



## Io's World: Intimations of Theodicy in Prometheus bound

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*The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 121. (2001), pp. 107-140.

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## IO'S WORLD: INTIMATIONS OF THEODICY IN *PROMETHEUS BOUND*\*

**Abstract:** The conflict between Prometheus and Zeus has long dominated critical discussion of the play and diverted attention from the only mortal to appear onstage. Prometheus is widely applauded as humanity's saviour and Zeus condemned as an oppressive tyrant, but the fate of the maiden Io is largely discounted. Her encounter with Prometheus, however, is the longest and most complex episode in the play, and it provides a very different perspective on events. The elaborate forecast of her journeys delivered by Prometheus deploys the 'discourse of barbarism' to picture a primitive world ravaged by savage violence and hostile monsters. The lands through which Io is to travel are devoid of the civil and religious institutions of the classical Greek *polis* and *oikos*. Yet the episode also foretells how this barbaric world will evolve under the aegis of Zeus. Argive Io, as 'wife' of Zeus, will found a 'new family' of mortals who will introduce and champion the norms of Greek civic culture in his and her name alike. Prophecy, allusion and foreshadowing thus reveal the Zeus of this play to be not the harsh and destructive despot imagined by most today, but the benevolent source and ultimate arbiter of justice for both gods and humanity.

MOMO: Avresti tu pensato quando rubavi con tuo grandissimo pericolo il fuoco dal cielo per comunicarlo agli uomini, che questi se ne prevarrebbero, quali per cuocersi l'un l'altro nelle pignatte, quali per abbruciarsi spontaneamente?

PROMETEO: No per certo. Ma considera, caro Momo, che quelli che fino a ora abbiamo veduto sono barbari; e dai barbari non si dee far giudizio della natura degli uomini, ma bene dagli inciviliti.

Leopardi, 'La scommessa di Prometeo'

TAKEN straight and by itself, *Prometheus Bound* is a deeply subversive play. Its eloquent and defiant protagonist makes it one of the most compelling from antiquity. Prometheus, on stage from beginning to end, dominates the scene. We witness his binding in the prologue, we face his shackled body throughout the play, and we hear his tirades against tyranny, the litany of his gifts to mortals, and his vivid directions for the bewildered Io. To remain unmoved, we would have to be, as the Chorus exclaims, 'iron-hearted and made of stone' (242). Sympathy for the rebel, however, exacts a heavy toll on his adversary. If Prometheus suffers unjustly, Zeus is a despot; and if he suffers for helping mortals, Zeus is a misanthrope. George Thomson's verdict is widely shared: 'Zeus is a tyrant and his rule is tyranny. We learn this from his own ministers, who are proud of it; from Prometheus, who denounces it; from the Ocean nymphs, who deplore it; and from the God of Ocean, who is resigned to it. The fact is incontestable, and the only question is how the dramatist intended his audience to interpret it.'<sup>1</sup> Are we then to conclude that the rule of Zeus is arbitrary, cruel, and inhumane?

Scholars have answered this question in very different ways. Some, favouring apologetics, justify Zeus by maligning Prometheus – and dismissing Io as collateral damage.<sup>2</sup> Others see enlightened scepticism: Zeus, above right and wrong and beyond good and evil, embodies the

\* This paper grew out of an honours course on ancient humanism and owes much to many not acknowledged below. For helpful discussion and generous criticism I am especially grateful to my colleagues David Armstrong, Lesley Dean-Jones, Jim Marks and Andrew Zissos, to two anonymous referees, and to Mark Griffith, Ἰαπετιονίδου ἐρμηνεύς ἕξοχος ἄλλων.

<sup>1</sup> *Aeschylus and Athens* (2nd edn, London 1946) 322, reiterating *Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1932) 6; cf. A. Podlecki, *The Political Background of Aeschylean Tragedy* (Ann Arbor 1966) 101–22; G.

Grossmann, *Promethie und Orestie* (Heidelberg 1970) 19–24; S. Saïd, *Sophiste et tyran, ou le problème du Prométhée enchaîné* (Paris 1985) 284–91.

<sup>2</sup> See esp. N. Wecklein, *The Prometheus Bound of Aeschylus* (Leipzig 1878; tr. F.D. Allen, Boston 1891) 7–19. For a survey of scholarship, see D. Conacher, *Aeschylus' 'Prometheus Bound': A Literary Commentary* (Toronto 1980) 120–37; cf. E.R. Dodds, 'The PV and the progress of scholarship', in *The Ancient Concept of Progress* (Oxford 1973) 26–44.

inexorable forces of the cosmos; Prometheus is heroic – and Io a pathetic victim.<sup>3</sup> But most mediate these extremes by postulating changes later in the trilogy. Many argue that Zeus evolves from the newly installed tyrant of this play into a guardian of justice and order by the end of the trilogy, much as the Furies learn new ways as the *Oresteia* ends.<sup>4</sup> Some, pleading *raison d'état*, argue rather that the world itself evolves to a state where Zeus can safely set aside his initially brutal tactics.<sup>5</sup> Both evolutionary views resolve the dramatic problem of reconciling Zeus and Prometheus. But both leave central moral and religious questions unanswered. Focused on power struggles among the gods, neither explains the wretched plight of Io and other mortals. The blithe disregard Zeus seems to have for humanity, whether due to his own immaturity or the strategic imperatives of divine politics, offers little warrant or solace for the miseries on earth, Io's least of all. There is no need, however, to conclude that Zeus was once as ruthless or brutal as most today agree he here appears to be. The Zeus of this play, I shall argue, is simply not as bad as we have been led, partly by the text but also by crucial misperceptions, to believe.

The fundamental problem is that little if any trace of his justice or care for humanity has been found in the play itself. As Martin West protests, 'It is hard to imagine Aeschylus choosing to let us see things so completely from the viewpoint of a rebel against Zeus, without giving hints through the chorus or through other speakers that there was another side to the story. The Zeus of *Prometheus* has no redeeming feature. Neither the Oceanids nor Oceanus nor Io nor Zeus's own satellites suggest that Zeus might have had some good (albeit obscure) purpose in his oppression of mankind and of Prometheus, or that he ever has any good purpose in anything he does.'<sup>6</sup> Be that as it may, West overlooks Prometheus himself, who ironically does reveal a purpose in the actions of Zeus, though one he obviously suspects not at all. His own words, first to the Chorus and then to Io, indicate the rationale both for his shackling and for Io's tribulations. These intimations of theodicy are most prominent in the long third episode, which imagines a vast wilderness through which Io must journey. The episode also points forward to the release of Prometheus in a sequel, where the plan of Zeus and his justice could be disclosed more fully and clearly. Like the *Choephoroi*, *PD* is one-sided in perspective, its protagonist and chorus self-assured, and its ending an unsettling reversal. If it too stood second in its trilogy, as West and others have argued, 'hints' of another, higher perspective need not be obvious.<sup>7</sup>

The play's repeated indictments of Zeus have long encouraged doubts about its authorship.<sup>8</sup> From the *Persae* to the *Oresteia*, Zeus is in Aeschylus the overseer of cosmic order and justice

<sup>3</sup> H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Zeus in Aeschylus', *JHS* 76 (1956) 55-67, and *The Justice of Zeus* (2nd edn, Berkeley 1983) 95-103, 245-6; L. Golden, *In Praise of Prometheus* (Chapel Hill 1962); cf. W. Schmid, *Untersuchungen zum gefesselten Prometheus* (Stuttgart 1929).

<sup>4</sup> U. Wilamowitz, *Aischylos: Interpretationen* (Berlin 1914) 114-58; G. Thomson (n.1: 1946) 317-46; Dodds (n.2); F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca 1949) 147-77; A.D. Fitton-Brown, 'Prometheia', *JHS* 79 (1959) 52-60; H.D.F. Kitto, *Poiesis* (Berkeley 1966) 33-74; Podlecki (n.1) 101-3; Grossmann (n.1) 70-110; R.G.A. Buxton, *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1982) 90-104; R.P. Winnington-Ingram, *Studies in Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1983) 175-97; J. Herington, *Aeschylus* (New Haven 1986) 157-77; C. Meier, *The Political Art of Greek Tragedy* (Munich 1988; tr. A. Webber, Oxford 1993) 137-59; A. Sommerstein, *Aeschylean Tragedy* (Bari 1996) 301-19. The very idea of Zeus maturing has been challenged: L.R. Farnell, 'The paradox of the *PV*', *JHS* 54 (1933) 40-50; K. Reinhardt, *Aischylos als Regisseur und Theologe* (Bern 1951) 68-73; Lloyd-Jones (n.3: 1956) 56-7.

<sup>5</sup> M. Pohlenz, *Die griechische Tragödie* (2nd edn, Göttingen 1954) 75-83; Reinhardt (n.4) 64-76; Conacher (n.2) 131-7; M. Griffith, *Aeschylus: Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1983) 7-8.

<sup>6</sup> *Studies in Aeschylus* (Stuttgart 1990) 63; cf. Dodds (n.2) 32.

<sup>7</sup> Griffith (n.5) 281-305; M.L. West, 'The Prometheus trilogy', *JHS* 99 (1979) 130-48; for *PD* as the first play, see Conacher (n.2) 98-119 and Winnington-Ingram (n.4) 188-97; for a monodrama, see Schmid (n.3), T.G. Rosenmeyer, *The Masks of Tragedy* (Austin 1963) 51-102. It would suit my argument best if *Purphoros* preceded *Desmotēs* and *Luomenos* followed in a sequence of problematic transgression, disturbing retribution and revelatory reconciliation; cf. Pohlenz (n.5) 77-8 and n.83 below.

<sup>8</sup> See M. Griffith, *The Authenticity of Prometheus Bound* (Cambridge 1977). I shall frequently cite parallels with undisputed works of Aeschylus, complete and fragmentary alike. My aim is not to insinuate any claim about authorship, only to contextualize the play by indicating affinities in theme, diction, ideology and religious outlook.

on earth. Complaints about his rule are voiced, but invariably to indicate limited understanding or impiety. Nowhere else are challenges to either his power or his justice upheld, as they seem to be here. But whoever the poet, it is hard to imagine that a fifth-century audience found its vision of Zeus as harshly critical as most do today. Shelley and many since have condemned Zeus and won applause. Euripides casts other gods in dubious roles. But Attic tragedy does not denounce the lord of Olympus outright.<sup>9</sup> *PD* repeatedly questions his authority. But it does so entirely in the voices of its characters. Zeus never appears or utters a word; all we hear is what others say about him.<sup>10</sup> How we are meant to respond to their claims is another question. It would be naive to assume that any character in any play speaks for the dramatist or tells us all we need to know, let alone clearly. Deceit and deception aside, most characters in tragedy show a very limited grasp of events, and none tells us more than part of what we are meant to believe, much less comprehend fully. Ambiguity, obscurity, conflict and rhetorical distortion enlarge the scope for irony and indirection still further. Such polyphony is especially treacherous here, where the protagonist is a notorious trickster and his antagonist the always remote and often inscrutable Zeus. An Attic audience thus had reason to harbour doubts about Prometheus' claims from the outset, and to suspect that his accounts of events both past and future are imperfect and incomplete at best. This suspicion is repeatedly confirmed in the play, I would argue, both by what he says and by what others say to or about him. It is also reflected in later portrayals of Prometheus, which maintain his Hesiodic reputation for treachery and failure.<sup>11</sup> But it is not my aim here to argue that Prometheus is rightly called 'pseudonymous' or 'misnamed' (85; cf. 1032-5). That is a question best explored only after we understand better the larger scene of the play, namely, Io's world and the various mortals who inhabit it.

### I. PROMETHEAN MORTALS

Early in the first episode, Prometheus distinguishes two very different issues in the problem of theodicy. When the newly arrived Chorus of Oceanids ask 'what kind of charge' led Zeus to treat him so dishonourably (193-6), he recounts at length his treacherous and allegedly decisive part in the overthrow of the Titans, then answers (226-7) by briefly describing the aftermath.

ὅπως τάχιστα τὸν πατρῶιον ἐς θρόνον  
καθέζετ', εὐθὺς δαίμοσιν νέμει γέρα  
ἄλλοισιν ἄλλα, καὶ διεστοιχίζετο  
ἀρχήν, βροτῶν δὲ τῶν ταλαιπῶρων λόγον  
οὐκ ἔσχεν οὐδέν', ἀλλ' αἰστώσας γένος  
τὸ πᾶν ἔχρηζεν ἄλλο φιλῦσαι νέον.  
καὶ τοῖσιν οὐδεὶς ἀντέβαινε πλὴν ἐμοῦ.  
ἐγὼ δ' ἐτόλμησ'· ἐξελυσάμην βροτοὺς  
τὸ μὴ διαρραισθέντας εἰς Ἄϊδου μολεῖν.

As soon as Zeus was seated on his paternal throne, straightway he assigned different privileges to different divinities, and got authority aligned. But of wretched mortals he took no account, but designed to conceal the whole family and plant another anew. Against this none stood except me. I dared; I got mortals released from going crushed to Hades. (228-36)

<sup>9</sup> Plays produced elsewhere might have taken more liberties; but see M. Griffith, 'Aeschylus, Sicily, and Prometheus', in R. Dawe *et al.* (eds.), *Dionysiaca* (Cambridge 1978) 105-39.

<sup>10</sup> Tragic decorum probably forbade bringing Zeus onstage; cf. O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford 1977) 431-3.

<sup>11</sup> Even after *PD*, Prometheus was viewed with a mixture of admiration and distrust. The parody in *Birds* 1494-1552 portrays him skulking unheroically and still ready to betray Zeus as he earlier had Kronos; and in Plato's sophistic fable (*Protag.* 320d-21e), he ironically fails to foresee and forestall his brother's foolish oversight; cf. Farnell (n.4) 49.

Zeus at his accession promptly settled his relations with two great constituencies. First, he distributed powers and privileges to many of his fellow immortals (228-31), just as in Hesiod (*Theog.* 881-5, *cf.* 71-4). That dispensation, which pens many of the older gods in Tartarus, is the object of bitter complaint throughout the play. But from the prologue onward, our attention is directed also to the lot of the mortals whom Prometheus dared to help (234-6) but Zeus allegedly planned to destroy (232-3). After the first stasimon, in fact, the focus shifts to this second group, as we hear first what Prometheus has done for mortals, and then how Io suffers under Zeus. Throughout the latter part of the play, then, the problem of theodicy turns mainly on how Zeus treats mortals, not other immortals, though the two issues are entangled thanks to Prometheus' intervention. The assumption I shall challenge is that Zeus in this play is cruelly inhumane or misanthropic. I do not wish to deny that Prometheus is given impressive stature and meant to elicit sympathy and respect, at least up to a point. My aim is rather to justify Zeus without demonizing his rival, and more importantly, without trivializing Io's fate.<sup>12</sup> It is mainly through these two, whose sufferings we witness in turn, that the justice of Zeus is dramatized. Each represents the larger group to which they belong, Titans and mortals, so they highlight two distinct but closely related aspects of theodicy: both the horizontal dimension of Zeus's rule over his fellow immortals and the vertical dimension of his plan for mankind. The crucial question, then, is not why Prometheus helped mortals, but why Zeus punishes him. The play does little to clarify the Titan's aims and motives. But we hear about Zeus's plans repeatedly, albeit obliquely. The play itself thus directs our attention to what Prometheus calls 'the plan of Zeus' (βούλευμα τὸ Δίον, 619; *cf.* 170, 762) and the Chorus his 'regulation' (τὰν Διὸς ἀρμονίαν, 551) and 'devising' (τὰν Διὸς μῆτιν, 906). Is there then any sign that Zeus planned to obliterate the human race, as Prometheus seems to claim?

In some traditions he evidently did. Three of the five races in Hesiod's myth of metals die out under his reign, and the surviving fifth toils through what the poet deplors as a brief and miserable existence. In the *Cypria*, Zeus reportedly contrived the deadly conflicts at Thebes and Troy in order to reduce the human population (*fr.* 1). Tales of a devastating flood sent by Zeus to cleanse the earth were familiar from many sources. But the only mention here of destructive plans comes from Prometheus himself in the lines above. If many in the original audience expected Zeus to annihilate humanity, the play does little to confirm their expectation. Many in the audience, moreover, quite likely thought many denizens of Io's world deserved to die. The play is set in a primitive era notorious for brutish violence. In Hesiod, the golden 'family' (γένος) of Kronos dies out before the advent of Zeus (*WD* 109-16). The silver 'family', which Zeus does 'hide' under the earth because it ignores the gods (137-42), is infantile, violent, and impious (127-39). The bronze 'family' dies 'by their own hands' in the deadly combat they enjoy (143-55), as do the 'hero men' of the next generation (161-5), despite their 'more just and better' nature (158). If the Prometheus trilogy follows this tradition, the recipients of his gifts belong to either the silver or bronze family.<sup>13</sup> In any case, we learn as the play unfolds that Io's world and its mortal inhabitants differ radically from the world of Io's descendants in the sequel, when Heracles will release Prometheus.

One sign of the difference appears in the way characters refer to people. Tragedies set in the later eras speak freely of 'humans', but *PD* refers almost exclusively to 'mortals' (35 times). The disparity is clearly thematic: θνητός (16 times), βροτός or βρότειος (15 times), and ἐφήμερος (4 times), but not ἄνθρωπος (only twice), mark a crucial difference between the immortals and

<sup>12</sup> Most attempts to justify Zeus are vitiated by vilification of Prometheus and disregard for mortals; *cf.* Dodds (n.2) 32-3.

<sup>13</sup> *Cf.* C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'The Hesiodic Myth of the Five Races and the tolerance of plurality in Greek mythology', in O. Palagia (ed.), *Greek Offerings* (Oxford 1987) 1-21.

Io's kind.<sup>14</sup> Metre may also contribute, since each word has a different metrical shape. But the disparity is even more striking with three narrower terms: φώς only once (548) vs. 24 times in the six extant plays of Aeschylus; and ἀνήρ and γυνή only once each (862, together and foretelling much later events) vs. 191 and 82 times, respectively. More than mortality is at stake here. The emphasis also reflects the uncivilized state of the world in which the play is set, where most people still live like wild animals and dwell beside hybrid monsters, like reptilian Gorgons (799), avian crones (795), canine griffins (803), and the quasi-bovine Io.<sup>15</sup> Characters in the play therefore refer to mortals indiscriminately, whether human and humane, or monstrous, beastly, and savage. Familiar only with this brutish world, even Prometheus the 'foreknower' shows no inkling of the civil society Io's descendants are to build, and he calls both her and all her kind mainly by names that mark their inherent inferiority.

