

Interpretation

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Volume 22 Number 2

- 157 Yuval Lurie The Cultural Predicament in Biblical Narrative
- 181 Paula Reiner Whip, Whipped, and Doctors: Homer's *Iliad* and Camus' *The Plague*
- 191 John C. Kohl, Jr. Design in the *Iliad* Based on the Long Repeated Passages
- 215 Judith A. Swanson The Political Philosophy of Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*
- 247 John C. McCarthy Pascal on Certainty and Utility

Discussion

- 271 Will Morrisey Strengthening Social Contract Theory: *Justice and Modern Moral Philosophy*, by Jeffrey Reiman

Book Reviews

- 283 Leslie G. Rubin *A Companion to Aristotle's "Politics,"* edited by David Keyt and Fred D. Miller, Jr.
- 285 Will Morrisey *The World of the Imagination: Sum and Substance*, by Eva T. H. Brann
- 289 Robert Sokolowski *Possibility, Necessity, and Existence: Abbagnano and His Predecessors*, by Nino Langiulli
- 295 Stephen M. Krason *The American Presidency: Origins and Development, 1776–1990*, by Sidney M. Milkis and Michael Nelson

Interpretation

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The Political Philosophy of Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*:

Justice as Seen by Prometheus, Zeus, and Io

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Although the view that Aeschylus is a retrograde religious playwright has largely been put to rest by arguments that he is a progressive philosophic poet, his contribution to the history of political philosophy has not been fully explored. One of the purposes of this article is to advance that exploration.¹

Arguments that Aeschylus is a poet of ideas generally contend that he is a rational humanist, optimistic about the power of reason to improve human life. Compared with Sophocles and Euripides he is, according to Walter Kaufmann, "the most optimistic" (p. 193), and Leon Golden calls Aeschylus "a priest of the cult of rationality" (p. 12). Like Plato's more critical "philosophical poetry," Aeschylus's philosophical poetry aims, therefore, not merely to entertain, but to educate. Contrary to Hugh Lloyd-Jones's view that Aeschylus's purpose is "not educative but dramatic," and beyond E. E. Sikes and J. B. Wynne Willson's opinion that Aeschylus was "a great religious teacher" in his time, Werner Jaeger, E. R. Dodds, Harold Cherniss, Leon Golden, and others, argue that Aeschylus's thought in particular and ancient Greek literature in general have universal, humanistic relevance. The discovery of "the essential humanistic significance, universal in application, of that literature," which should be the ultimate goal of scholars, is made possible by "an essential continuity of human experience from the Classical world to our own."²

Aeschylus's play *Prometheus Bound* is an example of literature from the Classical world that has humanistic significance because it raises universal human questions. By dramatizing the ancient Greek myth of Prometheus, about a god who is severely punished by the chief god for giving the human race the divine privileges of intelligence, fire, and the arts, *Prometheus Bound* questions the nature of the divine world and man's relation to it.³ The theological-anthropological setting of the play signifies its philosophical content, inasmuch as theology or metaphysics, inquiry into the nature of the divine, or of the ultimate cause, is the fullest extension of philosophy, inquiry into the nature of things and their causes.⁴ Testimony to the philosophic content of this theological-anthropological drama is its attraction for philosophers: Plato, Marx, and Nietzsche, for example, discuss it.⁵

While the philosophic content of *Prometheus Bound* has been well acknowledged and discussed, its political content, and particularly its philosophically political content, have not. The drama is not only or perhaps even primarily about man's relation to the divine, but about the relation of human beings to each other, or human community; one of the play's universal messages concerns the ethical requirements of government. The nature of divinity, or the justice of the gods, turns out to be only one of three kinds, or dimensions, of justice presented; the question of man's relation to the divine becomes, as the play develops, the question of the extent to which human beings should heed or incorporate that relation into their relations with each other.⁶ While the essentially political character of Aeschylus's poetry has been acknowledged since Aristotle, scholars have not explored the substance of that character as much as they have explored its other dimensions.⁷ In a survey of secondary literature on Aeschylus published during the years 1947–54, Alexander G. McKay concluded that although much work had been done that is anthropological, moral, religious, psychological, statistical, technical, historical, poetic, and of the "new criticism" genre, "there is still need for closer scrutiny of the plays with reference to choral behavior and political allegory." In a footnote to his 1952 article, "Aeschylus as a Political Thinker," Franz Stoessl writes: "A complete inquiry . . . not only into one or another political allusion in Aeschylus' plays, but into the way he puts political problems and tries to solve them in a general and philosophical manner, has, so far as I know, not yet been made" (p. 115 note 1). Another survey by McKay of Aeschylean scholarship published during 1955–64 does not even include, as does his previous 1947–54 survey, a section on the "political thought" of Aeschylus (p.79; Stoessl). With the increasing acceptance in the sixties of the view, launched in the forties and fifties, that Aeschylus is a rational humanist (see note 2), the last thirty years have produced considerable work on the political content of Aeschylus's work, though the effort has been spent less on *Prometheus Bound* than on the other, more overtly political, plays—the *Suppliants*, *Seven Against Thebes*, and especially on the *Oresteia*.⁸

Furthermore, most of the political interpretations of *Prometheus Bound* are historical rather or more than they are philosophical. Such political-historical interpretations hold that each character represents a political figure or party active during the age in which Aeschylus lived, and that their interrelations symbolize the political dynamics of that age. Presupposing that Aeschylus drew from his own immediate experience, such treatments argue, for example, that after spending time in Syracuse under Hiero's rule, he modeled Zeus after him, characterizing that ruling god as tyrannical. Accordingly, the character Oceanos who supports Zeus is understood to be a typical courtier of Hiero's, and Hermes, messenger of Zeus, a spy. Yet such interpretations also suggest that Aeschylus based his portrait of Zeus on the statesmen Pericles, Peisistratus, Hippias, and/or Xerxes; his portrait of Oceanos on Cimon the oligarch or Alex-

ander I; and Prometheus on Protagoras Another interpretation puts forth that Zeus represents Cimon the oligarch; Prometheus, Themistocles the democrat; and their struggle, the fifth-century B.C. political climate. Stasis amongst the gods in *Prometheus Bound* is thought to depict the Athenian revolution of 463–61 B.C., and so on. The results of efforts to match or connect art to historical reality are apt to be highly speculative, however. Furthermore, in the case of *Prometheus Bound*, those efforts are made more difficult, and the connections more speculative, by the uncertainty about its years of production and date of publication, to say nothing of the uncertainty about the play's authorship.⁹

The few political interpretations of *Prometheus Bound* that are philosophical fall into two categories, those that derive theoretical, universally valid inferences from possible connections between the drama and the historical political situation, and those that refrain from suggesting such connections virtually altogether and focus on the text to ascertain universal insights or a political philosophy.¹⁰ The method adopted here focuses on the text of *Prometheus Bound*, making reference to general historical developments only when the meaning of the text suggests such a connection, plausibly bolstering the textual interpretation.¹¹ Although this study shares the goal of trying to ascertain Aeschylus's philosophical or universal political views, it does not, as will be noted throughout, share all of the conclusions of existing political-philosophical interpretations. For example, some of them argue that the central political problem presented in *Prometheus Bound* is that between power and intelligence or knowledge, rather than between competing forms or dimensions of justice.¹²

The broad aim of this study of *Prometheus Bound*—to ascertain its “political philosophy”—is understood, then, to mean the discovery of the universally applicable ethical requirements of government it recommends.

INTERPRETATIONS OF PROMETHEUS, ZEUS, AND IO IN THE LITERATURE

In ascertaining the meaning of *Prometheus Bound*, scholars come to various conclusions about the significance of each of the personae. Their conclusions about the dominant persona, Prometheus, answer the three main questions to which his circumstances, enchainment to a boulder by Zeus, give rise: (1) To what extent is Prometheus guilty? (2) Of what, if anything, is he guilty? or, in other words, What sin, if any, does he represent? and (3) Does he ultimately prevail over, or submit to, Zeus, his punisher?

There are interpretations that argue that Prometheus is guilty, and those that argue that he is not guilty; scholars disagree about how Aeschylus judges, and wants his audience to judge, Prometheus. The most accepted view of Prometheus, which supports not only his innocence but his goodness and admirability, is put forth in its most developed form in Eric Havelock's *The*

Crucifixion of Intellectual Man. According to Havelock, and also to Jaeger and many others, Prometheus represents scientific intelligence and civilization. Aeschylus transforms the mythical figure of the Fire-Stealer and Fire-Giver “into the figure of the great inventor and teacher and thinker”; Prometheus the huntsman “is no thief or deceiver, but a searching intelligence.” Thus, although he demonstrated compassion in giving the arts to man, the suffering Prometheus himself deserves compassion. He is mankind’s intellectual hero: his struggle with Zeus represents the perpetual conflict between power and creative intelligence, between brute strength and genius. Jaeger believes that “In order to make Prometheus impart his enthusiasm to us as he does, the poet must have shared in these lofty aspirations [to progress and civilization] and himself admired the greatness of Prometheus’ genius.”¹³

In this view, the greatness of Prometheus’s intellect is inseparable from its intractability. Prometheus is at once the eternal victim and the hero because he does not succumb to Zeus. Some accounts confirm his triumph by arguing that the play foreshadows his liberation by Zeus. In any case, according to this view, Aeschylus presents Prometheus as the champion and giver of reason to whom mankind should be grateful.

