

CHORAL SELF-REFERENTIALITY IN THE
PROMETHEUS BOUND.
SONG, DANCE, AND THE EMOTIONS*



ABSTRACT: In the parodos of the *Prometheus Bound*, the chorus of the Oceanids enters in their winged cars and addresses Prometheus in lyric meters without, however, performing dancing. In order to interpret the absence of choral activity up to a certain point of the drama, which has a significant impact on the identity of the tragic chorus per se, it is important to understand the role and the importance of the Oceanids in the whole play by bringing to the fore their own comments on their presence and activity. Within this framework, we need to place particular emphasis on the dramatic space that hosts their performance, as well as on their singing and dancing and on the emotions conveyed throughout the drama. The unusual *choreia* of the Oceanids corresponds to the spoken grief of the chained protagonist and thus acquires a strong performative effect.

THE *PROMETHEUS BOUND* HAS BEEN much debated by classicists for many reasons. The date¹ and conditions of production² of the tragedy are unknown and many scholars doubt its authenticity.³ Leaving the ques-

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1. See, for example, Sutton (1983) 289-294, who argues that the *Prometheus* was written before 456 B.C. in proximity to the *Oresteia*, when the plays of Aeschylus and the young Sophocles dominated the Great Dionysia. See also Lefèvre (2003) esp. 137-146, who bases his arguments on the *Prometheus*' possible date of composition, on the ancient reception of the play and on the possible influence from post-Aeschylean authors. In addition, Bees (1993) offers a wholesale examination of the *Prometheus*' possible date of compositions combined with an examination of the play's authenticity and concludes that it might have been written in the second half of the 5th century B.C. May I note here that for the text of *Prometheus* (and the whole of the Aeschylean corpus) I rely on M.L. West's edition (Teubner, 1990).
2. See Hammond (1972) 387-450 and (1988) 5-33.
3. For a succinct presentation of the problem of the *Prometheus Bound*, see Lesky (1983) 96-99. The most significant deniers of the play's authenticity are: Schmid (1929); Griffith (1977); Taplin (1977); West (1979) 130-148; Bees (1993). *Contra* Hering-

tion of authorship open, I shall discuss the song, dance, and emotions of the chorus in the particular dramatic space of the *Prometheus Bound*. More specifically, I will focus in this essay on the issue of choral self-referentiality, by which I mean the chorus' commentary on its own performance.⁴ The discussion is divided into three sections: dramatic space, choreography, and emotions. Starting point of the discussion will be the examination of the dramatic space of the *Prometheus Bound*, which will, hopefully, contribute to the description of the choral performance and will allow us to follow the shaping and communication of the chorus' emotions throughout the play.

THE DRAMATIC SPACE

According to Issacharoff's semiotic theory, there exist at least three distinct categories of theatrical space: (a) theater space (architectural design); (b) stage space (the stage and set design); (c) dramatic space (space as used by a particular dramatist).⁵ The third category of theatrical space, which is also our main concern here, is further subdivided into onstage and offstage (mimetic and diegetic). Mimetic space is visible to the spectators, whereas diegetic space is described, but not visible to them.⁶

The first information on the setting of the *Prometheus* is offered by the Strength (*Kratos*), who opens the play. The location of the play is Scythia, a broader area that encompasses the lands to the north and east of the Black Sea.⁷ Scythia is the destination of *Kratos* (Strength), *Bia* (Violence), Hephaestus', and Prometheus' journey. In this inhospitable place, Prometheus' punishment is going to be accomplished (A. Pr. 1-10):

ΚΡΑΤΟΣ. Χθονὸς μὲν εἰς τήλουρον ἤκομεν πέδον,
 Σκόθην ἐς οἶμον, ἄβροστον εἰς ἐρημίαν.
 Ἥφαιστε, σοὶ δὲ χερὴ μέλειν ἐπιστολὰς
 ἄς σοι πατὴρ ἐφεῖτο, τόνδε πρὸς πέτραις
 ὕψηλοκρήμνοις τὸν λεωργὸν ὀχμάσαι
 [...]

ton (1970) esp. 17-21, Pattoni (1987) and Lefèvre (2003) 135-136, who defend the authenticity of the play.