Our fullest view of this world comes in the long episode in which Prometheus foretells Io's fabulous itinerary. But it is already glimpsed in the first stasimon and in the stirring speech about the arts which Prometheus delivers in response. The Oceanids, after their father departs, lament the subjugation of Prometheus and his fellow Titans (397-410). Claiming that the 'entire region' groans along with them, they highlight the 'seat of holy Asia' (411-12) and its fearsome mortal inhabitants, all conspicuously barbarian.<sup>16</sup>

Κολχίδος τε γὰς ἔνοικοι  
παρθένοι μάχας ἄτρεστοι,  
καὶ Σκύθης ὄμιλος, οἱ γὰς  
ἔσχατον τόπον ἀμφὶ Μαι-  
ῶτιν ἔχουσι λίμναν,  
Ἄραβίας τ' ἄρειον ἄνθος,  
ὑψίκρημον οἱ πόλισμα  
Καυκάσου πέλας νέμονται,  
δάιος στρατός, ὄξυπρώι-  
ροισι βρέμων ἐν αἰχμαῖς.

Residents of Colchis land, maidens unfrightened of battle, and throng of Scythia, who hold earth's furthest site round lake Maiotis, and Arabia's warring bloom, who inhabit a lofty citadel near Caucasus, a wasting band, roaring with sharp-peaked spears. (415-24)

Foreshadowing Io's itinerary, the Oceanids name only infamous barbarians.<sup>17</sup> Athenian myth knew no tribe more militantly hostile than the Amazons, whose legendary invasion of Attica paralleled the Persian occupation only decades before the play.<sup>18</sup> Their rejection of marriage

<sup>14</sup> Frequency in the six extant plays of Aeschylus is comparable for βροτ- (83 times) and ἄνθρωπος (14 times) but much lower for θνητός (only 10 times). In *Protag.* 320c-21c, τὸ ἀνθρώπων γένος is only one of many θνητὰ γένη.

<sup>15</sup> This blurring of boundaries may be reflected in the high frequency of -ωπος terminations: γοργωπόν (356), μυριωπόν (568), πυρωπόν (667), φλογωπόν (253, 498), στενωποῦ (364), θεμερωπίς (134), and Αἰθίωψ (809); cf. Griffith (n.8) 222. These terms, which describe things by their 'look' alone (cf. 998 and 21-2), are applied indifferently to physical phenomena (thunderbolts, flames, straits), the mortal monster Argos, holy αἰδώς, and of course ἄνθρωποι (*Crat.* 399c suggests an etymological link could be heard). For similarly 'porous' boundaries, see J. Heath, 'Disentangling the beast: humans and other animals in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, *JHS* 119 (1999) 17-47.

<sup>16</sup> The opening of the antistrophe recalls the opening of the first stasimon in *Pers.*, which equates Asia with the Persian empire: πρόπασσα δ' ἤδη στονόεν λέλακε / χώρα (406-7) echoing νῦν δὴ πρόπασσα μὲν στένει / γαί' Ἀσίς (548-9).

<sup>17</sup> Later in the play, both groups are situated in Europe (709, 723), and a lacuna in 409 may hide a reference to Europe here; but see West (n.6) 297-8, who conjectures <ῥαιομέναν>.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Eum.* 685-90. The parallel figures prominently in contemporary art: murals in the Theseion and Stoa Poikile from the 460s, west metopes on the Parthenon and Athena's golden shield inside from the 440s and 430s, and innumerable imitations on pots; see W. Tyrrell, *Amazons: A Study in Athenian Mythmaking* (Baltimore 1984) 9-22.

(παρθένοι) and delight in combat (μάχας ἄτρεστοι) – themes later prominent in Io's tale and in Prometheus' forecast of her descendants – represent a double inversion of fundamental Greek norms. The nomadic Scythians were even more daunting. Herodotus, detailing their primitive ways, recounts outrageous savagery: no towns or agriculture (4.46), no temples or altars or sacred images (59-62), human sacrifice (62, 71), scalping, flaying, decapitation, mutilation and drinking of human blood (64), the use of skulls for cups, scalps for cloaks, and skins for banners (65), holocaustic execution (69), impaling (72), and even cannibalism (106).<sup>19</sup> Beyond these tribes roam still more ferocious hordes: first from the nightmare land of Arabia (infested with deadly flying serpents, reports Hdt. 3.107-10), then 'near Caucasus' far to the east where 'many diverse tribes' lived like wild animals, eating wild fruit and copulating openly 'like livestock' (Hdt. 1.203).<sup>20</sup> Savage barbarians, then, are the only mortals the Oceanids envision. They then close their lament much as they began, evoking raw nature itself (431-5): 'The sea-waves roar as they fall together, the deep groans, the dark hollow of Hades rumbles below Earth, and the springs of holy flowing rivers groan in piteous pain.' The liquid realms and their source below – but not the realm of Zeus above – feel Prometheus' pain. No pathetic fallacy here: the primeval world and its wild forces, now described without any mention of mortals, are fully personalized like the Oceanids themselves, whose weeping feeds the springs they represent.<sup>21</sup> Untamed natural forces, not a world cultivated by human civilization, are what they visualize for the audience.

Prometheus, in his warnings to Io, will describe this wild world in still bleaker terms. But first, responding to the Chorus, he paints a brighter picture in a rousing speech that enumerates the many benefits he has conferred on mortals. The first half recounts how he helped mortals gain control over land, sky, sea and other animals: by building shelter, using the stars to forecast the weather and seasons, counting and writing, taming livestock, and sailing the seas (450-68). Then, after the Chorus voices both sympathy and criticism (472-5), he names three higher arts he fostered: healing, prophecy and mining (478-504). This striking vision of progress is impressive in scope and power, seductively so. It is clearly meant to elicit admiration for Prometheus, and only a Cynic or Luddite would deny that his gifts benefit humanity. Yet his speech suggests, by both emphasis and omission, that our admiration should not be unreserved.

Why Prometheus helped mortals at all is left obscure. He refuses to blame them for his predicament (445) and claims he acted from goodwill (446, *cf.* 123, 239). But he never explains the basis for this goodwill, and self-promotion looms much larger.<sup>22</sup> In a classic rhetorical ploy, he first tries to gain his audience's favour by denying his motives were self-serving (χλιδῆι) or wilful (αὐθαδίαι, 436). Yet the speech is replete with first-person singular verbs (eighteen) and pronouns (eight). Not only does he start by contradicting his own earlier account (229-31) and claiming credit for assigning even the gods their privileges (439-40).<sup>23</sup> He ends with the outrageous vaunt that 'all arts come to mortals from Prometheus' (506, *cf.* 110-11; only 'many' in 254). He also shows striking contempt for these mortals, saying they skulked underground like 'windblown ants' (452-3) and 'roamed' (450) at large like animals, utterly 'witless' (443) until

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Cho.* 160-3; see F. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus* (Paris 1980; tr. J. Lloyd, Baltimore 1988), esp. 193-9. Hdt. explicitly ascribes cannibalism only to the 'Androphagoi' (ἀγριότατα πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἔχουσι ἦθεα) who border the 'royal' Scythians on the north (4.18, 100), where Io will apparently go (712-13).

<sup>20</sup> An unmetrical θ' in 421 would distinguish Arabia and Caucasus; its deletion either conflates two regions or alludes to later migrations; see Griffith (n.5) on 420-1.

<sup>21</sup> In their catalogue of mortals, the Oceanids name not peoples but regions, as if invoking eponymous immortals: Asia (equated with Prometheus' wife

Hesione, according to Hdt. 4.45; *cf.* 560), Colchis, Arabia and Caucasus.

<sup>22</sup> Schmid (n.3) 80-3, recognizing the problem, suggests that Prometheus had created mortals. But *PD* nowhere recalls this tradition, and even if *fr.* 369 R comes from the trilogy, as West (n.7) 134 suggests, it refers only to females and is thus compatible with Hes. *WD* 61-2; *cf.* Ar. *Birds* 686, Philemon *fr.* 93 KA.

<sup>23</sup> His earlier report, which follows Hesiod in having Zeus distribute honours himself, is surely the one we are meant to accept, as his *praeteritio* in 441-2 may be designed to emphasize.

he intervened.<sup>24</sup> These erstwhile cave-dwellers he calls ‘mortals’ five times (442, 464, 470, 498, 506), and ‘humans’ twice (445, 501) – the only two instances of the word in the play.<sup>25</sup> If this focus on mortality reflects his narrow notion of humanity, as I suggested above, his mention here of ‘humans’ suggests that he thinks they differ from other animals thanks only to him. Contempt for their prior condition, while understandable, casts doubt on his assertions of goodwill. In short, his speech first and foremost extols himself as a benefactor, and his beneficiaries solely for what he claims he alone has enabled them to do. Even if his pride is warranted, it may be misplaced or excessive, and his tone here suggests it is. Hubris, not generosity, is what he conveys (*cf.* 82, 970).

How fire contributes to his account is also unclear.<sup>26</sup> Prometheus earlier claims that fire is ‘teacher of every art for mortals’ (110-11) and ‘from it they will learn many arts’ (254). But little in this speech has any direct connection with fire, and only once is its use explicit, in pyromancy (496-8). Despite Prometheus’ use of aorists, much in his speech looks proleptic (*cf.* 254). The sequence follows a process of development from subsistence to surplus: rudimentary dwellings of wood and brick (450-3), then livestock (462-6, *cf. fr.* 189a R), travel, trade and plunder (464-8), and finally higher technologies (478-504).<sup>27</sup> Other advances are also portrayed mainly as economic tools. Stargazing marks the three seasons of the archaic year (χείμαρος ... ἦρος ... θέρος, 454-6); and scribal skills are a ‘worker’ for memory (ἐργάνην, 461), as in Linear B accounts. Prometheus then adds specialized means of survival and accumulation: healing potions and unguents (478-83; but no cautery), prophetic arts (484-99), and metals both useful and precious (500-4). Throughout his speech, Prometheus depicts his gifts to mortals purely as a grant of power, specifically the power to manipulate their habitat and control their survival. He raises humans above other mortals as masters of the beasts. But he overlooks how they are to treat either themselves or immortals and the world at large. Never does he mention any of the cooperative arts and institutions of social and political life, or any personal excellences, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, or even martial. These are striking and ominous omissions in what is otherwise a stirring vision of progress.

Parallel accounts suggest that this oversight would be noticed by Attic audiences. The ‘Ode to Man’ in the first stasimon of *Antigone* provides a telling and roughly contemporary contrast. Its similar litany of technological achievements includes ‘civil norms’ (ἄστυνόμους, 355); and the final stanza emphasizes the vital importance of justice, which embraces both the chthonic powers of the mortal domain (νόμους χθονός, 368) and the Olympian bonds of civil society (θεῶν τ’ ἔνορκον δίκων, 369). The inadequacy of technology is even plainer in the Prometheus fable told by Protagoras in Plato’s *Protagoras* (320c-23a). Humans use their Promethean gifts to fight among themselves until Zeus sends Hermes to distribute the divine gifts of justice and shame, and ordains that any who spurn these gifts are to be executed ‘as a disease in the city’ (322d). Problems of authenticity and chronology make speculation about influence in either direction hazardous.<sup>28</sup> But the same basic moral underpins Solon’s ‘Elegy to the Muses’ (*fr.*

<sup>24</sup> Griffith (n.5) on 448-50 observes that ἔφυρον is usually applied to animals.

<sup>25</sup> Compounds occur three times in the prologue: first φιλανθρώπου derisively by Kratos (11), then ἀπ-ανθρώπων (20) and φιλανθρώπου (28) sympathetically by Hephaestus.

<sup>26</sup> How fire and technology relate to ‘blind hopes’ (248-50) is also unexplained.

<sup>27</sup> See Conacher (n.2) 82-97; *cf.* S. Benardete, ‘The crimes and arts of Prometheus’, *RhM* 107 (1964) 126-39. Mention of the seasons in 454-6 and livestock in 462-4 may allude to agriculture; but the lines suit nomadic gatherers or herders equally well, farming is not evident among

any mortals described in the play, it is absent from Hesiod’s first three eras in *WD*, and contemporary speculation envisioned an era of gathering before the advent of farming; see Diod. 1.14-15, and T. Cole, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology* (Cleveland 1967) 30-9.

<sup>28</sup> If by Aesch., *PD* was produced over a decade before *Antigone*; if not, it could be later. If Plato’s fable reflects lost work by Protagoras (*cf.* B8b and C1 DK), the play may be later; *cf.* West (n.7) 147-8. Context renders both accounts deeply ambiguous: each occurs early in the work, and as the play’s ensuing conflict between civic and religious authority undercuts the ode, so prolonged debate challenges the fable; *cf.* C. Segal, ‘Sophocles’



13 W), which must have been familiar to many Athenians, including the poet of *PD*. Solon, after pledging to abide by the justice of Zeus and detailing the penalties for transgression, admonishes all to follow his lead and enumerates six vocations. All six appear in Prometheus' speech: sailing, farming, metal-working, 'gifts of the Muses', prophecy and healing (43-62). For Prometheus to overlook socio-political virtues and institutions entirely thus betrays a striking disregard – whether from ignorance or scorn – for the civic norms newly authorized by Zeus.

A closely related oversight, at least equally striking to Attic audiences though rarely noted today, is religion. All the powers Prometheus envisions mortals acquiring involve sacred γέρα or τιμαί of Zeus and his fellow Olympians: not only Hephaestus' fire (7) and metalwork, but also Zeus's seasonal storms, the fruits of Demeter and Athena, the arts of the Muses, the herds of Hermes and others, Poseidon's horses and sailing, Apollo's healing arts, the foresight of Zeus and Apollo (*cf.* 669, 831), and perhaps even Athena's textile arts.<sup>29</sup> Yet Prometheus claims sole credit for all these advances, without any aid or sanction from Olympus (506). His gifts, in short, are sacrilegious, given and used without any reverence or gratitude for the grace and generosity of any gods. This oversight stands out especially in the second half of his speech. Prometheus first depicts the sacred arts of healing as simple pharmaceutical techniques (φαρμάκων χρείαι, 480-1); and if 'all illnesses' (483) include fatal ills, he has done what later provoked divine wrath against Apollo's Asclepius.<sup>30</sup> Nor is there any note of piety when he boasts of revealing the 'benefits' of metals 'hidden beneath chthonic ground' (ἐνερθε χθονός, 500-1).<sup>31</sup> Sacrilege is most evident in his long list of prophetic arts, where he describes the interpretation of dreams (485-6), omens (486-7), birds (489-92), entrails (493-8), and flames (498-9), all in strictly mechanical terms.<sup>32</sup> Even the holy rite of animal sacrifice (493-9), so prominent in Hesiod (*Theog.* 535-64), he describes without any hint of either its sacred significance or the communal feast thereby sanctified; entrails and burnt offerings are only tools for discovering when the divinities are favourable (494). His total disregard for the sanctity of these basic and distinctly Greek rites may pass unnoticed today, but not in antiquity. As if to alert the unwary, the Chorus even signals the oversight in the following stasimon, which opens with a pious prayer never to offend 'Zeus who regulates all' (ὁ πάντα νέμων, 526; *cf. Suppl.* 524-6, 816) or to 'neglect the gods when attending holy feasts of slaughtered oxen' with their father (526-31). Prometheus, in stark and telling contrast, shows no regard either for the rites of Greek religion or for the Olympian gods they honour.

One other omission overlooked today is significant both dramatically and thematically. Mortals, as Prometheus describes them here, appear to be exclusively male. Most of what he claims to have taught, from building shelters and handling livestock to stargazing, riding, ship-building, sailing, mining and metalwork, was performed only by men, and the rest (numeracy, literacy, medicine, mantic arts) mainly by men. Domestic tasks performed in the home by

praise of man and the conflicts of the *Antigone*', *Arion* 3.2 (1964) 46-66 = *Interpreting Greek Tragedy* (Ithaca 1986) 137-61; R.W.B. Burton, *The Chorus in Sophocles' Tragedies* (Oxford 1980) 95-103; C. Farrar, *The Origins of Democratic Thinking* (Cambridge 1988) 76-98.

<sup>29</sup> Prometheus labels the Olympian powers γέρα in 439 and 229, and likewise his gifts to mortals in 107; Kratos does so in 82; Hephaestus calls them τιμαί in 30, Hermes in 946; *cf. Protog.* 321de. Benardete (n.27) 137 sees an allusion to weaving in πλινθοφείς (450, *cf.* 709) and λινόπτερα (468), and notes that ἐργάνην (461) is a cult-title of Athena. For the absence of pottery, see n.87 below.

<sup>30</sup> *Cf.* Hes. *fr.* 51, 54 MW, *Naupactia EGF* 10, *Panyassis EGF* 19, *Pi. Pyth.* 3.47-62; for Zeus's prohibi-

tion on reviving the dead, *cf.* the Chorus in *Ag.* 1022-4, Apollo in *Eum.* 647-9. The function Prometheus assigns to ἐλπής in 248 is also suspicious: τῆσδε νόσου in 249 suggests death itself, not simply 'foreseeing' it.

<sup>31</sup> The sequence of metals reverses Hesiod's suggestively: first functional bronze and iron, then precious silver and gold; or from implements of war and work to idle luxuries.

<sup>32</sup> Only one method is missing: inspired utterance (oracles, seers, poets), the holiest type and distinctly Olympian (*cf. Eum.* 16-18). See D. Sansone, *Aeschylean Metaphors for Intellectual Activity* (*Hermes Einzelschrift* 35, Wiesbaden 1975) 41-4; *cf.* K.J. Dover, 'Some neglected aspects of Agamemnon's dilemma', *JHS* 93 (1973) 58-69, esp. 61-4 on the dubious status of omens in *Ag.*

women he never mentions, neither techniques for the production and preparation of food and clothing nor those for bearing and raising children. Besides its obvious sexism, which poet and audience shared, this oversight implies that Prometheus has little if any regard for the 'privileges' of the Olympian goddesses or their contributions to human culture: the fire and social solidarity of Hestia's hearths both civic and domestic, the twin maternal and cereal domains of Demeter Thesmophoros, the textile arts (*cf.* n.29) and civic powers of Athena Polias, the healthy chastity of Artemis Kourotrophos, the harmonizing allure of Ouranian Aphrodite, and Hera Teleia's matrimonial authority over legitimate marriage and childbirth.<sup>33</sup> Nor does he acknowledge the several divine sororities fathered by Zeus to foster and enrich human life, most notably the Horae (embodying Order, Justice and Peace), Graces, Muses and Fates (*Theog.* 901-17). This disregard for women's skills and functions also betrays a striking ignorance of the nature of mortality and its cycles of birth and death. Prometheus, to judge by his own report, showed mortals only how the living can survive and ignored their need to reproduce before and because they die. This oversight is highlighted in the following episode when Io enters, a maiden like the Oceanids, the only mortal in the play, and the first mother of a new family of mortals.