But there are those, such as Sikes and Willson and P. A. Vander Waerdt, who argue that Aeschylus does not present Prometheus in a favorable way. Aeschylus shows that Prometheus is guilty of much: (1) of theft from the gods, (2) of pride, willfulness, or arrogance (*hybris*), and (3) of trying to make man immortal, all of which his rationality assists and encourages. The severe and indefinite, if not eternal, punishment he suffers is meant to suggest the consequences of radical impiety, the source of which is lack of moderation (*sophrosune*) or overconfidence in the power of intelligence or cleverness. Aeschylus is championing not science and civilization, but moral character and religious orthodoxy; the play promotes conservative rather than progressive ideals. In this, once conventional, now less popular, interpretation, if Prometheus prevails or is liberated, then it is because he sees the error of his ways and changes, and Zeus is merciful.¹⁴

A third, less common, interpretation, advanced by Gilbert Murray and Anthony C. Yu, for example, identifies Prometheus’s chief trait as neither intellectuality nor willfulness, but compassion or pity. Prometheus is the first philanthropist. He is the first real Friend of Man, not simply or mainly because he gave mankind the arts of survival and progress, but because he suffered for us; by both practicing compassion and eliciting it from human beings (the audience), Prometheus teaches compassion. Barbara Hughes Fowler points out that Prometheus’s greatest gift to mankind is not reason per se but the art of healing (see especially p. 174). Zeus, this third interpretation suggests, knows only how to wound, not heal; Prometheus’s inordinate suffering at the will of Zeus reveals the defect of divine justice. According to Yu, “no moral justification can be found for the treatment of Prometheus, because that punishment is a

payment of evil for good" (p. 34). Aeschylus, then, judges Zeus not Prometheus to be the immoral or guilty party and holds out the promise of the moral transformation of God through His own suffering.¹⁵

Although the text, as will be shown, indicates that Prometheus represents compassion or pity more than he does intellectuality or pride, and that his compassionate nature highlights the defect of Zeus's justice, Zeus's understanding of justice, in turn, as well as the character Io's understanding of justice, shows Prometheus's sensibility to be excessive. The chief immoderation characterizing Prometheus is not rationality or arrogance but, it will be shown, too much pity.¹⁶

If Prometheus has a character flaw, then Zeus's punishment of him may be justified. The question of Zeus's justness is complicated by the fact that he is not actually a character in the play; everything the audience learns about him is hearsay, and the portrait painted differs from his portraits in Aeschylus's other plays. *The Suppliant Maidens*, for example, presents Zeus as just, merciful, and the protector of mankind; the *Oresteia* presents him at once as "saviour" and a morally neutral "accomplisher"; but *Prometheus Bound* portrays him as tyrannical and an enemy to mankind.¹⁷

Scholars have offered three main theories to account for Aeschylus's differing portraits of Zeus. According to Lloyd-Jones (especially pp. 64–67), J. D. Denniston, and Denys Page (pp. xii–xvi) for example, Zeus simply exercises arbitrary power; he appears contradictory because, subject to no law or standards of justice, he may or may not uphold law or justice as he pleases. The existence and power of Zeus, unlike the existence and power of the Judaic-Christian God, do not ultimately benefit man. According to Sikes and Willson (especially pp. xxiv–xxvii), J. A. K. Thomson, and Eirik Vandvik, for example, Aeschylus's Zeus is stern but not arbitrary; modeled on the traditional, Hesiodic and Homeric, portraits of Zeus, Aeschylus's Zeus punishes the guilty and rewards the innocent. Zeus's will is thus immediately morally beneficial and also ultimately good for man, in that under it he will meet a higher destiny. A third, large camp of commentators, including O. J. Todd, Gilbert Murray (especially pp. 80–110), Havelock (pp. 89–109), Finley (pp. 220–33), Dodds (pp. 28–63), A. D. Fitton-Brown, and Yu (especially pp. 31–42) argue that Aeschylus depicts Zeus's evolution from tyrannical and arbitrary to merciful and just. Some argue that Zeus's evolution is evident in the Prometheus trilogy: *Prometheus Bound* foreshadows the moral transformation that motivates Zeus to release Prometheus in *The Unbinding of Prometheus*, a transformation that human beings celebrate in *Prometheus the Fire-Bearer*, although the theory is admittedly conjectural in that only fragments of the last two plays are extant.¹⁸

While the evidence may be on the side of the evolutionists, it also supports the second view, that Zeus's rule is not arbitrary. In other words, although *Prometheus Bound* may foreshadow a future moral transformation in Zeus, it does not present him as immoral and unfathomable, a wholly primitive god. If,

then, he changes later in the Prometheus trilogy or in Aeschylus's other works—a question this inquiry will not pursue—that change is not as radical as the evolutionists make it out to be.

Other interpretive difficulties arise over the character Io, the mortal woman who visits Prometheus. To what extent and in what ways is she important to the play? Few studies of *Prometheus Bound* maintain that Io is central to the play or a conveyer of Aeschylus's messages.¹⁹ *Prometheus* studies generally give some attention to Io, but nowhere near the attention they give to Zeus, who has no lines to analyze. Both works that figure Io centrally and those that do not present one or a combination of four main theories about her purpose in *Prometheus Bound*. The first is that her punishment by Zeus—she was exiled from her home for refusing to submit to Zeus's lust—further illustrates his tyranny and helps vindicate Prometheus. Second, her desire to know about her future from Prometheus provides the opportunity for him to show off his prophetic powers and knowledge, giving testimony to the view that he champions and represents the intellect. Since Prometheus predicts that a descendant of Io's will liberate him, a third theory argues that her dramatic function is to foreshadow events to come in the trilogy and her philosophic function, to reveal the righteousness of Prometheus. A fourth, less popular theory takes a psychoanalytic approach to the problem of Io, arguing, for example, that her relation to the father who was compelled to exile her is oedipal. All four of these theories focus on what has happened to Io and what will happen through her, not on who she is, in the present, in her encounter with Prometheus. Furthermore, all but the last theory maintain that Io's function is to enhance Prometheus. While all of these are plausible, they do not convey the substantive significance of Io. *None of the theories explaining the purpose of Io gives her philosophically political weight independent of Prometheus.* The main purpose of this essay is to show that Aeschylus in fact endows Io with as much philosophically political significance as he does Prometheus and Zeus.²⁰

In sum, my contention is that the text as it unfolds reveals that the chief trait of Prometheus is pity, that the rule of Zeus does represent a higher destiny for man, and that the figure of Io, together with the figures of Prometheus and Zeus, conveys a universal message about justice that Aeschylus wants his audience to heed. That message conjoins the perspectives of Prometheus, Zeus, and Io, which are shown to be deficient when taken alone.

THE OPENING SCENE

In the opening scene of *Prometheus Bound*, two servants of Zeus, Might and Violence, oversee Hephaestus, the god of fire and crafts, nailing Prometheus to a boulder.²¹ Might explains that Zeus has charged Hephaestus with the task of nailing Prometheus because he is the god from whom Prometheus stole a spark

to give to mankind. The comment does not explain Zeus's motive: Does Zeus assign Hephaestus the task because he wants to punish him, too, for failing to keep good guard over fire? Or to toughen Hephaestus? Or because Zeus believes that victims execute justice best, because most passionately? If Zeus anticipates or hopes that Hephaestus will execute the task with vengeance, then the silence of the servant Violence in this scene is justified; Hephaestus is supposed to express violence. At the same time, Zeus may have sent Violence to remind Hephaestus of the nature of his task, fearing that Hephaestus's brotherly love for Prometheus—they are both Titan or old-order gods—will undermine the passionate execution of the deed. Aeschylus does not here provide insight into the motivations or mind of Zeus. Perhaps he believes that the sovereignty of Zeus is not to be understood. In fact, the question of the extent of the god's knowability is a philosophical/theological "hook." Although, as Mark Griffith points out, Zeus in *Prometheus Bound* is "not an object of abstract theological discussion" (p. 251) he is, as R. P. Winnington-Ingram observes, "a mystery to be investigated . . . himself a problem to be solved" (pp. 183–84. Snell remarks that in Aeschylus, "man begins to ponder the mystery of the divine," p. 109).

The audience learns from Might that the purpose of Prometheus's punishment is rehabilitative: to teach him "to endure and like the sovereignty of Zeus and quit his man-loving disposition" (10–11). Raised now is the political/theological question of whether love of god necessitates indifference to man or this world. Furthermore, Aeschylus coins the word "*philanthropos*"—meaning "man-lover" or "human-lover"—to describe Prometheus, as if to identify a personality or ethical type in preparation for its critical examination. Immediately noteworthy is that Prometheus directs his "philanthropy" not toward his divine equals but toward radically inferior beings, suggesting that he is motivated by pity.²² The sight of Prometheus being nailed to a rock at the command of Zeus thus raises the question: If god does not condone the expression of pity toward mankind, should human beings? Equally, though, the audience is compelled to question the justice of Zeus; How just can god be if he punishes greater beings for helping lesser ones? If there is divine justice, it appears to be harsh and tough.

After Might speaks, Hephaestus observes that "the command of Zeus has its perfect fulfilment" in Might and Violence (12–13). The remark heightens the mystery of Zeus: Is force Zeus's objective, or the means that perfects, in the sense of realizes, his objective? To use Aristotelian terminology, Is force only the efficient cause, or the first cause and end, of divine rule? Hephaestus explains to Prometheus that he suffers because he did not fear the anger (*cholos*) of the gods (29). Might concurs that Prometheus is the god "whom the gods hate most of all" and reminds Hephaestus that Zeus can express that hate in any way he pleases because "only Zeus is free" (37, 50). Throughout the play, the personae, including Prometheus himself, repeat nine times that Prometheus is

the enemy of the gods (67–68, 119, 159, 864, 920–22, 973, 975, 978, 1042). The explanation for Prometheus’s punishment and the essence of Zeus’s rule thus seems to be passion.

On the other hand, the opening scene provides other clues to the essence or objective of divine rule. Speaking in disbelief to Prometheus, Hephaestus says, “you, a god, . . . gave honors to mortals beyond what was just [*pera dikes*]” (29–30). The otherwise mindless Might grasps and defends the principle by which his master governs and he himself benefits. Responding to Hephaestus’s pitying remark about Prometheus, “You see a sight that hurts the eye,” Might retorts, “I see this rascal getting his deserts [*ton epaxion*]” (69–70). Zeus evidently rules according to the principle of desert. Judging human beings unworthy of divine privileges, he is punishing Prometheus for giving them to man. (Might’s acute jealousy of divine privileges, expressed in his anger toward Prometheus and toward Hephaestus for pitying Prometheus, may be due to his awareness that only his immortality separates him from mankind [36–38, 82–87]. Lest Hephaestus question his worthiness, the insecure Might, before exiting, points out that Prometheus’s alleged forethought [the meaning of his name] cannot extricate him from his predicament. Might is worth something.)

