



Prometheus Bound

Aeschylus

Who Was Prometheus?

- ❖ Titan
- ❖ Creator of mankind from clay
- ❖ Stole fire to give to man
- ❖ See lines 504-505
- ❖ Sentenced by Zeus to eternal torment
- ❖ Bound to a rock and each day an eagle (symbol of Zeus) is



Other Characters

- ❖ Zeus - (not present)
- ❖ Hermes
- ❖ Io
- ❖ Oceanids
- ❖ Oceanus
- ❖ Hephaestus
- ❖ Might [Kratus]
- ❖ Violence [Bia] - (does no speak)



Punishment For What?

- ❖ And, why was that a problem?



Punishment For What?

- ❖ line 10 - "...that he might learn to endure and like the sovereignty of Zeus and quit his man loving disposition."



Hephaestus

- ❖ Son of Hera and Zeus
- ❖ Craftsman of the gods
- ❖ Does not like the role he is playing. Why?
- ❖ Is he sympathetic with Prometheus' cause?



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- ❖ Hephaestus has chosen sides; he is aligned with Zeus and Prometheus is, therefore, the enemy. Might indicates that it is wrong to pity an enemy. How might this situation be reflected in our own culture?

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- ❖ Several references to the newness of Zeus' rule are made (i.e. "the new Prince" – line 97; "new are the statesmen... and new are the customs..." – lines 148, 149, "new" – line 312; etc.). In what way is Zeus (and the Olympians) new?
 - ❖ How did Zeus become King of the Gods?
 - ❖ "When first the Gods began their angry quarrel, and God matched god in rising faction" (lines 201-202), Prometheus chose to side with Zeus. So, why is Zeus not more understanding of someone who has been his ally? (hint: lines 227-229)

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- ❖ Of all the possible deities, demigods, and demons that could have been cast in this drama, why Io?

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- ❖ Zeus loves Io. Really? What kinds of love are reflected in this drama?

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- ❖ Prometheus gives hope to mankind, but has no hope that Oceanus can get Zeus to relent. Why the paradox?

Future Shock

- ❖ *Prometheus* derived from the Greek *pro* (before) + *manthano* (learn) and the agent suffix - *eus*, thus meaning "Forethinker".
- ❖ "Prometheus" means "Foreseeing One". Io asks him to tell her the fate that awaits her and he indicates it is better not to know. Do you agree with him? Would you want to know what awaits you in the future if you could? How would it change the way you live your life if you knew what awaited you in the future?

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- ❖ In what ways is this drama about “power”. Political power? Economic power? Sexual power? Power over ones own circumstances? Power over ones own will? Power to effect change?

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- ❖ Might claims that “only Zeus is free” (line 50). Is this the message of the whole drama? Who is free? Is even Zeus free?
 - ❖ The Chorus claims that even Zeus cannot escape what is fated? Prometheus says, “So must I bear, as lightly as I can, the destiny that fate has given me; for I know well against necessity, against its strength, no one can fight and win.” (line 103) Does Aeschylus believe this? How does this compare with what you believe about God and freewill?

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- ❖ Victor Frankl, a Nazi concentration camp survivor, asserted “Freedom to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances.” Is Prometheus an example of this? Or, is there more to it than that?