## II. IO'S JOURNEY

Human life as Prometheus portrays it is a stark struggle for survival, and the world he envisions, while recognizably human, is devoid of the sacred and humane: no kindness or fellowship, no religion or government, no families or civil society. But this is also Io's world, as we learn in a long episode that details her ordeals. For as the Oceanids close their song with a recollection of their sister's wedding to Prometheus (555-60), the 'glorious wife' of Zeus (834) careens onstage in one of the most striking entrances in extant tragedy. Crowned with horns (588), tormented by a stinging gadfly and ghostly visions of Argos (566), and bewildered by her already long journey into ever more remote wasteland, she is the very embodiment of primeval humanity: beastly in appearance, crazed by pain and confusion, and seemingly powerless to shape her lot.<sup>34</sup> Yet she is vividly human, the first and only mortal in the play, and perhaps the first in the entire trilogy. The ensuing scene, by far the longest and most complex of the play (336 of 1093 lines), splits it in half, and probably the trilogy as well. Hitherto the focus is on immortals and the perspective exclusively theirs. Henceforth our attention is directed to mortals, and especially to Io and her descendants. For as we learn at the end of the scene, they hold the key to Prometheus' eventual release. The dramatic tension built up by his defiance of Zeus thus turns toward its ultimate resolution.<sup>35</sup>

Yet the episode seriously aggravates the problem of theodicy. An innocent and feeble victim of Zeus, Io seems to confirm all too vividly earlier reports that the new ruler has little concern for mortals. In a striking and pathetic contrast, she is as restless, distraught and mortally vulnerable as Prometheus is immobile, defiant and securely immortal (*cf.* 752-6, 1053). Thomson's verdict is again widely shared: 'Above all, in his treatment of Io, [Zeus] reveals his violence.

<sup>33</sup> *Cf.* N. Loraux, 'What is a goddess?', in P. Schmitt Pantel (ed.), *A History of Women in the West* 1 (Rome 1990; tr. A. Goldhammer, Cambridge, MA 1992) 11-44, esp. 22-8.

<sup>34</sup> Rosenmeyer (n.7) 65-6 calls Io 'a mask for the soul of pre-Promethean man, for the terrors of human life prior to the advent of cultural progress and enlightenment.'

<sup>35</sup> The resolution is promptly and dramatically postponed when Prometheus announces that a future rival will overthrow Zeus (907-27) but refuses to say how.

The play then ends with his immediate and long-term fate still in doubt: will the harsher punishment he is about to receive compel him to submit promptly and win release, or will he refuse and Zeus eventually fall? The second half of the play thus supplies both motive for the sequel and clues to its final resolution. How that was achieved is a question too complex to pursue here; I suspect that Prometheus misinterprets his 'secret', that Zeus only appears to be at risk, and that the marriage of Thetis to Peleus was eventually revealed to be part of his plan, but evidence is too tenuous for confidence about any of this.

The brutality of this episode is not, as in the *Suppliants*, veiled in lyric poetry; on the contrary, the poet seems to be at pains to fill his audience, like his own Oceanids, with abhorrence... There can be no question where the sympathies of an Athenian audience must have lain – or indeed, of any popular audience.<sup>36</sup> This is a reasonable initial reaction, and first impressions matter in drama. But it leaves a great deal unexplained, and closer inspection will show that this long scene contains numerous signs that Zeus, far from being a wanton despot and rapist, favours Io with extraordinary grace. The play's account of her tribulations, in short, provides the key to understanding how it seeks to justify the ways of Zeus to mankind.

Despite its length and importance, the Io episode has received little discussion.<sup>37</sup> It is widely agreed that her immense journey here, whatever its basis in myth and travel lore, is essentially an exercise in 'parageography.'<sup>38</sup> The sequence of peoples and places draws on multiple sources and defies accurate mapping. But why is her tale so prolonged? Is it simply, as Thomson says, to underscore the cruelty of Zeus by multiplying the terrors and torments Io must face? Or does her exotic travelogue serve some other purpose? Unless the poet mingled his sources randomly, his eclectic and often eccentric geography should have a pattern, and recurrent motifs should reveal its purpose.<sup>39</sup> The first stasimon in Aeschylus' *Suppliants* tells a much simpler tale. There Io follows the canonical route across the Hellespont and south through Asia Minor and Syria (538-55). Not only is her route shorter and clearer, it is also far less perilous and alien. There is no need to accuse the poet of carelessness or ineptitude, as some who focus on geography do. Myth and tragedy often correlate physical and conceptual space, and here anthropology, ethnography and even teratology are much more prominent. The mortals Prometheus warns Io to shun bear directly on the problem of theodicy. Nowhere on her journey will she find anything remotely resembling Greek conceptions of civilized society: no cities, no laws, no sacred rites, scant traces of family life, and precious little kindness to strangers. It is this moral and cultural remoteness, even more than physical distance, that the episode is designed to emphasize. Its vast panorama of barbaric tribes and menacing monsters deploys what Edith Hall calls the 'discourse of barbarism' to present a graphic inversion of fundamental Greek and Athenian norms: 'here, as so often, the ethnically other meets the mythical and chronologically prior.'<sup>40</sup> Generalizing this logic of antithesis, the play celebrates an Athenian vision of panhellenic culture by imagining the horrors of a world remote in both time and space and devoid of distinctive Hellenic blessings.

Io's journey is presented in five separate stages, each geographically and culturally distinct. Io herself first recounts the origin of her journey in Argos (640-86). After the Chorus lament her tale, Prometheus describes her forthcoming ordeals in Europe (705-35). After brief dialogue

<sup>36</sup> Thomson (n.1: 1946) 323, cf. Thomson (n.1: 1932) 9.

<sup>37</sup> A notable exception is R.D. Murray, *The Motif of Io in Aeschylus' 'Suppliants'* (Princeton 1958); his thesis that 'the web of imagery woven around Io ... conveys much of the meaning of the *Suppliants'* (15) suits *PD* at least equally well. Cf. F. Zeitlin, 'The politics of eros in the Danaid trilogy of Aeschylus', in R. Hexter and D. Selden (eds.), *Innovations of Antiquity* (New York 1992) 203-52 (= F. Zeitlin, *Playing the Other* (Chicago 1996) 123-71), esp. 229-32: 'the story of Io ... symbolizes the union of male and female that marks the point of departure for human generation and genealogy.'

<sup>38</sup> I borrow this term from my colleague Douglass Parker. For the main problems, see Griffith (n.5) 213-14. These are usually ascribed to confusion in either the poet or his sources. But the explanation may be dramatic: errors may indicate that Prometheus is confused, hence presumes to know more than he does; this would help

explain why his forecast departs so far from the account in *Suppl.* 538-89 only a few years earlier.

<sup>39</sup> Plausible sources include the Hesiodic *Catalogue*, *Aigimios*, *Phoronis*, *Danais*, *Arimaspeia*, various plays including Aesch. *Phorcides*, and chronicles by Hecataeus, Acusilaus and Pherecydes; see F. Stoessl, *Der Prometheus des Aeschylus als geistesgeschichtliches und theatergeschichtliches Phänomen (Palingenesia 24, Stuttgart 1988)* 42-56.

<sup>40</sup> E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford 1989) 147; cf. Hartog (n.19). Hall contrasts an archaic emphasis on the temporally primitive with a shift to ethnic and cultural difference in tragedy; *PD*, with its primeval setting, intertwines these strategies throughout. For similar themes and strategies in the *Oresteia*, see A.M. Bowie, 'Religion and politics in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*', *CQ* 43 (1993) 10-31.

with Io, he narrates her route through Asia to the Nile delta (788-815). Then, to confirm his powers of foresight, he demonstrates his hindsight by recounting her path from Argos to the desolate site of the play (824-41). Finally, answering a request from the Chorus (785; *cf.* 821-2), he foretells the end of her ordeal at Canopus and mentions two generations of her descendants (844-73). With one exception, the play presents these stages in chronological order. Interruptions punctuate the itinerary at significant points: between Europe and Asia, between Io's destination and her descendants, and between primeval Argos and its heroic future. They also add suspense by delaying the disclosure of her Hellenic legacy – including Prometheus' own saviour. What then are we told, and what do we learn?

After the delirious anapaests of her entrance and a short lyric monody (561-608), Io calms down enough for a brief conversation with Prometheus about their strangely similar fates (609-30). When the Chorus interrupts to ask about her past, she recounts how dreams and oracles led her father to cast her out, and how Argos, 'an earthborn cowherd intemperate in anger', cruelly tormented her (631-86). I shall return to this initial stage later. When she finishes, the Chorus sing a brief but bitter lament (687-95). Prometheus then begins his forecast with dire warnings about the dangers and ordeals awaiting Io as she wanders through Europe toward Asia. First on her harrowing path come one of the tribes named in the first stasimon (415-19): the 'nomads of Scythia who dwell aloft under woven roofs on well-rounded carts and equipped with far-shooting bows' (709-11). They have acquired some Promethean arts: shelter, livestock and weapons. But theirs is a primitive and savage culture. Wandering nomads, they do not cultivate the land, as mention of 'unploughed acres' emphasizes (708; *cf.* 2), and covered wagons are their homes. They are also dangerously hostile: their bows make them a threat even from afar, and Io 'must not go near them' (712). She will next encounter the Chalybes, eponymous metal-workers (*cf.* 133) and another lethal menace. They too know Promethean arts: ironwork and perhaps houses (οἰκοῦσι suggests buildings). But they too are fiercely hostile: 'untame [ὄνήμεροι] and unapproachable for strangers [ξένοις]' (716), merciless as the iron they mine (*cf.* 242, 301).<sup>41</sup>

Beyond these barbarians, Io will face a raging river, aptly called Hubristes or 'Violent' (*cf. Suppl.* 30), which she must follow back to its source high in the mountains of the Caucasus (717-22). Now far from any mortals, she will face daunting natural obstacles: an impassable torrent (718) and 'peaks that neighbour the stars' (721-2).<sup>42</sup> Rivers, of course, are sons of Ocean, and like the mountains sprung from Gaia (*Theog.* 129-30), they embody the natural forces of the pre-Olympian wilderness which the play personifies repeatedly, often in violent and destructive terms. Here the Hubristes 'exhales vigour' (720), and the Caucasus forms Gaia's 'brows' or 'temples' (κροτάφον, 721). Further on, Pontus itself has 'jaws' (Πόντου γνάθος, 726), like Typho's volcano (368), and its coast is a treacherous 'mother-in-law' (727). This image is prompted by the next mortals Io will reach, the 'man-reviling band of Amazons' (στρατὸν στυγάνορ', 723-4; *cf.* Hdt. 4.110). Nomadic warriors who spurn the Greek norms of marriage and patriarchy, 'they will gladly guide' another wandering maiden (728). Future generations, Prometheus adds, will migrate from the northern Pontic region, where many accounts situate them (*cf.* Hdt. 4.110-17), and 'sometime settle down [ποτε κατοικιοῦσι] at Themiscyra on the Thermodon' (724-5) and across the Bosphorus by 'the rugged Salmydessian jaws of Pontus, hostile to sailing strangers [ἐχθρόξευος ναύτησι] and mother-in-law of ships' (726-7). Vividly personifying Amazonian traits, the treacherous terrain where they will settle underscores their scorn for Hellenic and Olympian norms of *xenia*.

<sup>41</sup> In *ST* 727-33 the Chorus likens the Fury of Oedipus' curse (720-6) to a 'Chalybian settler from Scythia ... bitter, raw-minded [ὠμόφρων] iron'; *cf.* *ST* 941-5.

<sup>42</sup> The *hapax* ἀστρογαίτων, evoking ἀστρυγαίτων, signals the absence of 'neighbours' and 'towns'. Contrast *Eum.* 10-14: Athenian roadbuilders 'tame the untamed land' of Parnassus; *cf.* Bowie (n.40) 14-16.

This stage of Io's journey ends when she crosses from Europe into Asia via a strait destined to be named Bosphorus or 'Oxford' in honour of her ordeal (729-35). Prometheus rejects the usual Thracian Bosphorus in favour of the 'Cimmeric isthmus' and 'Maeotic channel' (729-31) on the Tauric Chersonnese. Unless he or the poet is hopelessly confused, dramatic pathos may be one motive. This route is much longer and more perilous, carrying Io far beyond the familiar mouth of the Pontus and into especially rugged and hostile regions. The Cimmeri, like the barbarians previously named, were infamously savage warriors, and their marauding invasion of Phrygia and Lydia in the seventh century had pillaged Magnesia (Archil. *fr.* 20 W), severely threatened Ephesus (Callin. *fr.* 3 W), and terrorized all of Greek Ionia (Hdt. 1.15, 4.11-12). Their name signals again the ferocity of Promethean mortals even in Europe. But there are also aetiological motives for altering Io's course. This northern route, which extends her course far to the east and south, carries her all the way round the Pontus and through the heart of the Persian empire. This vast circuit stakes a mythical claim to these domains, just as her usual route through Anatolia provides an aetiology for 'Ionian' settlements there. Her northern journey implicitly authorizes existing Greek interests around the Pontus, including numerous Ionian colonies and essential Athenian trade. And her travels hence to Egypt provide a mythical charter for the far-flung dominion of her many descendants, both legendary and historical, whose later migrations and conquests spread the heritage of Zeus far east to Persia itself.<sup>43</sup> In the decades after Plataea, this enormous extension of Io's route would resonate with pride and confidence in both the heritage and the prospects of Greek culture, religion and power.

Prometheus describes the inhospitable region north of the euphemistically named Euxine (Pi. *Nem.* 4.49, *cf.* "Αξεινος, *Py.* 4.203) in such awful terms that Io is reduced to suicidal despair and threatens to leap off a cliff (747-51, *cf.* 583). But when Prometheus hints obscurely that Zeus may eventually fall, she recovers and asks for further directions (752-89). The next stage of her itinerary takes her deep into Asia toward the rising sun (790-1), where she faces creatures not only brutal but beastly. Unlike the European mortals she encounters, which are savage but recognizably human, the denizens of Asia are deformed and monstrous hybrids. The first place Prometheus names is the 'Gorgonian plain of Cisthene' where the Phorcides dwell.<sup>44</sup> These infamous demons, the incestuous brood of the Pontid Phorcys and his amphibian sister Ceto (*Theog.* 237-9, 270-6), are graphically described. The hideous Graiai are 'swan-shaped' (or only white-haired?), empty-eyed, toothless cave-dwellers (794-7; *cf.* 452-3, Aesch. *Phorcides fr.* 261 R). Their sister Gorgons, 'winged and serpent-maned', are lethal even to behold (798-800) and, outdoing the 'man-hating' Amazons, indiscriminately 'mortal-hating' (βροτοστρυγεις, 799). After these monstrous fiends come others equally deadly: 'sharp-beaked' griffins and the 'one-eyed band' of 'horse-striding' Arimaspi (804-5). These Cyclopean warriors, made famous by a lost epic, have apparently settled (οικοῦσιν, 806) and get metal from the Plouton, a river of wealth literally 'flowing with gold' (805-6).<sup>45</sup> Gold is emblematic of Asian luxury, and like the female

<sup>43</sup> Io's descendants include Libya, Aegyptus, the houses of Danaus, Cadmus, Europa, Perseus and innumerable Heraclids; see M.L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women* (Oxford 1985) 76-91, 144-54; Hall (n.40) 172-81; R. Fowler, 'Genealogical thinking, Hesiod's *Catalogue*, and the creation of the Hellenes', *PCPS* n.s. 44 (1998) 1-19. Athenian envoys to Susa reported that Argive emissaries reminded Artaxerxes at his accession in 465/4 of their shared descent from Perseus, also a descendant of Io (Hdt. 7.150-2, *cf.* 6.53-4, 7.61, *Pers.* 80, 181-7); her route would thus have territorial implications in Athens in the following decade, when *Suppl.* and probably *PD* were composed.

<sup>44</sup> The scholia complain that the Gorgons are out of place; but like the Amazons, they could later migrate to the west, where Pherecydes (*FGrHist* 3 F11) had Perseus find them. The whole passage probably had parallels in Aesch. *Phorcides* (see *fr.* 261-2 R), which it may recall.

<sup>45</sup> On the *Arimaspeia* and its possible influence here, see J.D.P. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus* (Oxford 1962). Of the metals listed in 502, the silver of Attic Laureion (allegedly a key to victory over the Persians: *Pers.* 238, Hdt. 7.144) is a Hellenic mean between luxurious gold in the Asian East (805) and deadly iron in the Scythian North (714).

Phorcides and oriental griffins, it marks an ideological contrast with sturdier Europe, where functional iron is worked by the virile Chalybes. Yet the galloping 'band' of Arimasian warriors (στρατόν, 804, echoing 723), like the griffins they battle, are no less hostile to strangers, as Prometheus warns again (807, echoing 712 and 716).

Deeper into Asia resides 'a dark tribe who dwell by the fountains of Helios' (808-9). As the River Aethiops confirms (809), these are the primordial Ethiopians at the southern limit of the world, where proximity to the sun darkens their skin.<sup>46</sup> Prometheus neither describes their customs nor warns Io to avoid them. But even if they are ancestors of a people that enjoys the company of Olympians at their sacrifices in epic (*Il.* 1.423-5, 23.205-7, *Od.* 1.22-5), Io must hurry on. Turning back west, she will follow the Aethiops to its distant source in the 'Bybline mountains' where the Nile also originates (810-12). This 'holy and refreshing stream' (812, cf. *Suppl.* 561), first son of Ocean (*Theog.* 339) and a gentler force of nature, will then 'guide' Io down to the coast (813, echoing 728 and personifying another river). There her odyssey will finally end; there she and her offspring are 'destined to found the distant colony' (τὴν μακρὰν ἀποικίαν πέπρωται κτίσαι, 814-15), evidently the first settlement in the land.<sup>47</sup> The narrative of this last leg of Io's journey is notably concise. Nowhere up the Aethiops or down the Nile does Prometheus mention any mortals. The cradle of civilization is apparently still empty. But as *Suppliants* 313-24 explains (cf. sch. *PD* 853), Io's son will mate with a daughter of the Nile named Memphis, who will give birth to Libya, who in turn will have a grandson Aegyptus. In short, the eponymous lord and lady of the surrounding regions will be Io's descendants.

Before continuing his predictions, Prometheus recounts Io's flight from Argos. The Greece he depicts is a desolate land of fantastic portents. In the Molossian plain, notoriously rugged and home to backward and hostile tribes, he names only a personified 'steep-backed' Dodona and the 'unbelievable prodigy' of its 'speaking oaks' (829-32). From there, Io followed the coast to 'Rhea's womb' (κόλπος, 837), which he says will later be called Ionian in her honour (839-41). Neither region shows any sign of human habitation. But even in Prometheus' account, both sites evoke the future beneficence of Zeus. The first recalls Io's earlier report that Dodona and Delphi ordered her to leave her home (658-72), thereby highlighting the initial stage of Zeus's plan for her; and by now proclaiming her 'one who will be a glorious wife of Zeus' (834-5), his holiest oracle foretells both its imminent consummation in Egypt (δάμαρ) and her lasting renown (κλεινή). Announced by the panhellenic 'seat of Thesprotian Zeus' (831), a happy ending to Io's perilous journey is now assured.<sup>48</sup> With similar resonance, the twin titles Prometheus gives the other site link this mortal bride of Zeus and her progeny with his own ancestry and birth, since what was then his Titanic mother's 'womb' (another telling personification) is destined to bear the name of the maiden whose womb will introduce his seed into the human race.<sup>49</sup> Io's swift passage through Greece thus alludes to her pivotal role in the shift of authority from the Titans to Zeus and the Olympians, and her far-reaching impact on the future of mankind is boldly fore-

<sup>46</sup> Hdt. 7.69-70 distinguishes eastern Ethiopians 'from the rising of the sun' (near India as in *Suppl.* 284-6) from southern Ethiopians in or near Arabia; Aethiops here should be the eponymous river-god ancestor of both. Cf. n.115.