What Zeus appears to be passionate about and to use force to effect, then, is the principle of desert. Like Hesiod’s and Homer’s Zeus, the Zeus Aeschylus presents is angry and harsh, and in these respects primitive and anthropomorphic, but his rule is not arbitrary. Nor, therefore, is it mysterious, at least not entirely. The principle of desert is comprehensible. Contrary to Irwin, the Zeus of Prometheus is not like the God of Job. (I suggest later that Zeus’s justice might be partially obscure to man.) Possibly, as Benjamin Farrington speculates, “[Aeschylus’s] purpose in the *Prometheia* . . . was to offer to the Athenian public a conception of Zeus that would not be incompatible with the Ionian enlightenment” (p. 70). Anthony J. Podlecki observes that Aeschylus thereby prepared the way for a new, democratic synthesis between science and religion (*Political Background*, p. 114). More to the point, perhaps, Aeschylus may want to suggest that the intelligibility of divine justice indicates its relevance or salutariness to political rule. In sum, as Dodds explains, Aeschylus’s purpose is to lead his contemporaries out of the dark and oppressive religious climate “not like Euripides by casting doubt on its reality through intellectual and moral argument, but by showing it to be capable of a higher interpretation . . . transformed . . . into the new world of rational justice” (p. 40. See also Jaeger, *Paideia*, pp. 338–39 on the historical moral and intellectual climate.).

Prometheus’s implicit prediction or trust that human beings will prove themselves worthy of divine gifts, and thus friends of the gods, contrasts with the skepticism of Zeus, who cares more for justice than for friendship (cf. 226–27). Aeschylus, like Plato but in contrast to the author of the Gospel of Matthew, makes clear that the human race should not hold out hope for friendship with god.²³ Zeus’s passions are not soft but hardened by their alliance with an unbending mind that enables him to resist appeals and thus to rule according to

the principle of desert, without mercy and compromise. As Hephaestus informs Prometheus while shackling him: "Many a groan and many a lamentation you shall utter, but they shall not serve you. For the mind (*phrenes*) of Zeus is hard to soften with prayer and every ruler is harsh whose rule is new" (33–35, cf. 160–68).²⁴ This is the first speculation that Zeus might mellow or "evolve" with time.

After this hint or hope that divine rule might mellow, Aeschylus poses the perennial dilemma, familiar to the Greeks through myths, between loyalty to kin, and loyalty to the gods and state. Hephaestus claims that kinship and familiarity with Prometheus hold him back from the job at hand (39). Yet Hephaestus's dilemma appears to be more complicated; he seems to feel loyalty to Prometheus less because of their "blood" ties—their divine Titan kinship—than because of their "philosophical" ties—their shared view that justice must be rooted in compassion (see also Hogan, p. 277). When Might asks Hephaestus, "Why are you pitying in vain?" Hephaestus responds, "You are always pitiless, always full of ruthlessness" (36, 42). Later Hephaestus alludes to his shared philosophy with Prometheus: "No one, save Prometheus, can justly [*endikos*] blame me," that is, only Prometheus can justifiably judge him a hypocrite (63). When Hephaestus declares to Prometheus that he groans for his sufferings, Might barks, "Are you pitying again? Are you groaning for the enemies of Zeus? Have a care, lest some day you may be pitying yourself" (66–68). Through Hephaestus, then, Aeschylus may hold out the hope or promise that Zeus will mellow by incorporating pity in his rule, lessening the conflict between loyalty to kin, and loyalty to gods and the state.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE CHORUS

Appearing shortly after Hephaestus and Might leave is the chorus of ocean nymphs, the Oceanids, who, upon seeing Prometheus, announce themselves as friends and feel both frightened and sad (126–29, 144–48). Expressing conflict between loyalty to Zeus and pity for Prometheus, their speech weaves lamentation with chastisement. Although they go on to scold Prometheus, as if Zeus were in the right, they note Zeus's nature and rule, as if to acknowledge his shortcomings. The new customs (*neochmois nomois*) by which Zeus rules are not yet established (*athetos*), and Zeus is the only one, the Oceanids claim, who feels no sorrow over Prometheus's pain; he "malignantly always cherishes" his unbending mind (*nous*), which is passionately determined to rule (149–50, 159–66).²⁵

The Oceanids first scold Prometheus after he claims that someday Zeus will need him, to foretell the events that conspire to depose Zeus (168–88). Prometheus almost declares here that justice is the reciprocal or equal fulfillment of needs: he will not tell Zeus what is fated until Zeus fulfills his needs by freeing him and compensating him for his suffering. The Oceanids are shocked

by Prometheus's challenge to divine authority. He acknowledges that Zeus has a firm will but assures them that he will soften it, apparently, as he said earlier, by suggesting Zeus's vulnerability: "hastily he'll come to meet my haste, to join in amity and union with me—one day he shall come" (189–95). Prometheus seems convinced that confrontation with one's own possible neediness compels one to see the true nature of justice.

After asking Prometheus to tell, and hearing, his side of the story, the Oceanids again express sympathy with his suffering, and he acknowledges their friendship (196–248). Although the chorus asks only for the story behind his predicament, Prometheus prefaces it with the history of his relationship with Zeus, explaining that, when the Olympians challenged the Titans, Prometheus joined Zeus's side after trying to no avail to persuade the Titans to use guile rather than force, because his mother had prophesied that guile would win. Prometheus even goes so far as to point out the ingratitude of Zeus: "These were the services I rendered to this tyrant and these pains the payment he has given me in requital." He then relates Zeus's intention to destroy mankind and his apportioning powers only to the gods. Won over, at least momentarily, the Oceanids express their pity. "Yes," Prometheus sighs, "to my friends the sight is pitiable." Pity thus seems to be the defining sentiment of both justice and friendship, according to Prometheus.

Indeed, much as friends give each other consolation or hope, Prometheus sowed "blind hopes" in human beings. Blinding man to the nature of death is the ultimate expression of pity. Calling the gift of hope a "great help" to man, the Oceanids may, like Prometheus, regard such extreme pity as a part or extension of justice. If they do, then they recognize that a notion of justice based on pity is at odds with divine justice, for, after hearing Prometheus declare that he pitied human beings more than himself, they ask, "Did you not perhaps transgress even somewhat beyond this offense?" to which Prometheus says, yes, he gave hope to man (240–53). In other words, he gave as the Greek audience would have known from myth, the only thing left in Pandora's jar after all the evils had escaped into the world (noted, with reference to Hesiod's *Works and Days* 96, by Rose, p. 262, and by Hogan, p. 284). The giving of hope to man suggests that Prometheus does not have complete confidence in the power of intelligence to solve man's woes, and that his pity for man overrides that confidence.

Yet Prometheus does not subsequently, as Michael Gagarin (p. 134) and Richmond Lattimore (p. 53) argue, admit the failure of his own intelligence when he stole in order to help mankind. Nor does the chorus, as H. J. Rose argues (p. 263), refrain from passing moral judgment and only tell Prometheus that he was imprudent. Aeschylus poses in the next lines, through the exchange between Prometheus and the chorus, not only the moral conflict between divine justice and the (Promethean) wish for human progress, but the question of whether it is intelligent to regard divine justice as opposed to human progress or well-being.

Pursuing the theme of the extent of Prometheus's transgression, the chorus

tells him in effect that, since he pitied human beings so far as to give them hope, he himself has no hope of being relieved by Zeus from his suffering: "What hope is there? Do you not see / that you were wrong [*hamartia*]?" (259–60). The chorus also denounces Prometheus later, when it is once again alone with him after Oceanos leaves, perhaps exhibiting its own justice or pity in chastising Prometheus when no one else is around. At the same time, the Oceanids' seeming self-righteousness raises doubts that they are in the moral right, making the reader undecided about Prometheus and eager to hear his response to the accusation of wrongdoing.

He replies: "I knew when I transgressed [*hamartia*] nor will deny it. / In helping man I brought my troubles on me" (266–67). As Rose points out, Prometheus scornfully or sarcastically quotes the chorus's language, as if to say "I 'erred' with open eyes" (p. 263). In other words, Prometheus believes that his actions were morally right; he "erred" or "acted mistakenly" only from the perspective of divine authority. As Sikes and Willson note, "Prometheus is far from confessing himself in the wrong." He "admits having transgressed the laws of conventional orthodoxy," which he believes are unjust (p. 84). The conceptual and linguistic distinction between law (*nomos*) and justice (*dike*) that the ancient Greeks made allows Prometheus to believe that he is morally right and thus to admit his transgression. In the fifth century B.C., *nomos* meant either positive manmade law, or divine or religious law (see Ostwald, *Sovereignty*, pp. 84–136, especially pp. 87, 91, 110, 133). Prometheus can thus raise the question of the justness of divine law. Both before and after this scene Prometheus indicates his belief that malice, not justice, motivates Zeus, when he calls Zeus's bondage of him spiteful or shameful (*aeike*) (97, 525). In the scene under consideration, Prometheus complains, just after admitting his transgression, about the severity of his punishment: "but yet I did not think that with such tortures / I should be wasted on these airy cliffs," which accords with his belief that malice motivates Zeus (268–70). If Prometheus did not correctly anticipate the costs of his actions, then might he also not misperceive the nature of Zeus? Far from portraying Prometheus as a master of forethought or intellect, Aeschylus raises doubts about his judgment.

In sum, Aeschylus makes his audience witness an exchange in which each party believes it has right on its side, indicating that both cannot be right, and suggesting that neither is in the right. The chorus and Prometheus may both be wrong because, in taking sides—the one with, the other against divine order—they believe that divine and human order are two opposed sides. Zeus's rule may not be contrary to justice and the interests of human beings.