4. Henrichs (1994/5) 60.

5. Issacharoff (1989) 56.

6. Ibid. 58. Edmunds (1996) 25 enriches Issacharoff's approach by subdividing the diegetic space into two subcategories: the diegetic space that is visible to the characters onstage, but not to the spectators and the diegetic space that is invisible to everyone.

7. *OCD* s.v.

STRENGTH. We have come to the distant ground of earth,
to the Scythian land, to an untrodden solitude.
Now, Hephaestus, you must care for the orders
your father left you, to bind
this wicked man fast on rocks with lofty cliffs
[...]⁸

From the initial lines of the Prologue we are thus informed that Prometheus is transferred to a land which is described as distant (*τήλουρον*) and desolate (*ἐρημίαν*), and where he will be bound on high-rugged cliffs (*πρός πέτραις ύψηλοκορήμυοις*). The detailed description of the spot helps us visualize the part of the acting space where Prometheus is located. However, we cannot be sure where exactly Prometheus stands in the *orchēstra*. The main traits of the place recur throughout the tragedy: remote, desolate, rugged, high, exposed to the elements.⁹ The comments of every character of the play on the *topos* unanimously reveal it as inhospitable: *Kratos*,¹⁰ Hephaestus,¹¹ Prometheus,¹² the chorus of Oceanids,¹³ Oceanus,¹⁴ Io,¹⁵ and Hermes.¹⁶ This unwelcoming *topos* has an essential dramatic function. By repeating how unfriendly and unwelcoming this place is, the poet simultaneously portrays Prometheus' punishment, which is established and defined by the *topos* itself, as relentlessly cruel. Moreover, the poet constantly reminds us of the 'here' and 'now' of the performance, rendering thus the escape from space and time impossible for the *dramatis personae* and the audience as well. This scenic space that "constitutes the quintessential *erēmia*,"¹⁷ in Rehm's expression, will host the interaction between Prometheus and the chorus and bring them together through their shared emotions of fear and grief.

8. The translations are mine, under the influence of Smyth (1926).

9. As Griffith (1983) 86 argues: "the constant references to 'rock', 'hill', 'crag', etc. ... are needed to keep the imaginary setting vividly in the audience's mind".

10. A. *Pr.* 1-5. See p. 128 of the paper.

11. Hephaestus makes several comments on the place: e.g. *φάραγγι δυσχειμέρω* ("this wintry cleft"; *Pr.* 15). See also 20, 31.

12. Prometheus makes constant references to the savage character of the place; see for example 117: *τερόμόνιον ἐπὶ πάγον* ("to this rock at the world's end"). Cf. 142-143a, 271-272.

13. 280-1: *ὄκραιοέσση χθονὶ* ("rugged ground").

14. 286: *δολιχῆς τέρμα κελεύθου* ("at the end of the long road").

15. 748: *τῆσδ' ἀπὸ στόφλου πέτρας* ("from this harsh ledge").

16. 1016-7: *ὄκρῖδα φάραγγα* ("jagged cliff").

17. Rehm (2002) 156.

CHOREOGRAPHY (A).
PROMETHEUS' LACK OF KINETIC ACTIVITY

As it has already been remarked, there is not enough information available as regards the exact position of Prometheus in the *orchēstra*.¹⁸ As the following passage indicates, Prometheus is on a spot where he will not be able to see, or hear, any human being. Situated either in the center or in the margins, Prometheus' spot is undoubtedly the symbolic center of the action (A. *Pr.* 19-25):

ΗΦΑΙΣΤΟΣ. [...] *δυσλύτοις χαλκείμασι*
προσπασσαλεύσω τῷδ' ἀπανθρώπω πάγω
ἦν' οὔτε φωνήν οὔτε του μορφῆν βροτῶν
ᾄψῃ [...]

HEPHAESTUS. [...] with indissoluble brazen bonds
I will nail you fast to this desolate crag,
so that you will not be able to see neither voice nor form of mortals.
[...]