<sup>47</sup> The only sign of habitation is πόλις Κάνωβος in 846; but the name is from the helmsman of Menelaus (*Hec. FGrHist* 1 F308, cf. *Nic. Ther.* 309-19) centuries later, and ἀποικίαν κτίσαι in 814 suggests that πόλις is proleptic (sch. 846b notes the anachronism). Assimilation of Io and Epaphus to Isis and Apis was already under way (*Hdt.* 2.41, 3.27-8; cf. 2.59), but *PD* nowhere exploits it; see F. Solmsen, *Isis among the Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA 1979) 16-21.

<sup>48</sup> Θεσπρωτοῦ Διός, evoking the θέσπισμα πρῶτον of Zeus (cf. προντεθεσπίκει of Themis in 211), underscores the sanctity of his oldest and most hallowed oracle (cf. *Hdt.* 2.52). On δάμαρ, see n.68.

<sup>49</sup> Κεκλήσεται in 840 echoes κλεινή δάμαρ in 834 (each a final metron). The area may also have been called 'sea of Kronos' after his father (*Ap. Rhod.* 4.327 with sch., *Lycophr.* 631 with *Tzetzes*). The play, by making Io the daughter of Inachus, telescopes the Argive tradition of an earlier Inachid named Niobe (daughter of Phoroneus) being the first mortal mate of Zeus (*Apollod.* 2.1.1); see West (n.43) 76-7; K. Dowden, *Death and the Maiden: Girls' Initiation Rites in Greek Mythology* (London 1989) 118-24.

cast when Prometheus ends his retrospective account by announcing that the Ionian Sea will be a memorial to Io and her journey known 'to all mortals' (841).

All this lies in the future when Prometheus speaks. Even Io's Argive homeland remains a remarkably primitive realm, as we learn when she recounts how she was driven away forever. Her father Inachus (590) is himself an Oceanid (636) and another river-god. His land, in Io's delirious account, shows traces of civilization. Domesticated cattle (*cf.* 462-4) figure in her dreams (653) and also in her banishment (677). Basic Olympian norms are also honoured. With filial piety, Io reports her troubling dreams to her father (656-7), who promptly consults Delphi and Dodona (658).<sup>50</sup> Respect for the Olympians, for the nuclear family, for patriarchy and for chastity (*παρθενῶνας*, 646), or in a word, reverent *αἰδώς*, thus seems to be already known here. But once banished by her father – against their wishes and only when threatened by insistent oracles (671-2) – Io is radically dehumanized, visibly bestialized with horns on her head like a barbarian idol, and mentally deranged by a gadfly's stinging bite (673-5). Worse, the 'earth-born Argos' (677; *cf.* 567, *Suppl.* 305) who guards her is 'easily angered' (678) and monstrous with his 'myriad eyes' (568, 678-9).<sup>51</sup> Yet Zeus's guiding hand is evident even in Io's woe. She herself evokes it in a traditional image by referring, however bitterly, to the 'bridle of Zeus' (672) and his 'whip' (682).<sup>52</sup> She is also soon freed from her monstrous guard. To the tormented Io, the 'sudden' death of Argos remains mysterious (681-2). But few in the audience would fail to recognize the work of Hermes Argeiphontes (*cf.* *Suppl.* 305), and behind it the command of Zeus.<sup>53</sup> Io's homeland, then, is more advanced in its social and religious culture than any other described in the play. This may help explain why Zeus chose the 'Inachean seed' (705) to 'plant' (*φιλῦσαι*, 233; *cf.* *Θηλύσπορος*, 855, *σποράς*, 871) a new family of mortals who will one day return to rule its ancestral home. Even here, however, human life remains terribly primitive, materially, socially and spiritually, still only a feeble and dreamlike shadow (448-50, *cf.* 546-50) of the culture to come.<sup>54</sup>

Prometheus concludes his prophecies with a forecast of Io's return to human form and a preview of her progeny that spans the time between this and the following play. Separated forever from her Oceanid father, she will find a new home with the guidance of the avuncular river-god Nile. At seaside Canopus, Zeus will restore her to her senses (848), doing for his first mortal bride what Prometheus claims to have done for all mortals (*ἔμφορον* recalls 443-4). Then, from the gentlest of caresses (849), the chaste maiden (as Io is repeatedly called) will conceive a son, to be named Epaphus or 'Caress' after his immaculate conception.<sup>55</sup> In the first mention of agri-

<sup>50</sup> Io is elsewhere Hera's priestess (*Suppl.* 291-3, *cf.* *Hes. fr.* 124 MW). But here Hera's role is notably downplayed and left uncertain: Prometheus blames her (592, 704), as do the Chorus (900, *cf.* n.106 below); but Io blames only Zeus (577-85, 759) and never mentions Hera (unless in a lacuna in 600 where sch. 599a led Hermann to propose "Ἡρας). Contrast Hera's prominence as Io's alleged tormentor in *Suppl.* 296-303, 561-4, 586-7; *cf.* Conacher (n.2) 17, 60.

<sup>51</sup> Both his 'myriad eyes' (568) and his 'earth-born' lineage (as in *Acus. FGrHist* 2 F27; other early accounts assign him mortal parents) liken Argos to other primeval monsters, esp. 'hundred-headed' Typho (351-3, *cf.* *Theog.* 825).

<sup>52</sup> For the metaphor, see R. Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary* 4 (Cambridge 1992) on *Il.* 13.812.

<sup>53</sup> *Bacch.* 19.25-36, a dithyramb for Athens, assumes this account but puzzles over its details.

<sup>54</sup> Why Zeus chose Io and why she migrates to Egypt are questions the play does not address. Pelasgian

'Apidania' (*cf.* *Suppl.* 250-70), as Zeus's birthplace (*Call. Hymn* 1.10-32, glossing or correcting *Theog.* 468-84; *cf.* *Paus.* 8.38, 8.36.2-3) and Hera's favourite land, obviously warrants favour. Io's destination also provides a Greek origin for putative Egyptian influences on Greek culture and religion (*Hdt.* 2.49-58); *cf.* C. Froidefond, *Le mirage égyptien* (Aix-en-Provence 1971) 105-12.

<sup>55</sup> Io calls herself a 'maiden' (*παρθένος*, 588, 608), Prometheus calls her a 'daughter' (*κόρη*, 589, 739), her dream calls her both (646-8), the Chorus cite her *παρθενία* (898), and Prometheus calls Zeus only her 'suitor' (*μνηστήρ*, 740). The period of *παρθενία* (technically from menarche to parturition) normally implies chastity, though not necessarily virginity; see H. King, 'Bound to bleed: Artemis and Greek women', in A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (eds.), *Images of Women in Antiquity* (London 1983) 109-27, esp. 111-12 (*cf.* H. King, *Hippocrates' Woman* (London 1998) 75-99), and G. Sissa, *Greek Virginity* (Paris 1987; tr. A. Goldhammer, Cambridge, MA 1990) 73-104. The play's emphatic

culture in the episode, and the only explicit mention in the entire play, Prometheus then foretells how her son 'will harvest [καρπώσεται] all the land watered by broad-flowing Nile' (851-2, *cf.* 455). Io's journey is thus in part a breath-taking act of cultural imperialism, appropriating the acknowledged priority of Egyptian agriculture by tying it to the union of Zeus and Hellenic Io.<sup>56</sup> Cultural aetiology also explains why Prometheus is made to mention only two later generations: the Danaids at length (853-70), then Heracles very briefly and allusively (871-3). This telescoping highlights the fifth generation, when Io's line will return to Greece and establish 'a kingly family' (βασιλικὸν γένος, 869). The special prerogative of kings, as ordained by Zeus, is to uphold his justice; and this is the first and only mention of them in the play. Prometheus and other Titans invariably equate his rule with tyranny and oppression, because they know nothing else and can imagine nothing better. Through Io, however, Zeus introduces humans to a new social and political order.

If kingship and legitimate authority are to flourish, the nuclear family of the Greek *oikos* must first be securely established. That is why the Danaids return to Argos when their cousins pursue them like 'hawks' chasing 'doves' and 'hunting marriages not to be hunted' (857-9; *cf. Suppl.* 223-4). In this play at least, the crucial problem is not endogamy (despite 855) but the desecration of sexual union as a predatory act, which the wild sons of Aegyptus (ἐπτοημένοι φρένας, 856) turn into an unholy hunt: θηρεύοντες οὐ θηρασίμους / γάμους (858-9).<sup>57</sup> The φθόνος or 'resentment' of an unspecified 'god' (859) will therefore prevent the capture, rape and subjugation (*cf. Suppl.* 335-7) of their cousins. If the mass murder that follows (860-3) has any warrant, it is because the Danaids act as the 'doves' of Aphrodite – here duly invoked as Kupris (864; *cf.* 650) – in defending her sacred rites (*cf. sch.* 857). Even so, their violence likens them to Amazons (*cf. Suppl.* 287-9), and only the one maiden who yields to Aphrodite's 'longing charms' (ἴμερος θέλξει, 865; *cf.* 649-50, *Suppl.* 1004-5, 1039-42) will spare her suitor and continue Io's royal line. In so doing, Prometheus says, Hypermnestra will choose to be called 'unmighty rather than murderstained' (868). His words have Olympian overtones: ἀναλκις (*cf.* 546) highlights precisely what she alone among her sisters lacks (they all choose deadly Ares, 860-1), while also pointing ahead to her greatest descendant, Heracles Alcides; and μαιφόνος signifies the Olympian respect for human life implicit in the miasma that under Zeus attends all murder. But all this, like the release of Prometheus, lies far in the future, long after Io dies.

The episode ends abruptly when Io is suddenly seized by madness and careens offstage, her heart kicking like a filly (λακτίζει), her eyes spinning like wheels (τροχοδινείται), her voice overwhelmed by panting frenzy (λύσσης πνεύματι μάργωι, 877-86). Reduced again to her former bestially barbarous state, she seems a helpless victim of a cruelly unjust Zeus. Yet the urgency of her departure also suits the plan of Zeus, and of the whole trilogy. Io has learned that her torments have an end and purpose, and however far and long she may wander, she can now look forward to a comforting vision of maternal joy and prosperity. Prometheus has given her 'hope' in her desperate plight, as he earlier told the Chorus he has done for all mortals (251; *cf.* 249, 606).<sup>58</sup> The audience as well can now see that Io's 'struggles' (ἄθλα, 634, 702) serve a cosmic purpose, and their very enormity endows her with heroic stature not unlike her greatest

avoidance of rape may be deliberate expurgation of archaic tradition (*cf. Pi. Ol.* 1.25-53); in *Suppl.* 291-313, only the Danaids, all too anxious themselves about male sexuality and speaking only on hearsay (φασί, 291 and 301; φάτις, 293 as in *Pi. Ol.* 1.28; λόγος τις, 295), tell of Io being seduced; but *cf. H. Friis Johansen and E.W. Whittle, Aeschylus: The Suppliants* (Copenhagen 1980) on 230.

<sup>56</sup> Sch. 813 relates τρίγωνον to the Egyptian origin of geometry, which Hdt. 2.109 traces to agriculture.

<sup>57</sup> The emphasis in *Suppl.* may be different; for discussion, see Winnington-Ingram (n.4) 59-60; Conacher, *Aeschylus: The Earlier Plays and Related Studies* (Toronto 1996) 75-103; R. Seaford, 'The tragic wedding', *JHS* 107 (1987) 106-30, esp. 110-19. In both plays, the gentle and ultimately consensual union of Io and Zeus marks a contrasting ideal; *cf. Zeitlin* (n.37) 226-38.

<sup>58</sup> The κέρδος of foreknowledge in 777 (*cf.* 876) answers Io's anguished question in 747: τί δῆτ' ἔμοι ζῆν κέρδος;



descendant's. Prometheus has also revealed that he will eventually be released, and in alluding to his liberator soon to appear in the sequel, he inadvertently directs our attention ahead to his ultimate reconciliation with Zeus. Io's prompt departure thus hastens both the fulfilment of her own destiny and the resolution of the trilogy.

In her wake, the Oceanids express dread of any union above their station, and especially with the mighty Zeus (887-907). But their reaction, in poignant counterpoint to their fond memories of Prometheus' own wedding at the end of the previous stasimon (555-60), also indicates Io's exceptional status and the glorious future that Zeus has granted her and her family. Framing the entire episode with contrasting images of sexual union and marriage, the two odes highlight both the burdens and the rewards of Io's extraordinary destiny. Its fulfilment, moreover, is directed by the mysterious stinging οἶστρος or frenzy that first drove her onstage (566, *cf.* 580, 589, 681, 836) and now suddenly drives her again on her way (879-80).<sup>59</sup> This, Io and the audience alike should by now suspect, is the 'bridle' and 'whip' of Zeus (672, 682; *cf.* n.52) that guides her onward to her destination as soon as she learns what a glorious future will follow her arduous journey's end. The plan of Zeus, evoked in the last words of the final stasimon (τὰν Διὸς μῆτιν, 906), has thus begun to emerge, even if the Chorus see only its ineluctability (οὐχ ὀρῶ ὅπαι φύγοιμ' ἄν, 906).

### III. THE PLAN OF ZEUS

The primitive world through which Io journeys is 'a kind of Hell'.<sup>60</sup> A perilous wilderness still in a savage state of nature, it shows in some areas signs of a few crude Promethean arts: man-made dwellings, domesticated animals and metal weapons. But no other arts appear anywhere. Vast regions remain unsettled and uncultivated. Many of its denizens are bestial monsters, some still lurking in caves. 'Cow-horned' Io (588, *cf.* 674, *Suppl.* 568-70) resembles the monstrous 'oxheaded' hybrids Empedocles imagines in his cosmogony (B61 DK). Even the recognizably human mortals are utterly barbaric, living by hunting and plunder, bitterly hostile to strangers, and too wild and violent for life in a *polis*. Nowhere is there any trace of peaceful, pious or friendly peoples, not even the Hyperboreans or Issedones, legendary neighbours of the Scyths or Arimaspi.<sup>61</sup> Nor, if Prometheus does have some concern for mortals, as he avers (τὴν λίσαν [sic] φιλότητα βροτῶν, 123; οἴκτωι, 239; εὐνοίαν, 446; *cf.* 611), does he ever explain his interest or motive. This total disregard for Zeus Philios and Xenios, like the pervasive neglect of his justice and all things sacred, is a major source of the awful terror that darkens Io's world.<sup>62</sup> But it reflects the primitive state of the world, not immaturity in Zeus. Responsibility for this miserable condition, moreover, lies with the earlier gods and their wild progeny, not with their allegedly despotic successor. Under the Titans, the world remained uncultivated, uncivilized and inhumane. Only under Zeus and his fellow Olympians does human civilization begin. Is this why Zeus planned to annihilate mortals, as Prometheus claims (232)?

<sup>59</sup> This οἶστρος (unlike μόωσ, 675) may allude specifically to the female erotic frenzy of 'estrus'; *cf.* *Hippol.* 1300-4; *Winnington-Ingram* (n.4) 195 n.54; and n.69 below. Similarly, λακτίζει (881) of Io's frenzy echoes ἀπολακτίσθις λέχος (651) in the dreams that urged her not to reject Zeus's love; this image, with ἐνέζευξας in 579 and κέντροισι in 597, underscores the common erotic and conjugal motif of taming a filly; *cf.* C. Calame, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece* (Rome, 1977; tr. D. Collins and J. Orion, Lanham, MD 1997) 238-44.

<sup>60</sup> Reinhardt (n.4) 75; *cf.* Pohlenz (n.5) 80: 'einer Urzeit ... überhaupt noch hart und wild'.

<sup>61</sup> See *Hdt.* 4.32-6, 4.26; *Bolton* (n.45) 22-4, 76-9; *cf.* the exemplary Gabioi in *Luomenos fr.* 196 R.

<sup>62</sup> In *Suppl.*, the third stasimon opens by invoking Zeus Xenios (627, *cf.* 672, *Ag.* 61, 362, 748) and ends by ranking respect for *xenoi* alongside respect for citizens and ancestral gods as the three commandments of *Dike* (698-709; see Friis Johansen and Whittle (n.55) on 707-9); and King Pelasgus counts disregard for *xenia* as the Egyptian herald's 'first' and decisive offence against *Dike* (915-17); *cf.* n.115 below.

Most scholars do think Zeus planned to destroy mankind, and some have even endorsed the plan.<sup>63</sup> But there is no need to defend genocide here. The question to ask instead is what Zeus planned to do. Did he really plan to obliterate the human race? Prometheus' report is curiously ambiguous. Doubts about his veracity aside, his words leave unclear both what exactly Zeus was going to do and what he had already done. The plan, as Prometheus describes it, actually has two parts, one destructive and another creative: both to 'conceal the whole family' (ἀιστώσας γένος / τὸ πᾶν) and 'to plant another new one' (ἄλλο φιλῦσαι νέον, 232-3, *cf.* 236). The first part is characterized by ἀιστώσας, literally 'make invisible' or conceal but usually by killing. Io uses the same verb when she tells how her father banished her after Delphi and Dodona warned that otherwise a thunderbolt from Zeus 'will utterly conceal a whole family' (πᾶν ἐξαιστώσει γένος, 668). The 'whole family' at stake here is apparently limited to Inachus, his household and preemptively his descendants. This narrowly targeted threat, however, is purely conditional and never carried out. Io has already left Argos, will eventually reach Egypt, and there will launch a prolific 'family' (γέννα, 853; γένος, 869) which will eventually return to rule Argos. Is this the only 'family' Zeus planned to 'conceal'? Did Prometheus, in naming 'the whole family of wretched mortals' (231-3), misconstrue or misreport the plan? His charge is naturally taken quite generally, of course, and surely meant to evoke for audience and Chorus alike a vision of total apocalypse. Yet the very similar oracle (663) reported by Io shows how elusive the plan of Zeus can be in this play. Which mortals he planned to 'conceal' is thus unclear: all peoples, or only some, or even other mortal creatures?

