces credibility, as Alcinoos observes in the *Odyssey* (σοὶ δ' ἔπι μὲν μορφή ἐπέων, ἔνι δὲ φρένες ἐσθλαί, 11.367).¹⁴⁹

Although these two passages present two very different contexts of falsehood, there are striking parallels. The emphasis in the *Olympian 1* passage on mortality as a defining condition of falsehood and persuasion seems particularly appropriate to Ixion, the mortal who fails to appreciate his divine friendships fully. The figure of Ixion encapsulates *Olympian 1*'s references both to the mortals who tell false stories and those who are persuaded by them, for Pindar's portrayal of Ixion, as I have argued, foregrounds Ixion's experience and fascination with the false Hera to the point where he effectively becomes the agent of his own punishment. A further point of connection lies in the role of Charis, whose effect in *Olympian 1* is to bring credibility to all stories by making them pleasant. MacLachlan compares the persuasive effects of Charis on a poet's audience to those of Aphrodite on a lover: "The work of *charis* in poetry is to soften an audience. This releases in them a response they might not otherwise make, akin to being touched by love."¹⁵⁰ In the case of Ixion, the pleasure afforded by the false Hera is explicitly sexual and is based on his attraction to the real Hera. Like the Charis of *Olympian 1.30* that makes an account pleasurable regardless of its veracity, Ixion's sexual attraction is to both the real and the false Hera. Moreover, with his confidence that the revelatory process of time will curtail the believability of false stories (1.33-34), Pindar suggests further that the pleasures associated with these false stories are also short-lived. Such an

¹⁴⁹ For the relationship between the truthfulness and aesthetic quality of what is said, see Adkins 1972.

¹⁵⁰ MacLachlan 1993, 114. See also her discussion on p. 113, esp. n. 38, where she connects the instance of Charis in *Ol.* 1.30 to a subsequent characterization of the love relationship between Pelops and Poseidon in *Olympian 1*.

observation resonates with the immediacy of Ixion's interaction with the false Hera, which, although offering initial pleasure, ultimately results in eternal condemnation.

Ixion's pleasure, then, could be said to result from a *charis* that Zeus has bastardized and adapted for his punishment. Instead of immediate torment in the Underworld, Zeus' initial response is to give Ixion something that will provide pleasure, thus maintaining a semblance of their guest-host relationship. The *charis* emblematic of affectionate exchange¹⁵¹ is replaced by a perversion, affording an empty pleasure that results from inappropriate lust rather than mutually respectful *xenia*.¹⁵² Although the pleasure of the pseudo-Hera produces the material effect of offspring, this offspring is not attended by the Charites (*Pyth.* 2.42-43).¹⁵³ Zeus takes advantage of Ixion's wrongful propensity for sexual pleasure to turn that pleasure against him and to take away the *charis* that might have accompanied Ixion and his kin had he not offended his host. The myth of Ixion thus presents a complicated perversion of *xenia*, in which the immediate consequence of its violation is a *pseudos* that simulates the joy brought by *charis* in a healthy guest-host relationship. As in *Olympian* 1 where the *pseudea* of false accounts distort the *xenia* of Tantalos and the gods, the *pseudos* presented in *Pythian* 2 represents a variant perversion of the guest-host relationship.

3. Sex, Lies, and the Guest-Host Relationship: The Hera-Cloud, Koronis, and Hippolyta

The figure of the Hera-cloud in the Ixion myth raises the issue of gender and its relationship to truth and falsehood. As the invention of Zeus, the Hera-cloud represents a

¹⁵¹ Cf. Kurke 1991, 67: "*Charis*, as always, designates a willing and precious reciprocal exchange."

¹⁵² Cf. MacLachlan 1993, 121: "[Ixion's] punishment...was to find emptiness instead of fulfillment: The woman to whom he made love was 'empty,' a cloud, and the sweetness he pursued was an illusion."

¹⁵³ Cf. MacLachlan 1993, 121: "Further, he [Ixion] and his offspring are isolated from human society, from the Charites."

passive entity, a physical embodiment of the *pseudos* that Zeus wishes to communicate to Ixion, yet she possesses her own agency and enough of the real Hera's sexual allure to attract and couple with Ixion. Thus the cloud combines male deception and female seduction and tells us that female seduction can be one form of the falsehood and deception that endanger guest-host relationships. Pindar's language of deception and seduction must now be considered within the broader context of ancient Greek treatments of women. In his depictions of sacred relationships such as *xenia*, Pindar employs a familiar type of deceptive female that dates to Hesiod's Pandora, who is, among other things, a figure of guile and deceit.

Indeed, Pindar's Hera-cloud bears striking resemblance to Pandora, whom Hesiod describes in similar language and gives comparable characteristics.¹⁵⁴ Both Pandora and the Hera-cloud are oxymorons: as the scholiast to Pindar notes, the "beautiful bane" (*καλὸν πῆμα*, *Pyth.* 2.40) of the Hera-cloud echoes Hesiod's description of Pandora as a beautiful evil (*καλὸν κακόν*, *Theog.* 585) and a great bane to mankind (*πῆμα μέγα*, *Theog.* 592). Furthermore, each female figure has been constructed as a likeness or an image, comparable to its model but not equivalent to it. Hesiod's Pandora is made in the image of a devout maiden (*παρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ ἵκελον*, *Theog.* 572) while the Hera-cloud, of course, is an imitation of Hera (*εἶδος... ὑπεροχωτάτα... θυγατέρι Κρόνου*, *Pyth.* 2.38-39). Each female figure embodies falsehood and deception: the Hera-cloud is a "sweet lie" (*ψεῦδος γλυκύ*, *Pyth.* 2.37) and Pandora, too, is described as a deception (*αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δόλον αἰπὺν ἀμήχανον ἐξετέλεσσεν*, *Erg.* 83; *ὡς εἶδον δόλον αἰπὺν, ἀμήχανον ἀνθρώποισιν*, *Theog.* 589). Perhaps most importantly, each female figure is created by

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Most 1985, 82-84 who discusses the correlation between the Hesiod's Pandora myth and Pindar's Ixion myth, positing a parallel between Prometheus and Ixion.

the mandate and wiles of Zeus (Ζηνὸς πάλαμαι, *Pyth.* 2.40; cf. Κρονίδεω διὰ βουλάς, *Theog.* 572 = *Erg.* 71).

Thus these figures represent acts of communication and exchange by Zeus, who produces each of them to punish mortals, yet they are also given the ability to act of their own accord. As entities that are paradoxically both passive and active, pseudo-Hera and Pandora embody a recurrent female type in Greek thought. In her discussion of women in Herodotus Ann Bergren notes the paradox of womankind:

Women are *like* words, they are ‘metaphorical words,’ but they are also original sources of speech, speakers themselves. They are both passive objects and active agents of linguistic exchange...In this relation to the linguistic and the social system, the woman...is paradoxically both secondary and original, both passive and active, both a silent and a speaking sign. (Bergren 1983, 76)

She draws on the work of Lévi-Strauss, who observes that in the practice of marriage exchange, women are traded between men as a communicative sign, yet the female herself also generates her own signs.¹⁵⁵ These ideas resonate with both the Pandora-myth of Hesiod and the Ixion-myth of *Pythian* 2. Pandora, as the price mankind must pay for fire, is the incarnation of Zeus’ deception, a message of retribution. As a divine creation, she is a passive entity who embodies the various aspects of the gods who contributed to her making: Hephaestus’ craftsmanship, Athena’s artistic skills, Aphrodite’s beauty, and Hermes’ trickery. But the very gifts that she represents also enable her to act of her own accord. Not only is she a “steep deception” of Zeus, she is also given the capacity to speak falsehoods and deceptions by Hermes (*Erg.* 78). She subsequently, of her own will, opens the jar that unleashes all evil onto the world (*Erg.* 94-95) and serves as the prototype for woman, a bane for men. Thus Pandora originates as Zeus’ deception, but

¹⁵⁵ Bergren 1983, 75.

her ability to act represents a combination of her own agency as well as an embodiment of the gods' exchange with mankind.

Similarly, Zeus creates the Hera-cloud in retribution for Ixion's offense; the cloud, as a *pseudos*, effectively serves as an act of communication to Ixion. The Hera-cloud, like Pandora, is not entirely a passive entity or an illusion; her seductive effect on Ixion is powerful and "real" enough for her and Ixion to couple and produce children. While a creation of Zeus, she is also an independent being whose agency and ability to interact sexually with Ixion increasingly overtakes Zeus as the focus of the mythical narrative. By describing the Hera-cloud as a "lie" and a "bane," Pindar calls attention to her ability to cause deception and misery. No mere illusion, the false-Hera, born as a cloud, nevertheless attains enough tangibility to couple with Ixion and foster a line of descendants, with which the mythical digression concludes:

ἄνευ οἱ Χαρίτων τέκεν γόνον ὑπερφίαλον
μόνα καὶ μόνον οὔτ' ἐν ἀνδράσι γερασφόρον οὔτ' ἐν θεῶν νόμοις·
τὸν ὀνύμαζε τράφοισα Κένταυρον. (42-44)

Without the Graces' blessing, that unique mother bore a unique son, who was overbearing and respected neither among men nor in the ways of the gods. She who reared him called him Kentauros.

At this point, Zeus' hand has completely disappeared: just as Hera is occluded by Zeus, Zeus, too, who has been mentioned only twice and each time in oblique cases (Διὸς, 34; Ζηνὸς, 40), recedes to the background. Attention to Ixion as well, after a few reiterative words about his punishment, yields to a focus on the Hera-cloud and her progeny. The repetition of *μόνα/μόνον* (43) stresses the singularity of the Hera-cloud and her child Kentauros, and, as MacLachlan observes, the absence of the Graces from the birth, along

with the exclusion of Kentauros from both mortal and godly realms further accentuates the isolation of these figures.¹⁵⁶

Thus the Hera-cloud, originally a passive creation, is now an independent, discrete entity. Ultimately, figures such as Pandora or the Hera-cloud embody a paradox: by playing the dual roles of message and speaker, they enable communicative acts by Zeus, who in creating them as deceptions, metaphorically “speaks” them while absolving himself of culpability for their trickery. By fashioning these female figures, Zeus ensures conveyance of punishment or retribution, but because these figures can speak and act for themselves, he transfers the agency of deception onto them. Thus do Pindar and Hesiod feminize deception, for an initially male act of falsehood becomes a female act of seduction.¹⁵⁷ To borrow the ideas of Bergren and Lévi-Strauss, Pandora and pseudo-Hera are signs both passive, embodying Zeus’ message to mortals, and active, as agents of their own communication.

Pindar’s innovation lies in the incorporation of this female type into the ritualized relationship of *xenia*. Unlike Pandora, who is simply a retributive figure, the Hera-cloud terminates a formalized relationship of reciprocity between guest and host, a relationship that serves as a metaphor for Pindar’s own relationship to his patron. In the context of Pindar’s odes, the creation of a female, third-party *pseudos* between guest-friends Zeus and Ixion sheds light on both the poet’s metaphorical relationship of *xenia* with his patron, and the role of gender in his characterizations of truth, falsehood, and deception. By externalizing falsehood from Zeus and Ixion’s guest-friendship in the form of a seductive female figure, Pindar implies that falsehood and deception do not belong in the

¹⁵⁶ Cf. MacLachlan 1993, 121: “Further, he [Ixion] and his offspring are isolated from human society, from the Charites.”

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Buxton 1982, 63-66, who suggests that seductive persuasion is the female version of *dolos*.

xenia he shares with his patron and secondarily implies that the feminine, as represented by deceptive seduction, is external to the bounds of proper guest-friendship. Pindar thus exploits a model of misogyny familiar from the earlier tradition, re-formulating it to suit his specifically epinician mode of poetry.

In several of his mythical narratives, Pindar similarly points to a female figure as a source of deception, of the sort that corrupts or destroys sacred institutions such as *xenia* or marriage. Perhaps the way has already been paved for him by Hesiod, who puts the source of both falsehood and truth in the mouths of the female Muses (*Theog.* 26-29),¹⁵⁸ or by Homer, whose Hera incorporates seduction in her deception of Zeus in *Iliad* 14-15. Pindar often embellishes a tale of seduction or infidelity by partnering such crimes with a deceptive element, thus adding another layer to the complicated puzzle of *aletheia*, *pseudos*, and *xenia*. He seems to do so only with female seduction, leaving male seduction largely free of the anxieties associated with feminine wiles.

The first example I will examine is Koronis in *Pythian* 3, whose story shares many points of similarity with Ixion's and who, like the Hera-cloud, threatens a ritualized relationship of reciprocity with seduction and deception. Koronis, having conceived the child of Apollo, falls in love with another man and couples with him, unbeknownst to her father. Apollo, however, detects her infidelity and consequently sends his sister Artemis to fell Koronis with her arrows. The similarities between Koronis and Ixion appear at the level of verbal resonance: Pindar refers to both Koronis' and Ixion's crimes as mental folly (ἀμπλακίαισι φρενῶν, *Pyth.* 3.13; cf. αἱ δύο δ' ἀμπλακίαι, *Pyth.* 2.30), involving love for something inappropriate. Koronis "was in love with what was distant" (ἤρατο

¹⁵⁸ Yet Hesiod also names Zeus as the Muses' father in line 29, just as Zeus mandates the creation of Pandora in Hesiod and the *pseudo*-Hera in *Pythian* 2. Zeus has a significant connection with several female propagators of deception.

τῶν ἀπεόντων, *Pyth.* 3.20), while Ixion’s love for Hera is based on crazed irrationality (μαινομέναις φρασίν | “Ἡρας ὄτ’ ἐράσσατο, *Pyth.* 2.26-27). Moreover, Pindar emphasizes the profoundly delusional lust of each (ἀυάταν ὑπεράφανον, *Pyth.* 2.28; μεγάλην ἀυάταν, *Pyth.* 3.24).¹⁵⁹

Beyond these verbal echoes, Koronis’ crime further resembles Ixion’s in that hers too occurs in the context of a guest-host relationship, although a more subtle one. Pindar provides very few details about Ischys, the man who diverts Koronis’ affections from Apollo, but he does mention twice that her affair occurs with a *xeinós* (ξένου, *Pyth.* 3.25; ξενίαν κοίταν, 32), a significant repetition in light of the paucity of other details concerning Ischys. In this context the term is generally translated “stranger” and reflects Pindar’s variation from the traditional myth in making Ischys a foreigner from Arcadia (25) rather than a fellow Thessalian like Koronis.¹⁶⁰ As Young and Burton note, this innovation fits into the general message of the ode that one should love what is near, both geographically and figuratively.¹⁶¹ A side effect of this innovation is that Ischys becomes a guest-friend, presumably of Koronis’ father, whose expected participation in a diplomatic relationship of exchange is implied when Pindar faults Koronis for coupling with Ischys without her father’s knowledge (κρύβδαν πατρός, 13). Furthermore, both Koronis’ and Ixion’s sexual activities offend the gods and produce offspring, who are borne of an act of deception.

It is around the issue of deception that their stories diverge, for Ixion is the victim of a deception, while Koronis is the perpetrator of one. Both stories center on sexual

¹⁵⁹ Race 1986, 65 also notices this echo.

¹⁶⁰ Burton 1962, 83; Young 1968, 35.

¹⁶¹ Burton 1962, 83; Young 1968, 36.

impropriety against a god, and in both stories, the transgressors are punished accordingly, but in the one instance, inappropriate lust is punished with a deception, whereas in the other, deception is part of the crime. Ixion, despite his many faults, is depicted as deceptive only with respect to the murder of his father-in-law (οὐκ ἄτερ τέχνας, 32), a crime which, as I have noted, receives very little attention in the mythical narrative of *Pythian 2*. Koronis, on the other hand, is guilty of deception as part of her offense against Apollo. Their respective crimes differ in that Ixion's is against his host Zeus rather than his would-be lover Hera, whereas Koronis' offense is against her godly lover himself.

Furthermore, in the Koronis myth the guest-host relationship is not between Koronis and a god—indeed, female participation in *xenia* would have been rare, almost inconceivable¹⁶²—but between the two mortals Ischys and Koronis' father, whose sole mention in line 13 serves to note his participation in a relationship of alliance between host and guest. Koronis violates this relationship by interfering in it and forging a marriage alliance without her father's approval.¹⁶³ Ixion's and Koronis' interactions with the gods represent two different albeit closely related relationships: Ixion and Zeus are engaged in a guest-host relationship while Koronis and Apollo are essentially married, for they are involved in a binding sexual relationship whose trust Koronis violates by sleeping with Ischys.¹⁶⁴ Marriage and *xenia* resemble one another in that each comprises

¹⁶² Herman 1987, 34 discusses the role of social status in the guest-host relationship and notes that “ritualised friendship appears as an overwhelmingly upper-class institution...People of humbler standing are significantly rare. Non-free men are absent altogether. And women are extremely rare. There are remarkably few references to male-female alliances.”

¹⁶³ See Herman 1987, 24-25 for a discussion of how a *xeinos* might foster and encourage a marriage.

¹⁶⁴ Of course Apollo, as a god, never formally marries Koronis, but the possessive authority he exercises over her represents the closest approximation to marriage that can occur between a god and a mortal. Cf. *Il.* 9.336 where Achilles laments the loss of Briseis, his ἄλοχος, a word that evokes marriage, even though Achilles and Briseis have no formal relationship. As a union between a mortal woman and an immortal god, Koronis' and Apollo's relationship operates on a double standard of fidelity. Apollo expects

a set of expectations and reciprocal obligations, but the different dynamics of *xenia* and marriage make for different modes of violation. The key difference between Ixion and Koronis is of course one of gender, and it is primarily this difference that explains the points of divergence between their otherwise similar stories. While both violate *xenia*, only Koronis, as a woman, does so through deception and seduction, thus embodying the gender paradigms of ancient myth.

