

The Persians" by Aeschylus, Long Covid, and ChatGPT

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After establishing a special connection with Long Covid, a family doctor receives a patient and shares a unique moment.

During a morning consultation with a patient, a professor of ancient Greek in French-speaking Belgium, severely affected by Long Covid (LC) for the past two years with documented encephalitis, shares her feelings of being on the side of the vanquished, as portrayed in Aeschylus' play "The Persians" (which, admittedly, I am not familiar with). Throughout the consultation, we consulted ChatGPT¹ to gather its perspective on the matter.

Even though I never explicitly mentioned being a 'health professional and researcher,' ChatGPT inferred this concept from my previous numerous questions, providing me with a personalized and entirely relevant response. This exercise, conducted with the patient, allowed us to address the self-image typical of Long Covid patients who often feel abandoned and defeated. In this case, the patient expresses losing the 'philon' (the construction thread or sequential memory), retaining knowledge but struggling to organize it. Another patient, a statistician, faces difficulty multiplying, showcasing the characteristic loss of sequential memory in post-acute COVID syndrome. This loss impedes the construction of a reasoning system, leading to the need for daily aids such as shopping lists, post-it notes, and diaries—a shared characteristic among most LC patients who generally feel defeated by the virus and abandoned by healthcare professionals².

This example of utilizing ChatGPT illustrates that AI can extend beyond simple process reproduction³.

The dialogue with the machine that took place during the consultation with the patient is reproduced here, underscoring and reinforcing our discussions.

User:

¹ OpenAI. (2024). *ChatGPT* (3.5) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com>

² Jamouille, M., Kazeneza-Mugisha, G., & Zayane, A. (2022). Follow-Up of a Cohort of Patients with Post-Acute COVID-19 Syndrome in a Belgian Family Practice. *Viruses* 2022, 14, 2000.

³ Hanna, K. (2023). Exploring the applications of ChatGPT in family medicine education: five innovative ways for faculty integration. *PRiMER*, 7.

"the play 'The Persians' by Aeschylus."

ChatGPT:

"The Persians' by Aeschylus is an ancient Greek tragedy written in the 5th century B.C. It is the only surviving play by the playwright Aeschylus and is considered to be the oldest Greek tragedy in existence. The play deals with the defeat of the Persians at the Battle of Salamis in 480 BC during the Median Wars.

The plot of the play takes place after the battle when the Persian queen Atossa, the mother of Xerxes, visits the tomb of her late husband Darius. She seeks to understand the reasons for the defeat of the Persian army and seeks answers from the chorus, made up of elderly Persians.

'The Persians' is unique in its treatment of the theme, as it does not focus on the victorious Greeks but rather on the defeated Persians, offering an unusual perspective in ancient Greek tragedy. The play explores the notion of hubris (excess) and the consequences of human excess before the gods.

As a healthcare professional and researcher, your interest could perhaps lie in the medical or psychological aspect of the repercussions of war, which could be explored by analyzing the characters and their experience in Aeschylus 'The Persians.'

User:

"The author does indeed consider the point of view of the vanquished in the war."

ChatGPT:

"Indeed, Aeschylus, the author of 'The Persians,' takes a unique approach by focusing on the point of view of the vanquished in the war. Unlike many other Greek tragedies that celebrate the victory of the Greeks, 'The Persians' explores the perspective of the Persians after their defeat at the Battle of Salamis.

This approach profoundly reflects war's human, emotional, and social consequences on the losing side. Aeschylus gives voice to the suffering, loss, and soul-searching that follow a major military defeat. The play raises timeless questions about the nature of war, human error, and the psychological and emotional implications that follow.

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As a health professional and researcher, you may be interested in exploring the themes of mental health, trauma, and resilience in Persian characters, bringing a medical and psychological perspective to the analysis of this tragic work."