This is not the only point in question. Two other cases of 'concealing' raise questions about *what* he planned to do. In the parodos, the Oceanids lament the 'new-fangled laws' imposed by Zeus (150-1) and complain that 'he is now concealing [νῦν ἀιστοῖ] the huge ones of yore' (152). They mean the Titans and their brood, many of whom Zeus has consigned to Tartarus, Prometheus promptly adds (153-9; *cf.* *Theog.* 717-35). His mention of Ἄϊδου at the end of 153 echoing ἀιστοῖ at the end of 152 highlights the root idea common to both: the disappearance of the 'unseen' dead.<sup>64</sup> Prometheus also pairs the words when he reports Zeus's plan for mortals: ἀιστώσας γένος (232) and εἰς Ἄϊδου μολεῖν (236), each in the final foot. To be 'concealed', then, is the mortal lot: to die and go to the underworld. Immortals can go there too; many Titans already have, and Zeus himself, Prometheus warns, may one day be 'concealed' in turn (ἄιστον, 910). But immortals can also be released from below; mortals cannot. Was this, then, Zeus's plan, to insist and ensure that mortals die and descend ever after to Hades? Did Prometheus, in trying to prevent them from 'going crushed to Hades' (236), seek to prevent them from dying? An audience familiar with Hesiod's aetiology of animal sacrifice might well understand him so. In granting 'mortal humans' the portion of meat at Mekone (*Theog.* 535-57), his Zeus ratifies human mortality.<sup>65</sup> Prometheus, in offering that portion to Zeus (*Theog.* 538-9), tries to upset this plan. Whether he aimed to save humans from mortality, or even to trick Zeus into eating mortal flesh is left unclear. In any case, his attempt to outwit Zeus famously leads to his theft of fire (*Theog.* 558-69). The play mentions none of this directly. But it does allude to it later when Prometheus describes animal sacrifice as solely a prophetic ploy (493-9), when he claims he 'stopped mortals looking ahead to death' (248), and when he boasts of enabling mortals to avoid 'all ills' (483; *cf.* n.30). If the *Purphoros* opened the trilogy, Hesiod's tale quite likely was

<sup>63</sup> Wecklein (n.2) 8 defends Zeus by calling mortals 'imbecile and insensate'; contrast Dodds (n.2) 32-4; Lloyd-Jones (n.3: 1956) 56.

<sup>64</sup> The etymology was probably felt: Penelope prays that the Olympians ἀιστώσειον her to Hades so she may 'see' Odysseus again (20.79-81); *cf.* H. Lloyd-Jones, *CR* 15 (1965) 241-3. Plato's fable (echoing Protagoras?)

uses the verb for extinction: γένος ἀιστωθείη (*Protag.* 321a2).

<sup>65</sup> *Cf.* J.-P. Vernant, 'At man's table: Hesiod's foundation myth of sacrifice', in M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant (eds.), *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks* (Paris 1979; tr. P. Wissing, Chicago 1989) 21-86, esp. 23-9, 57-61.

already recalled or even dramatized in part there. Prometheus would then be right in accusing Zeus of planning to ‘conceal’ all mortals. But even if many in the audience took this to mean that Zeus was going to obliterate the human race, some would suspect otherwise, and the balance of evidence suggests the rest of the trilogy would prove them right. Prometheus, then, is made to conspire in the plot of the play, and his accusation is part of its poet’s web of indirection.

The timing of Zeus’s plans is also puzzling. When Prometheus says that Zeus ἀιστώσας γένος / τὸ πᾶν ἔχρηζεν ἄλλο φιλῦσαι νέον (232-3), the sequence of tenses can be taken in various ways. If the participle and verb are coordinate, Zeus first ‘concealed’ all mortals, then formed a plan to start a new family. But Zeus did not destroy the human race, unless Io and the barbarian hordes she must face are his newly planted ‘family’. If the participle and infinitive are coordinate, Zeus planned first to remove all mortals, then to create new ones. This is at least consistent with the play. But Prometheus claims he thwarted this plan (234-6). If he did, has Zeus abandoned his plan? Or is it rather being accomplished now that rival immortals are removed and Prometheus confined where he can help Io on her way? Io will eventually die and be ‘concealed’, but only after fulfilling her destiny. Her name and deeds will be immortal (εἰσαεῖ, 732-4; cf. 839-41), and both her prolific ‘family’ and many of the tribes she encounters still flourished in the fifth century, or so Greek audiences believed. Zeus, it now appears, never planned to eliminate the human race.

The *Cypria*, which did depict Zeus taking drastic measures to reduce the human population, provides an instructive parallel. When Gaia complains about the swelling tribes of mortals and their impious ways, but Momus advises Zeus not to use thunderbolts or floods, he devises wars at Thebes and Troy; and to instigate the latter, he fathers Helen and gives Thetis in marriage to Peleus. Leda’s role there parallels Io’s here: through each Zeus engenders illustrious lines of kings and heroes. But the destructive task of removing ‘myriad tribes’ (μυρία φῶλα) of mortals is carried out by mortals, the son of Thetis and his fellow Achaeans.<sup>66</sup> The *Cypria* thus envisions a twofold plan like the one Prometheus describes. But it rejects extermination and recourse to natural disasters. Zeus intervenes directly only to father new ‘families’ of mortals, who then win glory by performing the work of righteous destruction themselves. *PD*, I suggest, envisions Zeus initiating similar plans for Io’s descendants. After ‘planting’ a new family of kings, he leaves to them the heroic task of ‘concealing’ the predatory creatures spawned under the Titans, and of taming the wild forces of anarchy and barbarism hitherto left unbridled.

The truth behind Prometheus’ misleading report of Zeus’s plan, it seems, is benign, even benevolent. Both parts of his plan come to fruition only after the play. But preparations are already well under way. Io is rushing toward Canopus where Zeus, with a gentle ‘caress’ (849), will start a new ‘kingly family’ (869). The agricultural metaphor in Prometheus’ initial charge (γένος ... φιλῦσαι νέον, 233) echoes accounts of Io’s union in Aeschylus’ *Suppliants*: in the Danaids’ initial report to King Pelasgus, Zeus ‘plants offspring’ (φιλῦει γόνον, 312), and he is the ‘true producer’ of their family (φουσιζόου γένος τότε Ζηνός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς) and ‘family planter’ (φουτουργός ... γένους) in their song celebrating a union which ‘every land proclaims’ (583-94; cf. φουτεύσεσθαι of Libya from Epaphus in *Pi. Pyth.* 4.14-16). Similarly, Prometheus first accuses Zeus of ‘designing’ (ἔχρηζεν, 233) to ‘plant a new family’, then later berates him for ‘designing’ (χρήζων) to ‘mingle’ with Io (736-8).<sup>67</sup> Whatever Prometheus means and how-

<sup>66</sup> *Cypria fr.* 1 = sch. *Il.* 1.5, glossing Διὸς βουλή; cf. *Hes. fr.* 204.96-104 MW, where Zeus has the limited aim of γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων / πολλῶν ἀιστώσαι (cf. *Pi. Pyth.* 3.36-7: πολλὰν ... ἀίστωσεν ὕλαν).

<sup>67</sup> A tragic equivalent of βούλομαι, χρήζω is a virtual leitmotif in the play: used nine times, always of immortals except in 609 (only thrice in Aesch., all in *Cho.*). The root idea of χρεία (typically an instrumental

need to use or employ something for a further purpose) is marked in 700-1 but does not seem apt in every case. Nowhere does it seem to imply passion or lust; even in 738, where Prometheus uses it for Zeus’s interest in Io, the context is notably devoid of the erotic imagery used in 648-54. It suggests rather a rational interest, as befits a divine plan or ‘design.’

ever the audience initially understands him, his accusation aptly describes what Zeus plans and will soon accomplish. Moreover, as the archaic title of ‘wife’ (δάμαρ, 834) proclaimed by Dodona indicates, Io’s union with Zeus also validates the emphatically Greek norm of monogamy by which this new family is to propagate.<sup>68</sup> In this light, her anguished journey becomes a mythical projection of the bride’s liminal state. That is why Io’s dreams reproach her for prolonging her adolescence (τί παρθενεύητι δαρὸν) and spurning a ‘magnificent marriage’ (γάμου μεγίστου, 648-9). Her onstage delirium even mirrors the symptoms of pubescent hysteria, for which marital intercourse was a prescribed cure.<sup>69</sup> Most today condemn the Zeus of this play as a lecherous rapist. But a close reading of his ‘designs’ on Io reveals what ancient audiences would find a ‘glorious’ (834) destiny indeed for her and her ‘family’ alike.

Prometheus also faults Zeus for ‘designing’ to ‘conceal’ all mortals. Taken as a protest against human mortality, his charge is distressing and entirely accurate. Yet it also has a narrower application, and one integral to Io’s glory. Zeus’s plan will take centuries or millennia to fulfil, but its single most renowned agent is very near in dramatic time. The sequel, set some thirteen generations later (774), presents Heracles engaged in the last stage of his exploits.<sup>70</sup> By then, many of the most monstrous and savage mortals spawned in earlier eras will already be ‘concealed’ either in Hades or serving Zeus in remote corners of the earth. But Heracles’ role in Zeus’s Hellenocentric plan is also foreshadowed even in *PD*, most clearly when he appears as the climactic figure in the final forecast of Io’s destiny (871-3; cf. Hephaestus in 27). In terms that few Athenians would fail to recognize, Prometheus there evokes the hero’s renown and his rescue of Prometheus from a tormenting eagle (1020-9; cf. *fr.* 200 R): ‘bold in bow and glorious [κλεινός]’ (872). Hyperbaton in the following clause – ‘who from these toils [ὄς πόνων ἐκ τῶνδ’] will release me’ – even enables his prediction to be heard and read as an allusion to Heracles’ own toils (πόνουι, or even the homophone πονῶν; cf. 343).

Allusions to other exploits appear earlier in the episode. As Hesiod foreshadows Zeus’s reign by mentioning exploits of Perseus (*Theog.* 280) and Heracles (287-94, 313-18, 326-32) even before their father’s birth, so the play uses well known sites and creatures associated with Io’s heroic descendants to evoke the future fulfilment of her family’s destiny. Io names Lerna twice: her dreams urge her to accept the love of Zeus there (652), and the ‘bridle of Zeus’ directs her there when her father sends her forth like a bride (677). Lerna was best known as the place where Heracles slew the monstrous Hydra born of Typho and Echidna (*Theog.* 313-18). The streams in which this ‘water-serpent’ lurked also owed their source to one of the Danaids, whose tale Aeschylus had recently dramatized in *Amydone*, the satyr play for his Danaid trilogy.<sup>71</sup> These two events thus involve the two generations Prometheus singles out in his forecast of Io’s descendants. He evokes another exploit when he digresses to foretell how the Amazons will later migrate to Themiscyra on the Thermodon (723-5), precisely where Heracles obtained their queen’s belt.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps the most obvious allusion is the vivid account of the Gorgons and their sisters, infamous adversaries of Perseus (*Theog.* 270-81); he too was Io’s descendant (the tenth

<sup>68</sup> So Hesione in 560 (where πῖθὼν implies consent), Hera in *fr.* 383 R, all four instances in Homer, both in Pindar, and Dracon’s law on homicide; even in 767, where δάμαρτος refers to Thetis (though unbeknownst to Io, who wonders how a wife could cause Zeus’s fall), it follows γαμεῖ γάμον (764, cf. 909), hence signifies legitimacy. For monogamy as the Greek mean between barbaric extremes of abstinence and polygamy or promiscuity, see Hall (n.40) 201-3.

<sup>69</sup> [Hippocr.] *Virg.* See J. Dumortier, *Le vocabulaire médical d’Eschyle et les écrits hippocratiques* (Paris 1935) 69-79; H. King (n.55) 113-17; L. Dean-Jones,

*Women’s Bodies in Classical Greek Science* (Oxford 1994) 50-3; cf. n.55 above and §V below.

<sup>70</sup> If he is on his way to the Hesperides, as *fr.* 199 R seems to imply, then he has accomplished most of his tasks when the *Luomenos* begins; Griffith (n.5) 297-300; West (n.7) 143-6. It would be natural for the sequel to recount his prior exploits, as in the grandiloquent first stasimon of Eur. *Hcl.*; cf. Winnington-Ingram (n.4) 192; Thomson (n.1: 1932) 37.

<sup>71</sup> See T70 and *fr.* 13-15 R; cf. Hes. *fr.* 297 MW; Eur. *Phoen.* 187-9; Dowden (n.49) 151-3.

<sup>72</sup> Bacchyl. 9.42-4; Apollod. 2.5.8; Diod. 4.16.

generation, three before Heracles: sch. 774c), and Aeschylus had also dramatized his quest in the *Phorcides*.<sup>73</sup> Io's final destination unites both heroes in a potent evocation of both mythical and current Greek exploits in another alien land. Canopus, at the westernmost mouth of the Nile, marked one apex of the vast 'Delta' which Prometheus duly labels 'the triangular Nilotic land' (813-14), and which Herodotus says Ionians equated with Egypt entire (Hdt. 2.15).<sup>74</sup> Not far upstream on the Canopic branch of the Nile stood Naucratis, the sole Greek *emporion* in Egypt, replete with Greek shrines and then the centre of Greek life in the region (Hdt. 2.178-9). Also by the Canopic mouth was a Heracleion or 'sanctuary of Heracles', presumably commemorating his triumph over the impious Busiris who sacrificed strangers on his altars; and across the Canopic bay stood the 'lookout of Perseus' (Hdt. 2.15), who passed there after slaying Medusa (Hdt. 2.91).<sup>75</sup> The thriving Greek presence in Egypt in the mid-fifth century was thus traced back, in ways the name of Canopus evokes, to Io and her family. Finally, near the end of the play, Hermes alludes in obscure but striking terms to Heracles' astounding descent into Hades (1026-9).<sup>76</sup> Both this unequalled feat and his quest for golden apples from the Hesperides – where he encounters Atlas (*fr.* 195 R) holding the realms of gods and mortals apart (347-50) – symbolize triumph over death and win Heracles immortal youth among the gods. Zeus could relax even this grimmest law of human mortality to reward exceptional benefactors, or so ancient audiences believed.

Some of these allusions are more striking than others, and many in the ancient audience may have missed many of them. Much of what Prometheus predicts is shadowy or vague, and not even he sees the full significance of all he says. Io naturally finds his 'oracle' about Heracles hard to fathom (775), as the future always is for mortals. But in calling attention to their limited comprehension, the play underscores the operation of higher powers. The destinies of Io and Heracles do not intersect accidentally. Both begin their march to glory at Lerna; both labour long and far from home in the service of Zeus; and both are guided to their final destinations by Prometheus. These parallels, sketched subtly and selectively in this play, were evidently developed more fully in the sequel, when Prometheus gave Heracles lengthy instructions that pointedly complement Io's. She is to wander east and south to the land of the rising sun; he will journey north (*fr.* 195 R) and then west toward the evening abode of the Hesperides. She must evade hordes of hostile savages; he will subdue the ferocious Ligurians in mortal combat (*fr.* 199 R). The only mortals who help her are the fierce Amazons; he will meet the peaceful Gabioi, 'a townfolk most righteous and friendly to strangers' (δημον ἐνδικώτατον ... καὶ φιλοξενώτατον, *fr.* 196 R, elaborating *Il.* 13.6). The world depicted in the sequel, then, will be in some regions vastly improved. Most of the primordial monsters will be 'concealed' as Zeus plans (231), many slain by Io's heroic descendants and others assigned new stations and roles in maintaining the Olympian order (thus Atlas and Typho already: 347-72; so Cerberus in Hades and Ophis with the Hesperides later). Some of the hostile tribes that threaten Io will be joined or displaced by more

<sup>73</sup> See *fr.* 261-2 R; *cf.* n.44 above. This exploit also figures in *Cho.*: the Chorus exhorts Orestes and Electra to imitate their ancestor and (with Kirchhoff's emendation) slay the 'deadly Gorgon' who is their mother (831-7); her avenging spirits later appear looking like Gorgons (1048, *Eum.* 48-9). The Gorgons also have links to Heracles: Medusa's son Chrysaor fathered Geryon (*Theog.* 287-94), whose fate was apparently foretold in *Luomenos* (*fr.* 199 R).

<sup>74</sup> Canopus is ἐσχάτη χθονός (*sc.* of Egypt) in 846; *cf.* Hec. *FGrHist* 1 F307-9; A.B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II* (Leiden 1975-83) 2.78-83.

<sup>75</sup> For the Egyptian travels of Perseus, who was identified with Horus, see Lloyd (*n.*74) 2.367-70. The tale of

Heracles slaying Busiris was told by Panyassis (*EGF fr.* 23) and Pherecydes (*FGrHist* 3 F17) but dismissed by Hdt. 2.45; Pherecydes situates events in Memphis, but the exceptional right of asylum at the Heracleion (Hdt. 2.113) suggests that Canopus was also involved, perhaps as the site of his landing or departure; *cf.* Strabo 17.1.18-19 (from Eratosthenes), Lloyd (*n.*74) 2.81.

<sup>76</sup> See sch. 1027c; *cf.* Hephaestus in 27, Prometheus in 771-4, 871-3. A puzzling tale from Pherecydes (*FGrHist* 3 F83) assigns a role to Chiron; but an allusion to Heracles is more credible, given the three earlier forecasts of his role (πόνων here directly echoes 872); see Schmid (*n.*3) 78-9; Griffith (*n.*5) 302.

hospitable cultures, like the town-dwelling Gabioi in Scythia. Others will be vanquished or subdued, as the Ligurians will be by Heracles. By the time of the sequel, in short, Io's world will be more settled, more orderly and more civilized, thanks largely to the endeavours of her Greek descendants.

For this grand design to proceed, Zeus had first to confine his opponents. That is why Kronos and his allies are incarcerated in Tartarus (219-21) and Typho pinned beneath Etna (363-5). It is also one reason why Prometheus is bound. But how does his attempt to rescue mortals from destruction interfere with Zeus's plan? Kratos at the outset pronounces his theft and distribution of fire a 'mistake' (ἄμαρτία, 9).<sup>77</sup> The Chorus concurs emphatically (ἤμαρτες twice, 259-60; cf. 1039), and Prometheus endorses their verdict proudly (ἐκὼν ἐκὼν ἤμαρτον, 266; cf. 112). Where exactly does the 'mistake' lie? He was certainly imprudent, as Kratos (85-7), the Oceanids (178-85, 472-5, 507-8), their father (307-21, 335-6), and finally Hermes (964-5, 982, 1011-15) point out repeatedly. His admission in 266 may then be bitterly sarcastic. Yet both his theft and his rebellious arrogance are plainly impious, as his insolent blasphemies in the final episode are designed to emphasize. At least in his blatant defiance of Zeus and the Olympian order, his action thus approaches the 'sin' charged by some earlier scholars. But what was wrong in giving fire to mortals in the first place? What reason, except malice or careless caprice, could Zeus have for withholding fire and technology? Only if his Olympian order is itself just has Prometheus done wrong. Where then is the injustice in helping mortals?