The secrecy that characterizes Koronis' relations with her father extends to her interactions with Apollo as well (ἄθεμιν τε δόλον, 32) and further marks her crime as not merely one of delusion but also of deception. This characteristic of deception enters into two crimes, against her father and against Apollo, and thus corrupts two sacred relationships. The first is the relationship of *xenia* between Koronis' father and Ischys, who is presumably a guest in her father's house. Koronis, as a woman, does not have a part in guest-host relations, nor does she have the authority to forge a marriage without the knowledge or consent of her father.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, as Pindar tells the story, Ischys is not culpable in any way for his actions, and indeed, Pindar plays down his agency in the affair, even delaying the sole mention of his name until line 31. Instead, Koronis is the constant focal point in this tale of wrongdoing. She violates the unspoken agreement between Apollo and herself that she will remain faithful to him while pregnant with his

monogamy from Koronis, even though he would expect no such devotion from another immortal (cf. Lyons 2003, 97 n. 21 on marriage in Hesiod: "The gods already practice marriage of a sort, but it is not for the most part the enduring institution known to mortals, e.g. Ἰαπετός ..., ἠγάγετο Κλυμένην, *Theog.* 507-508.").

¹⁶⁵ Cf. the comments on "wild women" by Carnes 1996, 31. Carnes argues that Peleus' marriage to Thetis in *Nemean* 4 imposes a custom of civilization on the untamed fringes of the earth. Marriage, as an act of "civilization," suppresses women "who must be exchanged by others, not by themselves." Koronis, in taking this act of exchange into her own hands, would qualify as an inappropriate, even untamed woman. Cf. also the plethora of scholarly work on marriage in ancient Greek society, including Finley 1981, 233-245; Garland 1990, 210-241; and Finkelberg 2005, 90-108.

child.¹⁶⁶ Her actions recall the paradox of woman described by Bergren, for by contravening the expectations of bridal passivity, Koronis' deception of Apollo causes disorder in their marriage, which has obligations and expectations of reciprocity similar to those of *xenia*.¹⁶⁷

The emphasis on Koronis' deception is clear, as is the role it plays in her detection. Apollo's omniscience is another Pindaric departure from the earlier version of the myth in which a raven informs Apollo of Koronis' infidelity. The intended significance of this change is debatable,¹⁶⁸ but it is clear that Apollo's knowledge of Koronis' deception is of key importance to the tale. Moreover, the way Pindar describes Apollo's omniscience is significant:

οὐδ' ἔλαθε σκοπόν· ἐν δ' ἄρα μηλοδόκῳ Πυθῶνι τόσσαις ἄιεν ναοῦ
 βασιλεύς
 Λοξίας, κοινᾶνι παρ' εὐθυτάτῳ γνώμαν πιθῶν,
 πάντα ἰσάντι νόῳ· ψευδέων δ' οὐχ ἄπτεται, κλέπτει τέ μιν
 οὐ θεὸς οὐ βροτὸς ἔργοις οὔτε βουλαῖς. (*Pyth.* 3.27-30)

She did not escape the watcher, but in sheep-receiving Pytho, the king of the temple, Loxias, happened to perceive her, entrusting his opinion to his most straightforward confidant, his mind which knows all things. He does not embrace falsehoods, and neither god nor mortal deceives him in deed or thought.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Burton 1962, 83: "Koronis' sin was that she lay with a mortal while pregnant by a god."

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Roth 1993, 3 on the relationship between Klytimestra and Agamemnon in the *Oresteia*: "Aside from the fact that like Helen and the lion of the parable she [Klytimestra] is an outsider brought into the house who with time encompasses her host's destruction, her status as a wife is analogous to that of a guest, for marriage and *xenia* were parallel social institutions. The basic function of each was to bring an outsider into the kin-group, and both forms of relationship entailed the exchanging of gifts and the formation of a hereditary bond imposing mutual obligations between families."

¹⁶⁸ See Young 1968, 37-38 for a discussion of this divergence. Citing Burton 1962, 84, Fennell *ad loc.*, and Wilamowitz 1922, 281, Young argues that Pindar alludes to the Hesiodic tale of the raven with the word σκοπός (27), but chooses not to go into further detail, as the aetiological nature of the raven-myth does not fit into Pindar's overall scheme in *Pythian* 3. I am skeptical as to the allusive nature of σκοπός, which I take to be a direct reference to Apollo's omniscience. Cf. Burton 1962, 84, who observes that the absence of the raven emphasizes Apollo's reliance on his own omniscience for the truth of Koronis' infidelity.

Pindar characterizes Apollo's distance from falsehood not as a refusal to craft falsehoods, which an extra-contextual translation of ψευδέων δ' οὐχ ἄπτεται might suggest, but rather as an ability to recognize falsehood.¹⁶⁹ Again, falsehood is focalized through the perceiver, as with Ixion in *Pythian 2*, but this time, the fault of Koronis as the female crafter is equally emphasized.

Female seduction is central to both cases of deception. By contrast, no sexual deception occurs in the story of Tantalos and Pelops in either of the versions Pindar proffers in *Olympian 1*, even though Poseidon's sexual attraction to Pelops is a key component of Pindar's retelling. Seduction by a male figure, as I will discuss later, contains no deceptive element. Thus the *pseudos* of Zeus' creation is a female figure intended to allure Ixion, yet because this figure is capable of acting of her own will, seductive actions are imputed to her rather than to Zeus. In Ixion's story, although the agent of the deception is a male figure,¹⁷⁰ the deception takes the form of a woman. Similarly, Koronis, a woman, deceives Apollo by seducing another man. Although the two cases are not exact parallels—Koronis, after all, does not deceive Apollo by seducing him—in each case, nevertheless, female seduction is closely associated or even coincident with deception. Moreover, Pindar downplays Ischys' role while highlighting Koronis' culpable deceptiveness (κρύβδαν πατρός, 13; οὐδ' ἔλαθε σκοπόν, 27; ἄθεμιν δόλον, 31), thus departing significantly from earlier versions of the myth where Ischys is

¹⁶⁹ Pace Gildersleeve 1885, 272, who interprets more ambiguity in the phrase: "Neither deceiving nor deceived."

¹⁷⁰ I.e., Zeus, and, indirectly, Ixion. See my discussion above.

presented as a rival to Apollo for Koronis' affections.¹⁷¹ Pindar recasts the myth to emphasize the central role of specifically female seduction and deception.

The alliance of female seduction and deception becomes ever clearer as we examine the other examples in Pindar, which more than once show the tendency for mythical female figures to compound their wrongfully seductive activities with deception. In *Nemean* 5 Hippolyta is a foil for the virtuous Peleus, whose marriage to Thetis serves as the mythical paragon of harmonious relations between man and god, the forging of an alliance with Zeus Xenios as its overseer. Zeus' decision to marry Peleus to a sea nymph specifically rests on the observations he makes as the god who protects the guest-host relationship (34-35). His approval alone, however, is not sufficient, for he must obtain Poseidon's consent. The marriage of Peleus and Thetis thus represents the culmination of Peleus' respect for the guest-host relationship, Zeus' recognition of this respect, and the cooperation of Zeus and Poseidon to reward it. Peleus and Thetis' union represents and results from collaborative relationships on several levels: on the mortal level Peleus' upstanding behavior toward his *xenos* earns him the reward of marriage; on the divine level the marriage cannot occur until Zeus confers with his brother Poseidon, whose broad influence is encapsulated in line 37 with the summary of his travels from Aigai to the Isthmos. The spirit of collaboration that pervades the myth of Peleus and Thetis explains its frequency in odes about Aigina, whose centrality in commercial affairs often leads Pindar to note its reputation for *xenia*.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 210. Gantz 1993, 91 even calls this allusion to Ischys a "clash between Apollo and Ischys," thus investing Ischys with a great deal more agency in the *Homeric Hymn* than he has in *Pythian* 3.

¹⁷² For *xenia* in Aigina, cf. *Ol.* 8.20-23, *Nem.* 3.2, *Nem.* 4.12, *Nem.* 5.8. I should also note that Aigina is the mythical homeland of the Aiakidai, which further accounts for Peleus' presence in odes to Aiginetan victors (e.g., *Nem.* 4, *Nem.* 5, *Isthm.* 8).

Pindar introduces the story of Peleus and Thetis with Peleus' interactions with Hippolyta. Although married to Akastos, Hippolyta attempts to seduce Peleus, but he refuses her advances, fearing retribution from Zeus Xenios (33-34). Hippolyta's reaction is to recruit her husband for an act of vengeance, claiming falsely that Peleus attempted to seduce her. Unlike Ixion, who succumbs to the charms of a deceptive female figure and thereby disregards the importance of his *xenia* with Zeus, Peleus resists such a woman out of respect for *xenia*. As with Ixion Pindar's narrative of falsehood focalizes not through the agent of deception, but through the one who experiences it: Peleus is rewarded for his virtue, but Hippolyta disappears from the narrative without a word as to her punishment or subsequent fate.¹⁷³

In many ways Hippolyta parallels Ixion while Peleus runs counter to him, for she, like Ixion, engages in a lustful attraction that would harm a guest-host relationship, this time between her husband and Peleus, rather than between herself and a guest.¹⁷⁴ As I have pointed out above, however, Pindar does not characterize Ixion as deceptive, whereas Hippolyta is emphatically deceptive: she is sneaky (δόλω, 26), deceitful even in seduction (παρφαμένα λιτάνευεν, 32),¹⁷⁵ and deftly persuasive, convincing her husband to take retaliatory action for false charges (πείσαισ' ἀκοίταν ποικίλοις βουλεύμασιν, | ψεύσταν δὲ ποιητὸν συνέπαξε λόγον, 28).¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, these contrasting depictions of

¹⁷³ Carnes 1996, 46 also notes this omission.

¹⁷⁴ Hippolyta is not cast as directly betraying her own *xenos* because, as I have noted, participation by women in *xenia* is very rare. See Herman 1987, 34.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Miller 1982, 117, who observes that the participle *παρφαμένα* here has the force of erotic persuasion, but notes that the other Pindaric uses of *παράφημι* connote misspeaking or insincere utterance. Cf. Slater 1969 s.v. *πάρφαμι*. Cf. McClure 1999, 63.

¹⁷⁶ Again, cf. Miller 1982, 117, whose analysis of *πάρφασις* in *Nemean* 8.32 concludes that both senses of the verb *παράφημι*, persuasion and misrepresentation, are present. I believe a similar combination of

two similar wrongdoers, Ixion and Hippolyta, cannot be fully attributed to differing circumstances, for Pindar does not inform us of any of the measures Ixion surely must have taken to conceal his lust for Hera from Zeus. The characterization of Hippolyta as tricky in *Nemean 5* is consistent with her characterization in *Nemean 4* (δολίαις | τέχλαισι, 57-58¹⁷⁷), yet the Peleus myth serves an entirely different purpose in that ode, where Peleus' rejection of Hippolyta is not an emphasized prerequisite of his marriage to Thetis. Although Pindar does not depict her favorably, it is notable that Hippolyta is credited with *techné*, a term that suggests her talent, intelligence, and resourcefulness. The use of this term, which elsewhere is used positively of artistry and skill,¹⁷⁸ further indicates what is so loathsome about deception and seduction: they pervert or misuse ordinarily positive, lauded qualities such as artfulness (cf. ποικίλοις, *Ol.* 1.28), cunning, and intelligence. Deception is driven not by madness of any sort, but by cool rationality, a trait that would normally be favorable.

Gender is the key factor in coupling deception with seduction. In all of the myths I have discussed above—Ixion in *Pythian 2*, Koronis in *Pythian 3*, and Peleus in *Nemean 5*—female figures and the falsehood they enact or even embody are central to the disruption of a guest-host relationship. While the ramifications for this disruption vary, in each story a female figure is the instrument of corrupted relations between guest and

meanings occurs in the participle in *Nem.* 5.32, although Carnes 1996, 44 argues that *παρφαμένα* refers to Hippolyta's impropriety rather than insincerity.

¹⁷⁷ This similarity appears to be one of the few between the two treatments of the Peleus and Thetis myth in *Nemean* 4 and 5. See Carnes 1996 for an examination of how the two odes and their differing emphases work together. Carnes 1996, 32 argues that Peleus employs the trickery that characterizes Hippolyta and bases this argument partly on a translation of *χρησάμενος* in *Nem.* 4.58 as “making use of.” I do not find this part of his argument convincing, as there is no reference in *Nemean 4* to any sort of trickery used by Peleus. I prefer instead to follow Slater's suggested translation of “experience” for the participle *χρησάμενος*.

¹⁷⁸ E.g., *Ol.* 7.35, *Ol.* 7.50, *Pyth.* 12.6. For other examples, see Slater 1969 s.v. *τέχνα*.

host, even when it is a male figure like Ixion who violates *xenia*. As Jeffrey Carnes has observed, Hippolyta in *Nemeans* 4 and 5

threatens the whole system of exchange of women and the Name of the Father... The consequences of this are represented in immediate, concrete terms: in female hands, language is harmful, exchange—including marriage and *xenia*—is queered, and men must suffer unjustly. (Carnes 1996, 44-45)

Carnes' study notes Hippolyta's disruptive role in relationship exchanges and focuses on her "masculine" sexual aggression¹⁷⁹ when she hijacks, to disastrous ends, the typically male role in the exchange of women: "[Women] must be exchanged by others, not by themselves."¹⁸⁰ His observations about the corruptive role of women in the Hippolyta myth can be applied to the Koronis myth of *Pythian* 3 and the Ixion myth of *Pythian* 2, for Koronis, as I have pointed out, disrupts various relationships by arranging her own marriage while the Hera-cloud, a female embodiment of *pseudos*, cements the end of Ixion and Zeus' *xenia*.

I have endeavored with these examinations to explain Pindar's persistent stance against falsehood and deception. One recurrent reason is the profound effect of verbal and nonverbal falsehoods on those who experience them. These effects are highlighted by the negative consequences for those who are duped (e.g., Ixion) and by the positive consequences for those who recognize and resist the falsehood (e.g., Peleus). Underlying all these examples is the idea that the toxicity of falsehood and deception lies in their disruption of the guest-host relationship, either between poet and *laudandus*, or between

¹⁷⁹ Carnes 1996, 26: "Hippolyte displays masculine traits in her combination of sexual desire and aggression (the inverted, or projected, version of the Amazons' dual status as libidinally- and aggressively-invested objects)."

¹⁸⁰ Carnes 1996, 31. Carnes ties this disruption to a female misuse of language. I am hesitant to espouse Carnes' argument in its entirety, largely because his resolutely structural and psychoanalytical approaches, I have found, can result in distorted interpretations of literary works.

the mythical figures of Pindar's digressions. The question of why falsehood and deception are to be shunned, despite their usefulness in crafting elegant poetry, is settled by an examination of their effects on sacred relationships like *xenia* or marriage. Finally, Pindar's use and adaptation of Hesiod's Pandora in seductive female figures such as the Hera-cloud, Koronis, and Hippolyta demonstrate how he carves out a niche for himself in Greek literature by borrowing earlier gender paradigms but assimilating them to his epinician models of truth, falsehood, and guest-friendship.

EXCURSUS: MALE SEDUCTION

My claims thus far have rested on examples of seduction instigated by women, and I have shown how Pindar employs the trope of the deceptive woman to illustrate negative models of sacred relationships like *xenia* or marriage. In some cases he adjusts traditional versions of myth to create a model of delicate reciprocity endangered by a female seductress. Of course, other forces can endanger *xenia*, but deception is a key one, and its incarnation as seduction is present only in female figures. Seduction by Pindar's male figures is not characterized as deceptive: when Aegisthus seduces Clytemnestra in *Pythian* 11 and Jason seduces Medea in *Pythian* 4, neither is portrayed in the same negative, specifically deceptive light as Hippolyta, Koronis, or the Hera-cloud. These two stories provide two models of male seduction, one which disrupts a marriage, while the other forges one. As different as the two cases may be, each strengthens my claim that it is specifically female seduction that violates *xenia* in Pindar. Even in the case of Ixion, whose lust for Hera terminates his good standing with Zeus, the final nail in his coffin is in the form of a seductive female figure, the Hera-cloud. The equation Pindar draws between feminine seduction and deception demonstrates how gender is an additional component in the illustrative oppositions of epinician poetry: to

truth/falsehood, obligation/negligence, and reciprocity/inequity may be added male/female. In discussing gender, I am cautious to avoid oversimplification—in no way is Pindar a simple misogynist, for his mythical female figures are not universally depicted in the same negative light as those I examine here; rather, I aim to explore and examine how Pindar employs gender paradigms such as female enigma to illustrate the more perplexing facets of deception.

The case of Clytemnestra demonstrates how closely women and deception are linked. Even though she is a victim of seduction rather than herself a seductress, she is still marked by her destructive and deceptive activities while her male seducer has neither of these traits. Pindar's depiction of the Agamemnon myth differs markedly from previous versions by giving prominence to Clytemnestra's role in the destruction of Atreus' house. Certainly she does not enjoy a reputation for good housewifery in previous versions of the myth; in Homer she is the foil for the model wife of Penelope, and her culpability for Agamemnon's death is a resounding theme: she is guilty of trickery (*Od.* 2.35, 4.91-92), she is a partner in Agamemnon's murder (*Od.* 3.232-235), and she is also blamed for Cassandra's death (*Od.* 11.405-434). But Homer places equal if not greater blame on Aegisthus, who stole the wife of another man before killing him, explicitly disregarding the advice of Hermes (*Od.* 1.32-43). Clytemnestra is in nowise guiltless, but Aegisthus' culpability is equally stressed. By contrast, iconographic evidence of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E. shows Clytemnestra playing a central role in Agamemnon's death; several terra cotta plaques from Gortyn and shield-bands

from Aegina and Olympia depict her wielding the murder weapon,¹⁸¹ whereas Homer faults her for her treachery, but not for committing the act itself.