The use of the verb *προσπασσαλεύω* (“nail fast to”), combined with the description of the “unbroken brazen bonds” (*δυσλύτοις χαλκείμασι*), makes Prometheus' movement impossible. A little later, Hephaestus enriches his description of Prometheus' imminent sufferings by focusing on his posture and predicting his constant lamentation, (31-4: “... you must stand upright, sleepless, without bending your knee. And you shall utter lamentations and useless laments”). Indeed, the protagonist's bodily inaction directs the audience's attention to his vocal activity and thus augments the latter's importance. In the following sections I shall discuss how the author harmonizes Prometheus' immobility with the choral movement in the *orchēstra* and also broach the question of the Oceanids' emotions.

18. The question has been posed and briefly discussed by Wiles (1997) 81-2, who argues that Prometheus stands possibly in the center of the *orchēstra*, relying on two arguments: Oceanus' circulation around Prometheus' boundary-stone and the cyclicity of Io's journey. I cannot, however, understand why the cyclicity of Oceanus' and Io's journey excludes the possibility of a position in the margins of the *orchēstra*. In addition, he mentions that Prometheus cannot see who enters, therefore he does not see the *parodoi*. But, since, according to Wiles, Prometheus stands in the center of the *orchēstra*, how is he not able to see the chorus' entry?

CHOREOGRAPHY (B).
ABSENCE OF CHORAL DANCING

It is clear that Prometheus has no view of the *parodoi*, since he cannot see the chorus of the Oceanids enter. However, he can smell and hear them as they approach rapidly through the air. The use of lyric iambs (114-6), combined with dochmiac metres (117) and anapests (120-7), anticipates the arrival of the chorus and underlines Prometheus' anxiety and confusion¹⁹ (*A. Pr.* 114-27):

ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ. ἄ ἄ ἔα ἔα.
 τίς ἀχώ, τίς ὀδμὰ προσέπτα μ' ἀφεγγής,
 θεόσντος, ἢ βρότειος, ἢ κεκραμένη;
 ἔκετο τερμόνιον <τις> ἐπὶ πάγον
 πόνων ἐμῶν θεωρός, ἢ τί δὴ θέλων;
 [...]
 φεῦ φεῦ, τί ποτ' αἶ κινάθισμα κλύω πέλας οἰωνῶν;
 αἰθήρ δ' ἔλαφραῖς πτερόγων ῥιπαῖς ὑποσυρρίζει.
 πᾶν μοι φοβερόν τὸ προσέρπον.

PROMETHEUS. Ha! Oho! What noise, what smell invisible flies to me?
 Is it sent by the gods, is it human, or mixed?
 Has <someone> come to this rock
 at the edge of the world to view my sufferings — or else with what intent?
 [...]
 Alas! What is, again, this rustling of birds I hear
 nearby? The air whistles with the light
 swings of wings.
 Everything that approaches causes me fear.

In attempting to understand who is approaching him, Prometheus relies on the senses of hearing and smell. The verb *προσπέτομαι* (*προσέπτα*, “to fly towards”) is attributed to the sound and the smell and is also indicative of the winged arrivals. The sound and smell, however, mislead Prometheus, who interprets the sound he hears as “rustling of birds” (*κινάθισμα*²⁰ ... *οἰωνῶν*), and therefore, fails to understand the identity of the arrivals. The characterization of their movement as “light swings of wings” (*ἐλαφραῖς πτερόγων ῥιπαῖς*) is the first description of the movement of the chorus, which is, how-

19. Griffith (1983) 106.

20. Hesychius s.v. defines *κινάθισμα* as *κίνημα πλήθους*. LSJ defines it as rustling motion. The word is found only in the *Prometheus Bound*.

ever, based on auditory and not visual perception. In addition, Prometheus' anger and fear make him impulsively think that the chorus has come as "spectator" (*θεωρός*) of his sufferings. Of course, as it will become evident in the play, the chorus' role is by no means restricted to that.