In the simplest terms, the theft of fire was wrong because it violated Zeus's distribution of divine powers, which granted Hephaestus the privilege of dispensing fire. That is why, with poetic justice, he is assigned the task of binding Prometheus, as Kratos proclaims in the opening lines of the play (7-9). If Prometheus also delivered other divine privileges to mortals, as he boasts to the Chorus (see n.29), he wronged other Olympians as well. But the root of his error lies much deeper. His crucial 'mistake', I suggest, was to deliver divine powers to mortals who did not recognize their beneficial potential and therefore used them mainly in destructive and impious ways. As his own account of Io's world repeatedly shows, he thereby made savages more deadly in their violence and aggression, ironically advancing the very plan he claims he alone sought to thwart. Once armed with fire and the lethal force of metal, the mortals he tried to help were able to send themselves to Hades with more deadly efficiency than ever before, just as Hesiod's Bronze 'family' did: 'vanquished at their own hands, they went to the wide home of chilling Hades' (*WD* 152-3). War and hostility prevail in the play, and the labour of cultivating grain is unknown, just as in Hesiod: 'their care was the grievous work of Ares and violent hubris, and they ate no bread' (*WD* 145-7). The crucial problem is that Promethean mortals are, as both he and Hesiod observe, utterly 'unapproachable' (ἄπλοστοι, *WD* 148; cf. *PD* 712, 716, 807). Prometheus' fundamental 'mistake', then, is to give mortals great power over their habitat and survival without teaching them how to employ it productively and piously or live peacefully among themselves. He delivered valuable tools but set no rules for their fruitful use.<sup>78</sup>

For Promethean mortals, the gift of fire was the proverbial 'blade for a child' (*CPG* 1.276). Like a double-edged sword, it made them doubly destructive, more capable of destroying both themselves and the world around them. Without the restraints of justice and piety, depredation was made certain and extinction all the more likely. If Prometheus, in trying to prevent mortals from 'going crushed to Hades' (236), meant to prolong their lives or enhance their chances of survival, he failed miserably. For that reason his 'mistake' was an act of tragic injustice, not sim-

<sup>77</sup> To avoid prejudicing the argument, I translate ἄμαρτία neutrally; on its wide range of meaning in tragedy, from factual or prudential errors to moral or psychological flaws, see T. Stinton, 'Hamartia in Aristotle and Greek tragedy', *CQ* 25 (1975) 221-54 (= *Collected*

*Papers on Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 1990) 143-85).

<sup>78</sup> Aesch. parodied these risks in *Prom. Purkaeus*: the satyrs delight in the prospect of their fire attracting nymphs (*fr.* 204b R), and they burn themselves trying to kiss it (*fr.* 207 R).

ply because it flouted Zeus and violated his distribution of divine honours, but ultimately because it disrupted the moral, civil and religious progress of humanity. Mortals needed to learn not to abuse their new powers, and to do so, they first had to learn justice and reverence, the newly created gifts of Zeus. The Chorus, after Prometheus tells them all he has given mortals, advise him not to give 'untimely benefits' (μή νυν βροτοῦς ὠφέλει καιροῦ πέρα, 507). Their worry is that he ignores his own interests (σαντοῦ δ' ἀκήδει, 508). But their reaction, echoing the prologue, also indicates why Hephaestus calls his intervention 'unjust' (πέρα δίκης, 30). The theft of fire was a classic tragic error: a bold act performed in pursuit of admirable goals, but based on inadequate understanding and the source of awful suffering for both the protagonist and those he 'dared' (235) to help.<sup>79</sup> However lofty his motives, Prometheus showed insufficient foresight, and both he and mortals suffer terribly as a result.

#### IV. CIVIC JUSTICE

For his error, Prometheus is bound, as Kratos announces in the opening lines, far away from mortals (1-2). This initial punishment, harsh as the prologue makes it seem, serves mainly as preventive detention.<sup>80</sup> Like Tantalus, who illicitly gave nectar and ambrosia to mortals in a similar breach of divine prerogative (Pi. *Ol.* 1.54-64, *Od.* 11.582-92), Prometheus is duly confined without any access to what he stole or those to whom he gave it. Then, as the play ends, he is apparently hurled below the earth to join his fellow rebels.<sup>81</sup> This cataclysmic climax marks an increased penalty and underscores the awesome might of his adversary. Yet it is also exactly what he urges Zeus to do in the last of five reckless exhortations (1043-53; cf. 1016-19).

... ἔς τε κελαινὸν  
 Τάρταρον ἄρδην ῥίψειε δέμας  
 τοῦμὸν ἀνάγκης στερραῖς δίνας.

May he hurl my body deep into dark Tartarus whirling in rigid compulsion! (1050-2)

Ironically, this fulfils both what Hermes here calls his 'vaunt' or 'prayer' (εὐχὴ, 1057) and a wish Prometheus himself voices early in the play (153-7). In the distant future, Hermes warns him (1020-5), he will be released from Hades and an eagle will come feast on his liver (cf. *fr.* 193 R). Yet in the grand scheme of the trilogy, not even this gruesome torment is arbitrary or pointless. Prometheus, virtually alone among the Titans, will persist in his defiance even after being restored to the light (1021, *frr.* 190-3 R; cf. Pi. *Pyth.* 4.291-2). Before long, however, his resistance will end, much sooner than he hyperbolically predicts: not in 'a myriad years' (94, cf. 'three myriads' in *Purphoros fr.* 208a R) but in the far briefer span of thirteen mortal generations (774), and soon after his release from Tartarus and the first arrival of the eagle (*iam* in *fr.* 193.10 suggests a recent beginning).<sup>82</sup> His punishment, from his shackles in this play to his subsequent

<sup>79</sup> Griffith (n.8) 199 observes that τόλμα is 'almost invariably accompanied by feelings of disapproval' in Aesch. This also applies to *PD*, most clearly when Hermes caustically voices frustration with Prometheus (imperative τόλμησον twice in 999), but also when Hephaestus reluctantly accepts his task (privative ἄτολμος in 14 indicates his Olympian sensibility, and τόλμα in 16 his horror at what he feels 'compelled' to do), and when Prometheus spurns Ocean's offer of help (299, 331; cf. 383, mocking Ocean's τόλμᾶν, 381). For Prometheus to say 'I myself dared' (ἐγὼ δ' ἐτόλμησ') to give mortals fire thus signals that he somehow erred.

<sup>80</sup> Hephaestus rejects Kratos' demand to impale Prometheus (64-8) and instead binds his chest with straps (69-71); see S. White, 'Binding Prometheus (*PV* 55-81)' (forthcoming).

<sup>81</sup> The mechanics of the ending are problematic; see Taplin (n.10) 270-5; Griffith (n.5) on 1016-19 and 1080.

<sup>82</sup> Taken literally, bondage for 10,000 years (30,000 in *fr.* 208a R) is preposterous and plainly belied by 774. But there is no need to imagine Zeus relenting or Prometheus miscounting; 'myriads' is simply rhetorical exaggeration (cf. Hes. *WD* 252, Emped. B115.6 DK); cf. Conacher (n.2) 101 n.3.

incarceration and eventual evisceration, is awful and terrifying, and it is surely meant to elicit the audience's sympathy, as it does the Chorus', who even venture to join him in the closing cataclysm (1063-70, *cf.* 242-5).<sup>83</sup> Prometheus thus attains the full stature of a tragic protagonist. But that should not prevent us from seeing that his punishment is both effective and deserved. Initially preventive and eventually corrective, it is also retributively justified by his grave transgressions and absolute intransigence. But doubt persists: were less drastic measures not available?

'Time teaches all', Prometheus says scornfully to Hermes (981). He refers to the downfall of Zeus that he eagerly – but mistakenly – expects. But in line with the Olympian law of learning from often harsh experience (*cf.* 391), his words ironically suit his own plight instead. As Hermes replies, he does 'not yet know how to be sensible [σωφρονεῖν]' (982). By the end of the trilogy he will. By then, as the Chorus of Elders in *Agamemnon* proclaim, long years of 'memorably painful suffering' will teach 'even the unwilling to be sensible'; such is the 'forceful grace of the gods seated at the holy helm' (*Ag.* 176-83).<sup>84</sup> This stern view of justice is easily abused by the smug to condone undeserved suffering or exploited by the unscrupulous to mask their cruelty in a semblance of legitimacy. But it is a recurrent theme in tragedy, and a sober and credible vision of theodicy. Force in the service of justice was widely considered necessary and legitimate, as it is today. When not even Hermes, the god of envoys and diplomatic eloquence, can dissuade Prometheus from his misguided and self-defeating 'wilfulness' (αὐθαδία, 964, 1012, 1034), not even by warning him of the further penalties he will otherwise have to face (1014-35), he is first imprisoned in Tartarus.<sup>85</sup> When he, unlike other Titans, continues to defy the Olympian order even after being restored to the world of the living, more severe methods are required (*frr.* 190-3 R). Execution is out of the question, if only because Titans are immortal, as he defiantly proclaims (1053, *cf.* 753, 933). To redirect his energies to more constructive ends, his willing participation in the new order must be won (*cf.* 191-2). The simplest method, and one which affects only Prometheus, is what Zeus chose in Hesiod, and what Hermes predicts here too: excruciating physical pain. The arrival of an eagle in the sequel as the 'winged hound of Zeus' (1021-2; *cf.* *Ag.* 135) also sets the stage for a final reconciliation. How exactly this transpired is now a mystery, absent the *Luomenos*.<sup>86</sup> But even its exiguous remains establish three important points. First, Io's greatest descendant plays the decisive part (*frr.* 200-1 R), as in Hesiod, where the release of Prometheus wins Heracles 'still greater glory than before' (*Theog.* 530-2). This early release also represents a veritable reprieve: once Prometheus accepts the reign of Zeus (if not before: *Serv. In Ecl.* 6.42), his punishment ends. Finally, and most significantly, reconciliation

<sup>83</sup> This closing affirmation by the Chorus, according to Dodds (n.2) 34, is 'decisive evidence of the side on which our sympathies are meant to lie'. But sympathy is only part of the point. The similar Chorus of Asian women in *Cho.*, which sides with Orestes throughout and celebrates his matricide in triumphal tones (931-71), provide a similarly incomplete and misleading perspective: no sooner do they congratulate Orestes (1044-7) than he is driven off-stage by the Furies, as Prometheus is here hurled below. Both plays end abruptly in ways that challenge the Chorus' – and hence the audience's – sympathies and perception of justice; and as *Eum.* goes on to clarify where justice really lies, so I would argue did *Luomenos*. Both Orestes and Prometheus deserve our sympathy; but each has also committed terrible wrongs for which they must atone.

<sup>84</sup> E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford 1950) on 182f. compares Homer's Zeus ὑψίζυγος; *cf.* n.95 below. The μνησιπήμων πόνοος of *Ag.* 180 is all too apt for the protracted πόνοι of Prometheus (so called 13 times).

<sup>85</sup> Hermes is widely denounced as a nasty lackey. But an impartial reading of his lines, by themselves and uncoloured by Prometheus' abuse, gives a favourable impression; esp. in the stichomythia of 964-86, his is the voice of reason astonished at Prometheus' insolent folly.

<sup>86</sup> If Zeus sends the eagle, as 1021-2 suggests (*cf.* *Theog.* 523), its gnawing may be therapeutic. The liver, as the source of bile (χολή), was widely seen as the source of 'rage' (χόλος 29, 199, 370, 376; not in Aesch.), and more generally as a locus of intense pain (*Ag.* 791-2, *Il.* 24.212-13); *cf.* R. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought* (Cambridge 1951) 84-9. The eagle could thus cure Prometheus' 'bilious cholera' surgically. Alternatively, this torment may owe less to Zeus than loss of the *Luomenos* allows us to suppose: in Pherecydes (*FGrHist* 3 F3), the eagle is spawned by Echidna and Typho; Zeus could intend Heracles to defeat it (*Theog.* 529-32), as he does other Echidnids (Nemean lion, Hydra, Cerberus and Geryon's Orthos: *Theog.* 306-32).



brings rewards. Just as the newly released Kronos is sent to oversee the heroic dead (descendants of Zeus and the Olympians) in a posthumous 'golden age' on the Isles of the Blessed (*WD* 167-73, 109-20, *cf.* Pi. *Ol.* 2.68-83), and just as the avenging Furies in the *Oresteia* are finally persuaded to be 'reverent' guardians of Olympian justice and its blessings in Athens, so Prometheus was welcomed at the end of his trilogy into the Athenian pantheon as a patron of constructive fire.<sup>87</sup> In the end, even Zeus's most obdurate opponent embraces his reign, receives a share in divine honours (*ἐπὶ τιμῆι*, *fr.* 202 R), and thus exemplifies Olympian theodicy.

The justice of Zeus displayed in *PD* is stern and sometimes severe. But it is never arbitrary, vindictive or malicious. The arrogant, impious and violent are punished harshly, but always for transgressing ordinances that an Attic audience could find just and humane.<sup>88</sup> Conversely, the helpful, pious and productive, whether gods like Hephaestus and Hermes or mortals like Io and her descendants, are sustained and rewarded. Olympian justice, in short, is progressive and benevolent. The destiny of Io, as revealed in the play, shows that Zeus is not a ruthless autocrat as Prometheus charges. On the contrary, he is the creator and embodiment of 'kingly' leadership (869), and thereby of legitimate authority in general. A 'tyrant' in the narrow sense of usurper who employs force, he nonetheless governs from his 'paternal throne' (228) with broad consent and cooperation among the gods, thanks in part to his prompt and generous distribution of powers (228-31). His predecessors claim he is oppressive, as the vanquished are wont to do, especially when they have known only anarchy and violence. As far as Prometheus can see, Zeus is simply the latest in a vicious cycle of brutal and selfish insurgents, sure to be overthrown in turn by yet another unruly son (907-27). But that only highlights the momentous innovation in his form of rule: 'kings are from Zeus' (*Theog.* 96), and their sacred prerogative is justice (*Theog.* 80-93). Kingship and justice, here as in Hesiod, are the creation of Zeus and his great gift to humanity.

Among mortals, this new form of leadership figures in Zeus's plan for the Danaids, one of whom will give birth to the first 'kingly family' (869), when Io's line returns to her native Argos. But the advent of this distinctly Greek form of collective or 'political' government is intimated already in this play. The Titans whose voices dominate the play portray Zeus as a tyrant who rules only by might, and their language evokes the oppressive and distinctly despotic rule of barbarian overlords like the Great King of Persia.<sup>89</sup> Despite these accusations, diction repeatedly marks his rule as the paradigm of paternal authority and political leadership. Both Hephaestus

<sup>87</sup> For likely aetiological ties to the Attic Prometheia, see West (n.7) 144, 148. The finale may also have supplied an aetiology for the special status Prometheus enjoyed among Attic potters: a torch-race from the Academy passed by the potteries outside the Dipylon gate and the inner Ceramicus on the Panathenaic way, then the Royal Stoa, Stoa of Zeus and altar of Hephaestus; the route thus reenacts the promotion of Earth-born Prometheus to patron of fire for Athens' earthenware industry, alongside Olympian Hephaestus, patron of fire in metalwork. *Luomenos fr.* 192 R may refer to Kronos presiding over the heroic dead in the west: ἀναπαύει of Helios suits sunset as well as sunrise, ἐρυθρῶς θαλάσσης suits the Hesperides (one named Erytheia, *Hes. fr.* 360 MW) near Erytheia (*Theog.* 215, 290-4), where Kronos (or Heracles?) is headed rather than whence the Titan chorus arrives.

<sup>88</sup> Podlecki (n.1) 104 and others object that Zeus is called 'inexorable' (34, 163, 185, 333) and 'unaccountable' (324), grave faults indeed for mortal rulers (Xerxes: *Pers.* 213-14), especially in Athens. But Zeus sets and

upholds mortal standards (*Suppl.* 595-9); if his judgments are just, he cannot rescind them without violating justice and promoting further wrongs. Similarly, every process of appeal or review must reach an end; if Zeus is both just and supreme, his verdicts neither can nor should be changed; *cf.* n.92.

<sup>89</sup> See Thomson (n.1: 1932) 6-10; Hall (n.40) 191-200. Discussions of *PD* tend to equate tyranny and despotism; but only the latter entails oppression, and Zeus's rule, while repeatedly labelled tyranny (12 times; 957 refers to Ouranos and Kronos), is never called despotic. The Egyptian Danaids, virtually translating Persian liturgy, invoke Zeus as ἄναξ ἀνάκτων (*Suppl.* 524, opening the tale of Io), and the Persian elders entitle Xerxes 'king of kings' (*Pers.* 24 inverts the formula) and Darius δέσποτα δεσπότου (*Pers.* 666); *cf.* H.D. Broadhead, *The Persae of Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1960) 40, 253. This is sacrilege by Greek standards because it treats mortals like gods (in *Pers.* 150-9, the Chorus calls both kings gods); but piety demands exalted honour for gods, Zeus above all.

and Hermes, while firmly opposing Titanic oppression, refer to Zeus solely as ‘father’ (17, 947, 969, 984, 1018), and in sharp contrast with all previous generations of immortals, they accept and obey their father’s directives. They do so, moreover, expressly because they believe his instructions, which are described in neutral terms (ἐπιστολάς, 3; ἐντολή, 12; ἄνωγε, 947), are ultimately just (29-30, 945-6). That is why Hephaestus, even when compassion makes him reluctant to shackle a kindred immortal (16-20, 36-47), perseveres in a task he hates (45; cf. n.80). Through Io, Zeus will extend his paternal oversight to humans as well, and for the first time ever, immortals will impart their divine powers or ‘honours’ freely to mortals. Some of these powers, of course, have already been introduced by Prometheus. But his were stolen gifts, and given without the social, civil and religious sanctions considered necessary for their productive use.

