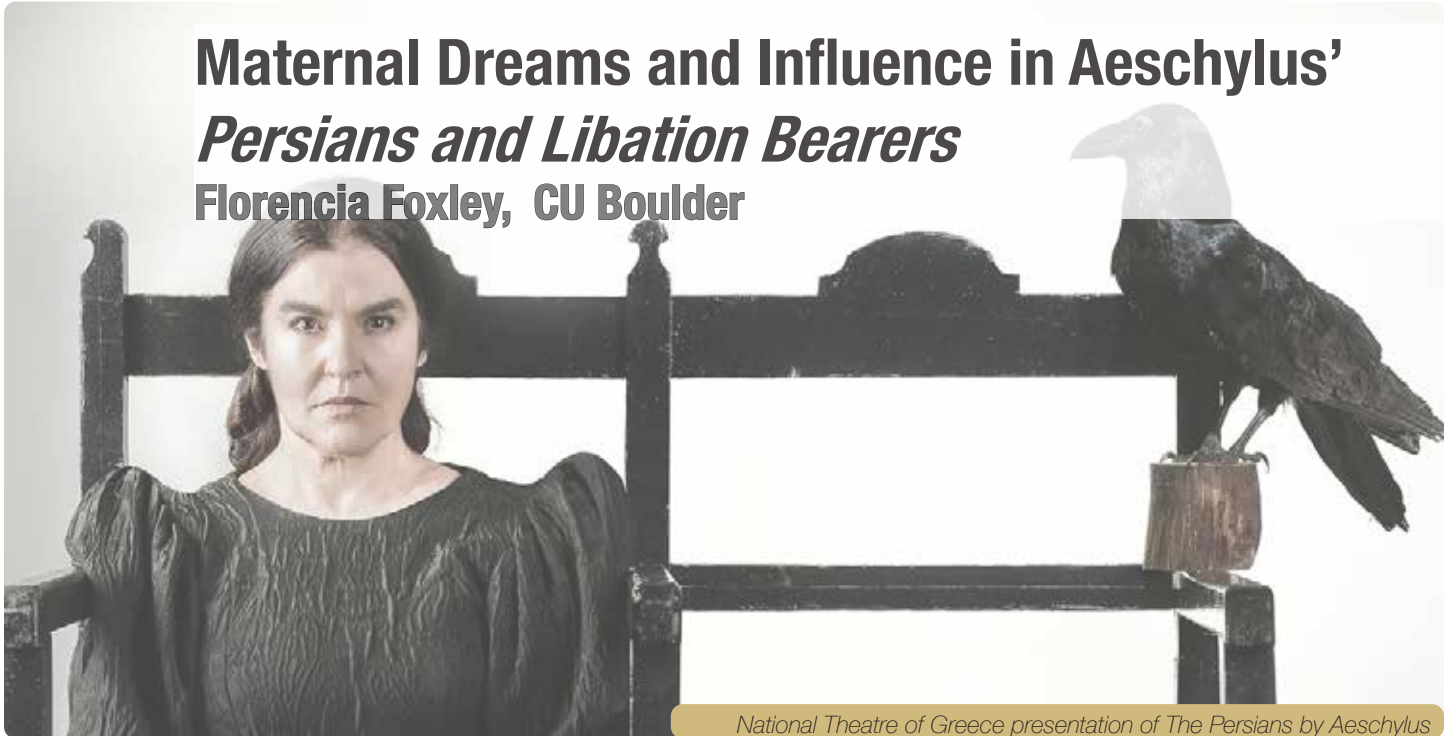


CU Boulder Department of Classics presents:

the 2020 Mary E.V. McClanahan Essay Prize Lecture

Maternal Dreams and Influence in Aeschylus' *Persians and Libation Bearers* Florencia Foxley, CU Boulder



National Theatre of Greece presentation of The Persians by Aeschylus

The power of maternity loomed large in the ancient Greek cultural imagination. Mothers and motherhood were essential to any city-state, yet deeply mistrusted by this misogynistic culture. Greek literature reflects both reverence and fear of maternity—awe at the intense attachment between mother and child and efforts to contain and channel that attachment in service to patriarchal structures. Gaia, Medea, Demeter, Alcestis, and Andromache; there are countless examples of mothers feared for the threat they pose or celebrated for their devotion to husband and home. My paper explores two Aeschylean examples of powerful and complex maternal bonds: Atossa and Xerxes and Clytemnestra and Orestes. In *Persians* and *Libation Bearers*, Aeschylus uses a mother's ominous dream of her son in order to draw attention to the close, and likely harmful, maternal bond. Both Atossa and Clytemnestra attempt to exert their influence over their sons through the gestures of nurture and clothing. Although Atossa is a positive example of motherhood, and Clytemnestra more threatening, nevertheless, I argue that the similarities between the two plays draw attention to the inherent damage that an overly influential mother poses to her growing son. Regardless of maternal intent, both sons must reject maternal influence at all costs in order to become autonomous adults.

Thursday, February 4th 2021 | 5:00 p.m. | Virtual Webinar

This lecture is free and will be hosted on Zoom

Sign up online to register: colorado.edu/classics/lecture_registration2

After you register, the link to the lecture will be sent to your email on February 3rd



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