THE VISITOR OCEANOS AND THE CHORUS

The next scene, between Prometheus and Oceanos, moves the philosophical content of the play in the direction of theological conservatism. Oceanos, both father of the Oceanids and, according to Greek myth but not reported by Aes-

chylus, grandfather of Prometheus, appears, like members of older generations, to be more conservative than his grandson and even his Zeus-fearing daughters. Unlike his daughters, he is not torn between his love for Prometheus and his respect for Zeus. He does not see a conflict between his devotion to Prometheus and his obedience to divine authority, apparently because he sees Prometheus less as an individual who is challenging divine authority with a new philosophy of justice than as a descendant and thus part of the divine world. Loyalty to Prometheus is as much loyalty to divine authority as is loyalty to Zeus. Oceanos is a “family man,” who has apparently come to terms with the recent integration of his family line. He advises Prometheus to recognize the new order and himself as a part of it: “Know yourself and reform your ways to new ways” (309–10).

Oceanos even offers to appeal to Zeus to free Prometheus. Rejecting this counsel and offer of help, evidently because Oceanos respects Zeus’s authority, Prometheus snaps, “Now let me be, and have no care for me.” Prometheus, the caregiver, wants no false care, no care that does not include sympathy for his beliefs. In other words, he does not want to be loved as a Titan or grandson, out of familial obligation, but for his convictions. This younger-generation Titan believes that his grandfather does not care what he thinks, and so does not care about justice. At the same time, he cannot, even in his anger, keep himself from caring and says, “take care lest coming here to me should hurt you” (332–36).

Apparently softened by Oceanos’ repeating his offer to go to Zeus, Prometheus thanks him for his loyalty and answers that, for Oceanos’ own good, he should not get involved in the conflict between him and Zeus (337–98). Advertising his compassionate nature, and his belief in his own innocence, Prometheus says that he would be bogged down in pity and heartache if Oceanos became “unlucky” too. Although Oceanos says that he is undeterred by the prospect of risk, he gives up trying to persuade Prometheus to let him ask Zeus for mercy when Prometheus assures him that that would only make Zeus angry at Oceanos. Oceanos is perhaps then induced to leave by what induced him to come, namely, respect for “him that now sits on the throne of power,” for divine justice (299).

Following Oceanos’ departure is the second of three private exchanges between the chorus and Prometheus. Although the chorus’s first strophe repeats the earlier observation that Zeus rules with his own, new laws (*idiois nomois*), it does not, as David Grene’s translation states, call Zeus a “tyrant” (403–6, cf. 149–50). The Oceanids, not using any form of the word “tyrannical,” seem careful not to impugn Zeus’s justice but rather lament the consequences of Prometheus’s violation of it. As Everard Flintoff comments, “at no point do they even vaguely suggest that there is anything illegal, or even unjust, about Zeus’ possession of or exploitation of power. If anything, the reverse. To them Zeus is all-powerful and deserves respect just because of this. . . . At no point do they ever use the words *turannos* or *turannis*.”²⁶

In the remaining five stanzas before Prometheus responds, the chorus assures him that the whole world—the people of Asia, Colchis, Scythia, Arabia, and even the sea, rivers, and Hades—laments his suffering and the honor lost to man. Perhaps Aeschylus omits the Greeks from the list because he hopes through *Prometheus Bound* to encourage them to deliberate, independently of the world, the ethics of pitying an excessive pitier, especially an excessive self-pitier (Hogan notes the absence of Greeks from the list, p. 288).

Indeed, Prometheus's next speech, as if to exploit the pity of the whole world, begins with an expression of self-pity—"my heart is eaten away to see myself insulted as I am"—and subsequently details the extent of his "goodwill" to man (436–71). Recounting that he found men "mindless and gave them minds," he makes a point of explaining that he is not telling this to reproach man, "but to set forth the goodwill of [his] gifts." Apparently, the depth of his goodwill is a function of the extent to which mankind was undeserving of his gifts. In other words, Prometheus seems inadvertently to expose the belief that gifts or privileges should go to the deserving. The fact of man's utter witlessness goes to show just how generous he was.²⁷ This implicit recognition of the principle of desert provides some grounds for a reconciliation between Prometheus and Zeus.

In addition to minds, Prometheus also gave human beings fire, both of which enabled them to invent things and arts endlessly—numbers and words, carriages and boats, agriculture, carpentry, mining, medicine, and prophesying. Thus, he boasts: "In one short sentence understand it all: every art of mankind comes from Prometheus" (254–56, 439–506). By distributing the arts to men, who lived primitively, in poverty, Prometheus gave them the resources or means to help themselves. Apparently, in his view, a just god perceives and attends to neediness, as if justice is the fulfillment of needs or the equalization of means.

Unselfish Prometheus gave human beings gifts because they were needy, but why give the needy gifts? What, in other words, is the premise of justice defined as the fulfillment of needs? The premise of, or rationale for, such justice is, apparently, compassion or pity. Prometheus explained his actions earlier: "I gave to mortal man a precedence over myself in pity [*oiktoi*]" (241). To give privileges out of pity under Zeus is daring; according to Zeus's rules of desert, mankind, who "dragged through their long lives and muddled all, haphazardly," would have had to be destroyed (448–50). Prometheus's pity for human beings extends so far that he gave them not only self-sufficiency but hope itself, preventing them from foreseeing death or Hades (250–52). If Prometheus esteems intelligence or forethought above all, then why did he circumscribe man's forethought and allow himself to be motivated by pity? According to Havelock, Prometheus was not motivated by sentiment but by science. Aeschylus's point is to dramatize that philanthropy is the product of forethought. Science compels the expansion of altruism beyond the boundaries of Christian charity, to the public realm. Prometheus is a proponent not of sentimental or

intuitional philanthropy, but of utilitarian ethics. While this explanation accords with Greek ethics, it does not explain Prometheus's self-pity. Furthermore, if, as Havelock contends, Prometheus gave hope to man to raise him to the level of the gods, then Prometheus the alleged scientist gave man a nonrational motive for rationality (pp. 53–54, 90–94).

Zeus may be angry at Prometheus less for privileging the undeserving than for privileging them with mind or the power of reason. For mind enables the perception of regularity, such as that of the days, seasons, number, and language, and with such perception comes the ability to anticipate, order, and plan. Moreover, as Martha C. Nussbaum points out, the ability to measure is the foundation of ethics: "what is measurable or commensurable is graspable, knowable, in order, good . . . insofar as there is numbering and measuring in practice, there is precise control; where numbering fails there is vagueness of grasp, therefore guesswork."²⁸ With reason, then, mankind can govern itself, effectively usurping Zeus.

Furthermore, because reason gives choices, men can choose to govern themselves in a way antithetical to divine justice. The perception of number yields the perception not only, for example, of proportionality but also of equality; men can therefore choose to order themselves not according to their differences but according to their similarities—they can distribute power democratically. No wonder Zeus is angry. He entrusted Prometheus with Mind and Prometheus gave it to a fledgling race without experience in self-government, a race that could not know the essentiality of hierarchy to order. Lloyd-Jones is correct to note that "the fifth-century Zeus was not a democratic god, who could never, for fear of losing his job, do anything not in the best interests of the human race" (p. 65). Nonetheless, while Zeus does not care about man, the principle of justice about which he does passionately care yields order and can thus serve man if he makes it the basis of political order.

Zeus may be angry as well because mankind now has not only the ability to resist the dictates of divine justice, but the confidence to ignore the gods altogether. If men become self-sufficient, they will stop worshipping the gods and become possessive of their self-sufficiency. The paradox of acts of unselfishness such as Prometheus's is that they presuppose or require, and thus encourage, selfishness. Givers need takers.

During Prometheus's long speech about the benefits he gave man, the chorus interjects that he is "like a bad doctor" who has not yet discovered the drugs to cure his own disease (472–75). The disease of Prometheus is self-sacrifice (507–8). His act of self-sacrifice committed injustice not only against himself, however, but also against human beings. After all, he knowingly gave us "hot goods." By putting into our possession goods stolen from the gods, Prometheus put us in a morally uncomfortable position toward the gods. Contrary to Havelock's characterization, Prometheus is not "a Greek Adam"; he

knew that he was stealing precious goods—he himself was endowed with the intelligence he was giving away (p. 52). As Nietzsche observes, the Semitic idea of sin is passive, the Aryan, active.²⁹ If guiltier than Adam, then he deserves a more severe punishment, not death but eternal pain. Furthermore, Adam was not acting altruistically. Aeschylus appears to anticipate the Socratic understanding of justice as minding one's own business, which is predicated on the argument that selflessness and total devotion to others causes more harm than good.

After counseling Prometheus to think of himself, the chorus expresses the hope that he “will be no less strong than Zeus” after his release (510–11). Torn as always between Zeus and Prometheus, the chorus—representing, as traditional scholarship argues, the Athenian point of view—perhaps wants compassion to play as much a role in matters of justice as does desert. Aeschylus thus raises the problem of how political order can give equal weight to compassion and desert, making the audience anticipate a resolution later in the play.

Seemingly offended by the chorus's hope that Zeus will retain power, Prometheus reminds them that Zeus is weaker than Fate and indicates that he knows Zeus's fate (511–25). As if in response to Prometheus's arrogance, the chorus now highly praises Zeus and criticizes Prometheus: “I shiver when I see you / wasted with ten thousand pains, / all because you did not tremble / at the name of Zeus: your mind / was yours, not his, and at its bidding / you regarded mortal men / too high, Prometheus” (539–43). This is not the last of the chorus's chastisement. Aeschylus makes certain that his audience questions Promethean justice and considers the wisdom of obeying divine justice. If, as Griffith claims, “every Athenian in the audience was familiar with Prometheus as a cult-figure and as the patron of the torch festival” and “they hardly needed to be told that he had regained his position of respect among the gods,” then they might need their enthusiasm of Prometheus tempered (p. 249). A purpose of *Prometheus Bound* may be to induce critical reflection about a cult figure and the policy that opened wide Athens' doors to needy foreigners.

Closing Prometheus's second private exchange with the chorus, Aeschylus also gives a clear justification for Zeus's anger toward Prometheus: human beings are too short-lived and feeble to be able to repay divine favors, even if they were inclined to do so. The chorus thus seems to assume that reciprocity or a measure of self-interest is built into divine justice. Proof of the human inability to repay divine favors is the failure of human beings to come to the aid of Prometheus: “Kindness that cannot be requited, tell me, / where is the help in that, my friend? What succor / in creatures of a day?” The chorus also notes Prometheus's failure to perceive the nature of human beings, raising further doubts about his judgment: “You did not see / the feebleness that draws its breath in gasps, / a dreamlike feebleness by which the race / of man is held in bondage, a blind prisoner?” (544–50). Perhaps Prometheus's judgment as to what is just and unjust, then, should not be accepted uncritically.