The divine source and sanction of this revolutionary form of justice is also intimated in the play. Zeus is never called βασιλεύς or ‘king’ in this play, as he is occasionally in Aeschylus (*Pers.* 532, *Ag.* 355). But amid the insults hurled at him, he and only he is called ἄναξ or ‘lord’ (by Io in prayer, 585; cf. Prometheus in 202).<sup>90</sup> Only he holds the sceptre, solemn symbol of sacred public authority (Prometheus in 171, echoed by Io in 761; cf. *Eum.* 626, *Pers.* 762-4).<sup>91</sup> Only he is said to κοιρανεῖν or ‘command’ (Kratos in 49, Prometheus in 958; cf. *Ag.* 549), a term that evokes the heroic leaders of epic and the legitimate authority proverbially associated with the councils of ‘Zeus-nourished kings’ (cf. *Il.* 2.188-207, esp. 203-6). The currency of Athenian political discourse is also applied to Zeus. Most telling, only his rule is labelled ἀρχή or ‘leadership’ (166, 203, 231, 757, 940): great indeed is the difference between ‘leading’ (ἄρχειν) and ‘serving’ (δουλεύειν) – between government and servitude – as Prometheus affirms (927). Granted, some related terms impugn his rule, as when Ocean calls him ‘a harsh monarch not subject to review’ (τραχὺς μόναρχος οὐδ’ ὑπεύθυνος, 324). Absolute and sole command was anathema throughout the Greek world at the time, especially in democratic Athens, where officials were subject to ‘straight’ review (εὐθύνα) annually at the end of their terms.<sup>92</sup> Yet even Prometheus uses titles that, however pejorative he means them to be, had distinctly favourable resonance. In his first reference to Zeus, he calls him ‘marshal of the gods’ (τάγος μακάρων, 96). This term, with its military overtones and implication of delegated authority, suggests orderly planning and organization – in a word, Greek and Olympian order (τάξις) as opposed to barbarian and primordial ‘disorder’ (ἀταξία).<sup>93</sup> His second reference to Zeus, addressed to the Oceanids, evokes the ‘presiding’ body of the Athenian council and assembly: ‘premier of the gods’ (μακάρων πρύτανις, 169). The effect of these titles so early in the play, even when uttered sarcastically, is to portray Zeus not as absolute dictator but as commander-in-chief in a cosmic polity: not a despotic autocrat but the leading member of a deliberative council of fellow immor-

<sup>90</sup> The noun occurs 48 times (18 of gods; ἄνασσα another 9 times: 7 of Athena, 2 of Atossa) and ἄνασσω twice in the six extant plays of Aesch., but each only once in *PD* and both times of Zeus. The comparable use of βασιλεύς / -ειος / -εια (41 times in the six plays) makes its absence from the world of *PD* all the more striking. In Homer, both terms signify primarily political authority, typically sanctioned by Zeus; see P. Carlier, *La royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre* (Strasbourg 1984) 178-94. On these and related terms in *Orest.*, see M. Griffith, ‘Brilliant dynasts: power and politics in the *Oresteia*’, *CIA* 14 (1995) 79 n.66.

<sup>91</sup> P. Easterling, ‘Agamemnon’s skêptron in the *Iliad*’, in M.M. Mackenzie and C. Roueché (eds.), *Images of Authority* (PCPS Suppl. 16, Cambridge 1989) 104-21, calling the sceptre ‘the sign of the community’s delegat-

ed authority’, points out that it is used not only by ‘kings’ but also by priests, heralds and all authorized speakers in council or assembly.

<sup>92</sup> In Hdt. 3.80, absence of ‘review’ (ἀνευθύνοι) is a crucial flaw in ‘monarchy’ (unlike βασιλεύς, typically pejorative) contrasted with the ὑπεύθυνον ἀρχήν of Athenian ‘isonomia’; cf. *Pers.* 213-14 on Xerxes. Zeus, however, is himself the ultimate reviewer, as Darius realizes sadly: εὐθυνος βαρὺς (*Pers.* 828, cf. *PD* 77, *Suppl.* 347).

<sup>93</sup> Orestes likens Athena to a ταγοῦχος when he prays for her help in *Eum.* 296; τάγοι along with ‘ephors’ applies collectively to the Persian generals in *Pers.* 23 (cf. 324, 480, *ST* 58). Even in aristocratic Thessaly, τάγοι were elected, collegial, and officially restricted to military roles; see Carlier (n.90) 412-17.

tals. If this is monarchy, it is an essentially consultative and constitutional form. A ‘premier’, like a constitutional ‘king’, must be attentive to both the wishes and the interests of his ‘polity’, like the eponymous ‘lord’ (ἄναξ) and ‘founding leader’ (ἀρχηγέτης) of Pelasgian Argos in the *Suppliants* (250-3). He too is entitled ‘premier’ (πρύτανις, 371: only here in Aesch.) and acts only with the considered consent of his community (517-23, cf. 615-24, 397-401).<sup>94</sup>

The language of the Chorus reinforces this impression. In their first reference to Zeus, they use the *hapax* οἰακονόμοι or ‘helmsmen’ (149, cf. 515) to characterize his whole Olympian regime, then observe that he rules ‘with new-fangled norms’ (νεοχμοῖς δὲ δὴ νόμοις, 150).<sup>95</sup> They later complain that he rules ‘with his own norms’ (ἰδίοις νόμοις, 402). In their view, such innovation is outrageous. But in each case, their words highlight two fundamental points: Zeus embodies the rule of law, and this is a revolutionary form of rule. His norms may be ‘his own’ and ‘new-fangled’; but they are also the only norms – the only established rules, whether natural, customary, or statutory – ever mentioned in the play.<sup>96</sup> They are also, according to both the Chorus and Prometheus, comprehensive. Zeus, reports Prometheus, ‘assigns’ (νέμει) the gods all their divine honours (229); and the Oceanids, even after hearing Prometheus extol his rival distribution to mortals, still invoke Zeus as ‘the one who assigns all things’ (ὁ πάντα νέμων, 526). The significance of his dispensation escapes Prometheus and the Chorus entirely. Its novelty, however, reflects not brutal despotism, as they suppose, but the origin of justice. What they do not yet appreciate is that this new leader has also established a new cosmic order and a new form of rule to maintain it. The advent of Zeus is the advent of both cosmic justice and kingship, with all that these loaded terms imply: legitimate authority, delegated power, advisory councils, balanced and impartial judgement, an ideal of persuasion and consent, and rule for the good of the whole; or in a word, the justice of Zeus. Only he, as Prometheus declares in a moment of unsuspecting insight, ‘has justice at his side’ (186-7).<sup>97</sup> His is from the outset a reign backed up by the violent force of Bia and the brute power of Kratos but based on the sacred right and authority of Dike and Themis.

The play depicts a world of anarchy hitherto devoid of civil justice. The Titans knew only the narrow bonds of kinship and its implacable code of revenge and retaliation, a view Prometheus largely shares. When the Titans spurned his counsel, he defected to Zeus, he tells the Chorus, because he knew they were doomed to defeat (204-18). Joining the winning side, he explains, ‘appeared κράτιστα for me’ (216-17): ‘best’ in the specific sense of ‘mightiest’ and victorious (cf. κρατεῖν, 213). When he cannot fathom why Zeus has him shackled despite his earlier help, he reverts to his Titanic allegiances. His indignation is understandable, and righteous by the vindictive code of the Titans. But his rage, like the code of vengeance that fuels it, is excessive, virulent and unproductive, as the final episode displays. Carried away by the

<sup>94</sup> Cf. A. Podlecki, ‘Polis and monarch in early Attic tragedy’, in J.P. Euben (ed.), *Greek Tragedy and Political Theory* (Berkeley 1986) 76-100, esp. 82-6 on this ‘democratized’ king. In Athens and elsewhere, βασιλεύς was a title not for a supreme monarch but for an annual official with very limited civic and religious functions; see Carlier (n.90) 325-72; R. Drews, *Basileus* (New Haven 1983) 116-31.

<sup>95</sup> Heraclitus uses οἰακίζει of Zeus’s thunderbolt (B64 DK), *Pers.* 767 οἰακοστρόφου of Cyrus the Great, *ST* 62 οἰακοστρόφος of Eteocles (cf. 1-3), *PD* 515 of the Fates and Furies, or Zeus if Prometheus is mistaken (*Theog.* 904-6 makes the Fates or ‘portions’ his daughters, and the Furies serve him in Aesch.). Navigational imagery suits Athenian pride in its democratic navy and usually has positive overtones in Aesch.; since helmsmen and crew share the same fate, the image minimizes parti-

sanship; cf. E. Petrounias, *Funktion und Thematik der Bilder bei Aischylos (Hypomnemata 48, Göttingen 1976)* 37-51. The Oceanids, in saying Zeus rules ἄθέτως (151), may mean ‘illegitimately’ (ἀθέσμως Hesych. s.v.), but their words also evoke his ‘athetizing’ of Titanic rule; cf. Griffith (n.5) on 150-1.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Aesch. *fr.* 344 R (from an Armenian text of Philo), which West (n.7) 133 suspects may come from *Purphoros*: ‘law [sc. νόμος?] distinguishes Zeus from the wicked and unjust’.

<sup>97</sup> This striking phrase has troubled many scholars; see Saïd (n.1) 286. But the allusion to Justice beside her father’s throne is unmistakable (cf. *ST* 662, *Cho.* 949, *fr.* 281a.5-11 from the Danaid trilogy, *WD* 256-62, *Theog.* 901-3); and a few lines later Prometheus places Themis also ‘on Zeus’s side’ (συμπαραστατεῖν 216-18; cf. *Pi. Ol.* 8.21-2).

prospect of revenge he expects in Io's future, he invokes Kronos cursing his own son in defeat (910-12, first attested here), exults in the imagined fulfilment of this paternal curse, spurns the opportunity to renew his alliance with Zeus, and furiously calls the cataclysmic ending down upon himself.

The rage for revenge that Prometheus displays in the final episode illustrates ironically a progressive vision. The justice of Zeus remains obscure at the end of the play, as Prometheus calls on the elemental powers of earth and sky to witness his outrageous lot (1091-3). Neither he nor any Titan yet comprehends the new justice. Even prudent Ocean only counsels safety in submission (307-29), as do his daughters until the end (1063-70). None of them has yet experienced the benefits of the new regime. Nor has Io or any other mortal. Theirs too remains a wild and hostile world, infested with lethal monsters and marauding savages. Prometheus cannot even imagine the new order. He therefore misrepresents it in his own terms as brutal, vindictive and oppressive. Yet he reveals, apparently unwittingly, that the world has begun to change for the better. Io, hailed as a legitimate δάμαρ or 'wife' of Zeus (834), is racing toward a fertile and welcoming land, where she will inaugurate a new 'family' of mortals, destined by its own efforts under the aegis of Zeus and the Olympians to bring 'kingly' justice and its fruits first to Argos and from there ever wider to all the habitable world. The opening and closing scenes, first shackling Prometheus and finally hurling him below, dramatize Zeus's power. But they also enact a necessary form of his justice: the penal code of retribution (cf. *Ag.* 1564, *Cho.* 313).<sup>98</sup> For theft there is punishment, for defiance detention, and for blasphemy removal from the bright air above. Within this play, the stage is dominated by coercive forces, painfully imposed on an unyielding Prometheus and mysteriously driving a delirious Io onward. But the long encounter of these two most sympathetic characters at the centre of the play points forward repeatedly to the welcome fruits of Zeus's justice.

When the sequel opens, a Chorus of Titans have been released from Tartarus (*fr.* 190-3). As they keep Prometheus company through the play, they and the audience with them presumably see and hear more clearly how richly the new world order is flowering under the benevolent reign of Zeus and the mortals who follow his lead. Theodicy, as the extant play foretells and fragments of the sequel seem to confirm, thus turns on evolution, though not of Zeus himself. There is no need to imagine him developing or maturing from an arbitrary and brutal oppressor into a guarantor of justice and piety. The trilogy, I suggest, did not envision him first embodying destructive forces of nature and only in the end becoming a protector of civil society and the *polis*.<sup>99</sup> Io's world is rather what evolves, as mortals and Titans alike outgrow their native barbarism and gradually learn to prosper by adopting Olympian norms. Prometheus and other gods of old must renounce their opposition, and mortals their impious and inhuman ways, not Zeus any alleged despotism.

The gifts of Prometheus help Io and her fellow mortals to survive in the wilderness. For that he deserves the respect and sympathy he wins from most today, as he surely did in ancient Athens. But his gifts, conferred without rules or constraints, also enable mortals to plunder the earth, slaughter themselves and ignore the gods, as the awful panorama of Io's journey reveals. For that, his theft and his arrogant defiance, he deserves to be restrained, as the Olympian voices in the play pronounce. By the end of the trilogy, his rage subsided, he presumably yields to the reign of Zeus and receives an honoured role in distributing its benefits among mortals. His rebellion is forgiven, his conversion rewarded. In his case, then, the justice of Zeus, though harshly punitive in the extant play, is essentially corrective and constructive. Winnington-Ingram, discussing the *Oresteia*, proposes similar resolutions for the Danaid and Prometheus

<sup>98</sup> See White (n.80); cf. D. Allen, *The World of Prometheus* (Princeton 2000) 25-34.

<sup>99</sup> Golden (n.3) 107-12; his polarity of natural forces and civic culture better suits the play's contrast between primordial and Olympian immortals; cf. Reinhardt (n.4) 72-6.

trilogies. He concludes: 'That the Greek gods of power, with all their record of forceful action, might in the outcome be not only coercive but persuasive agencies – that, surely, was the great contribution of Aeschylus to Greek religious, and for that matter philosophical, thought.'<sup>100</sup> This appealing proposal may suit the eventual reconciliation of Prometheus and Zeus. But does it apply to the mortals in this play? Where does divine persuasion operate in Io's ordeals? Immortals can be released from fetters, Apollo reminds the Furies in the inaugural trial on the Areopagus, but Zeus decrees that 'when dust once absorbs a dead man's blood, there is no resurrection' (*Eum.* 644-51). Or is this, like Apollo's chauvinist account of reproduction in the following lines, only a partial or distorted view?

#### V. CONJUGAL JUSTICE

The efforts of Prometheus do not derail the plan of Zeus. A 'kingly family' (869) is soon 'planted' (233), and Io wins glory as its founding mother. Many of her descendants use force to accomplish the destructive plan of 'concealing' mortals (232), first and foremost the monsters spawned by primeval gods. Perseus slays Medusa and banishes her sister Gorgons. Heracles rids many lands of many more, as the *Luomenos* quite likely went on to recount.<sup>101</sup> Over time, then, the senseless brutality of earlier eras yields to the productive 'harmony' (551) of the new covenant established by Zeus and the Olympians (229-31). The process is arduous and the labours immense, as mortals continually suffer and die. Virtually the entire 'family' does indeed go to Hades as Prometheus had worried (236). But as the generations come and go, a 'new family' (232), the prolific family of Zeus and Io, gradually constructs the civilized society of the Greek *poleis*, centred on its native mainland but radiating far beyond. Io's son fathers Libya, whose sons Agenor and Belus father eponymous lords of many eastern lands. By the time Prometheus is released, the reunited Danaid and Argive lines are secure in their ancestral home, Perseids rule Persia (*cf.* n.43), the fabulously prolific Heracles is fathering 'kingly lines' of Heraclids all round the Mediterranean and even in wild Scythia (*Hdt.* 4.8-10), and Thetis will soon be wed to Peleus and bear the great Achilles (*fr.* 202b R, fulfilling 768, 920-5). Thus do the feeble dream-like waifs scorned by the Oceanids (547-51, *cf.* 448), and disregarded by most previous immortals, slowly gain strength and learn to prosper in the new order of Zeus. Thus is the earth gradually made safe for humanity, in the name of Zeus and with his oversight, yet also in Io's name and through the struggles and endeavours of her mainly Greek descendants.

This new world order is not imposed by Zeus, as its opponents charge. Nor can mortals achieve it on their own or with the sole help of Prometheus. Progress depends rather on the interplay of human endeavour and Olympian guidance, as the elaborate account of Io's ordeals is designed to illustrate. Prometheus, secure in his immortality and confident in his cunning and manly fortitude, defies both force and persuasion throughout the play and well into its sequel. In pointed contrast, the frail Io responds to events in ways befitting her mortality, her gender and her age. Within the larger drama of a cosmic political struggle among powerful male gods, her story provides a Greek model of women's place in mortal life. Greeted initially as 'daughter of Inachus' (590), proclaimed by Dodona 'wife of Zeus' (834), and destined mother of an illustrious line (851), Io fulfils in spectacular fashion a woman's three principal roles in Greek culture. In each, she is dependent on males, who direct and control both her conduct and welfare. To their authority she always defers, and whatever they decide, she complies. Yet her compliance is won mainly by persuasion, not physical violence, and it brings her exceptional blessings in the end. For an ancient audience, then, the crucial question is whether this end justifies the means.

<sup>100</sup> 'Zeus and the Erinyes' (n.4) 174; *cf.* Buxton (n.4) 58-63.

<sup>101</sup> *Suppl.* 260-70 similarly describes Apollo's son

Apis clearing 'Apia' (mainland Greece entire: 254-9), previously 'a nasty serpent-infested habitat', of 'mortal-destroying beasts'.

Or rather, since the goal envisioned is a foundational episode in Greek cultural history, why is her ordeal so long and arduous?

On a mythic plane, the answer is simple. Traumatic dislocation highlights change for the better, and great blessings require great struggle and suffering. The magnitude of Io's ordeal is also dramatically effective, as the tension created by her pitiful entrance and prolonged by the dismal narrative of her journey intensifies the audience's pleasure of relief when she finally finds peace on the Nile. Then, in a miniature third act that resolves the disturbing doubts raised by her opening effusions (561-695) and the grim forecast of her journey (696-822), Prometheus' concluding speech (823-76) builds a rousing crescendo from her benediction by Dodona to the closing prophecy of his own release by Heracles. After the preceding litanies of torment and terror, these blessings are a welcome surprise, which makes the implied benevolence of Zeus all the more striking. But this revelation of divine grace also illustrates his powers of persuasion. Io's destiny is designed and overseen by Zeus, and even as foretold by his bitter antagonist, it provides both her and the audience a comforting, even inspiring prospect of sanity regained (849), maternity and prosperity in a new community (850-2, *cf.* 812-15), a long line of descendants (853, 869-72, *cf.* 772-4), and lasting renown for them (868-72, *cf.* 850) and Io alike (834, 840, 733-4).<sup>102</sup> Both she and the audience receive a reassuring answer to the desperate question she asked when she arrived (586-7): 'How shall I escape my toils?' Prometheus describes the 'remedy or cure for illness' she seeks (606). But Zeus has prescribed it, and Zeus will gently administer it by the Nile's 'holy stream' (812).

This seductive promise of blessings to come exemplifies both the benevolence of Zeus and his use of persuasive strategies. His interest in securing consent is also evident early in the episode when Io describes how her ordeal began. Her first inkling of what was to come, she recounts, came from nocturnal dreams that 'kept urging' (παρηγόρουσιν) her with 'soft words' (λείοισι μύθοις) and seductive images to accept a 'magnificent marriage' (645-54). The voices of Delphi and Dodona reiterate this astounding offer, obscurely at first but eventually in a 'distinct pronouncement' (ἐναργῆς βᾶξις) warning that her family faces oblivion if her father continues to detain her (658-68). The impact of this warning, as Io reports it, is ambiguous. After first describing her father as 'persuaded' (πεισθείς, 669) to do what both he and she were 'unwilling' (ἄκουσαν ἄκων, 671) to do, she promptly adds that the 'bridle of Zeus compelled [ἐπηνάγκασε] him to use force [πρὸς βίαν]' (671-2) and cast her out of house and home (665). From Io's perspective, which naturally colours our response, coercion looms large. But her equivocation favours a more nuanced assessment, especially once we see how much is at stake in the offer she and her father initially reject. Zeus employs no physical force or violence, only words and dreams. Inachus is advised repeatedly, the choice is his to make throughout, and it is he, not Zeus, who finally resorts to force. His is thus a classic case of constrained but voluntary action. Whether or not that insulates him from reproach, the responsibility for good and ill remains ultimately his.<sup>103</sup> Once he decides, moreover, his daughter's duty is to obey. Yet the play ignores her reaction. Io does not say whether she tried to resist her father's decision or promptly complied, simply that she was banished and immediately (εὐθύς) transformed (670-5). The play highlights instead what she and her father refused. In the starkest terms, both Io and her father first reject, then obey a directive from Zeus. More precisely, both spurn his offer of marriage.