Prometheus' bodily idleness is counterbalanced by the use of lyric iambs and anapests and, furthermore, by the rapid movements of the wings. As Ley²¹ argues,

If the sound and delivery of anapests imply movement, to compose them for an actor/character who has been violently placed in a position in which he cannot move may be an impressive, performative effect. What the verse implies is the very thing the actor/character cannot do himself; the verse form itself points to the (in)action of the tragedy.

The Oceanids enter and put an end to Prometheus' agitation and fear, emotions that are no doubt shared by the audience. However, the textual evidence does not clarify from where they enter and where exactly they stand.²² In the first lines of their entry song (*parodos*) they define themselves as a friendly group, refer to their journey, reveal their identity, and explain the reason for their arrival (*A. Pr.* 128-135):

ΧΟΡΟΣ. μηδὲν φοβηθῆς· φίλῳ γὰρ ἄδε τάξις

21. Ley (2007) 86.

22. Thompson's (1932) 142-144 theory of mimetic dance ("a dance conventionally associated with the flight of sea-nymphs on their winged sea-horses") solves the problem of the staging of the chorus' aerial entry, but it does not solve other issues, such as the representation of the flying movement while seated or that of the imaginary descent from the air to the earth. Pickard-Cambridge (1946) 38-40 suggests that a winged car, which is rolled forward to the roof of the stage, carries the chorus. Inoue (1977) 256 agrees with the approach of Pickard-Cambridge, to the extent that, despite the difficulties of the staging, "an actual descent must be portrayed in some manner". Taplin (1977) 252-260 discusses the practical problems of the staging of the chorus' entry, their movement and their descent to the ground. Griffith (1983) 109 gives three possible options for their movements, but he seems to prefer the last one: "They appear somewhere above (and behind?) P., i.e. up in the air, on cars which are either suspended from a huge machine (probably beyond the means of the fifth-century Attic stage) or, more likely, rolled out on the roof of the stage-building. Repeated mention is made of their aerial entry, and we have noted that P. cannot see them as they arrive." Di Benedetto and Medda (2002) 86 consider it impossible for twelve persons to have been carried on a *mēkhanē*. On the contrary, Podlecki (2005) 165 cannot understand the reason why the chorus could not "have been swung in on the *geranos* [...] on a very large winged car". Marzullo (1993) offers a detailed study on the sophistic play between words and actions in the *Prometheus Bound* and focuses on the poet's demonstration of his ability to create amazing descriptions rather than on their performative potentiality.

πτερούγων θοαῖς ἀμίλλαις
 προσέβα τόνδε πάγον, πατρώας
 μόγις παρειποῦσα φρένας.
 κραιπνοφόροι δέ μ' ἔπεμψαν αἴθραι.
 κτύπον γὰρ ἀγὼ χάλυβος διῆξεν ἄντρον
 μυχόν, ἐκ δ' ἔπληξέ μου τὰν θεμερῶπιν αἰδῶ·
 σύθην δ' ἀπέδιλος ὄχῳ πτερωτῶ.

CHORUS. Do not fear; for this friendly formation
 has approached this rock with swift trials of wings
 having scarcely persuaded our father's mind.
 And the swift-bearing breezes have carried me;
 for the echo of the bang of iron pierced the depth of our caves
 and stroke my grave and serious modesty;
 and I came hastily, unsandalled, in a winged carriage.