Pindar is the “first literary source to move Clytemnestra fully to center stage, making the initiative and control of the situation hers (as well as the deed?), with Aegisthus reduced to a supporting role.”¹⁸² He accomplishes this in part through a ring-structured narrative that begins *in medias res* with the death of Agamemnon, then recounts the rescue of Orestes and the death of Cassandra:¹⁸³

τὸν δὴ φονευομένου πατρὸς Ἀρσινόα Κλυταιμήστρας
χειρῶν ὑπο κρατερῶν ἐκ δόλου τροφὸς ἄνελε δυσπενθέος,
ὁπότε Δαρδανίδα κόραν Πριάμου Κασσάνδραν πολὺ χαλκῷ σὺν
Ἄγαμεμνονία
ψυχῇ πόρευ' Ἀχέροντος ἀκτὰν παρ' εὐσκιον
νηλῆς γυνά. (*Pyth.* 11.17-22)

[...Orestes] whom indeed, when his father was murdered, the nurse Arsinoe took from under Clytemnestra's mighty hands¹⁸⁴ away from her grievous treachery when she with a gray sword¹⁸⁵ made the Dardanian daughter of Priam, Cassandra, go to the shadowy promontory of Acheron with the soul of Agamemnon, pitiless woman.

The effect of this narrative order is to highlight first the horrific events for which Clytemnestra is responsible and for which she is consequently characterized as guileful (ἐκ δόλου...δυσπενθέος, 18) and pitiless (νηλῆς γυνά, 22). The syntax further

¹⁸¹ Gantz 1993, 668-669. Cf. Prag 1991, 243 n. 3 for a list and fuller description of the material representations.

¹⁸² Gantz 1993, 672. There is, however, supposition that Stesichorus' *Oresteia* first promotes Clytemnestra to central status; cf. Prag 1991.

¹⁸³ See Finglass 2007, 35-36 for a tidy presentation of the events of the Agamemnon myth, both in chronological order and in the order presented by *Pythian* 11.

¹⁸⁴ Or “when his father was murdered by the mighty hands of Klytaimestra.” Cf. Finglass 2007, 65. The ambiguity of the phrase χειρῶν ὑπο κρατερῶν—does it refer to Agamemnon's slaying or to the near murder of Orestes?—serves to highlight Klytaimestra's agency in both deeds of destruction.

¹⁸⁵ There has been some debate as to whether Klytaimestra's murder weapon was a sword or an axe. See Prag 1991 for a summary of arguments on either side of this debate.

emphasizes this characterization: νηλῆς γυνά is conspicuous both for concluding a sentence and for beginning a line.

This doubly condemnatory depiction of Clytemnestra is ostensibly mitigated by the subsequent rhetorical question positing two alternative reasons for Clytemnestra's violence:

πότερόν νιν ἄρ' Ἰφιγένει' ἐπ' Εὐρίπω
σφαχθεῖσα τῆλε πάτρας ἔκνισεν βαρυπάλαμον ὄρσαι χόλον;
ἢ ἑτέρῳ λέχει δαμαζομέναν ἔννυχοι πάραγον κοῖται; (*Pyth.* 11.22-25)

Did Iphigeneia, slaughtered at the Euripos far from her homeland, goad her to awaken her heavy-handed anger? Or did nightly couplings *seduce* her, conquered by the bed of another?

Having previously painted Clytemnestra a treacherous woman, Pindar suggests motherly revenge as a motivation for her violence. Maternal concern, however, is incongruous with the danger she poses to Orestes, which Pindar describes in the previous lines (*Pyth.* 11.17-18). Indeed, even the initial word of this rhetorical question, πότερον, signals to the audience the imminent appearance of an alternative,¹⁸⁶ the enticements of adultery.

Pindar diminishes Aegisthus' agency in this act of adultery, thus presenting a female victim of seduction without a male seducer. He uses the language of seduction in the verb πάραγον, whose prefix πάρ- denotes something done “‘amiss’ or ‘wrongly’”¹⁸⁷ and is thus comparable to the verb πάρφαμι, used of Hippolyta's beguiling speech at *Nemean* 5.32 (παρφαμένα λιτάνευεν, 32). Yet the language focalizes through Clytemnestra's experience rather than any person responsible for instigating it: Clytemnestra's seduction is effected by “nightly couplings” (ἔννυχοι...κοῖται, 25) rather than Aegisthus, who is not even named as the agent of Clytemnestra's seduction or

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Finglass 2007, 96 *ad* 22 (πότερον).

¹⁸⁷ Miller 1982, 117.

submission (δαμαζομέναν, 24). To emphasize her culpability even further, Pindar refers to her adultery as the “most hateful fault of young wives” (τὸ δὲ νέαις ἀλόχοις | ἔχθιστον ἀμπλάκιον, 25-26). Clytemnestra’s treachery is thus attributed to her own failure to resist the allures of seduction.

Aegisthus’ characterization lies in sharp contrast. He, unlike Clytemnestra, is not portrayed as deceptive, for he has not misled Clytemnestra’s senses the way the false Hera-cloud does Ixion’s in *Pythian 2*, nor has he offered the same overly pleasurable allurements as the Hera-cloud’s “sweet lie” (ψεῦδος γλυκύ, *Pyth.* 2.37) or “beautiful bane” (καλὸν πῆμα, *Pyth.* 2.40). Furthermore, Aegisthus displays none of the conniving wiles of Hippolyta in *Nemean* 4 and 5. Instead, the manner of his seduction is presented as dominance rather than trickery (δαμαζομέναν, 24). Clytemnestra herself differs from male victims of seduction, both the impervious (Peleus) and the corruptible (Ixion), for she makes no attempt to resist. In Homer, by contrast, Clytemnestra initially resists Aegisthus’ advances, succumbing only when her guardian is slain (*Od.* 3.263-275). Pindar places all culpability for death and destruction on Clytemnestra, thus presenting women seducers and women seduced as equally guilty of deception and treachery.

While Medea in *Pythian 4* and Clytemnestra in *Pythian 11* are superficially dissimilar (the former is a heroine, the latter, a villainess), both figures experience male seduction and when compared to female seducers, provide evidence for a fundamental difference between seduction of a woman and seduction by a woman. Female seducers are marked by the language of deception and trickery, while male seducers lack this aspect of deception and characteristically enjoy active and willing participation by the woman being seduced. Pindar’s Medea, who helps her guest-friends the Argonauts in *Pythian 4* and is lauded at *Olympian* 13.53-54 for choosing a husband in defiance of her

father, is a far cry from the Euripidean villainess and from the other female characters of Pindar's odes. What prompts her helpfulness is her seduction by Jason, which fundamentally differs from the trickery exercised by the female seducers of Ixion and Peleus.

A key difference lies in the role of Jason, whose seduction of Medea is instigated and aided by Aphrodite. She provides Jason with an *iynx*-love-charm (*Pyth.* 4.213-216) along with the requisite rhetoric necessary for using the *iynx* (λιτάς τ' ἐπαιδιάς, 217).¹⁸⁸ The purpose of this charm is to remove Medea's filial piety and instill in her a longing for Greece (ὄφρα Μηδείας τοκέων ἀφέλοιτο αἰδῶ, ποθεινὰ δ' Ἑλλάς αὐτάν | ἐν φρασί καιομένην δονέοι μάστιγι Πειθοῦς, 218-219). These lines point up several key differences between the seduction of Medea and other seductions, for hers is marked by persuasion (Πειθοῦς) rather than deception,¹⁸⁹ and the immediate result of Medea's seduction is a desire for a new home and homeland rather than for Jason.¹⁹⁰ In Medea's case Aphrodite and Jason replace Medea's familial loyalties with allegiance to a foreign land.

Jason's seduction of Medea is motivated not solely by his own attraction to her, but also by his quest for the golden fleece, whereas seductions by women serve only their own sexual desires. Aphrodite's aid to Jason is part of a greater mission than mere sexual

¹⁸⁸ On the *iynx*, see Gow 1934 and Faraone 1993.

¹⁸⁹ In addition to *Pyth.* 4.219, Peitho personified appears three times in Pindar's extant poetry (*Pyth.* 9.39, Fr. 122.2, Fr. 123.14), each time in association with sexual desire and pleasure.

¹⁹⁰ While both persuasion and deception often have the similar goal of dissuading someone from a usual course of action in favor of one less conventional, persuasion does not have the same negative associations with misdirection. Cf. Buxton 1982, 63-66, who examines the ambiguous distinction between *peitho* and *dolos* in Greek tragedy and points out that *peitho* tends to be characterized by frankness, whereas *dolos* subverts the normal values of the polis.

conquest, which explains why her actions here resemble Hera’s earlier motivation of the Argonauts:

τὸν δὲ παμπειθῆ γλυκὺν ἡμιθέοισιν πόθον ἔνδαιεν Ἥρα
ναὸς Ἀργοῦς, μὴ τινα λειπόμενον
τὰν ἀκίνδονον παρὰ ματρὶ μένειν αἰῶνα πέσσοντ’, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ καὶ
θανάτῳ
φάρμακον κάλλιστον ἕως ἀρετᾶς ἄλιξιν εὐρέσθαι σὺν ἄλλοις. (*Pyth.*
4.184-187)

Hera kindled that *all-persuasive* sweet *longing* in the demigods for the ship Argo so that no one would be left behind to stay with his mother, nursing a life without danger, but would discover with his other comrades, even at the price of death, the most beautiful means to his achievement.

The conjoining of persuasion and desire outlined here (παμπειθῆ γλυκὺν...πόθον, 184) resembles the experience of Medea (ποθεινὰ δ’ Ἑλλάς αὐτάν | ἐν φρασί καιομένην δονέοι μάστιγι Πειθοῦς, 218-219). Just as Hera instills in the Argonauts “all-persuasive longing” for the Argo rather than their parents, so the iynx of Aphrodite dissolves Medea’s filial ties and fills her instead with a yearning for Hellas. The efficacy of Hera’s influence relies on eliciting the same reactions of sexual desire: dismissal of what one would normally espouse in favor of something unknown and potentially dangerous. The similarities between Aphrodite’s and Hera’s respective actions demonstrate the applicability of persuasion outside of sexual contexts: unlike the deceptive seduction of, for example, Koronis and Hippolyta, persuasion is employed in situations where an individual act of sexual conquest is not the sole or primary goal. The result of persuasion is an incorporation of Medea’s and the Argonauts’ skills into the larger goals of Jason’s quest.

Persuasion, unlike deception, changes Medea’s perspective but does not put her on uneven footing with Jason. Medea and Jason enter into a partnership whose mutuality and parity are stressed by the language of sharing and reciprocity: καταίνησάν τε κοινὸν

γάμον | γλυκὸν ἐν ἀλλάλοισι μεῖξαι (“And they *agreed* to contract *with one another* a sweet marriage *by mutual consent*,” 222-223). This idea of consensual seduction is subsequently reiterated when the poet says that Jason “stole Medea *with her own help*” (κλέψεν τε Μήδειαν σὺν αὐτῇ, 250). When Pindar describes Medea’s help for Jason’s encounter with the fire-breathing bulls, he refers to Medea as a *xeina* (πῦρ δέ νιν οὐκ ἐόλει παμφαρμάκου ξείνας ἐφετμαῖς, “The fire did not cause him to waver because of the commands of the host-woman, all-powerful in magic,” 233), a clear reference to her ethnic alterity, but also an encapsulation of the aid she provides to her non-Colchian guests. The term connotes the relationship of reciprocal benefit in which she and Jason participate and reinforces the spirit of mutual consent that characterizes their marriage. This seduction of Medea differs fundamentally from the seductions of Ixion and Peleus, for it forges a guest-host relationship, whereas the seductions of Ixion and Peleus represent dissolution of one.

This model of seduction thus serves as a metaphor for Pindar’s conception of epinician poetry. As the target of persuasion, Medea resembles the audience of the poet, who, as a *xeinos*, ingratiates the victor with the audience. Medea too is a *xeina*, but on the other side of the guest-host relationship, the one persuaded. The goal of exerting *peitho* on Medea is to procure her aid for Jason and the Argonauts. Thus, when depicting Jason’s seduction of Medea, the poet portrays it as persuasion instead of manipulation or force, incorporating it as part of a guest-host relationship of reciprocity between speaker and addressee. In this analogy, then, the poet is not a charlatan who presents a slanted point of view, but a forger of guest-host relations between himself, victor, and audience; his rhetoric is meant to persuade the audience to participate somehow in an honorable

system of give and take that solidifies relationships and, in the case of Medea, contributes to lawful order and rule in Iolcos.

CONCLUSIONS

I began this chapter with an examination of *Olympian* 1, arguing that oppositions between truth and falsehood could be understood through the lens of *xenia* and other relationships of obligation. To that end my investigations have revealed that *aletheia* is depicted as a stabilizing force in ritualized friendships. As such, it is connected to the poet's epinician purpose since his relationship to the victor is portrayed as one of friendship or guest-friendship which entails reciprocal obligation. On the other hand deception and falsehood cause a rupture in the formalized and ordered relationships of marriage and *xenia*, which accounts for the frequent disavowals of falsehood spoken by Pindar in his poetry. His depictions of falsehood and trickery emphasize the destructive role such forces play on recognized institutions of order such as *xenia*. Furthermore, trickery and falsehood have associations with female seduction and treachery and often characterize and are characterized by dishonorable female characters, even to the point where male deception is transferred to a female agent, as in the case of Zeus and pseudo-Hera. Such depiction of female seduction adheres to some extent to dominant paradigms of women in antiquity,¹⁹¹ but Pindar portrays these women as dangers to sacred institutions and thus exploits gender paradigms to illustrate the perils of deception to societal stability. While it is intuitively known that falsehood and deception are undesirable qualities and that women were often villainized in antiquity, what my

¹⁹¹ Cf. McClure 1999, 32-69 who argues that verbal genres are gendered and that seductive persuasion is a specifically female mode of speech.

discussion, I hope, facilitates is a deeper understanding of how Pindar explains their noxious effects.

CHAPTER FOUR: WHAT IS TRUTH TO AESCHYLUS?

VERBAL *ALETHEIA*

In previous chapters I observed that Aeschylus follows Homer's lead in depicting truth as a primarily verbal entity by reserving the term ἀλήθεια and its cognates for verbal depictions of truth, whereas Pindar distinguishes between ἀλήθεια and its verbal representations, even at times implying that words can only approximate the truth. The two poets' different uses of terms for truth reflect the differences between their two genres, lyric and tragedy: in epinician lyric the "poet"¹⁹² is solely responsible for delivering the truth to his audience, and he depicts himself as having unique access to this truth, whereas in tragedy no poetic persona is apparent, and the contexts of truth and falsehood are acts of communication between speakers and addressees. That Aeschylus adheres to a largely verbal model of truth and falsehood is only appropriate since verbal exchange lies at the heart of Greek tragedy. While there is an overarching plot and an implied concomitant narrative, the soul of this plot and narrative are in the verbal interactions that occur between characters. Aeschylean truth must be a particularly verbal concept because the characters in tragedy rely on one another to learn the truth.

OPPOSITIONS

This is not to say that Aeschylus treats truth as an entirely subjective entity formed by some sort of dialectic that constructs the truth through a series of question-and-answer sessions between interlocutors. Instead the dialogue between characters

¹⁹² By which I mean, of course, the poetic persona reflected in the odes.

reflects a search for a truth that is not fictive, a truth that is carefully specified often by opposition to the nebulosity of dreams, hopes, or illusions. In some ways Aeschylean truth has more specificity than Homer's, since Aeschylus contextualizes truth and falsehood in terms of such contrasts.¹⁹³ When the Chorus of the *Agamemnon* listen to Cassandra's ravings, they recognize that she speaks the truth, as opposed to a mere semblance of it:

τὴν μὲν Θυέστου δαῖτα παιδείων κρεῶν
ξυνῆκα καὶ πέφρικα, καὶ φόβος μ' ἔχει
κλύοντ' ἀληθῶς οὐδὲν ἐξηκασμένα. (*Ag.* 1242-1244)

I understand the feast of Thyestes on the flesh of his children and I shudder, and fear takes hold of me as I hear it *truly told and not in images*.

The Chorus respond to Cassandra's perceptions about the house of Atreus. Despite her well-known curse of incomprehensibility, the Chorus do indeed understand her here as she describes an event familiar to them in plain words devoid of enigmatic metaphors. Her words have so vividly expressed the fate of Thyestes that the Chorus equate her words to the truth rather than a semblance of it. The Chorus' words hold two major implications: they equate Cassandra's verbal report and truth and posit an opposition between *aletheia* and appearance. These implications resonate with the sentiments of *Nemean 7* where truth and appearance are similarly distinguished, but the key difference is that the Pindaric example depicts verbal reports as a representation, a "mirror," of the truth, whereas the truth of Cassandra's plain words is set in opposition to images that only resemble the literal meaning. Like Pindar Aeschylus implies the existence of an objective reality, but differs in that he, perhaps because tragedy consists of

¹⁹³ I do not refer here to the contrast implied by the etymology of ἀλήθεια, which, as I have argued in previous chapters, is not strikingly apparent in the use of the word. Almost any instance of ἀλήθεια may arguably contain an implicit contrast to what is hidden or forgotten, but such a contrast is ancillary and does not reveal as much as contextual uses of the word do.

communicative interactions, suggests that truthful reporting equates rather than approximates the truth.

In the *Prometheus Bound* Io very clearly puts pleasant falsehoods in a different category from accuracy:

εἰ δ' ἔχεις εἰπεῖν ὅ τι
λοιπὸν πόνων, σήμαινε, μηδέ' μ' οἰκτίσας
ξύνθαλπε μύθοις ψευδέσιν. (PV 683-685)

If you can tell me what remains for me of toils, tell me, and do not out of pity coddle me *with false stories*.