THE VISITOR IO AND THE CHORUS

The character Io, Prometheus's third visitor, asks the most questions of the seven speaking characters in the play: Hephaestus asks none; Hermes (the last visitor) asks two; Oceanos, four; Kratos, eight; Prometheus, seventeen; the chorus, eighteen; and Io, *twenty-five*. Furthermore, Prometheus and the chorus speak in all eight scenes and have far more lines than Io, who speaks in only one scene, meaning that she is much more likely than they, when she does speak, to ask a question. At one point, she fires ten in a row at Prometheus, who answers each in one sentence before she asks the next (757–74). Io's relative inquisitiveness is even greater than these numbers indicate, inasmuch as the questions of the other characters tend to be rhetorical more often than hers, and she also requests information or explanations in the imperative, often saying "tell me," for example (583, 607, 608, 618, 622, 625). Io, then, is a relentless seeker of information. Her words and actions, more obviously than Prometheus's, contrary to the usual interpretations, champion enlightenment.

As if to impress Io's nature immediately on the audience, Aeschylus makes her enter the scene with a barrage of questions, beginning with: "What land is this? what race of men? who is it / I see here tortured in this rocky bondage?" (560–62). Before Prometheus can answer, she makes nine requests for information and explanations. She wants to know not only her whereabouts and Prometheus's identity, but why she is being chased all over the earth by a stinging gadfly. She assumes that she has done something to offend Zeus: evidently understanding that desert is central to divine justice, she asks, "Son of Kronos, what fault, what fault / did you find in me that you should yoke me / to a harness of misery like this, / that you should torture me so to madness / driven in fear of the gadfly?" Her lack of knowledge of her sin is more unbearable to her than are physical tortures; she begs the "King" to grant her prayer for answers (577–84). Perhaps trying to rival the god to whom Io is appealing, Prometheus lets her know that he knows who she is: the (mortal) daughter of Inachus, lusted after by Zeus and driven over the earth by the hatred of Zeus's wife, Hera. Io's curiosity, at any rate, aroused, she fires more questions, but this time at Prometheus: Who is he? What does she still have to suffer? Prometheus, characteristically, obliges, explaining that he is Prometheus who gave fire to men and will tell her all she wants to know, "as it is just to open lips to friends" (589–612). Prometheus is clearly among those, identified by Aristotle, who quickly treat others as friends, despite the fact that friendship takes time (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1156b24–32). He is at any rate betraying his "philanthropy"—his propensity to treat mortals as friends. Furthermore, he clearly subscribes to complete openness among friends, indicating another dimension of his liberality.

Io next asks Prometheus why he is being punished (613–14). After Prometheus says that his being nailed to the cliff was Zeus's plan, she repeats her

question, this time more precisely: “What was the *offense* for which this is punishment?” Even if Io infers that Zeus must have considered men undeserving of fire and Prometheus undeserving of the authority he assumed in giving it to them, she evidently does not think that Zeus’s justice gives sufficient reason for punishing Prometheus’s benevolent deed. If incredulous that Prometheus is being punished for helping man, then she too may believe that justice consists of taking pity on the needy and fulfilling their needs. She is, in her ignorance of her sin, after all more needy than Prometheus and seeks his pity in soliciting his knowledge of her fate. She regards his granting of her request not as a matter of justice or right, however, but as a favor or gift (*dorea*) (616). Moreover, when Prometheus says, as if having second thoughts about agreeing to tell her all she wished to know, that it would be better for her not to know the extent of her future suffering, Io insists: “Do not hide from me what it is fated I should suffer” (624–25). He says that he is not unwilling to grant her favor, but fears breaking her mind (*phrenes*).³⁰ Apparently *not* sharing his view that the unfortunate should be pitied even to the extent of keeping them ignorant of the gravity of their condition, she instructs: “Do not care for me more than I would have you” (626–29). Io, then, unlike the Oceanids and Oceanos, seems not to be a partisan of either Zeusean, desert-based, or Promethean, pity-based justice. She thought Prometheus blessed mankind when he gave them fire apparently not so much because he fulfilled a need of theirs, or provided charity, but because he gave them a gift of illumination.

In response to the chorus’s request to let Io explain what led to her present “sickness,” before Prometheus tells about her future, Prometheus concurs, but tells Io that “To sorrow and make wail for [her] ill fortune” in order to “win a tear from those who listen, / is well worthwhile.” If he does not believe that Zeus listens to self-pity, then perhaps he hopes that pity won from the chorus (and the audience) will comfort Io when he tells her her difficult fate. Seemingly owning up to her own standard of accountability, Io responds: “I know not how I should distrust you: clearly you shall hear all you want to know from me” (631–42).

Responsive to Prometheus’s urging, Io includes in her story appeals for pity. She notes, for example, that she is bitter about the ruin of her beauty (642–44). The comment evokes, at the same time, a distinction between her appearance and her being; Aeschylus indicates, in effect, that Io has a soul.³¹ Furthermore, her lack of beauty—the audience sees a cow-faced figure—concentrates attention on her speech. Io is a woman of substance whose speech is important, even if she laces it with Promethean-style self-pity.

She explains that at home in her “maiden chamber” she was haunted nightly by a voice telling her that Zeus was stricken with lust for her and that she should appear in a meadow and not disdain him. After telling her father about her dreams he, “seeking to discover what deed or word of his might please the God,” as Io later seeks illumination, sent embassies to Pytho and Dodona.

After hearing many riddling oracles, Inachus finally understood and reluctantly obeyed threatening orders to cast Io out of his home (645–83). Aeschylus thereby compels us, the audience, to see Io as an individual, who must take responsibility for herself.³²

Perhaps Io's forced autonomy explains her insistent questions, directed first at Zeus and then at Prometheus: in order to take responsibility for herself, she needs enlightenment and information about her past, present, and future, to make sense of her situation and avoid repeating her mistake. Although she might surmise that Zeus had grounds to punish her by exile because, as king of the gods, he deserves whatever he wants, she cannot surmise from what she has been told why she now looks like a cow and has a gadfly pursuing her. She may seek an account of Prometheus's suffering to gain insight into her own. Wandering and alone now, unable to depend on her father, enlightenment is more precious to her than ever: "If you can tell me what remains for me, tell me, and do not out of pity cozen with kindly lies: there is no sickness worse for me than words that to be kind must lie" (683–86). Later she pleads: "Do not offer me the gift and then withhold it" (775–77). She wants the honest truth, not paternalistic, pity-filled lies from Prometheus.

By having Io refer to herself as a virgin (588, 608, 646, 648), Aeschylus signals the incompleteness of her perspective. Her virginity is both source and symbol of her naivete. If she felt herself, or knew through experience, the power of sexual desire (as did Helen) and of jealousy (as did Clytemnestra), then she would not insist on an explanation of her punishment by Zeus, and might figure out the cause of the ruin of her beauty. According to Jacquelin Duchemin, Io's "total and perfect innocence"—her unblemished character and her having provoked nothing—makes Zeus's and Hera's treatment of her seem all the more odious (p. 6, my translation). But to refuse to satisfy lust, and particularly the lust of a god, is a provocation, as is beauty, especially in the eyes of a wife (see also Havelock, pp.45–46: The provocation has been given by the dangerous attraction of her sex"). Io's naivete is almost unbelievable. In sum, by asking for a rational explanation of her situation, Io reveals her ignorance of the nonrational and thus the incompleteness of her perspective.

When the chorus expresses disbelief of, and sympathy for, the extent of Io's suffering, Prometheus says, "Wait till you hear what remains," as if all pain should be disclosed (687–97). If justice is the fulfillment of needs or the cessation of pain, then needs, or pain, must be made known, and apparently regardless of how much further pain the disclosure itself causes. That Io herself pressed to hear about her remaining pain may suggest the extent of her commitment to accountability and of her self-knowledge. What if she learns that she is sentenced to wander aimlessly for life? Without knowledge of her future she at least has hope. Her preference for enlightenment over hope suggests what her judgment of Prometheus's gift of hope to man might be: such an expression of pity deprived human beings of complete self-responsibility. To blind human

beings with hope was an act of paternalistic pity that diminished Prometheus's gift of intelligence and preempted his playing the role of the champion of enlightenment. Thus, Aeschylus gives the role to the far-traveling Io.

Although Prometheus claims that he will tell Io about her fate so that she can know the limits of her journey, his detailing the agonies of the journey seems intended more to prove the unjustness of Zeus and thereby to vindicate Prometheus (700–735).³³ Prometheus completes the first part of his prophecy by calling Zeus a hard, indifferent tyrant who has even more in store for Io (735–41). When Io cries out in response, Prometheus scolds, as if to make her confront the horror of divine will: “Again you cry out, again you lament? What then / will you do when you learn your other sufferings?” In response to the chorus's disbelief that there are more, Prometheus guarantees “a wintry sea of agony and ruin,” which makes Io feel suicidal: “Better at once to die.” Now that Prometheus has made Io and the chorus see the harshness of divine will, he says that Io has it easier than he since she has the refuge of death. There is no limit set for his pain, save when Zeus falls from power (742–56). All of Prometheus's pity seems to have coalesced into self-pity; at any rate, he does not appear able to sustain the level of pity he once showed mortals.