The water-nymphs, daughters of Oceanus, have come as friends (*φιλία* ... *τάξις*). But, where does this friendship originate? The answer will be given by themselves later, in l. 559. So far, they inform us that they have come “hastily” (*σύθην, σέυω*) “in winged cars” (*ὄχῳ πτερωτῶ*), which during the journey “competed with one another” (*θοαῖς ἀμίλλαις*). The emphasis on the haste of their journey is vividly conveyed through the use of the verb *σεύω* and the adjective *θοός*. At the hearing of Hephaestus' iron, their intense worry, which is expressed through the emotionally strong verb *ἔπληξε* (*πλήσσω*, here, “to be struck by terror”), motivates them to act and leave their caves—possibly in the depths of the ocean—in order to come and alleviate Prometheus' pains. The proof of their rush is that they have come “without sandals” (*ἀπέδιλος*), which is a clear stage direction and it might imply their natural, plain beauty²³ that contrasts with the ugly, rugged surroundings. Furthermore, the absence of sandals might have specific social connotations related to the gender of the chorus. Blundell, who relies entirely on vase-paintings, concludes that shoes play an important role in distinguishing the gender roles in ancient Athens and more specifically, shoes or the lack of them underlines the active role of Athenian males in public life as opposed to the passive role of Athenian women. A fifth-century red-figure cup by Peithinos leads Blundell to the following conclusion: “the young men's sandals, coupled with their sticks, signify their ability to move around freely in outdoor, public space; and in this way their position as Athenian cit-

23. On the association of foot with beauty and sexuality in Sappho and in epic poetry see Levine (2005) 55-72. Cf. also Philostr. *Ep.* 1.37, who writes in the period of the Second Sophistic: [...] ὃ ἄδετοι πόδες, ὃ κάλλος ἐλεύθερον [...].

izens is underlined".²⁴ If she is right, then the appearance of the chorus of the Oceanids in bare feet would be inappropriate for the public space. However, the absence of literary evidence and the exclusion of other possible interpretations apart from the strict dualities, such as male/female, active/passive or public/private, weakens Blundell's argument, as Powers remarks.²⁵

Although one would imagine them seated in the winged carriage(s), the phrase *κραιπνοφόροι δέ μ' ἔπεμψαν αἶθραι* ("swift-bearing breezes have carried me") indicates that they soar into the air, as Griffith persuasively argues.²⁶ However, *they are sent by the winds*, as they explain, and do not seem to move on their own. Their passive movement is depicted as a bird's flight.

Interestingly, the chorus does not dance. The Oceanids remain seated in their winged car(s) and address the protagonist. The only movement in the scene is restricted to the flying of the carriage. The chorus, rise from their world (sea caves) up into the protagonist's world (sky). The immobility of their bodies strengthens the power and the effect of their voice. The fact that the chorus sings without performing choral dancing seems paradoxical,²⁷ but nevertheless creates a strong performative effect. One could argue that the chorus' immobility is their emotional reaction to the sight of Prometheus. Furthermore, in this way the Oceanids might be considered as expressing their sympathy for him.²⁸

This motif of absence of choral dancing is not unparalleled in ancient Greek drama. In Euripides' *Troades* Hecuba refers to the lament of the unhappy people as a song that does not permit dancing (Eur. *Tr.* 120-121: *μοῦσα δὲ χαῦτη τοῖς δυστήνοισι / ἄτας κελαδεῖν ἀχορεύτωνος*), and a little later, when she invites the chorus to participate in her lament, she exhorts the women to "utter a cry", instead of performing the festive, archetypal *choreia*.²⁹

24. Blundell (2002) 148.

25. Powers (2014) 89.

26. Ibid. 114.

27. Taplin (1977) 256 remarks that the amount of choral dancing and singing in the *Prometheus* is in any case limited.

28. Podlecki (2005) highlights the metrical contrast between the lyric stanzas that reveal their worry and Prometheus' calmer and more measured anapaests, arguing that this may suggest a difference of emotional tone between the two.

29. In Aesch. *Eum.* 331-333 and 341-6 the Erinyes' song is described as a hymn sung with no accompaniment of the lyre, and therefore, as a sad song (*ῥυμός ἐξ Ἐρινύων, / δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρ- / μικτός, ἀδονὰ βροστοῖς*); cf. 341-6. Similarly, in Aesch. *Ag.* 990-992 the Erinyes' song is sung without the lyre: *τὸν δ' ἄνευ λύρας ὄμως ἕμνωδεῖ / θρηῖνον Ἐρινύος ἀποδίδακτος ἔσωθεν / θυμός [...]* On the spontaneity of the song, see Brillante (2009) pp. 27-8, who focuses on the terms *ἀποδίδακτος, ἔσωθεν* and *θυμός*. Cf. also Aesch. *Supp.* 678-683, where the lack of song and dance are considered "man-