In her request for knowledge of her future, Io demands that Prometheus not lie to her in an effort to spare her feelings, using the term *pseudos* in a context where falsehood and pity are closely aligned. She is careful to differentiate between what she actually wants to hear and what Prometheus may *think* she wants to hear, specifying knowledge of what will really happen, however painful, as the ultimate goal of her inquiry. Furthermore, she acknowledges the potential for falsehood to prevail by catering to the listener's desires over all else; both the sentiment and the wording recall *Olympian* 1.28-34:

ἦ θαύματα πολλά, καὶ πού τι καὶ βροτῶν φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον
δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι.
Χάρις δ', ἅπερ ἅπαντα τεύχει τὰ μείλιχα θνατοῖς,
ἐπιφέρεισα τιμὰν καὶ ἄπιστον ἐμήσατο πιστὸν
ἔμμεναι τὸ πολλάκις·
ἀμέραι δ' ἐπίλοιποι
μάρτυρες σοφώτατοι.

Indeed, there are many wonders, and somehow the speeches of mortals, *stories*, have been embellished beyond the true account and deceive with intricate *falsehoods*, for Charis, who provides mortals with all pleasant things, often renders the incredible credible by bringing honor. But *days to come* are the wisest witnesses.

The notable difference between the two passages is that the term *aletheia* is absent from Io's words; thus the contrast is not explicitly between truth and enjoyable falsehood, but

between what will happen and pleasant illusion. In the Pindaric passage the truth and the future (ἐπίλοιποι) are intertwined, whereas Io mentions the future (λοιπόν) without situating it explicitly in a context of truth. Instead Io's quest for truth is implied by her rejection of false stories, and possibly by the verbal resonances between her words and Pindar's, both of which attribute transparency to the future. In the context of the *Prometheus Bound*, however, the possibility of access to the truth is a rather complicated issue,¹⁹⁴ a full discussion of which is outside the scope of this project. Suffice it to say that Io posits a clear distinction between desire and accuracy.

Similarly, when the Chorus of the *Agamemnon* anticipate the Herald's report, they posit truthful and dream-like as the two alternatives for the beacon-fires.¹⁹⁵

τάχ εισόμεθα λαμπάδων φαεσφόρων
 φρυκτωριῶν τε καὶ πυρὸς παραλλαγᾶς,
 εἴτ' οὖν ἀληθεῖς εἴτ' ὄνειράτων δίκην
 τερπνὸν τόδ' ἔλθὼν φῶς ἐφήλωσεν φρένας. (*Ag.* 489-492)

Soon we will know about the light-bearing beacons and the transmissions of fire, *whether they are true* or whether this pleasant light has come and deceived our minds *in the manner of dreams*.

Here too is the contrast between reality and appearance. The opposition here is not only between truth and dreams, but between truth and illusions that convey credibility because they are pleasant to believe.

Manipulating the Contrast Between Truth and Hope

In light of these contexts of opposition, we can surmise that truth is a distinct entity, neither good nor bad, but despite the sometimes severe acknowledgment that the truth will not necessarily bear good news, the characters of Aeschylean tragedy seem to

¹⁹⁴ See n. 227 below.

¹⁹⁵ Page's OCT and Lloyd-Jones 1979 give these lines to Clytemnestra in accordance with the manuscripts, but most other editors attribute them to the Chorus.

desire it for its own sake, regardless of the consequences. Thus, a paradox: the truth is at once distinct from hopes, wishes, or pleasant illusions, yet it in itself is also an object of desire, a void in knowledge that characters seek to fill through verbal communication. This contrast between truth and what is pleasant presents a complication when characters express an awareness of it, yet simultaneously desire the truth because they think it will bring better consequences than lies. The problems of this paradox are reflected in the interaction between the Chorus and the Herald of the *Agamemnon* on the whereabouts of Menelaus:

Κη. οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως λέξαιμι τὰ ψευδῆ καλά,
ἔς τὸν πολὺν φίλοισι καρποῦσθαι χρόνον.
Χο. πῶς δῆτ' ἂν εἰπὼν κεδνὰ τάληθῆι τύχοις;
σχισθέντα δ' οὐκ εὐκρυπτα γίνεται τάδε.
Κη. ἀνὴρ ἄφαντος ἐξ Ἀχαιικοῦ στρατοῦ,
αὐτός τε καὶ τὸ πλοῖον· οὐ ψευδῆ λέγω. (*Ag.* 620-625)

Herald: It cannot be that I speak *what is false as fair*, so that my friends harvest it for the long time ahead.

Chorus: If only you can tell *good news* and still speak *truth!* When these things are severed, it is not easy to conceal.

Herald: The man is vanished from the Achaean host, he and his ship; *I speak no lies.*

The Chorus seeks news of Menelaus, whose disappearance and absence furthers the plot of the *Agamemnon* by enabling Clytemnestra and Aegisthus to carry out their planned murder.¹⁹⁶ Their hunger for information is offset by the Herald's unwillingness to deliver bad news, particularly since he cannot adorn it into something pleasant. He sets forth his truth-telling mission by plainly admitting his inability to make falsehoods pleasant, delivering the disastrous news that Menelaus is missing, and punctuating this report with a denial of falsehood. Having opened his report with an acknowledgement of the false parallels between good and true, however, he later concludes on a hopeful note:

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Lloyd-Jones 1979, 62.

Μενέλεων γὰρ οὖν
πρῶτόν τε καὶ μάλιστα προσδόκα μολεῖν
εἰ δ' οὖν τις ἀκτίς ἡλίου νιν ἱστορεῖ
καὶ ζῶντα καὶ βλέποντα, μηχαναῖς Διὸς
οὐπω θέλοντος ἐξαναλῶσαι γένος,
ἐλπίς τις αὐτὸν πρὸς δόμους ἦξειν πάλιν.
τοσαῦτ' ἀκούσας ἴσθι τάληθῆ κλύων. (*Ag.* 674-680)

As for Menelaus, first and chiefly, expect that he will come. Well, if some ray of the sun finds him out still flourishing in life, by the contrivance of a Zeus who does not yet wish to destroy his race, there is some hope that he will come back home. Know that in hearing so much you have heard the *truth!*

The Herald's claim to accuracy is a fairly common generic trope of messenger speeches,¹⁹⁷ but the placement of this claim at the conclusion of his speech is significant. He begins on a note of hesitation, reluctant to convey bad news but also unwilling to tell a placating falsehood. The Chorus agree about the futility of concealing the truth when it is separate from the good, but at the same time express a desire for the truth to be good news.¹⁹⁸ In any case the Herald delays the claim that his report is true (τάληθῆ) until he has delivered news of something hopeful, even though he cannot confirm Menelaus' whereabouts. The claim of truth at the end of such a speculative statement is odd and suggests that the desire for the truth as well as for good news can coincide when the full truth is unknown.

The potential conflict that arises from the desire for truth is whether this desire will supersede others. Clytemnestra exploits this conflict when she makes the astonishing and profoundly dishonest claim that she has been a faithful wife in Agamemnon's absence:

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *Pers.* 513-514, *Sept.* 66-68, 651-652. See also *Supp.* 931-932 where the Herald of the Egyptians states the duty of a herald to report precisely and completely.

¹⁹⁸ Goldhill 1984, 57: "In other words, this construction both asserts a wish (that the messenger might speak both good and true things) and puts its possibility under question."

γυναῖκα πιστὴν δ' ἐν δόμοις εὖροι μολῶν
οἶανπερ οὖν ἔλειπε, δωμάτων κύνα
ἐσθλὴν ἐκείνῳ, πολεμαν τοῖς δύσφροσιν,
καὶ τᾶλλ' ὁμοίαν πάντα, σημαντήριον
οὐδὲν διαφθείρασαν ἐν μήκει χρόνου·
οὐδ' οἶδα τέρψιν οὐδ' ἐπίσογον φάτιν
ἄλλου πρὸς ἀνδρὸς μᾶλλον ἢ χαλκοῦ βαφάς.
τοιόσδ' ὁ κόμπος, τῆς ἀληθείας γέμων,
οὐκ αἰσχρὸς ὡς γυναικὶ γενναίᾳ λακεῖν. (*Ag.* 606-614)

Let him come and find a faithful wife at home, just as he left her, a watch-dog of his home, loyal to him, hostile to his enemies, and in all other ways the same woman who has destroyed no seal over time. I know neither pleasure nor censorious speech from another man any more than I know the art of tempering brass. Such is my boast, brimming with truth, not shameful for a noble woman to shout.

Her words express the direct and diametric opposite to the truth: far from being a trusty watch-dog of Agamemnon's home, she has taken a lover into her home with whom she conspires to murder her husband. The most appalling aspect of her speech is not only that it is untrue but that in the wake of these patent untruths, it claims to be "brimming with truth." Her attachment of the term *aletheia* to a completely false statement reveals the extent of her character's duplicity and showcases Aeschylean dynamics of truth and falsehood on several counts.¹⁹⁹ First, she uses *aletheia* to characterize a verbal account, thus in keeping with the Aeschylean and Homeric notion that truth is a primarily verbal manifestation. Secondly, she is telling the Chorus what she thinks is expected of a good wife. Instead of confessing her actual activities during Agamemnon's absence, Clytemnestra provides a description of how she should have behaved if she were truly devoted to him. She exploits the Chorus' desire for the truth by lying in such a way as to satisfy another of their desires, the desire for her wifely loyalty to Agamemnon. Whether or not she successfully deceives the Chorus is another matter; their response comes in the

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Goldhill 1986, 8, who observes that the phrase "'loaded with truth'... suggests the marked possibility of its opposite, that words can be emptied, unloaded of truth."

textually problematic lines αὕτη μὲν οὕτως † εἶπε μανθάνοντί σοι, | τοροῖσιν ἐρμηνεῦσιν εὐπρεπῶς † λόγον (“So she spoke; if you understand through clear interpreters, her speech looks fair,” *Ag.* 615-616);²⁰⁰ although the meaning of these lines is not entirely clear, the Chorus’ references to interpreters of the speech and its seemliness (ἐρμηνεῦσιν εὐπρεπῶς) indicate a degree of irony.²⁰¹

WHERE IS THE TRUTH TO BE FOUND? WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH?

So far I have argued that Aeschylean truth is a primarily verbal entity delineated by opposition to illusory hopes or desires. It is separate from desire, yet is itself an object of desire since the characters of Aeschylus, while acknowledging the distinction between truth and what they want, nevertheless exhibit a consistent desire to learn the truth. This desire for truth raises the questions, particularly in light of the doubt shown toward Clytemnestra by the Chorus in the last passage, of who has access to the truth and where it is to be found. There are three main avenues to truth in Aeschylus: nonverbal signals, messenger-figures, and prophecy.

1. Nonverbal Signals

Of this first category, nonverbal signals, there are two significant examples, the similarities between which I discussed briefly in Chapter Two and now elaborate here. In the *Seven Against Thebes* the Chorus of Theban women launch into a long choral ode, voicing their despair about the dangers that loom over their city as the troops of the feuding brothers Eteocles and Polyneices confront each other. They justify their fears at

²⁰⁰ For a summary of scholarly controversies surrounding these lines, see Denniston and Page 1957, *ad* 615-16.

²⁰¹ Cf. Goldhill 1984, 57: “πρεπ- refers back to the element of the visible in the watchman’s speech and throughout the play, and implies, as before, here particularly through the irony of the chorus, the possibility of speech having an opposite predication.”

the opening of the ode by interpreting the dust-cloud raised by Polyneices' army as evidence of Thebes' imminent doom, a "clear, true messenger" of the danger to come:

Χο. θρεῦμαι φοβερὰ μεγάλ' ἄχη.
μεθεῖται στρατὸς στρατόπεδον λιπών·
ρεῖ πολὺς ὄδε λεὼς πρόδρομος ἰππότης·
αἰθερία κόνις με πείθει φανεῖσ'
ἄναυδος σαφῆς ἔτυμος ἄγγελος. (*Sept.* 78-82)

My sorrows are great and fearful; I cry aloud. The army has left the camp and is gone. Look at the forward rushing river, the great tide of horsemen! A cloud of dust on high appears and persuades me, a messenger *clear and true*, though voiceless.

The second example is in the beacon-fires of the *Agamemnon*. Upon spotting the beacon the Watchman declares the accuracy of its message—the fall of Troy—and hastens to notify Clytemnestra:

Ἀγαμέμνωνος γυναικὶ σημαίνω τορῶς
εὐνῆς ἐπαντεῖλασαν ὡς τάχος δόμοις
ὀλολυγμὸν εὐφημοῦντα τῆδε λαμπάδι
ἐπορθίαζειν, εἴπερ Ἴλιου πόλις
ἑάλωκεν, ὡς ὁ φρυκτὸς ἀγγέλλων πρέπει. (*Ag.* 26-30)

To Agamemnon's wife²⁰² I signal clearly that she may rise from her bed as quickly as possible and raise a jubilant cry of thanksgiving at this torch, if the city of Ilium is taken,²⁰³ as the beacon's light announces.

The Watchman informs Clytemnestra, who similarly treats the fires as evidence of victory and later announces the news to the Chorus.

Both Clytemnestra and the Chorus of the *Seven*, however, encounter resistance to their claims. In the *Seven* the Chorus' lament elicits Eteocles' fierce and unrelenting disapproval:

ὕμᾱς ἐρωτῶ, θρέμματ' οὐκ ἀνασχετὰ,

²⁰² It is significant that this reference to Clytemnestra does not use her name, instead designating her the wife of Agamemnon and thus portending the sexual conflict of the play, an issue I will discuss later in this chapter. See Winnington-Ingram 1983, 102.

²⁰³ The εἴπερ designates confidence rather than skepticism. See Denniston and Page 1957, *ad* 29.

ἦ ταῦτ' ἄριστα καὶ πόλει σωτήρια
στρατῶ τε θάρσος τῷδε πυργηρουμένῳ,
βρέτη πεσοῦσας πρὸς πολισσούχων θεῶν
αὔειν, λακάζειν, σωφρόνων μισήματα;
μήτ' ἐν κακοῖσι μήτ' ἐν εὐεστοῖ φίλη
ξύνοικος εἶην τῷ γυναικείῳ γένει·
κρατοῦσα μὲν γὰρ οὐχ ὀμιλητὸν θράσος,
δείσασα δ' οἴκῳ καὶ πόλει πλέον κακόν.
καὶ νῦν πολίταις τάσδε διαδρόμους φυγὰς
θεῖσαι διερροθήσατ' ἄψυχον κάκην. (*Sept.* 181-191)

You insupportable creatures, I ask you, is it best, does it offer safety for the city and courage for this beleaguered army of ours for you to fall at the statues of the city's gods crying and howling, an object of hatred for all temperate souls? Neither in evils nor in fair good luck may I share a dwelling with the female race! When she's triumphant, hers a confidence past converse with another, when afraid an evil greater both for home and city. Here now running wild among the citizenry you inspire spiritless cowardice with your clamor.

The very fact of Eteocles' response to the Chorus is significant, for as Hutchinson and Foley observe, choral songs are generally ignored by the next speaker.²⁰⁴ Eteocles' reaction is far from dismissive, instead excoriating the Chorus for their overreaction and assigning their behavior to a female propensity for hasty extremes of emotion.

Clytemnestra too encounters resistance. Although the Chorus express their reverence to Clytemnestra (258), they make clear that their allegiance is a function of her marriage to Agamemnon, whose absence makes her his proxy (259-260).²⁰⁵ Her dealings with them are thereafter marked by persistent skepticism as she reports news of the fall of Troy: they express disbelief (πῶς φῆς; πέφευγε τοῦπος ἐξ ἀπιστίας, "How do you say? From disbelief your word has escaped me," 268) and request to know her sources, incredulous that a message could arrive so quickly (τί γὰρ τὸ πιστόν; ἔστι τῶνδέ σοι τέκμαρ; "For what proof do you have? Do you have evidence of this?" 272; καὶ τίς τόδ'

²⁰⁴ Hutchinson 1985, *ad* 182-202; Foley 2001, 45.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Goldhill 1984, 34: "[Clytemnestra's] power is because of the lack not just of the ruler but of the 'male.'"

ἐξίκοιτ' ἂν ἀγγέλων τάχος; “And what kind of messenger could arrive with such speed as this?” 280). They surmise that she may have gathered her news from dreams or rumors (πότερα δ' ὄνειρων φάσματ' εὐπιθῆ σέβεις, “But do you respect the visions of dreams as persuasive?” 274; ἀλλ' ἦ σ' ἐπιάνέν τις ἄπτερος φάτις; “But is it some wingless rumor exciting you?” 276). Clytemnestra effectually deflects each of their accusations and puts the Chorus' anxiety to rest by telling them of the beacon-fires (281-316) and even providing an imagined account of the events at Troy (320-350).

The Chorus' request for evidence (τὸ πιστόν, τέκμαρ, 272) accords with explicit expressions from contemporaneous literature of the value of witnessing events, for example when Pindar claims to be a witness or claims knowledge from witnesses, or in the Athenians' marked contrast between hearsay and first-hand knowledge in Thuc.

1.73.2. Clytemnestra garners the Chorus' acceptance by specifying her source and providing a description of the beacon-fires that explains the relay-system of message-transference (281-316), but with one key opening phrase portrays its relay as a single, unified message: Ἥφαιστος, Ἴδης λαμπρὸν ἐκπέμπων σέλας· | φρυκτὸς δὲ φρυκτὸν δεῦρ' ἀπ' ἀγγάρου πυρὸς | ἔπεμπεν (“Hephaestus, sending from Ida a bright flame. And beacon began to send beacon this way by means of the courier fire,” 281-283).²⁰⁶ By attributing the fires to Hephaestus, Clytemnestra gives the message a divine source and thereafter presents the series of beacon-fires as a single traveling flame.²⁰⁷

She then provides a detailed description of Troy, conveying far more information than what could be gleaned from the fires alone,²⁰⁸ she describes the fallen bodies (325-

²⁰⁶ For the use of personification here, see Goldhill 1984, 38.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Lloyd-Jones 1979, 15.