Convinced now that she suffers “cruelly” from Zeus, again revealing her susceptibility to Prometheus and a possible liaison between her and Prometheus's views, Io helps Prometheus turn the conversation to Zeus's fated demise. During the subsequent exchange, Io seeks assurance that Zeus will not be able to preempt his doom, and wants to know who will free Prometheus against Zeus's will. To find out if she is indeed as won over as she seems, Prometheus gives her the choice of learning about the rest of her journey or the identity of the descendant of hers who will free him: Prometheus may predict that, if she is convinced of Zeus's wickedness and has no hope for herself, she will want to hear about who will help make possible the vanquishing of Zeus. But such a prediction assumes that Io wants to hear about her future in search of hope, not enlightenment. It is Prometheus who is hopeful that Io has indicted Zeus, lost hope for herself, and hopes only for the fulfillment of his needs. Before we can learn if Io has become exemplary of Promethean justice, the chorus asks Prometheus to tell both stories—Io's fate, to her, and his deliverance, to them. Prometheus obliges, proceeding first with the remainder of Io's “sad wanderings, rich in groans.” Her travels will be no better in Asia than in Europe. Though Prometheus mentions that Io will eventually return to her homeland, he does not dwell on her future happiness but instead proceeds to tell the details of her past wandering—allegedly to prove his power of insight, but again, perhaps also to complete his condemnation of Zeus. The remainder of Prometheus's last speech to Io relates that Zeus will one day touch her with his hand, which will both relieve her of her induced madness and impregnate her. Evidently, Zeus will either change or simply try a different approach to make her his. In any case, he makes her rational again, establishing grounds for

an alliance between them. From the son Io bears will come generations, among which will be a girl who chooses, out of love, not to kill her incestuous lover as have generations of women raped by their kin (the story of Hypermestra in Aeschylus's *Supplices*). From this union will come kings, and one of them will free Prometheus. Prometheus will defy Zeus, then, because of the same kind of love Prometheus showed human beings: love that violates divine law and the integrity of the beloved. The news that selfless Promethean justice will prevail because of irresponsibility may be what drives Io away in a frenzy (757–886).

If Io deems Promethean justice lacking in accountability, then Aeschylus may want his audience to appreciate her insight and thus realize the importance if not centrality of accountability to justice. On the other hand, does not Aeschylus undermine, rather than affirm, Io's perspective by portraying her as mad? Her madness indicates that she does not even hold her own, let alone triumph. Her failure to hold her own or remain in a dialogue with Prometheus, however, contributes to the tragedy of *Prometheus Bound*. As Alain Moreau points out, Io's madness represents not only internal but external disorder, or cosmic chaos (p. 110), but more precisely, the chaos that results in a world without accountability. Aeschylus suggests the importance of accountability to justice, then, by indicating that *the absence of accountability is tragic*.

In other words, Io is an Apollonian figure who turns Dionysian (and back again, though not within *Prometheus Bound*). The dual nature which Nietzsche attributes to Prometheus is more accurately attributable to Io. Io, more than Prometheus, resembles the god Apollo: beautiful, morally pure, self-knowing, and an exemplar “of individuation and of just boundaries” (p. 72). In Prometheus's charitable bequest to mankind, he disregarded the boundaries of justice, reached out to man, and sought to bring together into one community, rather than to separate, gods and men. Io, alienated and alone, seeks to discover the meaning of justice through speech and account for herself as an individual, distinct and apart from all ties of family and friendship. Her Dionysian delirium is especially tragic to a Western audience because, although she is non-Greek, she embodies the ideals of self-awareness and self-reliance. She knows she needs knowledge and she seeks it.³⁴

After Io leaves—and thus behind her back—the chorus hints that she is not entirely innocent—that she *aspired* to “marry up.” Characteristically self-righteous, the chorus says that they would never share the bed of a god and believe that partners should be “equal,” since one cannot fight or escape the anger of a god (887–906). Perhaps there is some truth in the chorus's remarks: perhaps Io played hard to get, miscalculated the outcome and consequences, and is now portraying herself as the innocent victim. On the other hand, perhaps the Oceanids are just envious, prudish, or both. In any case, by raising doubts through the chorus about Io's self-knowledge and honesty, Aeschylus indicates their importance to accountability.

The chorus next expresses shock at Prometheus's declaration that Zeus will

suffer more than he when he falls from power. Prometheus responds that he is not afraid to say such things because he is immortal and expects to withstand even greater pain, to which the chorus can only mutter, "Wise are the worshippers of Adrasteia" (the Inescapable). Untempered, Prometheus mocks: "Worship him, pray; flatter whatever king / is king today; but I care less than nothing / for Zeus" (907–46). Prometheus does not pity the pitiless. In a just world, the pitiless will not receive pity when they themselves need it, for justice is the balance of neediness.

THE VISITOR HERMES AND THE CHORUS

Prometheus's last visitor is the god Hermes, Zeus's messenger, who claims that Prometheus's obstinacy led to his "self-willed calamitous anchorage." In an ordered world, according to Hermes, only resistance brings calamity. By contrast, according to Prometheus, not to resist order is slavery. Hermes advises trust and passivity, assuming that justice will exist unless willfully obstructed. Prometheus advises distrust and action, assuming that injustice prevails unless corrected; justice must be constructed. Preventing Prometheus from acting, the gods are obstructing justice, returning "ill for good." From Hermes' perspective, only the mad interfere with order and advocate such interference, whereas according to Prometheus, obedience to divine order is childlike (944–88). Prometheus's pride, according to Hermes, keeps him in foolish ignorance of the wisdom of subjection to the highest divinity (999–1013): "You are a colt new broken, with the bit / clenched in its teeth, fighting against the reins, / and bolting. You are far too strong and confident / in your weak cleverness. For obstinacy / standing alone is the weakest of all things / in one whose mind is not possessed by wisdom."

Hermes, assuming the role of prophet, proceeds to tell Prometheus that he will be further punished in Hades for his obstinacy before he sees the light again (1014–35). The chorus agrees with Hermes that Prometheus is obstinate, but when Hermes orders the Oceanids away, their piety prevents them from deserting one of their own kind, however impious he may be (1036–70). Somehow divine desert-based justice allows for personal loyalty. Perhaps the Oceanids' conduct implies that divine justice does accommodate pity or compassion as long as it is directed toward "friends" not "strangers." Compassion toward friends and kin is consistent with desert-based justice inasmuch as friendship and kinship are criteria of desert.

According to Hermes, since Prometheus knows that he has transgressed divine order, he can only blame himself for his troubles, like all activists who challenge divine order. Thus he points out the moral lesson to the chorus and the audience: "when you are trapped by ruin don't blame fortune: / don't say that Zeus has brought you to calamity / that you could not foresee: do not do

this: / but blame yourselves” (1072–76). Hermes, then, messenger of Zeus, champions accountability. Through Hermes, Aeschylus thus exposes the necessity of accountability to desert-based justice: worthiness entails accountability. Io, then, prepares the way for Hermes: she underscores the importance of accountability to justice, of character to accountability, and Hermes suggests that accountability is integral to desert-based justice. Hermes thereby inadvertently exposes the shortcoming of his master. Adherence to the principle of desert mandates accountability.

Despite Hermes’ counsel, and as if to drive home his own character, Prometheus’s final words amidst a violent earth-breaking storm, are self-pitying: “how I suffer, how unjustly” (1093).

CONCLUSION

In sum, by way of his portraits of a pitying Prometheus, a judgmental Zeus, and an inquisitive Io, Aeschylus presents three perspectives of justice, their merits, defects, and the bases for their harmony. Prometheus teaches that without pity, the weak may perish and only the gods survive; if the human race is to survive, then pity must be integral to the notion of justice by which it abides. Zeus, by judging and punishing and rewarding individuals for their merits and crimes, reveals the basis for an understandable moral order: the principle of desert. Regulative principles, or laws, preempt chaos and do so more effectively if they have a moral rationale. The persona of Io teaches that without knowledge one cannot account for oneself and act responsibly. The withholding of knowledge, then, such as the refusal to account for one’s actions, can impede the accountability of others. Responsible conduct, and thus any kind of justice, is impossible without a measure of accountability.

Aeschylus presents the defects of each persona’s view of justice in part by juxtaposing the views. Next to Zeus’s principled justice, Prometheus’s pity-based justice appears arbitrary. Next to Io’s insistence on accountability, Promethean pity seems forgetful of the integrity of the self and of others. In turn, Prometheus’s sense of justice induces the audience to notice that Zeus’s rational desert-based justice does not accommodate pity, and Io’s speech-based notion of justice makes us notice that Zeus never speaks, never himself explains the justice by which he rules, depriving human beings of a full account of divine justice. In light of the partial mysteriousness of divine justice, Io’s insistence on accountability looks naive, as if human beings can command accountability even from the gods. Finally, Prometheus’s exposure of the vast inequality of means and of attributes among beings suggests that Io’s ideal of complete accountability may not bring about perfect justice. Aeschylus thus suggests that the best possible conception of justice integrates all three perspectives.

Aeschylus gives dramatic grounds for the integration or reconciliation of the

three perspectives of justice. Prometheus betrays sympathy with the principle of desert by indicating the vastness of the liberality he showed by bestowing gifts on the human race. He also reveals ethical potential as the giver to man of the capacity to measure. Zeus, through the Oceanids' loyal support of their Titan kin, shows evidence of allowing pity or compassion toward the worthy. Io shows a capacity for pity in self-pity and a capacity for understanding the principle of divine justice in her quest to learn what she has done wrong. Finally, Prometheus's prophecy that Zeus will allow a descendant of Io's to free him may symbolize the hope that all three notions of justice will be harmonized. At the same time, by raising doubts about Prometheus's judgment and underscoring through Io the importance of speech and accountability, Aeschylus may recommend that human beings not simply wait and hope for a harmony, but strive to bring it about themselves.

Perhaps to encourage the human or political effort to harmonize the three perspectives of justice, Aeschylus reveals also their philosophical and practical intersections. As Prometheus understood, meting out justice according to the principle of desert in a human context requires confrontation of the fact of the imbalance of means. Justice according to desert must figure neediness into its calculus. While absolute neediness is an observable fact, pity or compassion may enable its perception in practice. If the integrity of the principle of desert is to be preserved, however, then desert must not be redefined as neediness. Only reason, not compassion, can distinguish between need and desert. The test of the justness of a system that proposes to compensate for neediness and maintain the principle "to each according to his merit" is, then, whether acts of compensation and reward can be rationally accounted for, in speech. Only through accountability can pity legitimately play as much a role in matters of justice as desert. By placing Io, the mortal and champion of accountability and speech, near the end of the play, Aeschylus may suggest that accountable speech is the only means to a complete notion of justice, and thus the essence of our ethical nature. As Hegel explains: "*Tragedy* consists in this, that ethical nature segregates its inorganic nature (in order not to become embroiled in it), as a fate, and places it outside itself; and by acknowledging this fate in the struggle against it, ethical nature is reconciled with the Divine being as the unity of both" (p. 105).