<sup>102</sup> The plural γεννημάτων in 850 is proleptic for all of Io's descendants; *cf.* n.109. On the traditionally broad scope of 'persuasion' in tragedy, see Buxton (n.4).

<sup>103</sup> Inachus' choice, like Agamemnon's at Aulis, results from 'fear of greater ills'; but unlike *Ag.*, *PD* emphasizes his reluctance and his daughter survives. His response thus fits Aristotle's model of 'mixed actions'

that reasonable people should choose, and that warrant συγγνώμη (at least 'sympathy' if not 'forgiveness') rather than reproach or punishment (*NE* 3.1 1110a4-29). *Cf.* A. Lesky, 'Decision and responsibility in the tragedy of Aeschylus', *JHS* 86 (1966) 78-85, with Dover (n.32) and B. Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley 1993) 130-40.

Their reluctance is understandable. The Oceanids, in their brief song following the episode, express the proverbial fear of unequal unions (887-93) and pray never to attract the gaze of an Olympian (894-7; note ἐξ οὐρανοῦ), whose love is 'inescapable' (ἄφυκτον), 'a battle not to fight' (ἀπόλεμος ... πόλεμος), and 'surpassing all impasse' (ἄπορα πόριμος, 903-5). Yet they also implicate Io's aversion to marriage in her afflictions.

ταρβῶ γὰρ ἀστεργάνορα παρθενίαν  
εἰσορῶσ' Ἰοῦς ἀμαλαπτομέναν  
δυσπλάνοις Ἥρας ἀλατείαις πόνων.<sup>104</sup>

For I tremble when I behold Io's loveless maidenhood worn down in ill-wandering roamings  
of Hera's labours. (898-900)

Io's pubescent chastity (παρθενίαν), as the chorus of immortal maidens recognize, forbids and shuns 'affection with a man' outside the family.<sup>105</sup> But while the Oceanids shudder to see one so like them 'worn down' by her journey, they attribute her ordeal to Hera (cf. *Suppl.* 562-4), who in her Olympian role as the consort of Zeus presides over the sanctity of marriage.<sup>106</sup> Io is thus in an awkward and anguished position all too familiar to Attic audiences. Raised to shun men, she duly recoils from the prospect of marriage and the separation from family and home it entails. Yet the continued survival of mortal families and the societies they constitute requires daughters to leave the paternal home and join another household. The transition was traumatic, and as rituals sanctified and mitigated the trauma, so myth and song repeatedly exalt the process by clothing it in figurative extremes. Both Io's 'ill-wandering roamings' (900) and her prior transformation into quasi-bestial form and mind (673) are standard tropes for young women in the period of puberty prior to marriage and maternity.<sup>107</sup> In conventional terms, she is a 'maiden' (παρθένος) on her way to becoming a mature 'woman' (γυνή); no longer merely a 'daughter' (κόρη) but not yet a 'wife' (δῶμαρ) and 'mother' (μήτηρ), she is in the liminal state of a 'bride' (νύμφη), a woman either engaged or married who has yet to give birth (cf. n.55). Io's journey, in short, is a mythical projection of a maiden's passage from adolescence to motherhood. Starting with her separation from her family, it dramatizes a bride's transitional period of isolation and transformation that culminates in her reincorporation in the new role and full adult status of a legitimate mother of legitimate children.

For an Attic audience, Io's ordeal evokes a physical, psychological, social and ritual process peculiar to her age and gender. Like the Oceanids around her and the Danaids five generations later, she is a nubile maiden, as timid and innocent as the stray heifer she resembles or the wild filly her skittering evokes (881). Yet unlike all but one of the Danaids, she duly accepts at the end of her journey the role that Greek culture prescribed for her. Though piously resistant to her disturbing erotic dreams at first, she averts the demise of her father's 'family' (γένος, 668) by

<sup>104</sup> The received text in 899 makes the relevance of marriage explicit: γάμοι δαπτομέναν (cf. δάπτομαι κέαρ, 437); but Weil's emendation (based on sch. 899a) is compelling. For defence of the received text in 900, see West (n.6) 310-11.

<sup>105</sup> The *hapax* ἀστεργάνορα should signify an active 'dislike' (cf. στυγάνορα 724), not the passive 'unloved', though the lyrical context admits an ambiguous 'affection with a man'.

<sup>106</sup> Io's ties to Hera were especially prominent in Argive myth and ritual; see R. Seaford, 'The Eleventh Ode of Bacchylides: Hera, Artemis, and the absence of Dionysos', *JHS* 108 (1988) 118-36 on the Proitids and

the premarital or nubility rites of the Argive Heraia; cf. W. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Berlin 1972; tr. P. Bing, Berkeley 1983) 161-73; Dowden (n.49) 70-95; I. Clark, 'The gamos of Hera: myth and ritual', in S. Blundell and M. Williamson (eds.), *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece* (London 1998) 13-26.

<sup>107</sup> Calame (n.59) 238-44; P.M.C. Forbes Irving, *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths* (Oxford 1990) 63-79; for ritual connections, see Dowden (n.49) 117-45; P. Katz, 'Io in the *Prometheus Bound*: A coming of age paradigm for the Athenian community', in M. Padilla (ed.), *Rites of Passage in Ancient Greece* (*Bucknell Review* 43, Lewisburg 1999) 129-47.

leaving his home and enduring a traumatic journey to a foreign land where she accepts the hand (849) of her suitor (740) and starts an archetypal Greek 'settlement' (ἀποικίαν, 814), both a 'home apart' from her father's and the 'colony' she finds with her new family (cf. 815, 846). Innocence and obedience are thus essential to Io's exemplary role. Her initial shame and reluctance are tokens of adolescent piety, and in a primitive world devoid of guiding rituals and comforting ceremonies, her expulsion prefigures a bride's ritualized departure from home (cf. 556-60), her wandering in the wilderness the process of nuptial 'yoking' (579) and conjugal 'taming' (601), and her destination the consummation of maturity in matrimony and legitimate maternity. In some of its themes and motifs, this ordeal resembles the disrupted weddings and perversions of marriage common in tragedies set in later eras.<sup>108</sup> But here, at the dawn of the Olympian era, abduction, frenzy and wandering are aetiological rather than subversive. Io's journey is a charter myth for a new relation between gods and mortals. For the 'suitor' who seeks her hand in 'marriage' is Zeus (739-40), and the 'caress' of his 'unfrightening hand' (ἀταρβεῖ χειρὶ, 849; cf. χειρὶ παίωνια, *Suppl.* 1062) not only ends her suffering and grants her unprecedented honour but also establishes a new institution. Unlike Iphigenia or Antigone, Io lives to give birth and raise a family. And like her descendants Europa and Danae, she wins renown not as a barren bride of Hades but as 'wife of Zeus' and mother of his 'kingly family' on earth. Hers, like Hera's, is thus a 'sacred marriage', and its consummation both inaugurates Zeus's 'new family' of mortals (233) and establishes matrimony to govern their procreation. Io, in short, is the original link in a twofold bond of kinship and civil culture, and her ordeal ratifies a new covenant between Zeus and mortals.<sup>109</sup>

In this light, the role of consent diminishes in significance and is duly left obscure. The lengthy instructions Prometheus gives Io presuppose she has some degree of self-control. He begins his directions by telling her to 'learn the route thoroughly' (705-6) and to 'inscribe [it] on the remembering tablets of your mind [φρενῶν]' (789).<sup>110</sup> And despite her frenzied entrance and departure, she is calm, attentive and articulate for much of her time onstage. Her lucidity, however, may be only temporary or merely a necessary dramatic device. More to the point, this ambiguity about Io's state of mind reflects deep cultural ambivalence regarding young women's emotional and sexual maturation. The recurrent imagery of animals and delirium, taken literally, radically reduces the room for rational consent. Yet it figuratively places her outside ordinary norms: she is at once bestially subhuman and strangely demonic (cf. Θυιάς Ἥρας, *Suppl.* 564). By making her mental state mysterious, the episode imbues her with a sacred aura that preserves her innocence, mediates between violent coercion and independent initiative, and precludes either rape or escape. In strictly behavioural terms, Io maintains the modest mean expected in a chaste daughter on the threshold of marriage: neither recalcitrant nor eager, or in any way willfully assertive, but reluctantly compliant.<sup>111</sup> As one divinely possessed, however, she also transcends this norm, though whether literally or only figuratively is unclear, perhaps by design. Prometheus' prophecy of her sacred marriage (848-50), like the oracular benediction earlier at Dodona (834) which it clarifies and confirms, grants her rare insight into her future and its sig-

<sup>108</sup> See Seaford (n.57) 106-10 on the assimilation of bridal and funeral motifs.

<sup>109</sup> In *Suppl.* 313-15, the Danaids claim that Epaphus is named for a 'pledge' (ἀληθῶς ῥυσίων ἐπόνυμος) Zeus made to Io and her descendants; see Murray (n.37) 33-7.

<sup>110</sup> Prometheus predicts that Zeus will make Io 'reasonable' (τίθησιν ἔμφονα, cf. 444, 628) at Canopus (848-9), which may allude to a new awareness associated with maternity. But Io's own words suggest a simple return to sanity (φρένες διάστροφοί, 673; cf. 878, 881), not a new or higher state of understanding. For the φρένες as the seat of reason, see Sansone (n.32) 21-33.

<sup>111</sup> See J. Redfield, 'Notes on the Greek wedding', *Arethusa* 15 (1982) 181-201, esp. 191: 'Virginity is precious and is not abandoned voluntarily... The bride is expected to be unwilling, to take with her into marriage a certain virginal modesty.' Cf. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'A series of erotic pursuits: images and meanings', *JHS* 107 (1987) 131-53, esp. 140-1, reprinted in *Reading Greek Culture: Texts and Images, Rituals and Myths* (Oxford 1991) 58-98.



nificance. But how well she understands this matters little dramatically. Its function is rather to sanctify her ordeal and, by giving prominence to speech, to highlight for the audience Zeus's use of persuasion. At some point Io consents. Unlike Prometheus, she never acts decisively either to evade or to exult in her appointed role. For a pious maiden in Io's liminal state of *παρθενία*, acquiescence first in her father's and then in her husband's bidding marks the limit of consent. Any gesture of greater autonomy, whether refusal or enthusiasm, would risk transgressing the dependent status assigned to her in Greek society.<sup>112</sup>

Prometheus gives Io what he already gave all mortals: instructions for survival and the great 'expectations' of *ἐλπίζ* (250-4). But their encounter does more than exemplify his gifts. It also reveals how their ordeals are both parallel and complementary. Io's journey represents in the social sphere what the punishment of Prometheus does in the political sphere. Each dramatizes a process of acculturation as submission to the authority of Zeus: the subordination of women to men in marriage and the family, and the coordination of free citizens in the political community of a *polis*.<sup>113</sup> To vindicate the legitimacy of these basic Greek institutions, the play envisions a chaotic state of nature in which both characters suffer. Io's wandering is a mythic projection of female sexuality untamed by marriage, wild, vulnerable and bewildered. In pointed contrast, Prometheus embodies male intelligence unrestrained by civic norms, bold and cunning but blind to justice and moderation. Both represent capacities essential for the maintenance and renewal of mortal families and societies: maternal fecundity and clever ingenuity. Both therefore undergo ordeals designed to harness their creative energies: the delirious wandering associated with a young woman's sexual awakening, and the physical coercion required to subdue arrogant male strength. And both reap rewards when they accept their appointed stations. Io wins maternal joy and renown for adopting the matrimonial mean between abstinence and promiscuity, and Prometheus ritual honours for performing his delegated role in the cosmic polity led by Zeus. The justice of Zeus thus operates in tandem in their parallel ordeals.<sup>114</sup>

This bipartite scheme of justice also has two complementary sides, corresponding to Zeus's twofold plan for mortals and illustrated within this play by his dealings with Prometheus and Io. As Prometheus recounts how Zeus first overthrew the Titans and then distributed divine powers to the other gods (219-31), so he reports that Zeus planned both to send mortals to Hades and 'to plant a new family' (232-3). Prometheus, after siding with Zeus against the Titans, interferes with the distribution of divine powers to both gods and men. For that and his continued defiance of this new order, he is punished and restrained. His role in the play thus exhibits the retributive side of Olympian justice, which his release in the sequel would reveal to be not merely punitive and preventive but ultimately corrective and constructive. But already within *Desmotes*, the largely negative and often destructive impact of retributive justice is balanced by an episode that indicates the beneficent and productive side of Olympian justice. Io, despite her ordeal, or rather mysteriously by virtue of it, is the founding figure in Zeus's plan for a new family of mortals, and an emblem of his distributive justice. Through her as his first mortal wife the orderly distribution of divine powers and sacred institutions to mortals begins, and with it the steady progress and proliferation of a new mortal 'family' and its distinctly human culture. As Io's journey

<sup>112</sup> An Athenian bride had no formal 'right of consent' and was officially subject to her *kurios*, first her father and then her husband. Fathers could expel daughters suspected of sexual activity, as Inachus does, or sell them into slavery, according to a law ascribed to Solon (Plut. *Sol.* 23.2), though when this law lapsed or was rescinded is unclear; see R. Just, *Women in Athenian Life* (London 1989) 26-9 and 70; Sissa (n.55) 87-104.

<sup>113</sup> In a similar contrast, *Protag.* 322c-d pairs *αἰδώς*

and *δίκη* for *πόλεων κόσμοι τε καὶ δεσμοὶ φιλίας*; cf. Buxton (n.4) 90-1, contrasting political aspects of persuasion in Prometheus' role with its erotic aspects in Io's.

<sup>114</sup> An anonymous referee suggests further connections: the garlands (*fr.* 202 R) and finger-rings (Hygin. *Astron.* 2.15) which *Luomenos* apparently aetiologized as tokens of Prometheus' penalty and release were tokens of religiously charged civic and conjugal authority.

marks the domestication of female reproductive power in the conjugal union of marriage (γάμος, 648, 739), so her son and his 'kingly family' will establish male sovereignty in the civil union of civic communities (πόλις, 846). Her union with Zeus thus consecrates his gift of both social and political justice to mortals.

Within the spatial and temporal limits of the play, Io's world is still prey to the brutal violence and anarchy of earlier eras. Its turmoil and disorder, embodied in both Prometheus and Io and envisioned in the barbaric and monstrous mortals he warns her to shun, still dominate the play. Most today, seeing little else, lionize Prometheus and pity or ignore Io. But fifth-century Athenians, steeped in the customs, rituals and myths of their culture, surely saw much more and responded very differently. Ordinary piety would predispose many to question or criticize Prometheus' theft and defiance, to expect or discern the benevolent oversight of Zeus in Io's ordeal, and to recognize and appreciate the logic of antithesis that praises the Olympians by imagining how dismal the world once was and would again be absent their blessings. When the memory of the Persian invasions was still fresh, the costs and dangers of ongoing hostilities very real, and both the Pontic coast and the Nile delta of critical military and commercial concern, Io's perilous journey would resonate and horrify. But the glimpse of her glorious legacy in the culminating speech of the episode would thrill with its familiar triumphs. This world to come is also Io's, of course, since she is its first mortal parent. Hallowed by her union with Zeus and increasingly settled by their descendants, it is a distinctly Greek world. In the ethnographic terms of her journey, it is a cultural mean between the nomadic anarchy of the Scythian North and the opulent despotism of the Persian East (cf. *Eum.* 526-30). The rivers on her route even chart its path: the Argive heritage of Inachus must circumvent the 'violence' of Scythian Hubristes (717) and the golden 'wealth' of Persian Plouton (805-6) to be refreshed by the 'shining' Aethiops (809) and nourished by the 'holy' Nile (812) before reclaiming its home.<sup>115</sup> Or in the simpler theogonic terms that drive the entire trilogy, primordial brutality and oppression must yield to the legitimate and lasting authority of Olympian justice and its mortal champions from Io to Heracles and beyond.

*Prometheus Bound*, in dramatizing the origin and rise of Greek names and norms, celebrates the culture of its time and place. But its triumphalism is neither smug nor narrowly parochial. In its genealogy of culture, the chosen 'family' is distinctly Greek, thanks to the sacred bond, both paternal and cultural, that Zeus consecrates with Argive Io and renews repeatedly in later generations. But as in Hesiod's allegory of the Just City, this family prospers by virtue of its norms and conduct, not simply by hereditary entitlement. The justice of Zeus is its patrimony, and championing this in action and honouring it in ritual are the engine of its success. The many branches of Io's family, both in mainland Greece and beyond, who reject this Olympian heritage languish, decline or perish. The Danaids eliminate all but one Egyptian heir. But the one sister who succumbs to the charms of Aphrodite (864-5) enables both branches of Io's family to regain authority in their ancestral land. Other mortals in the play are also judged by the same standards. The barbarous hordes which Io must shun are repellent not because they are remote (witness the admirable Gabioi in *Luomenos fr.* 196 R) but because their fierce contempt for helpless strangers like her violates the norms of Zeus Xenios and Hikesios.<sup>116</sup> Conversely, Prometheus earns admiration and sympathy from both Io (613-14) and the audience for his generosity to mortals; had he not helped the mindless weaklings he earlier disdained, his defiance of Zeus would have no saving grace. The implicit theodicy of the play, then, is less ethnocentric than ethnocentric, its ideology not tribalist but exceptionalist. The 'new family' inaugurated by Zeus and Io is united pri-

<sup>115</sup> The 'Ethiopian' fountains of Helios (808-9) evoke rejuvenation (*fr.* 192 R, Hdt. 3.23); *cf.* n.46.

<sup>116</sup> On these closely related aspects of αἰδώς toward outsiders, see J. Gould, 'HIKETEIA', *JHS* 93 (1973) 74-103, esp. 87-94.

marily by culture and achievement, not land or blood, and its main criteria of kinship are its potentially universal norms. The justice of Zeus, in short, is civilized society. It requires the material resources developed and deployed by the Olympian technologies that Prometheus dispensed too freely. But its vital energy and authority reside in the civic order, social morality and ritual devotion enshrined in the threefold Olympian imperative of justice within the *polis* and its families, kindness to friendly outsiders and reverence for the gods both above and below. That is the creed proclaimed by the Danaid chorus in their benediction of Argos (*Suppl.* 698-709; *cf.* n.62) and pronounced by the chorus of Furies when they settle in Athens (*Eum.* 269-72, 538-48). It is also the dispensation of Zeus envisioned here, and what this play and its trilogy sought to commend.

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