327), the lamentations of the newly enslaved Trojan elders (328), and the toils of the Greek conquerors (330-337), none of which could have been explicit in the beacon-fires. Even though the details provided are imagined, they are significant demonstrations of Clytemnestra's grasp of war from both the Greek and Trojan points of view,²⁰⁹ and her understanding of the consequences of war, as she refers to the conquerors' choice to respect or disrespect the gods of Troy (338-340). Her account accordingly meets with acceptance by the Chorus, who praise her manlike prudence and her use of "trusty" proofs²¹⁰ (γύναι, κατ' ἄνδρα σώφρον' εὐφρόνως λέγεις· | ἐγὼ δ' ἀκούσας πιστά σου τεκμήρια | θεοὺς προσειπεῖν εὔ παρασκευάζομαι, "Woman, you speak graciously like a prudent man. I have heard your *trusty proofs* and am prepared to address the gods in praise," 351-353).²¹¹ What Clytemnestra does to garner the Chorus' trust, if only temporarily, is to elaborate the nonverbal message of the beacon-fires.²¹²

The Chorus, after initially accepting her story, regress to their earlier skepticism:

πυρὸς δ' ὑπ' εὐαγγέλου
πόλιν διήκει θοὰ

²⁰⁸ Goward 2005, 64 and Fraenkel 1950, *ad loc.* also note the degree of detail in Clytemnestra's account. Fraenkel argues that Clytemnestra presents *hoia an genoito* rather than *ta genomena*, which Goward claims "misses the point: Aeschylus deliberately undermines a logical foundation, leaving the voice to manifest itself in all its eloquence and power." I am inclined to agree with Fraenkel, since he suggests that Clytemnestra's account is imagined but realistic, and the Chorus accept it as such; Goward's focus on the power of Clytemnestra's voice strikes me as overly speculative and narrowly focused.

²⁰⁹ Clytemnestra presents the Trojan and Greek points of view in lines 326-329 and 330-337, respectively.

²¹⁰ Pace Denniston and Page 1957, *ad* 352 who think the Chorus' praise "is not to be taken seriously; nothing Clytemnestra has said affords evidence, let alone 'convincing proof', that the beacons betoken the fall of Troy."

²¹¹ McClure 1999, 74 argues that Clytemnestra builds credibility with the Chorus by using the masculine discourse of proofs and logic—indeed the Chorus praises Clytemnestra's reason as belonging to a man—but capping her speech with a clear statement of her womanhood (348), thus gaining the upper hand with the Chorus by blending masculine and feminine discourses and exploiting the advantages offered by both. McClure is correct to observe the ambiguity of Clytemnestra's gender (cf. Winnington-Ingram 1983, 101-131) but perhaps goes too far in designating Clytemnestra's discourse one of proofs and logic—in itself a questionable assertion—and terming such a discourse "masculine."

²¹² Cf. Goldhill 1984, 38-39 who notes Clytemnestra's verbalization of a non-verbal message.

βασις· εἰ δ' ἐτήτυμος,
 τίς οἶδεν, ἢ τι θεῖόν ἐστί πη ψύθος;
 τίς ὧδε παιδνός ἢ φρενῶν κεκομμένος,
 φλογός παραγγέλμασιν
 νέοις πυρωθέντα καρδίαν, ἔπειτ'
 ἀλλαγᾶ λόγου καμεῖν;
 γυνακὸς αἰχμᾶ πρέπει
 πρὸ τοῦ φανέντος χάριν ξυναινέσαι·
 πιθανὸς ἄγαν ὁ θῆλυς ὄρος ἐπινέμεται
 ταχύπορος· ἀλλὰ ταχύμορον
 γυναικογήρυτον ὄλλυται κλέος. (Ag. 475-487)

At the bidding of the fire that brought good news through the city runs the swift message; who knows if it is true or if it is some godly lie?²¹³ Who is so childish or so far shaken out of his senses as to let his heart take fire at the new messages of the beacon and then to suffer when the story is changed? It is fitting for a woman's spirit to give thanks for something before it has appeared. Too persuasive, a woman's ordinance spreads far, traveling fast; but dying fast a rumor voiced by a woman comes to nothing.²¹⁴

The Chorus of the *Seven* and Clytemnestra encounter two distinct accusations: the Chorus is charged with immoderate emotionality, while Clytemnestra's supposed error is capricious naïveté, but both of these are allegedly female tendencies. A further similarity lies in the words describing their respective interpretations: the Theban women describe the dust-cloud as a "true messenger," an ἔτυμος ἄγγελος, while the Chorus of the *Agamemnon* term the beacon-fires as possibly ἐτήτυμος, a variant of ἔτυμος. The choice in both passages of the adjective ἔτυμος instead of ἀληθής is striking since each instance

²¹³ Cf. the false dream sent by Zeus to Agamemnon in *Il.* 2.

²¹⁴ Scholarly confusion and disagreement surround the Chorus' sudden reversal. As Denniston and Page 1957, *ad* 475ff. note, "There is nothing in this play or any other properly comparable with the present example, in which the foundations of a whole stasimon are undermined in the epode with sudden and total ruin." Fraenkel 1950, 249 posits a "certain looseness in the psychological texture of the Chorus" as an explanation. Winington-Ingram 1983, 104 notes that the Chorus has just expressed anxiety over the negative consequences of war for its victors and conjectures that this passage expresses relief that the news of Troy's fall may still be false. Whatever the psychological motivation may be for the reversal, these lines and the ones that follow provide effective anticipation for the Herald's imminent entrance and the news he brings. Cf. Fraenkel 1950, 248: "The moment which the poet has chosen for the utterance of the Elders' doubts was dictated to him by considerations of dramatic structure, that is to say the need for an effectual foil to the Herald's speech."

refers to a nonverbal signal, whereas ἀληθής, as I have discussed in Chapter Two, tends to characterize verbal communications. The use of ἔτυμος has implications for the truth-value of the message—neither the dust-cloud nor the beacon-fires carries the authority of a speaking messenger who communicates a true report based on what he has witnessed first-hand. Instead both the cloud and the fires are nonverbal signals whose authority as messages of truth rests with whoever has interpreted them as such. The message of a nonverbal signal results not from a communication between two speakers but rather an interpretation by one person of an inanimate message; it thus does not convey the same degree of consensual truth that an ἀληθής message does.

The internal receptions of the Theban women and of Clytemnestra support the notion that their ἔτυμος messages command very little belief. Eteocles' harsh reaction to the Chorus, who have annoyed him with their excessive lamentations, is understandable since the women have admittedly read a lot, perhaps too much, into the significance of the dust-cloud, which they mistakenly see as an omen of their annihilation. At the end of the play Thebes still stands, and the Theban women are safe from the danger they so readily believed would overcome them. Likewise, the doubt Clytemnestra encounters from the Chorus of the *Agamemnon* is somewhat justified, as the beacon-fires are proof positive neither of Troy's fall nor of Agamemnon's return, which Clytemnestra equates with the fall of Troy. The harsh reaction from Eteocles and the doubt of the Chorus in the *Agamemnon* together imply that this type of truth, which derives from interpretation of nonverbal signals and is termed ἔτυμος, is considered less reliable than the type relayed through verbal communication.

The beacon-fires *are* eventually described as ἀληθής, but not until the Herald's arrival on the scene is anticipated:

τάχ εισόμεθα λαμπάδων φαεσφόρων
φρυκτωριῶν τε καὶ πυρὸς παραλλαγᾶς,
εἴτ' οὖν ἀληθεῖς εἴτ' ὄνειράτων δίκην
τερπνὸν τόδ' ἔλθὸν φῶς ἐφήλωσεν φρένας·
κῆρυκ' ἀπ' ἀκτῆς τόνδ' ὄρω κατάσκιον
κλάδοις ἐλαίας. (Ag. 489-494)

Soon we will know about the beacon-watchings and the fire-transmissions of the light-bearing torches, whether they are *true* or whether this light that brought joy in its coming has beguiled us in the manner of dreams. I see here a herald from the shore, his brow shaded with twigs of olive.²¹⁵

The Chorus speak these lines in response to Clytemnestra's reading of the beacon-fires, and the implications are clear: her interpretation can be proven only by the Herald.

Significantly, the veracity of the beacon-fires is now described by the word ἀληθής instead of ἔτυμος or ἐτήτυμος. Now that the Herald may corroborate or deny Clytemnestra's claim, the beacon-fires that form its basis are either ἀληθής or illusory.

The fires themselves are not means to truth as much as the Herald is, since whether or not Clytemnestra's interpretation is deemed true depends on his report. The fires' veracity is questionable until supported by another more credible source, a source that may engage in communicative interaction of a verbal nature; hence the application of the adjective ἀληθής over ἔτυμος here.

Whereas Clytemnestra makes an inference based on a nonverbal message, the Herald's information comes from eyewitness experience and communication with those present at the events he reports. His capacity for verbal interaction is specifically contrasted with the "voicelessness" of the beacon-fires:

μαρτυρεῖ δέ μοι κάσις
πηλοῦ ξύνουρος διψία κόνις τάδε,
ὡς οὔτ' ἀναυδοῦς οὔτε σοι δαίων φλόγα
ὔλης ὀρείας σημανεῖ καπνῶ πυρός. (Ag. 494-497)

²¹⁵ Page's OCT and Lloyd-Jones 1979 give these lines to Clytemnestra in accordance with the manuscripts, but most other editors attribute them to the Chorus.

Mud's brother and neighbor, thirsty dust, attests this much, that *he is not voiceless*, nor will you find him kindling the flame of mountain brushwood to make signals with a fire that is illusion.

While ἔτυμος describes an interpretive truth that stems from a nonverbal signal, ἀληθής designates a truth that can be communicated between two parties, an exchange of truth, which is what the characters of Aeschylean tragedy seem to value more.

2. Messengers

The credibility granted to the Herald of the *Agamemnon* underscores the role of the messenger-figure as a speaker of truth. Nonverbal signals do not carry the same authority by comparison and are explicitly compared to verbal messages in the *Choephoroi*. When Electra catches sight of a lock of hair, she and the Chorus surmise that it may belong to Orestes, but lament that this unspeaking sign does not convey the same certainty as a messenger: εἴθ' εἶχε φωνὴν ἔφρον' ἀγγέλου δίκην, | ὅπως δίφροντις οὔσα μὴ 'κινυσσόμην ("If only it had sense and speech, *like a messenger*, so that I was not of two minds, swayed to and fro," *Cho.* 195-196). When she discovers an additional indicator of Orestes' presence, she remains dubious (καὶ μὴν στίβοι γε, δεύτερον τεκμήριον, "Yes, and here are footprints, a second sign," *Cho.* 205), and her doubts gradually subside only when Orestes presents himself to her, confirms her suspicions about the lock (229-230), and produces an additional sign of his identity, a garment woven by her (231-232).

The messenger-figure, then, is treated as the most credible, unquestionable purveyor of truth in Aeschylean drama because of his first-hand knowledge and his ability to communicate it verbally.²¹⁶ None of the messengers in Aeschylus encounters

²¹⁶ Cf. *Pers.* 266-267 where the Herald claims eyewitness knowledge of the events he reports.

incredulity, and those who are particularly welcomed as sources of truth report what has happened abroad, far from the staged action of the tragedy. Although it is a commonplace in Greek drama for a messenger-figure to report offstage action, the Aeschylean messenger is distinct in that he is comparatively rare and often reports events that have occurred prior to, rather than simultaneously with, the events of the play.²¹⁷ He is therefore endowed with a great deal of privileged information and enjoys authority because he alone can provide a first-hand account of events that would otherwise be unknown or unknowable to the characters onstage.²¹⁸

The Herald of the *Agamemnon* consequently arrives on the scene amidst eager anticipation of his truthfulness. Since his first task is to confirm Clytemnestra's report, he is not the sole source of information, but he is the only one who can provide a first-hand account of the events at Troy. He therefore does not need to provide evidence either for his report or for his character to elicit the Chorus' belief, and his quite general account is consistent with Clytemnestra's, but provides no details that would afford him greater credibility over her. The Chorus receive him with a friendly greeting and with questions about his well-being, thus showing how they identify with and relate to him (κῆρυξ Ἀχαιῶν χαῖρε τῶν ἀπὸ στρατοῦ, "Hail, herald of the Achaean army!" *Ag.* 539; ἔρωσ πατρώας τῆσδε γῆς σ' ἐγύμνασεν; "Did love of your ancestral land afflict you?" *Ag.* 540). When the Herald concludes his first speech, the Chorus cement their unquestioning belief in his account, even paying him the further compliment that his account edifies and rejuvenates: νικώμενος λόγοισιν οὐκ ἀναίνομαι, | ἀεὶ γὰρ ἠβᾶ τοῖς γέρουσιν εὐμαθεῖν

²¹⁷ Cf. Taplin 1977, 83. The notable exception is the *angelos* at *Sept.* 792.

²¹⁸ Cf. Taplin 1977, 81-82 who discusses the essential elements of a messenger scene: "Not every scene with any sort of narrative element will pass as a messenger scene. Rather, there are three elements involved: anonymous eye-witness, set-piece narrative speech, and over-all dramatic function... The usual *angelos* is, like this in *Pers*, a lower-status character who has no other part in the play."

(“Your words prevail on me, and I do not reject them; for eagerness to learn is always a renewal of youth for the old,” 583-584).

Clytemnestra’s interpretation of the beacon-fires, by contrast, meets with skepticism from the Chorus, whose doubt indicates that her means of acquiring the truth are not as credible as the Herald’s. When she is vindicated, she mocks those who would discredit the beacon-fires and her belief in them:

ἀνωλόλυξα μὲν πάλαι χαρᾶς ὕπο,
ὄτ’ ἦλθ’ ὁ πρῶτος νύχιος ἄγγελος πυρὸς
φράζων ἄλωσιν Ἰλίου τ’ ἀνάστασιν·
καί τίς μ’ ἐνίπτων εἶπε “φρυκτωρῶν διὰ
πεισθεῖσα Τροίαν νῦν πεπορθῆσθαι δοκεῖς;
ἦ κάρτα πρὸς γυναικὸς αἶρεσθαι κέαρ.” (590-592)

I cried aloud with joy long since, when the first message of the fire came by night, indicating the capture and sack of Ilium. And some rebuking me said, “Convinced by fire signals do you now think Troy has been sacked? Indeed it is like a woman to let her feelings carry her away.”

She exits soon thereafter, leaving the Herald and the Chorus to continue their discourse (615-680). This section showcases the uniqueness of the Herald’s knowledge: the Chorus ask about Menelaus, who they learn is missing along with his crew. The Herald alone is in a position to provide information about Menelaus. While Clytemnestra learns much from the beacon-fires, they tell her nothing of Menelaus’ whereabouts, or even that Menelaus is lost.

The Messenger of the *Persians* enjoys a similar singularity of knowledge. When he reports to Queen Atossa the disaster in Greece, he concludes with a claim to truth that goes unquestioned:

ταῦτ’ ἔστ’ ἀληθῆ, πολλὰ δ’ ἐκλείπω λέγων
κακῶν ἃ Πέρσαις ἐγκατέσκηψεν θεός. (*Pers.* 512-513)

These things are *true*, but I omit many of the woes a god has hurled against the Persians.

He does not lose any credibility by admitting the curtailed nature of his account, instead boosting it with his implied knowledge of further corroborating details.²¹⁹ The response from the Chorus and the Queen is not to question his account but to give tacit recognition of its veracity by posing no further questions, instead simply bursting into exclamations of lament (515-531). Indeed, his very arrival on the scene is marked by the Chorus' anticipation of his report:

ἀλλ' ἔμοι δοκεῖν τάχ' εἶση πάντα ναμερτῆ λόγον.
τοῦδε γὰρ δράμημα φωτὸς Περσικὸν πρέπει μαθεῖν,
καὶ φέρει σαφές τι πρᾶγος ἐσθλὸν ἢ κακὸν κλύειν. (*Pers.* 246-248)

But soon you will know the whole *infallible* account: a Persian runner comes bearing some *clear* report, good or bad to hear.

The terms the Chorus use to designate the Messenger's account clearly convey their expectation of accuracy (*ναμερτῆ*, *σαφές*), and they entertain no possibility that his report may be false. As Barrett notes, the Chorus invoke "both the messenger's reliability and the fullness of his account."²²⁰ This Messenger models the exceptional authority accorded to such a figure. Since the Chorus and the other characters at home have no other way of knowing what is happening in Greece, the Messenger has the unique position of being the sole source of information, which he may edit as he pleases. His first-hand knowledge precludes any doubt.

3. Prophecy

²¹⁹ Indeed, he has said twice before that his account is incomplete (329-330, 429-430).

²²⁰ Barrett 2002, 29. Barrett observes that the Messenger does not adhere to the *koruphaios*' expectations of him; the Chorus expect a conventional messenger-figure, but the Messenger deviates from this course by summarizing rather than detailing what has happened, thus imposing his own point of view on his narrative. Cf. de Jong 1991 on the various perspectives offered by Euripidean messengers. I find Barrett's reading interesting, but hesitate to assign too much significance to the omissions of the Persian Messenger, since it seems to me that any narrative is by nature edited by its speaker.

The third means to truth I have identified is prophecy or statements that prove prophetic. As I observed in Chapter Two, there are several instances where words for truth such as ἀλήθεια, ἀληθής, and ἔτυμος designate accurate prophecies of events that have not yet occurred, whether these prophecies stem from individual prescience or interpretation of divine will. In some ways prophetic figures might be considered a type of messenger, as they serve as intermediaries between a message's source and its recipient and express their messages verbally. Seers fundamentally differ, however, since their information originates from divine knowledge.