An examination of how Zeus, Prometheus, and Io use speech indicates that only Io, putting aside her susceptibility to Prometheus and other reservations about her character, preserves speech's ethical integrity or alliance with rationality. All who understand divine justice, like Hephaestus and Hermes, know that "it is a dangerous thing to treat the Father's words lightly," for "the mouth of Zeus does not know how to lie, but every word brings to fulfilment" (17, 1032–33). From the point of view of divine justice, the only legitimate speech is that which declares Zeus's will. Conversely, all other speech is suspect and should not be taken seriously. Actions should be trusted over speech. Oceanos

responds to Prometheus's urging him to leave by suggesting that Prometheus gives advice too freely for one who is enchained, and explains that he takes his cue from deeds not words (338–39; cf. 295–99). The chorus hopes that it will never “sin in word” as Prometheus does (526–36, 933). Not only the authoritativeness of Zeus's speech, but the possibility of his overhearing speech, recommends reticence. The theme of Oceanos's only speech, for example, is Prometheus's boastfulness; he warns Prometheus three times that Zeus will hear his angry and arrogant words, and exhorts: “do not talk so much” (301–31). Oceanos thus abides by his belief that words should be used only to correct a vain tongue or doctor a diseased temper (379–80).

While divine justice encourages reticence and suspicion of speech, Promethean justice depends on liberality of speech for its execution. The fulfillment of needs requires needs to be made known. Prometheus's own speech and the speech he urges in others is, then, not responsive but declarative, and declarative especially of injustice. He declares man's neediness (“man's tribulation, that I would have you hear”) and encourages Io to declare her “ill fortune” (442–43, 637–39). Perhaps he gave mankind the art of writing, the ability to “hold all in memory,” to encourage the recording of all injustice (460–61). In any case, before telling Io why he is being punished, he says that it is just to speak openly to friends, suggesting perhaps that justice depends on friends sharing grievances (609–11). Speech can also serve justice, even in the form of lies, by showing or eliciting pity or concern. Prometheus shows concern for Oceanos by telling him to leave, for Io by eliciting pity for her, and for human beings by, in effect, lying to them about death. He is also tempted to conceal or lie about Io's fate to avoid deranging her.

Unlike Promethean justice, Ionian justice depends on speech not to declare injustice, but to give and seek accounts, or to enlighten and seek enlightenment. Io exchanges accounts with Prometheus and seeks account from Zeus. She complains about her circumstance, not to declare it unjust, but to search for its cause. She does not give or seek pity through speech, instructing Prometheus not to cozen her out of pity with lies. In her view, because the purpose of speech is not to judge or assuage, but to render accounts or enlighten, it must be honest, direct, dispassionate, and reasonable. Such speech presupposes equanimity and the ability to reason. Thus, Io's punishment, which includes her ignorance and her madness, is unbearable. Being left in ignorance of one's own alleged crime is unjust, the work, in her view, of an arbitrary, mischievous god. A god that does not answer or enlighten must be unreasonable, for a god with reason would defend himself. A commitment to enlightenment thus indicts speech that obfuscates or conceals. The oracular obfuscation of divine will frustrates Io only less than her madness, which makes her lose, at her departure, mastery of her speech: “I run / out of my course by the madness driven, / the crazy frenzy; my tongue ungoverned / babbles, the words / in a muddy flow strike on the waves of the mischief I hate, strike wild / without aim or sense” (883–86).

As Aeschylus's other works, notably the *Oresteia*, convey his advocacy of rational speech as a means to justice, *Prometheus Bound* continues to explore the ethical capacities and limitations of speech. Aeschylus discovers that the ethical function of speech is to reconcile the quintessentially human, and the quintessentially divine, notions of justice. While his hope may be that such reconciliation can take place in the polis, his gift is that reconciliation in philosophical poetry.

NOTES

1. For the view that Aeschylus merely endorsed ancient religious orthodoxies see, for example, Welcker, Solmsen, Lloyd-Jones, and Denniston and Page. For the view that Aeschylus is an avant-garde poet of ideas see, for example, Gilbert Murray, esp. chap. 3, "Aeschylus as a Poet of Ideas" (which explains that Aeschylus is "one of those [poets] who derive their inspiration in a large degree from their philosophical beliefs or speculations" [p. 72]); Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, pp. 237–67; Snell, esp. pp. 94–112; Dodds, pp. 28–63; Gladigow; Golden, pp. 3–30 for a summary of the debate over Aeschylus's achievement; and Kaufmann, pp. 191–227.

2. For the characterization of Plato's works as philosophical poetry, see Stanley Rosen's exceptional *The Quarrel Between Philosophy and Poetry: Studies in Ancient Thought*, esp. pp. 1–26, 102–18. For Lloyd-Jones's and Sikes and Willson's remarks, see their respective, "Zeus," p. 66, and *The Prometheus Vincit of Aeschylus*, p. xxiv. Quoted remarks are from page 22 of Golden's *In Praise*; pages 21–30 discuss Jaeger, "Classical Philology and Humanism," pp. 371ff; Dodds, pp. 10ff; and Cherniss, pp. 289ff. See also Jaeger's *Paideia*, p. 239.

If Aeschylus did indeed write philosophical poetry, then Plato and some of the Presocratics might be in his debt. For the argument that Aeschylus influenced Parmenides, see Capizzi. Jaeger (*Paideia*, pp. 239, 248–54) and especially Snell (pp. 94–112) suggest Aeschylus's influence on Plato, or on the development of philosophy. In opposition, Lloyd-Jones observes that Plato includes Aeschylus in his condemnation of the poets in Books II and III of *The Republic*, and speculates that had Aeschylus pioneered an influential philosophical rationalism, Plato would have acknowledged the fact "with gratitude and admiration" (pp. 64–65). But even if Plato is correct in his assessment that Aeschylus's Zeus is nonrational, he may have unfairly lumped together the poets, failing to see the advance toward philosophy that the playwrights, in contradistinction to the epic lyricists, made. As Snell explains: "In tragedy myth severed its connexion with a particular concrete situation. The human situations which it expresses are no longer, as in the archaic lyric, fixed in time and place by victory, marriage, or cult; they are universal situations. It is evident that this broadening of the perspective marks a tendency toward philosophical generalization. Before long the problem of human action which is the concern of tragedy was to become a matter for intellectual cognition; Socrates insists on solving the problem through knowledge of the good. That is the ultimate abstraction of the real, its transformation into a teleological concept" (p. 112). Similarly, Jaeger writes: "Until the appearance of tragedy no type of poetry had ventured to use myth merely as the vehicle for an idea, and to choose or neglect myths in accordance with their fitness for that purpose" (*Paideia*, p. 253).

3. Considerable evidence has been marshaled against the assumption that Hesiod's rendition of the myth was Aeschylus's source; see Duchemin, who argues that the myth originated from an epic poem, well known in Herodotus' time, called the *Arimaspees*, by a little-known writer, Aristeas; see also Seaford (pp. 1–26) who argues that the myth was shaped primarily by ideas put forth by the Presocratics. In light of this evidence, I try neither to resolve the debate nor to examine the ways Aeschylus allegedly altered the Hesiodic version of the myth of Prometheus.

4. Jaeger remarks that "tragedy can be appreciated only if we start with the conviction that it is the highest manifestation of a type of humanity for which art, religion, and philosophy still form an indissoluble unity. . . . It seems as if poetry, which the Greeks were the first to raise to such a difficult height of technical excellence and spiritual significance, had wished to reveal all its beauty

and power and wealth once more before it left this earth and journeyed back to Olympus" (*Paideia*, p. 246).

5. See Plato, *Protagoras* 320c–323c; Marx, p. 15; Nietzsche, pp. 69–72. Jaeger notes that "Poets and philosophers of all nations have for centuries loved *Prometheus Bound* far more than any other Greek drama, and they will always love it, as long as a spark of Prometheus' fire still burns in the human soul" (*Paideia*, p. 263).

6. In light of tragedy's universalization of human problems (see note 2) and Aeschylus's particular attention to the problem of justice, courses on the early history of political philosophy might as plausibly begin with Aeschylus—the *Oresteia* or *Prometheus Bound*—as with the Presocratics or Thucydides, as they often do.

7. See *Poetics* 1450b7, where Aristotle says that characters of early tragedy speak politically, not rhetorically.

8. This assessment is made on the basis of my perusal of the publications on Aeschylus recorded in *L'Année Philologique* during the twenty-year period 1971–91. *The Classical World* ceased the publication of its bibliography, with helpful surveys such as McKay's, in 1978.

9. See, for example, Deratani, Davison, Stoessl, Baglio, Meautis, and Thomson, pp. 317–46. About Davison, McKay writes: "Few are as prone to find contemporary allusions so directly expressed and personal identifications on such a scale seem more appropriate to comic than to tragic technique." About Baglio's work, McKay exclaims: "This radical inquiry *never shirks* historical attachment, however misty or elusive the connection" (p. 82)! There is a body of secondary work on the controversy surrounding the date and authenticity of the *Prometheus* trilogy, the most persuasive of which argues for its authenticity and production circa 457 B.C., making it Aeschylus's last work; thus I will not trace interpretive difficulties to these uncertainties.

10. In the first category are Stoessl; and Podlecki, *The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy*, pp. 101–22; in the second are Havelock; Finley, pp. 220–33; Fowler; Ewans; and Vander Waerd.

11. As Lionel Pearson remarks, "It would be absurd to pretend that the ethical and religious ideas of Aeschylus are a mere reflection of popular morality, and yet it is equally wrong to look upon him as an isolated individual completely independent of his time" (p. 90). At the same time, just because he wrote during a particular age does not mean that he was *compelled*, somehow unconsciously, to include the ideas of that age in his work; he was an artist and "a work of art exists independently of its author and of the accidental circumstances of its production" (Cherniss, p. 289).