The most obvious example of a prophetic figure is Cassandra of the *Agamemnon*, whose truthfulness is both self-proclaimed and acknowledged by the Chorus:

Κα. τὸ μέλλον ἤξει, καὶ σὺ μ' ἐν τάχει παρῶν
 ἄγαν γ' ἀληθόμαντιν οἰκτίρας ἐρεῖς.
 Χο. τὴν μὲν Θυέστου δαῖτα παιδείων κρεῶν
 ξυνῆκα καὶ πέφρικα, καὶ φόβος μ' ἔχει
 κλύοντ' ἀληθῶς οὐδὲν ἐξηκασμένα. (*Ag.* 1240-1244)

Cassandra: The future will come; and soon you shall stand here to pronounce me, in pity, a *prophet who spoke all too true*.
 Chorus: Thyestes' feast upon his children's flesh I understand and shudder at, and fear takes hold of me as I hear it *truly told* and not in images.

At first Cassandra seems an unlikely voice for truth, as she is initially silent and remains so for more than two hundred lines, prompting Clytemnestra to belittle her as either a Greek-illiterate barbarian (1050-1053) or a madwoman unaccustomed to her newly imposed servitude (1064-1068). The Chorus agree that Cassandra's behavior is strange and confusing: ἐρμηνέως ἔοικεν ἡ ξένη τοροῦ | δεῖσθαι· τρόπος δὲ θηρὸς ὡς νεαιρέτου ("The stranger seems to need a clear interpreter; and her manner is that of a newly captured beast," *Ag.* 1062-1063). When she finally does speak, it is in agitated exclamations to Apollo that elicit confusion from the Chorus (1074-1075), whose stated

need for an interpreter, at the time a reference to Cassandra's foreignness, now takes on new meaning. The communicative gap between the Chorus and Cassandra is emphasized by their contrasting modes of speech, Cassandra's sung lyrics interwoven with the Chorus' spoken trimeters.²²¹

Her lack of lucidity, however, diminishes even in the midst of her exclamations of lament. The Chorus have already found an affinity with her and pity her (1069) despite Clytemnestra's encouragement towards scornful disdain. Perhaps it is their pity for her that facilitates ready recognition of her prophetic ability:

χρήσειν ἔοικεν ἀμφὶ τῶν αὐτῆς κακῶν
μένει τὸ θεῖον δουλίᾳ περ ἐν φρενί. (*Ag.* 1083-1084)

She will prophesy about her own sorrows; the god's gift remains in her mind, even in servitude.²²²

The developing bond between Cassandra and the Chorus further strengthens as she displays her gifts of prophecy. Her words are perfectly understood at first:

Κα. ἄ ἄ
μισόθειον μὲν οὖν, πολλὰ συνίστορα
αὐτοφύνα κακὰ ἴκαρτάναι
ἀνδροσφαγεῖον καὶ πέδον ῥαντήριον.
Χο. ἔοικεν εὐρις ἢ ξένη κυνὸς δίκην
εἶναι, ματεύει δ' ὧν ἀνευρήσει φόνον.
Κα. μαρτυρίοισι γὰρ τοῖσδ' ἐπιπέιθομαι
κλαιόμενα τάδε βρέφη σφαγὰς
ὀπτάς τε σάρκας πρὸς πατρὸς βεβρωμένας.
Χο. ἦ μὴν κλέος σου μαντικὸν πεπυσμένοι
ἦμεν, προφήτας δ' οὐτινας ματεύομεν. (*Ag.* 1090-1099)

Cassandra: No, to a house that hates the gods, one that knows many sad tales of kindred murder..., a slaughter-place for men, a place where the ground is sprinkled.

²²¹ Cf. Lloyd-Jones 1979, 87.

²²² On the meaning of τὸ θεῖον cf. Denniston and Page, 1957, *ad* 1084: "The 'day of slavery which takes from a man half his excellence'...has not robbed Cassandra of her gift of prophecy (which is all that τὸ θεῖον means here)."

Chorus: The stranger seems to have keen scent, like a hound, and she is on the track of those whose blood she will discover.

Cassandra: Yes, for here are the witnesses that I believe. These are children weeping for their slaughter, and for the roasted flesh their father ate.

Chorus: Indeed we had heard of your prophetic fame; but we seek no interpreters of the gods.

Cassandra's words are vague, yet sufficiently allusive for the Chorus to recognize that she refers to the past carnage of the house of Atreus; they are consequently quick to ascribe prophetic ability to her (1098-1099).²²³

Cassandra is alternately lucid and incomprehensible to the Chorus, who understand her when she speaks allusively about events familiar to them but are confused when her utterances become predictive rather than reflective. As she progresses to predictions of Agamemnon's death, the reaction from the Chorus is confusion:

Κα. ἰὼ πόποι, τί ποτε μήδεται;
τί τόδε νέον ἄχος; μέγα,
μέγ' ἐν δόμοισι τοῖσδε μήδεται κακόν,
ἄφερτον φίλοισιν, δυσίατον· ἀλκὰ δ' ἐκάς ἀποστατεῖ.
Χο. τούτων ἄιδρίς εἰμι τῶν μαντευμάτων,
ἐκεῖνα δ' ἔγνω· πᾶσα γὰρ πόλις βοᾷ. (Ag. 1100-1106)

Cassandra: O horror, what plot is this? What is this great new agony? A great evil is being plotted in this house, unbearable for its friends, hard to remedy; and protection stands far off.

Chorus: These prophecies I know not; but the others I recognized; for it is the talk of all the city.

The Chorus themselves state the difference between this prophecy and her earlier ones, which were recognizable, whereas the present ones are not. Cassandra's knowledge of the truth is well received, but only as long as what she says relates to the past and is thus already familiar to her listeners. When she describes events not yet known to the Chorus, they are stopped short, claiming ignorance (ἄιδρίς, 1105).

²²³ Cf. Zeitlin 1990, 111 on the visionary quality ascribed to women.

As Cassandra proceeds to detail Agamemnon's death and her own (1107-1148), she continues to be incomprehensible to the Chorus, who consequently diagnose her with madness (1140-1145). But she is able to overcome this accusation of madness when she achieves a moment of clarity in which the Chorus understand her once more:

Κα. ἰὼ γάμοι γάμοι Πάριδος ὀλέθριοι φίλων·
ἰὼ Σκαμάνδρου πάτριον ποτόν·
τότε μὲν ἄμφι σᾶς αἰόνας τάλαιν'
ἠγνυτόμαν τροφαῖς·
νῦν δ' ἄμφι Κωκυτόν τε κ' Ἀχερουσίους
ὄχθους ἔοικα θεσπιωδῆσειν τάχα. (1156-1161)
Χο. τί τόδε τορὸν ἄγαν ἔπος ἐφημίσω;
νεογνὸς ἂν αἰὼν μάθοι·
πέπληγμαι δ' ὑπαὶ δῆγματι φοινίῳ
δυσσαλγεῖ τύχα μινυρὰ θρεομένας,
θραύματ' ἔμοι κλύειν. (1162-1166)

Cassandra: O the marriage, the marriage of Paris, bringing ruin on his loved ones! O the native flow of the Scamander! Wretched me, I was once reared and grew up around your banks! But now I am likely to prophesy soon around the Cocytus and the Acherousian shores.

Chorus: Why have you voiced this saying, all too clear? A new-born could hear and understand. I am struck by a bloody bite, by your painful fate as you shriek your plaintive notes, shattering for me to hear.

What contributes to this dawn of understanding is a description of the events at Troy, which Cassandra has herself witnessed. Her allusion to Paris establishes a point of commonality between her history and the Chorus' as she speaks of past events in a way that they would understand, thus making them more receptive to her prophetic utterances. Again, her explanation of events that would be recognizable to the Chorus garners their trust and facilitates their comprehension and belief. As Lebeck notes, Cassandra interweaves her own fate with Agamemnon's and the destruction of Troy with the curse upon the Atreids.²²⁴

²²⁴ Lebeck 1971, 51-58.

Cassandra's reports resemble a messenger-figure's in their descriptive quality. She alternately encounters belief and incomprehension from the Chorus, but when they do understand her, they credit her with reporting on events as if she were actually there:

θαυμάζω δέ σου,
πόντου πέραν τραφεῖσαν ἀλλόθρου πόλιν
κυρεῖν λέγουσαν ὥσπερ εἰ παρεστάτεις. (*Ag.* 1199-1201)

But I marvel at you, that though bred beyond the seas you speak truly of a foreign city, as though you had been present.

The Chorus' response to Cassandra's speech about the House of Atreus (1178-1197) encapsulates why they believe her: she speaks of events with first-hand knowledge and clarity.²²⁵

The difference between Cassandra's access to truth and a messenger-figure's is that hers comes from an entirely different source. Whereas her knowledge results from the gift of sight given her by Apollo (1202-1212), messengers rely on eyewitness information and therefore may only report on events that have already occurred. Cassandra, like Clytemnestra, receives her knowledge of events without being present at them herself, eliciting belief when her accounts are sufficiently vivid to effect comprehension. While Clytemnestra is vindicated when the Herald's report concurs with her own interpretation, Cassandra must rely on her knowledge of the past to win over the Chorus. But the Chorus implicitly place a higher premium on her type of knowledge, prophecy, when they acknowledge and recognize her gifts in this arena. As I stated previously, the Chorus have no trouble recognizing Cassandra's prophetic abilities when

²²⁵ Denniston and Page 1957, 166 and Lloyd-Jones 1979, 93-94 argue that Cassandra evokes the past and tells the Chorus about Apollo's curse in a purposeful endeavor to persuade the Chorus of her prophetic knowledge about the future. I prefer to read these lines as emphasizing the frustrating paradox of Cassandra, by turns believed and incomprehensible.

she talks about the past.²²⁶ Their comprehension of Cassandra is akin to their belief in the report of the Herald, for when they do understand her, it is because she speaks like an eyewitness.

Furthermore, Cassandra's references to past carnage, unlike a messenger speech, include allusion to future consequences. She speaks of "kindred Furies" (συγγόνων Ἐρινύων, 1190), the "original ruin" of Thyestes' and Atreus' crimes (πρώταρχον ἄτην, 1192), and the by-turns recurrence of their misdeeds (ἐν μέρει, 1192), all of which point up the reciprocal and self-perpetuating nature of individual acts of violence. She later explicitly refers to the reciprocal nature of Atreid carnage as she foretells the deaths that will result from her own:

οὔτοι δυσοίζω θάμνον ὡς ὄρνις φόβῳ,
ἀλλ' ὡς θανούση μαρτυρήτέ μοι τόδε,
ὅταν γυνή γυναικὸς ἀντ' ἐμοῦ θάνῃ
ἀνήρ τε δυσδάμαρτος ἀντ' ἀνδρὸς πέσῃ. (1316-1319)

I do not tremble as a bird before a bush in fear, but as I die, bear me witness to this, when *a woman* shall die in return for me, *a woman*, and *a man* falls in return for *a man* unfortunate in his wife.

Using repetitive language that reflects the reciprocity of retribution (γυνή γυναικὸς, ἀνήρ...ἀνδρὸς), Cassandra again demonstrates that her gift of sight comprises awareness of causality as well as a simple prediction of events. Her observations suggest an understanding of the continuous bloodshed that past events effect and show the connectivity between past, present, and future that her particular brand of truth enables her to perceive. The Chorus, however, do not readily perceive the future implications of this trend of reciprocal violence, instead only noting the accuracy of her references to Atreus and Thyestes. The singularity of Cassandra's access to truth is that it knows no

²²⁶ See p. 29 for my discussion of prophecy as entailing knowledge about the past and present in addition to the future.

time dimension. She sees the future just as she sees the past or present, an ability that automatically sets her apart from her interlocutors, who, of course, do not share the same keen-sightedness. As a result the Chorus are sympathetic to Cassandra when she reports on events familiar to them, but her knowledge of future events isolates her. Thus when she connects the ghosts of Thyestes' children to the imminent vengeful actions of Clytemnestra, the Chorus understand only the former:

τὴν μὲν Θυέστου δαῖτα παιδείων κρεῶν
 ζυνηκα καὶ πέφρικα, καὶ φόβος μ' ἔχει
 κλύοντ' ἀληθῶς οὐδὲν ἐξηκασμένα·
 τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἀκούσας ἐκ δρόμου πεσὼν τρέχω. (*Ag.* 1242-1244)

I understand the feast of Thyestes on the flesh of his children and I shudder, and fear takes hold of me as I hear it truly told and not in images. But when I hear the rest I falter and run off the course.

The various receptions of Cassandra, Clytemnestra, the Theban women, and messenger-figures indicate that despite the variety of its instantiations, truth in Aeschylus is most believable in its manifestation as a messenger's report, but the demonstrable validity of other forms of truth and the characters' erroneous disregard of them are reminders that the truth may be found in less obvious places.²²⁷

GENDER AND CREDIBILITY?

²²⁷ I do not include the predictions of Prometheus in my model, largely because he is a god and provider of prophecy to mankind (*PV* 484-499), yet he also obstructs true prophecy by instilling in man blind hopes (τυφλάς...ἐλπίδας, 250). His relationship to prophecy therefore inherently differs from Cassandra's because he himself is a source for prophecy, rather than one who can access this source. Cf. Griffith 1983, *ad* 484-90: "Occasionally scepticism was expressed about the value of μαντική (e.g. Xenophanes A 52 DK, Soph. *OT* 852-8, Eur. *Hel.* 744ff., etc.), but this was more often directed against its human practitioners (oraclemongers, priests, etc.) than against the divine basis of the art, e.g., Eur. *El.* 399-400 Λοξίου γὰρ ἔμπεδοι | χρησιμοί, βροτῶν δὲ μαντικὴν χαίρειν ἔω (with Denniston's n.)." Furthermore, to examine other characters' credulous reactions to his predictions misses one important point of the play, which is to present the conflict between possibility and necessity. It is no accident that his predictions are not explicitly associated with truth (either ἔτυμος or ἀληθής) so much as with the future (cf. λοιπόν, *PV* 684; τὰ λοιπά, 703), which is a less certain concept than truth and is not unquestionably inevitable in the *PV*.

My discussion of the various means to accessing truth in Aeschylus—nonverbal signals, messenger-figures, and prophecy—begs an inclusion of gender, since each source corresponds to a particular gender: the nonverbal signals I discussed are noticed by female figures (Clytemnestra in the *Agamemnon*, the Chorus of Theban women, and Electra in the *Choephoroi*), whereas messenger-figures are invariably male.²²⁸ Furthermore, the most conspicuous example of prophetic truth resides in Cassandra, a character who happens to be a woman. What makes this a specifically gendered issue is the varying degrees of belief elicited by these characters: Clytemnestra, the Theban women, and Cassandra each meet with resistance to their claims, and in some cases their interlocutors specifically point to their gender as a basis for incredulity. These coincidences of gender and disbelief are a useful starting point for studying the credibility assigned to each of these sources of truth because they raise the question of to what extent Aeschylus aligns credibility, or lack thereof, with gender.

It is no secret that consideration of gender is useful in studying tragedy, as evidenced by the abundance of scholarship devoted to the topic²²⁹ and by the numerous references to gender and gender differences within the plays themselves: the Chorus of Danaids appeal to their father not to leave them, citing their feminine lack of bellicosity (μόνην δὲ μὴ πρόλειπε, λίσσομαι, πάτερ· | γυνὴ μονωθεῖσ' οὐδέν· οὐκ ἔνεστ' Ἄρης, *Supp.* 748-749); Eteocles expresses impatience with the Chorus of the *Seven*, ascribing their supplicating behavior to womanly capriciousness (κρατοῦσα μὲν γὰρ οὐχ ὀμιλητὸν θράσος, | δείσασα δ' οἴκῳ καὶ πόλει πλέον κακόν, *Sept.* 189-190); Clytemnestra

²²⁸ Cassandra shares some characteristics with messenger-figures, but I do not include her in this category, since the source of her knowledge is so different from theirs.

²²⁹ See Winnington-Ingram 1983, 101-131; Goldhill 1984; Rabinowitz 1993; Zeitlin 1996; Wohl 1998; McClure 1999; Foley 2001.

punctuates her rendition of the fall of Troy with a reminder about her sex (τοιαῦτά τοι γυναικὸς ἐξ ἔμοῦ κλύεις, *Ag.* 348); the Chorus of the *Agamemnon* attribute the tendency towards premature joy to the female gender (γυναικὸς αἰχμᾶ πρέπει | πρὸ τοῦ φανέντος χάριν ξυναινέσαι, *Ag.* 483-484); Orestes mocks Aegisthus for having a woman’s heart (θήλεια γὰρ φρήν, *Cho.* 305); and in the *Eumenides* issues of gender underlie the two opposing arguments as to whether a matricide trumps a mariticide.²³⁰

In some ways Aeschylus seems to subscribe to a simple and familiar paradigm of gender-based credibility in which women are not considered trustworthy.²³¹ For example, the Chorus of Danaids encounter skepticism in their interactions with Pelasgus, the king of Argos, who notices, among other things, their femaleness (*Supp.* 237). But gender is only one identifying difference between the suppliant Danaids and their interlocutors and it seems to work in tandem with other differences to elicit antagonism and disbelief:

Βα. ποδαπὸν ὄμιλον τόνδ’ ἀνελληνόστολον
πέπλοισι βαρβάροισι κάμπυκώμασι
χλίοντα προσφωνοῦμεν; οὐ γὰρ Ἀργολίς
ἔσθης γυναικῶν οὐδ’ ἀφ’ Ἑλλάδος τόπων. (*Supp.* 234-237)

...
πρὸς ταῦτ’ ἀμείβου καὶ λέγ’ εὐθαρσῆς ἐμοί. (249)

...
ἄπιστα μυθεῖσθ’, ὦ ξένοι, κλύειν ἐμοί,
ὅπως τόδ’ ὑμῖν ἐστὶν Ἀργεῖον γένος. (277-278)

From what country is this throng that I accost, clad *un-Greekly* and reveling in *foreign* robes and snoods? The raiment of these women is *neither Argive nor Greek*.

...*Reply* and speak boldly to me.

...You speak things *untrustworthy* for me to hear, *stranger-women*, how this Argive race is yours.

²³⁰ See *Eum.* 209-212, 217-221.

²³¹ E.g., McClure 1999, 26 dates this tradition to Hesiod’s Pandora.