12. See Havelock and Stoessl; Stoessl does not mention "justice" once in his article. The view that the essential conflict between Prometheus and Zeus is that of wit and power is more Hesiodic than Aeschylean.

13. Yet Jaeger and Havelock believe that Aeschylus was not entirely uncritical of rationality, science, and civilization. Jaeger remarks that Prometheus is not merely guilty of a property offense against the gods, but responsible for giving a gift the benefit of which is "connected with some deep tragic imperfection." While Jaeger suggests that intellectualism or rationality, in rejecting the authority of the divine, may not be wholly good for man, Havelock does not trace the corruption of reason to impiety but to power and the uses to which it puts reason. That Aeschylus presents the Prometheus drama as a tragedy not a romance indicates, Havelock notes, that he was "not a little wiser than his counterparts among the modern philosophers, the Positivists, the Marxists, or the Instrumentalists" who link scientific knowledge directly to prosperity, liberty, and equality. For the quotations from Jaeger see *Paideia*, p. 264; see also pp. 262–67 and p. 241, which characterizes the "spirit of Aeschylus" as not only "soaring aspiration and power" but also "self-renunciation, humility, and reverence." The preceding quotation from Havelock is on pp. 15–16 of *Intellectual Man*; quotations from Havelock in this paragraph are on pp. 15, 52, 56; see also esp. pp. 86–87, 104–9. Another proponent of the view that Prometheus is the champion of intellect, technology, and civilization is Golden, esp. pp. 18–19.

14. As Sikes and Willson point out, "The spectacle of a wholly good man struggling against unmerited adversity would have been repugnant to a Greek. According to Aristotle, the ideal tragic hero is one whose general character is noble, but who has fallen into misfortune, not from vice or

depravity, but from some fatal frailty or error" (p. xxvi; see also pp. xxiv–xxvii and Aristotle's *Poetics* 1453a). See also Vander Waerdt, esp. pp. 35–36.

15. See Gilbert Murray, pp. 89–110; Murray suggests in contrast to Yu that the rule of Zeus may nonetheless be good for man in a way man cannot discern (likening Zeus to the God of Job). Fowler reveals the connections between medical and political theory in the play and shows that Prometheus as well as Zeus is sick or imbalanced. In accordance with the third interpretation summarized here, Finley notes without developing that "Though [Prometheus] has become a figure of mind, he is in fact largely a figure of feeling. His loyalty to man, the source of his pains, was such an emotional impulse" (p. 224).

16. I have not come across in the literature the view that Aeschylus both condemns Prometheus, as the second interpretation holds, and presents Prometheus's chief attribute as compassion, as the third interpretation holds.

17. Lloyd-Jones observes that of all of Aeschylus's works, the *Supplikes* trilogy and *Prometheus Bound* supply the most evidence about Zeus (p. 57).

18. See also Ewans, p. 11, and Vander Waerdt, esp. p. 29. Other evolutionists are Ludolph Dissen, U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, M. P. Nilsson, and A. J. Festugière, cited in Lloyd-Jones, p. 56. Golden summarizes the controversy over Aeschylus's Zeus and puts forth his own evolutionary theory on pp. 100–126.

19. Of all the publications about *Prometheus Bound* recorded in *L'Année Philologique* during a twenty-year period, from 1971–91, only five contain "Io" in the title, all were published within a four-year period (1976–79), and none is in English; only two other publications, appearing in 1985–86, feature Io prominently enough to warrant mention of her in the *L'Année* abstract. Furthermore, one of the five works with "Io" in the title is not primarily an interpretation of her role in *Prometheus Bound* but investigates the sources of Aeschylus's knowledge of the myth of Io, an investigation motivated not only by the *Prometheus* Io, but by the *Suppliant Woman* Io. The Danaids who figure centrally in that play are her fifth-generation descendants (see Duchemin). In my view, Io is as important, albeit in a different way, in *Prometheus Bound* as she is in *Suppliant Women*, which makes puzzling the lack of a book on *Prometheus Bound* comparable to Robert Duff Murray, Jr.'s *The Motif of Io in Aeschylus' "Suppliants."* My aim is to counter A. F. Garvie's criticism of Murray, that "the allegorical use of the myth of Io as the central motif has no real parallel in the other extant plays" (p. 71). Additional evidence indicating the general lack of attention to Io in Aeschylus studies is an article entitled "Aeschylus' Women," by Anthony J. Podlecki, which gives one sentence to the subject of Io (p. 43).

20. The following works advance one or more of the first three theories about Io; the first three articles devote the most attention to Io in the *Prometheus Bound*, the remaining works are in chronological order: Albin; Masaracchia; Moreau, esp. p. 110; Kitto, pp. 61–63; Irwin, pp. 91–92; Havelock pp. 45–46, 61–62; Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought* pp. 18–19; Yu, p. 29; Griffith, p. 248; Duchemin, p. 6. For psychoanalytic interpretations of the character and myth of Io, see Kouretas; Devereux, pp. 26–56; Gourevitch, pp. 263–79. Ewans offers other speculations about Io; comparing her to both Cassandra and Odysseus, he suggests that she represents the tenacity of humanity (pp. 11–12).

21. The Greek version of *Prometheus Bound* used in preparation of this article is the text of Dindorf reprinted in *The Prometheus Vincit of Aeschylus*. All quotations are from David Grene's translation in *Aeschylus II*. Citation numbers refer to lines, not pages, and all emphases are mine.

22. Aristotle was the first to coin the abstraction *philanthropia* to mean mutual fellow feeling between equals (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1155a20). See Le Déaut, especially pp. 256–57 on Aeschylus and p. 280 on Aristotle.

23. Snell remarks: "though the Zeus of Aeschylus is an unassailable guardian of justice, he has retired to a plane high above the world of pressing realities. Instead of guiding the course of events through his actions or his words, he has as it were attained to the status of an ideal: Zeus and the idea of justice are about to merge into one" (p. 108).

24. According to David Sansone, the characteristic functions of the *phrenes* are cognition, intellection, and speech, though Aeschylus sometimes uses the term loosely when *thumos* (spirit) or *kardia* (heart) would be equally appropriate (esp. pp. 16–25). William G. Thalmann, however, goes

further than Sansone, arguing that in Aeschylus *phrenes* “nearly always carries the notion of rational thought and intellectual understanding” and that the passages in which Sansone says the term is ambiguous “make good sense” when read with this stricter connotation. The *Prometheus Bound* passage in question seems to support Thalmann’s case. See esp. pp. 491–94.

25. Martin Ostwald (*Nomos*, pp. 43–44) and Everard Flintoff (who does not comment on Ostwald’s earlier work) make compelling cases for reading “*athetos*”—drawn from *tithemi* (to establish)—instead of “*athesmos*” (lawless) at line 150. Ostwald translates “*athetos*” “without proper enactment,” and Flintoff associates the word with “nullification.” If the Oceanids say at 150 that Zeus rules lawlessly, they contradict their later description, at 551, of Zeus’s law (Grene’s translation) or rule as “ordered [*harmonia*].” Furthermore, Zeus’s unbending *nous* (or *phrenes*, see note 24) again suggests that he does not rule haphazardly; Thalmann notes that Aeschylus rarely uses *nous* and uses it always, with perhaps one exception, to signify a mental—as opposed to emotional—disposition or faculty (p. 510).

26. As Flintoff notes, all but two of the characterizations of Zeus as tyrannical come from Prometheus. The two are from Kratos and Oceanos—the latter “who seems to have caught the word from Prometheus in 305 cf. 324” (p. 370).

27. Yu also notes that Aeschylus depicts human beings as “nothings” to show the depth of Promethean compassion, but argues that Aeschylus fully endorses Prometheus’s compassion (pp. 38–39).

28. She continues: “This Platonic argument is the natural development of a long tradition of reflection about the arts and human progress . . . developed in the *Prometheus Bound*” (pp. 107–8).

29. What further distinguishes the Aryan notion from the Semitic, according to Nietzsche, is the *dignity* the Aryan confers on active sin, which he calls “the characteristically Promethean virtue.” Regarding Prometheus as symbolic of defiant, artistic genius, Nietzsche explains that, with the sublime view of active sin, “the ethical basis for pessimistic tragedy has been found: the justification of human evil, meaning both human guilt and the human suffering it entails” (p. 71). In my reading, the active sin of Prometheus is against man as well as god, inasmuch as it promotes the kind of selfless slave morality Nietzsche finds in Christianity and attacks in his “On the Genealogy of Morals.”

30. Grene translates *phrenes* “spirit,” but this seems to be another instance that supports Thalmann’s argument that reading “mind” for *phrenes* in some passages in Aeschylus makes sense (see note 24). Sansone notes that articulate speech—of which Io, despite her proclaimed madness, is still clearly capable—requires the *phrenes* (pp. 51, 82–83).

31. Snell observes that Aeschylean drama marks the beginning of the acknowledgment that the human soul is the real seat of life (p. 111; see also Thalmann, p. 510).

32. Dodds notes that “the liberation of the individual from the bonds of clan and family is one of the major achievements of Greek rationalism” (p. 34, see also pp. 45–48; Dodds cites G. Glotz, *La Solidarité de la famille en Grèce*, pp. 403ff, 604ff).

33. Prometheus may also, as several scholars have proposed, be demonstrating his knowledge of world geography, one of the achievements of civilization. See, for example, Jaeger, *Paideia*, pp. 252, 262–63; Baldry, pp. 18–19. Havelock writes: “This geographic motif also supplies one of the reasons why the dramatist included Io in the play at all”; “Her role when examined is not really hers at all. . . . The main point is that she is not an actor at all, but a symbol of persecution and a vehicle of prediction” (pp. 46, 61).

34. Prometheus reveals that an inlet of a sea will be called “Ionian” as “a memorial to all men of [Io’s] journeying,” as if to say perhaps that she will be remembered in Greece, or considered an honorary Greek (839–41). Jaeger notes that Aeschylus makes self-knowledge a major theme in *The Persians* (*Paideia*, p. 257). Snell points out that Aeschylus’s heroes, in contrast to Homer’s, are self-reliant agents (pp. 103–4).

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