Despite the obvious femaleness of the Danaids, Pelasgus' primary preoccupation is with their foreignness,²³² which is a recurrent theme in the play.²³³ It is clear that Pelasgus, from the beginning, approaches the Danaids as inherently different from himself and uses language that emphasizes the differences (ἀνελληνόστολον, 234; βαρβάροισι, 235; οὐ... Ἀργολίς... οὐδ' ἀφ' Ἑλλάδος, 236-237; ξένοι, 277). Accompanying this language is a distrust of the Danaids (ἄπιστα, 277) that stems from the difference between their appearance and the reality they claim. Pelasgus' willingness to help the Danaids rests on their ability to provide some proof of similarity between themselves and him, but their efforts to do so are stymied by their egregiously non-Greek apparel.

But the very differences observed by Pelasgus are at once expressions of distance and invitations to proximity. Pelasgus invites the Danaids to close the gap by using language that evokes the reciprocity of friendly exchanges (ἀμείβου, 249); his reference to them as strangers (ξένοι, 277) marks their difference but also invites a relationship of alliance (*xenia*) and thus forges the connectedness inherent in guest-host relationships. Furthermore, Pelasgus suggests his possible willingness to help the Danaids should they persuasively demonstrate their Argive descent: διδαχθεὶς <δ'> ἄν τόδ' εἰδείην πλέον, | ὅπως γένεθλον σπέρμα τ' Ἀργεῖον τὸ σόν ("If instructed, I would know this better, how your race and seed are Argive," *Supp.* 289-290).

The paradoxical relationship between Pelasgus and the Danaids, at once strangers and kin to Argos, barbarians and Greek (ἀστοξένων, 356), has been well summarized by

Froma Zeitlin:

²³² Cf. Friis Johansen and Whittle 1980, *ad* 238-40: "Though he has of course noticed their sex (cf. 237), the King makes no further reference to it until 277ff. and, with the possible exception of his allusion to Amazons (287), displays no sign of regarding it as in the least relevant or important. What is particularly surprising to him is that *foreigners* should not have tried to secure any kind of local assistance."

²³³ Cf. Mitchell 2006, 212 for a list of references to the Danaids' un-Greekness.

In their flight from Egypt to Argos, the suppliants' intermediate position also corresponds to the position of virgins, who are situated on the margins of society, betwixt and between, both "other" to the culture and a part of it...As insiders and outsiders, the Danaids are both Greek and barbarian. They belong in the city yet remain foreign to it. (Zeitlin 1996, 125)

We have seen the relationship of the feminine to *xenia* in Pindar's poetry, where the guest-host reciprocity that is central to his epinician poetry is threatened by female deception. Aeschylus alters this relationship. Although he may seem at first to resemble Pindar in his depiction of the feminine as a destabilizing "otherness,"²³⁴ the example of the Danaids indicates that feminine destabilization occurs with the establishment, rather than dissolution, of *xenia*. The Danaids eventually win over Pelasgus with the tale of their descent from Io, which endears them to him, but creates the subsequent problem of the instability Argos will face should its citizens risk war with Egypt by helping the Danaids. It is their position of marginality that works both to the Danaids' advantage and disadvantage: as suppliants, they are entitled to request help under the auspices of Zeus, but as foreigners, they are subject to the suspicions of a king wary of foreign difference.²³⁵

Zeitlin has identified femininity as one form of "otherness," but it should be stated explicitly that in Aeschylus femininity is compounded by other differences of identity. Credibility is granted to those who can establish similarity, while distrust obtains when oppositions of identity cannot be overcome. Thus Electra in the *Choephoroi* must similarly build credibility with the Chorus of slave-women who, although of the same

²³⁴ For an introductory discussion of opposition and difference, see Zeitlin 1996, 1-15.

²³⁵ For an excellent study of ancient supplication, see Naiden 2006, esp. 1-27 where he demonstrates that successful supplication requires a series of actions beyond a mere plea for aid.

gender as Electra, are of different socio-political status. In her address to them Electra acknowledges this disparity but attempts to narrow the gap:

τῆσδ' ἔστε βουλῆς, ὦ φίλοι, μεταίτιαι
κοινὸν γὰρ ἔχθος ἐν δόμοις νομίζομεν.
μὴ κεύθετ' ἔνδον καρδίας φόβῳ τινός·
τὸ μόρσιμον γὰρ τὸν τ' ἐλεύθερον μένει
καὶ τὸν πρὸς ἄλλης δεσποτούμενον χερρός.
λέγοις ἂν εἴ τι τῶνδ' ἔχεις ὑπέρτερον. (*Cho.* 100-105)

Be *accessories* to this plan, friends, for we practice a *shared* hatred in the house. Do not hide it in your hearts out of fear of any, for doom awaits *both the freeman and the one ruled by the hand of another*. You might speak if you have anything better than this.

Electra establishes familiarity by addressing the Chorus as φίλοι and by using terms of commonality (μεταίτιαι, κοινόν). Furthermore, she subordinates class differences by pointing out their shared hatreds and common fates and by putting herself in the position of advice-seeker, thus elevating the agency of the Chorus, who in turn duly instruct Electra and facilitate the emotional expression of both Electra and Orestes.²³⁶ The steps Electra must take to ingratiate herself with the Chorus resemble the Danaids' rhetoric towards Pelasgus and demonstrate that gender alone guarantees neither alliance nor opposition.

Gender in Aeschylus, then, is a more complicated issue than a simple dichotomy between male and female, since femaleness is only one characteristic that distinguishes female characters from their male interlocutors. By the same token the role of gender in issues of truth and falsehood is similarly complicated. To generalize the ancient Greek paradigm of truth, falsehood, and gender as one in which women are treated as deceptive and men are truthful does not do justice to the complexity of gender dynamics in Aeschylean tragedy. Although several of Aeschylus' female characters encounter

²³⁶ See Foley 2001, 154-159 for the Chorus' role in the *Choephoroi*.

challenges to their credibility which might derive from ancient views of female deceptiveness, my central argument in this section is that Aeschylus manipulates this gender paradigm, thereby problematizing and perhaps even implicitly criticizing it by showing how disbelieved female characters in the end prove to be “right.”

The most prominent examples are the Chorus of the *Septem* and Clytemnestra, who each encounter a skepticism or even hostility that is connected specifically to their status as women, a specific point of commonality that merits further examination of how their gender influences the credibility they are accorded—or denied—by their interlocutors. The Chorus of Theban women receive a harsh response from Eteocles, who faults their extreme anxiety, which he asserts is a female tendency. After his initial chastisement of the Chorus he generalizes their behavior as a feminine trait and concludes with a statement about the proper roles of man and woman: μέλει γὰρ ἀνδρί, μὴ γυνὴ βουλευέτω, | τᾶξωθεν· ἔνδον δ’ οὔσα μὴ βλάβην τίθει (“What is outside is a man’s province: let no woman debate it; within doors do no mischief!” 200-201).

It should be noted that Eteocles does not specifically fault the Chorus for being deceptive or untruthful, preferring instead to characterize them as irrationally and detrimentally fearful. Furthermore, despite his explicit comments about the differences between male and female, his conflict with the Chorus seems to stem from their differing world-views, a difference for which gender serves as his shorthand explanation. As Hutchinson and Brown observe, Eteocles and the Chorus express divergent religious views,²³⁷ neither of which is unambiguously “right”: as I noted earlier, Eteocles is partly

²³⁷ Hutchinson 1985 and Brown 1977 differ as to the precise nature of this religious conflict. Hutchinson 1985, 74 asserts that Eteocles’ problem with the Chorus is one of religious practice rather than attitude: Eteocles objects not to prayer itself, but to the Chorus’ manner of prayer. Brown 1977, 301, on the other hand, interprets the scene as a conflict between religious attitudes: Eteocles’ pragmatism contrasts with the Chorus’ total submission to and trust in the gods. While I am inclined to agree with Brown more than

justified in his annoyance with the Chorus, for ultimately the total destruction of Thebes is avoided. But even so, the deaths of Eteocles and Polyneices at the end of the play also demonstrate the deficiencies of Eteocles' worldview and reflect the short-sightedness of his fraternal feud and his earlier rebuke of the Chorus.²³⁸

The case of Clytemnestra proves a more prominent gender issue since her femaleness is a recurrent point of emphasis by both the Chorus of the *Agamemnon* and Clytemnestra herself.²³⁹ Twice does she conclude a speech with a reference to her womanhood (τοιαῦτά τοι γυναικὸς ἐξ ἐμοῦ κλύεις, “Such things do you hear from me, a woman,” *Ag.* 348; τοιόσδ’ ὁ κόμπος, τῆς ἀλήθειας γέμων, | οὐκ αἰσχρὸς ὡς γυναικὶ γενναίᾳ λακεῖν, “Such is my boast, brimming with truth, not shameful for a noble woman to shout,” 613-614), and when her pronouncement of Troy's fall is corroborated by the Herald, she notes how she, despite being charged with a femininely premature joy (590-592), observed the proper womanly duties of sacrifice:

λόγοις τοιούτοις πλαγκτὸς οὔσ’ ἐφαινόμην·
ὄμως δ’ ἔθνον, καὶ γυναικείῳ νόμῳ
ὀλολυγμὸν ἄλλος ἄλλοθεν κατὰ πτόλιν
ἔλασκον εὐφημοῦντες, ἐν θεῶν ἔδραις
θυηφάγον κοιμῶντες εὐώδη φλόγα. (*Ag.* 592-597)

By such words I appeared to wander in my wits; nevertheless I sacrificed,
and as is *women's* custom one here, one there in the city uttered the

Hutchinson, I find the subtle differences between their two arguments less important than their shared premise that while Eteocles may describe his conflict with the Chorus in terms of gender, it is more a matter of religious difference than gender-based animosity.

²³⁸ Cf. Foley 2001, 48: “Whatever we are to think of this scene in *Seven against Thebes*, however, the tables are eventually turned on the emphatically rational Eteocles.” Of course, as with all Greek tragedy, culpability lies dually with the individual and with larger forces at play. In some ways Eteocles cannot prevent his downfall, which is decreed by Oedipus' curse.

²³⁹ This is not to say that the Chorus of the *Septem* do not self-identify as women, but their references to womanhood are more general than specific to themselves and are less emphatically “gendered.” For example, *Sept.* 326-335 discusses the general fate of women in the aftermath of war, using feminine participles and adjectives (τὰς κεχειρωμένας, 326; νέας τε καὶ παλαιάς, 327) rather than the noun for woman γυνή.

jubilant cry, giving praise in the gods' abodes, lulling the fragrant flame that feeds on incense.

Unlike the Chorus of Theban women, whose religious worldview is questioned by Eteocles more than their accuracy, Clytemnestra faces accusations that her accounts may be false. The Chorus initially doubt that news of Troy's fall could come so quickly (280), then re-orient their doubt around the questionable accuracy of the beacon-fires (475-482), which in their view would be accepted only by a woman (483-484, 590-592). Clytemnestra specifically addresses challenges to her credibility using the same terms of gender as her challengers, thus emphasizing the gender basis of the Chorus' doubt and demonstrating that their doubt and its basis are unfounded.

Despite the Chorus' skepticism as to the accuracy of Clytemnestra's information, they do not overtly accuse her of deceptiveness when she claims wifely devotion in *Ag.* 613-614. Their only acknowledgement of her duplicity in these lines is to mention briefly that her words beg interpretation (615-616);²⁴⁰ later, they do try to warn Agamemnon of her disloyalty by advising him to exercise scrutiny as to the fidelity of his subjects (783-809), but they do not explicitly point the finger at Clytemnestra, and Agamemnon ignores them. Upon Clytemnestra's description of her husband's murder (1372-1398), the Chorus' immediate reaction is to note her verbal audacity (*θρασύστομος*, 1399) and later the general atrocity of the crime rather than her deceptiveness, to which they finally allude nearly one hundred lines later (*δολίῳ μύρῳ*, 1495). Deceptiveness is not a trait the Chorus conspicuously assign to Clytemnestra; even their doubt about the beacon-fires stems from fears of hope-driven inaccuracy rather than suspicions of feminine deception, and the fallacy of their assessment is borne out by

²⁴⁰ Furthermore, these lines are notoriously opaque and can at best be read as a veiled warning about Clytemnestra's untruthfulness. See Denniston and Page 1957, *ad* 615-16 for the uncertainty surrounding these lines.

the events of the play. Aegisthus in the *Choephoroi* makes a similar error of judgment: he, like the Chorus of the *Agamemnon*, faults the female race for letting emotion dictate belief when he hears the (false) news of Orestes' death: πῶς ταῦτ' ἀληθῆ καὶ βλέποντα²⁴¹ δοξάσω; | ἢ πρὸς γυναικῶν δειματούμενοι λόγοι | πεδάρσιοι θρόσκουσι, θνήσκοντες μάτην; (“How am I to suppose this tale is true and real? Is this a story born of women’s terror that darts upward and perishes in vain?” 844-846). In this case he is correct: the news of Orestes’ death is false, but it is not false for the reasons he assumes. Instead of perceiving deceit, he mistakenly attributes falseness to female tendencies toward irrationality. Ultimately his doubt does not save him, as he still enters the house and meets his death. Aeschylus is implicitly critical of statements about the female tendency to yield to emotion at the expense of accuracy, which are proven false as the drama unfolds. Furthermore, he demonstrates that this gender-based doubt is misdirected, since it fails to expose and prevent the larger and more destructive deception enacted by either Clytemnestra or by Orestes.

Cassandra faces similar challenges in that her prophecies are not invariably welcomed and meet a receptive audience only when she describes familiar events. But her struggle is not strikingly similar to the Theban women’s or to Clytemnestra’s, as she encounters neither hostility nor disbelief but incomprehension. Moreover, her interlocutors do not denigrate her prophecies as a symptom of her femaleness, nor is her gender conspicuous at all except when she tells the Chorus about the curse of Apollo, with whom they presume Cassandra has had a sexual relationship (1204, 1208). The character of Cassandra is relevant to my discussion of how gender relates to issues of

²⁴¹ Note the choice of participle βλέποντα, which implies that the report has a life of its own. See Garvie 1986, *ad* 844.

truth and falsehood only in that she has difficulty being believed and that she happens to be a woman, but her difficulty stems from incomprehension rather than mistrust, and her femaleness is acknowledged but not held against her by her interlocutors. By the same token the messenger-figures, who uniquely enjoy unquestioned credibility, are male characters, but their maleness is not an emphasized, or even mentioned, component of their authority. Cassandra's only association with falsehood or deceptiveness is made by her own admission, when she explains that Apollo's wrath stems from her deception of him: ξυναινέσασα Λοξίαν ἐψευσάμην ("I consented, and then played Loxias false," 1208).

What Cassandra, Clytemnestra, and the Chorus of Theban women do have in common is that they are proved correct as the events of the play unfold. Given the varying degrees of emphasis on their gender, however, it is unclear how much their credibility is hindered by their femaleness. Eteocles' and the Chorus of the *Agamemnon*'s disdainful comments about women should be read more as indicators of the vexatiousness of the Theban women and Clytemnestra than as serious judgments about female credibility (or lack thereof). Furthermore, not only are their generalizations about gender proved incorrect, so too are their justifications for their gender stereotyping. The accuracy of the beacon-fires in the *Agamemnon* is vindicated as are Cassandra's prophecies and the dangers foretold by the dust-cloud in the *Septem*. It cannot be said, then, that Aeschylus' treatment of his female purveyors of truth reflects a misogynist alignment of femininity and deception such as we have seen in Hesiod or Pindar; if Aeschylus is implying anything about truth, falsehood, and gender, it seems to be a criticism of this paradigm. Even Clytemnestra's guile is not easy to condemn since the audience's sympathies to her have been roused early on in the play with the story of

Iphigeneia's sacrifice (*Ag.* 205-247). Perhaps the old-fashioned view of Pindar as the backward-looking preserver of the past and Aeschylus as a progressive transformer is correct in this case,²⁴² as Pindar's female characters more conspicuously reflect a Pandora-like conception of woman, whereas the Aeschylean treatment of female characters is implicitly critical of this view.

TRUTH, FALSEHOOD, AND EXCHANGE

As I discussed in the previous chapter, Pindaric truth and falsehood must exist in relation to the reciprocity of *xenia* that underscores poet-patron relations. My discussion of truth and falsehood in epinician therefore took into consideration the overriding force of reciprocity and exchange: epinician truth complements praise and is even in part equivalent to it and *vice versa*; Pindar expresses the negativity of falsehood and deception by depicting them in contexts of relationships of reciprocity, which they destabilize. As in Pindar's odes, exchange and reciprocity lie at the heart of truth in Aeschylus, who depicts messenger's reports, themselves items of verbal exchange, as the most credible (although he also implicitly criticizes this view). As I discussed earlier, truth in tragedy is manifested in the verbal exchange between characters and is thus intimately tied to this idea of exchange.

A further type of exchange and reciprocity in tragedy, and perhaps the one most discussed in Aeschylean scholarship, especially on the *Oresteia*, is the retributive justice that drives the plots. In the *Suppliants* the Danaids appeal to Zeus for help, phrasing their request in terms of ἀλήθεια:

ἄγε δὴ λέξωμεν ἐπ' Ἀργείοις
 εὐχὰς ἀγαθὰς ἀγαθῶν ποινάς·
 Ζεὺς δ' ἐφορεύει ξένιος ξενίου

²⁴² Summarized in Finley 1955, 3-8.

στόματος τιμὰς ἔπ' ἀληθεία
τέρμον' ἀμέμπτων πρὸς ἅπαντα†. (*Supp.* 625-629)

Come then, let us offer for the Argives *good* prayers, a return for *good things*. And may *Zeus of strangers*, blameless, behold from the mouth of a *stranger* offerings *in truth*, an end for all things.

It is natural for the Danaids to offer prayer to Zeus Xenios, who would protect them as strangers and suppliants to Argos. The presence of ἀλήθεια in this invocation,²⁴³ echoes the association between Alatheia, Zeus, and *xenia* that opens *Olympian* 10 and links truth to reciprocal relationships:

ἀλλὰ σὺ καὶ θυγάτηρ
Ἀλάθεια Διός, ὀρθᾶ χερὶ
ἔρύκετον ψευδέων
ἐνιπὰν ἀλιτόξενον. (*Ol.* 10.3-6)

You and the daughter of *Zeus, Truth*, with a correcting hand ward off from me the charge that *I harm a guest friend* with broken promises.

Whatever the correct text of *Supp.* 628, the appearance of ἀλήθεια in a context that invokes reciprocity, both with an invocation to Zeus in his aspect as guest-friend and with language that mirrors the symmetry of reciprocal relationships (ἀγαθὰς ἀγαθῶν, 626; ξένιος ξενίου, 627), indicates the relevance of truth to the reciprocity of guest-friendship.

But the reciprocity that permeates Aeschylean tragedy is not confined to the exchange of goods that underlies friendships or guest-host relationships. Instead, it is aggression and violence that drive the tragic plots.²⁴⁴ As Gagarin argues, “underlying all [Aeschylus’] dramatic action is a fundamental sense of rise and fall in human affairs, of

²⁴³ The corruption of the text here (ἀληθεία vs. ἀληθείας) has frustrated commentators and occluded precise translation. Cf. Friis Johansen and Whittle *ad loc.*: “to the achieving of truth (sc. “that they may come true!);” Grene and Lattimore 1991, 28 (using the translation of Seth G. Benardete): “in true frankness.”

²⁴⁴ For the sake of simplicity and clarity I have here distinguished two types of reciprocity, the reciprocity of *charis* (such as is found in relationships of *xenia* or *philia*) as opposed to the reciprocity of revenge, but tragedy sometimes showcases the conflict between the two. Belfiore 1998, 139-158 argues interestingly, and for the most part convincingly, that “harm to *philoï* is a central element in the plot structures of nearly all of the extant tragedies,” and some of that harm results from a perpetuation of retributive violence.

action and reaction, of reciprocity, and of *dikē*.²⁴⁵ Although Aeschylean *dikē* is generally discussed in the context of the *Oresteia*, there is evidence that similar themes run through some of the other Aeschylean tragedies: the Danaids make claims to *dikē* (78, 343, 395, 406, 430, 437), always in connection with Zeus or the gods, although they never provide specific reasons for their claims, as do the Egyptians,²⁴⁶ and the loss of the rest of the trilogy leaves unanswered whose claims prove ultimately to be the more valid. But it is clear that the Danaids, like the other characters of Aeschylus, show a concern for reciprocity, both in benefits that should be conferred on their Argive benefactors and in retribution for the wrongs they have suffered. Polyneices and Eteocles too each “have a valid claim to *dikē*.”²⁴⁷ Like Pindar’s epinician, Aeschylean tragedy presents a tit-for-tat system, but the obvious difference is that the Aeschylean model has a greater focus on perpetuating acts of violence rather than *charis* and is thus mutually detrimental to its participants rather than beneficial. It is this model of exchange that I now propose to take up, particularly in its relevance to truth and falsehood.

The relationship between truth and retributive violence is clearest when Clytemnestra speaks with the Chorus in the aftermath of her husband’s murder:

Χο. ὄνειδος ἦκει τόδ’ ἀντ’ ὄνειδους,
 δύσμαχα δ’ ἐστι κρῖναι.
 φέρει φέροντ’, ἐκτίνει δ’ ὁ καίνων·
μίμνει δὲ μίμνοντος ἐν θρόνῳ Διὸς
 παθεῖν τὸν ἔρξαντα· θέσμιον γὰρ.
 τίς ἂν γονὰν ἀραῖον ἐκβάλῃ δόμων;
 κεκόλληται γένος πρὸς ἄτα.
 Κλ. ἐς τόνδ’ ἐνέβηξ ξὺν ἀληθείᾳ
 χρησμών. (Ag. 1560-1568)

²⁴⁵ Gagarin 1976, 137.

²⁴⁶ The observations about and citations of *dikē* are taken from Gagarin 1976, 129-130, 134.

²⁴⁷ Gagarin 1976, 120. See his discussion on pages 120-123.

Chorus: This *reproach meets reproach*, and it is difficult to judge. Someone *plunders the plunderer*, and a murderer pays the price. It *awaits* that the doer suffer while *Zeus abides* on his throne, for it is the law. Who would cast out the cursed stock from the home? The race is bound fast to ruin.

Clytemnestra: You have come upon this prophecy *with truth*.

This passage serves to emphasize a cosmic system of reciprocity and posits Zeus as the overseer of such a system. The repetitive language emphasizing the symmetry of reciprocity (ὄνειδος...ὄνειδους, 1560; φέρει φέροντ', 1562; μίμνει δὲ μίμνοντος, 1563) recalls the similar repetition of *Supp.* 625-629, but here the reciprocity is one of retributive violence rather than *xenia*. Just as Zeus oversees both types of reciprocity, ἀλήθεια serves as a further common link as Clytemnestra acknowledges the inevitability of what the Chorus predict. More than a simple message accurately conveying events, ἀλήθεια also characterizes the certainty of reprisal for murder; divine law ensures this reprisal, which, as we know, will be carried out by Clytemnestra's son.

Truth is inextricably tied to this system of reprisal, as it characterizes the inevitability of retributive aggression. This is made painfully clear by Cassandra, whose access to truth *via* prophecy serves only to give her knowledge of her disastrous future without the ability to prevent it; foreknowledge of Agamemnon's and her deaths does not alter their unavailability, and the Chorus and she are painfully aware of this:

Χο. ἀπὸ δὲ θεσφάτων τίς ἀγαθὰ φάτις
βροτοῖς στέλλεται; κακῶν γὰρ διαί
πολυεπεῖς τέχνη θεσπιφδῶν
φόβον φέρουσιν μαθεῖν. (1132-1135)

From oracles what good message is sent to men? For through evil the wordy arts of prophets bring fear to their listeners.

Κα. ὕπ' αὖ με δεινὸς ὀρθομαντείας πόνος
στροβεῖ ταρασσῶν φροιμίαις <δυσφροιμίαις>. (1215-1216)

ἤξει γὰρ ἡμῶν ἄλλος αὖ τιμάορος,
μητροκτόνον φίτυμα, ποινάτωρ πατρός. (1279-1281)

We shall not die unavenged by the gods. For another avenger of us will come in turn, a mother-killing scion, avenger of his father.

Whereas truth strengthens the reciprocity of retribution by emphasizing its certainty, falsehood and deception play their parts by ensuring individual acts of violent revenge. Clytemnestra's act of deception, the cunning with which she lures Agamemnon to his death, enables this particular instance of retributive justice, but it will be reciprocated by her own death in the *Choephoroi*, which, as Orestes describes, is effected through tactics that mirror her own murder of Agamemnon:

αἰνῶ δὲ κρύπτειν τάσδε συνθήκας ἐμάς,
ὡς ἂν δόλω κτείναντες ἄνδρα τίμιον
δόλω γε καὶ ληφθῶσιν, ἐν ταύτῳ βρόχῳ
θανόντες, ἧ καὶ Λοξίας ἐφήμισεν
ἄναξ Ἀπόλλων, μάντις ἄψευδῆς τὸ πρίν. (*Cho.* 555-559)²⁴⁹

I recommend you conceal this agreement with me so that after killing an honored man *with a trick*, they may be taken *by a trick*, dying *in the same snare* as Loxias has prophesied, lord Apollo, the seer *unlying* heretofore.

This marriage of retributive violence with truth, falsehood, and deception dissolves in the *Eumenides* when the cycle of reciprocal vengeance comes to an end. The acquittal of Orestes cements the transformation of *dikē* from personal vengeance into legal justice²⁵⁰ and coincides with the gradual disappearance of truth and falsehood as affiliates of revenge; hence the relative infrequency of terms for truth and falsehood in the *Eumenides*. When truth *is* mentioned, it is in contexts of legal judgment where truth

²⁴⁹ Cf. Garvie 1986, ad 556-8 who notes the recurrence of the theme of “tit-for-tat vengeance” in the *Oresteia*.

²⁵⁰ Cf. Kitto 1961, 67-95. Many have noted, of course, that this resolution is not altogether satisfactory: Orestes' crime being lesser than Clytemnestra's should not automatically merit acquittal, nor does his acquittal provide closure for the deaths of guiltless innocents like Cassandra and Iphigeneia. Cf. Cohen 1986.

accompanies a system of justice based on equity rather than individual retaliation (cf. *Eum.* 487-488: κρίνασα δ' ἀστῶν τῶν ἐμῶν τὰ βέλτατα | ἦξω διαιρεῖν τοῦτο πράγμα' ἐτητύμως, “After choosing the best of my citizens, I will come to judge this affair correctly,” *Eum.* 795-796: οὐ γὰρ νενίκησθ', ἀλλ' ἰσόψηφος δίκη | ἐξῆλθ' ἀληθῶς οὐκ ἀτιμία σέθεν, “For you are not defeated, but justice by an equal number of votes resulted *in truth*, with no dishonor to you.”).

CONCLUSIONS

Aeschylus follows Homer's lead in depicting truth as a primarily verbal entity but adds further specificity by depicting truth in contexts of opposition to hopes, illusions, or dreams, which are sometimes more readily believable because they reflect desires. Yet paradoxically truth is itself an object of desire, one that is achieved primarily through communicative exchange between speakers, especially in messenger-reports. But prophecy and nonverbal signs are also ways to access truth, although neither carries with it the authority accorded to messenger reports; hence the contrasting vocabulary used to describe the two means to truth (ἔτυμος vs. ἀληθής). By showing that only messenger reports are readily believed, but that nonverbal or prophetic sources are equally accurate, Aeschylus implicitly criticizes a system of ascribing belief to some sources of truth while denying it to others, particularly when those sources are (erroneously) associated with female emotionality or gullibility. Finally, Aeschylean and Pindaric truth are natural *comparanda*, for both revolve around systems of reciprocity that pervade their respective genres. For Aeschylus this reciprocity is primarily manifested in violent acts of vengeance; the truth revealed to various characters is essentially knowledge of this vengeance. Falsehood and deception play a slightly different role in Aeschylus than in Pindar: while acts of deception destabilize relationships of *xenia* or marriage, just as in

Pindar, they also act to reinforce a different system of reciprocity by enabling the completion of individual acts of violence that perpetuate the larger cycle of retribution.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The primary aims of any interpretation of literature are to facilitate and deepen understanding. This project stemmed from a fascination with Pindar's unusual personification of *aletheia* in *Olympian* 10 and Fragment 205, which I consequently set out to satisfy. What grew from this was a realization that there was a much bigger topic to be studied here which extended beyond the bounds of the four surviving books of Pindaric odes. I have endeavored with this dissertation to point out the need for scholarly attention to truth and falsehood in Pindar and Aeschylus and to provide some of that attention here.

I devoted Chapter Two to an examination of various terms for truth and falsehood in Pindar and Aeschylus. The purpose of this examination was to supplement other word-studies whose focus had been on Homer and Hesiod. In the course of my examination I found various complexities in Pindar's and Aeschylus' ideas about truth and falsehood that differed or innovated from Homeric usage. Although distinctive in their respective variations from earlier poets, both Pindar and Aeschylus similarly expand on the conceptions of truth inherited from their poetic predecessors. In particular they each move beyond the idea of truth as a verbal communication that accurately reflects what happened. Aeschylus uses words for truth and falsehood to designate suitability, individual disposition, and statements about the past, present, or future. He notably enlarges the time dimension of truth so that it is no longer limited to statements about what has already happened. Pindar too manipulates terms for truth and falsehood,

making them more specific to the genre of epinician poetry by including truth as part of his relationship to the *laudandus* and describing falsehood as anathema to such a relationship.

Taking note of the broader ways in which Pindar and Aeschylus use terms for truth and falsehood allows for fuller comprehension of their respective poetic aims. When Pindar invokes the goddess of truth (*Ol.* 10.4, Fr. 205), he refers to accuracy both in his poetry and in his obligation to the *laudandus*. In Chapter Three I explored various contexts of truth and falsehood in Pindar's odes, examining direct references to the purpose of poetry as well as the mythical digressions that were not overtly about poetry, but could be understood as relevant to it because of the similar language used by Pindar to discuss both. The specific connection I saw between the two discourses was the model of *xenia*, which describes the relationship between poet and patron as well as various relationships between the characters of Pindar's myths. In some cases, specifically in *Olympian* 1 and *Nemean* 7, the narrative of the mythical digression blended into the narrative of the larger ode, thus lending weight to my premise that Pindar's myths could facilitate understanding of his conception of poetry. Pindar incorporates truth into the relationship with his patron, thus verging on a notion of truth that approaches sincerity without abandoning accuracy. He very explicitly puts forth praise as his purpose, yet he suggests that inaccurate praise is invalid and even takes measures to define truth in terms of the spirit of praise and obligation that pervades epinician poetry. Deception and lies are thus depicted as detrimental not only for their own atrocity but for their destabilizing effects on relationships of reciprocal obligation. My investigation in this chapter led me to the conclusion that truth and falsehood in Pindar could not be understood outside of his

relationship to the *laudandus*, which he constructs as one of reciprocal obligation governed by *aletheia*.

This conclusion in turn prompted me to hypothesize that ideas about truth and falsehood in poetry are inherently related to genre. Accordingly, I devoted Chapter Four to contexts of truth and falsehood in Aeschylus with the aim of discovering their relevance to the playwright's tragic objective. The various characters of Aeschylean tragedy desire to learn the truth even with full knowledge that it may be unwelcome. What I found was that truth and falsehood in tragedy, as in Pindar, were inherently communicative entities, but the tragic mode of discourse differed from the epinician lyricist's in that communication of truth involved the further step of acceptance or belief. Many characters claim to know the truth, but only some of them can communicate it free of doubt. Both truth and falsehood—and belief and doubt—served to further the plot of reciprocal vengeance that permeates Aeschylean drama, truth by emphasizing the inevitability of retaliation, falsehood and deception by ensuring its enactment. My earlier word-study allowed me to realize that when Aeschylus describes a prophecy as “true,” he makes reference not only to its fulfillment, but also to the predetermination or inevitability that surrounds prophecies related to plots of reciprocal violence.

Thus Aeschylus parallels Pindar on two counts: he incorporates truth and falsehood into the language of his genre, specifically by assimilating them to the cycles of reciprocal violence that pervade his plots, and he uses a model of reciprocity as a defining feature of his genre. This reciprocity obviously differs from epinician *xenia* in that it consists of retributive violence, which is a product of personal feelings of vengeance and cosmic inevitability rather than of friendly obligation. In short both poets assimilate truth and falsehood to the purposes of their respective genres: Pindar's

epinician poetry is meant to praise and to affect its audience's beliefs, while the goal of tragedy, if we are to believe Aristotle, is to effect the experience of pity and fear through the mimesis of an action (*Poet.* 1449b); in Aeschylus this action usually takes the form of violent reprisal. Both incorporate models of reciprocity, of systems in which no action goes unrewarded (or unpunished), and despite the many differences between Pindar and Aeschylus in terms of form and purpose, both incorporate truth and falsehood into these models. The dynamics of this reciprocity differ between the two poets, of course, and part of my purpose in this dissertation was to compare and contrast these dynamics.

Pindar as a lyric poet depicts a relationship of *xenia* through his voice alone, and what we see as the product of this relationship is what the poet produces for his share of the agreement; we must accept the conceit that the relationship between the poet and his patron is one of *xenia* or *philia*, even though we cannot see this relationship from the patron's point of view. The tragedian, by contrast, uses dialogue between actors and reactors to present both sides of a reciprocal relationship, a relationship in which he himself has no part.

In the medium of tragedy where truth is communicated between interlocutors, the issue of truth involves credibility, since mere knowledge of the truth does not ensure its believability once communicated. This receptive aspect of communication raises issues of the credibility surrounding truth in a way that Pindar's monophonic lyric does not. Thus falsehood in Pindar is rather straightforwardly depicted as deception, whether successful or not, in contrast to the complicated dynamics of credibility that surround communicative acts in Aeschylean tragedy. Issues of truth and falsehood in tragedy can further the onset of retributive action whether through establishment of credibility or denial of it.

My examination has also called attention to gender as a prominent issue to be considered in truth and falsehood studies. Pindar depicts several female characters as harmful to the stability of ritualized relationships of reciprocal obligation, since they often have traits of selfishness and seduction, which is a feminine form of deception. In this way he recalls a previous model of woman, dating to Hesiod's Pandora, wherein the female is associated with sexual allure and deception, but he assimilates this model to his own epinician genre by depicting such women specifically as harms to *xenia*, the defining relationship between himself and his patron. Aeschylus too refers to this type of woman, primarily by showing how some female characters have a hard time being believed. Unlike Pindar, however, he often implicitly criticizes the Pandora-type by putting true statements in the mouths of his female characters, who must overcome preconceptions of their deceptiveness.

Despite the abundance of scholarship on truth and falsehood, very little of it has paid substantial attention to Aeschylus and Pindar; this dissertation is meant as a first step toward addressing this need. Furthermore, I hope that my dissertation lays the groundwork for future considerations of Pindar and Aeschylus as comparably genre-driven poets. I have tried to show that truth and falsehood cannot be understood in a vacuum and are reflected in each poet as concepts that further their generic aims. The implications of this argument are twofold: neither Pindar nor Aeschylus can be adequately interpreted without full consciousness of their respective genres and how they define them; furthermore, examinations of generic purposes in Pindar and Aeschylus should take into account their treatments of truth and falsehood and how these concepts reinforce their aims. Future work on this topic might include a fuller consideration of truth in epinician poetry, which would involve discussion of Bacchylides, and an

expanded examination of truth and falsehood in the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, what their tragic aims are, and how their presentation and characterization of truth and falsehood serve to further those aims.

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