(Eur. *Tr.* 145-152: *τύφεται Ἴλιον, αἰάζωμεν. / μάτηρ δ' ὥσεί τις πιανοῖς / ὄρνισιν, ὅπως ἐξάρξω γῶ / κλαγγάν, μολπάν, οὐ τὰν αὐτὰν / οἶαν ποτὲ δὴ / σκήπτρω Πριάμου διερευδομένα / ποδὸς ἀρχεχόρου πληγαῖς Φρυγίους / εὐκόμπους ἐξήρχον θεούς*). Hecuba invites the chorus to sing a cry without performing the festive, archetypal *choreia* that traditionally informs tragedy. In other words, Hecuba cancels the essential, archetypal element of a Chorus' performance and effectively, of its identity.

In both the *Prometheus* and the *Troades*, the motif of the absence of the traditional, festive *choreia* (song and dance) and the transformation of the chorus into a group of singers appears in situations of intense grief. As Murnaghan argues, choral song and dance in tragedy is inextricably associated with joyful, festive moments and instantiates “a collective celebration of the benefits enjoyed by both the protagonists and their audiences.”³⁰ While in the *Troades* Hecuba shapes the character of the choral performance, in the *Prometheus Bound* it is the chorus who decide for their own performance. In both cases, however, the emotional convergence³¹ between the protagonist and the chorus prompts similar (in)actions and reactions from both parts.³² The chorus, like the protagonists, are forced — willingly or not — to a condition akin to a physical handicap that mirrors the protagonists' physical and emotional defeat. In other words, the chorus' involvement with the protagonists' misery and participation in their lamentation displaces the chorus from its archetypal role.³³

One wonders, then, if and when the Oceanids will begin their dancing and how will this dancing be presented. In the first episode, just before Oceanus' entry, Prometheus invites the chorus to “come down to the ground” (v. 274: *πέδοι δὲ βᾶσαι*) and listen to his misfortunes. The chorus' answer is suggestive of their position so far (A. *Pr.* 279–285):

ΧΟΡΟΣ. [...]

καὶ νῦν ἐλαφρῶ ποδὶ κραιπνόστυτον θᾶκον προλιποῦσ',

αἰθέρα θ' ἀγνὸν πόρον οἰωνῶν,

ὀκραιοέσση χθονὶ τῆδε πελῶ. [...]

wearily havoc” for the city: *μηδέ τις ἀνδροκμῆς / λοιγὸς ἐπελθέτω / τάνδε πόλιν δαΐζων, / ἄχορον ἀκίθαριν / δακρυογόνον Ἄρη / βοάν τ' ἔνδημον ἐξοπλίζων.*

30. Murnaghan (2011) 248.

31. By emotional convergence I mean the similarity and mutuality of shared emotions that Prometheus and the chorus feel and express.

32. On the emotional convergence between people see Anderson et al. (2003) 1054-1068.

33. Murnaghan (2011) 250-252.

CHORUS. [...]

And, now, with light foot

I shall leave my swift-rushing seat and the pure air,
the pathway of birds, and draw near to this rugged
ground; [...]

In the above lines the Oceanids refer to their own movement, declaring that they will come down to the ground, where Prometheus stands, ‘with light foot’ (*ἐλαφροῦ ποδί*). Yet, we are not certain about the exact kind of choral movement. The audience sees or imagines the chorus, seated in the winged carriage in the air until this moment, starting to dismount from the open air to the earth, and eventually standing on a spot that may either be visible to Prometheus or not. Their interaction with the hero is suspended by the unexpected aerial entry of Oceanus and his dialogue with Prometheus (vv. 284-396). Here, two options are conceivable: the chorus either exits and re-enters after the Oceanus’ scene or remains in the *orchēstra* throughout it. If the chorus is standing in the acting space throughout the exchange between Oceanus and Prometheus, it is hard to explain the reason the Oceanids remain silent and why they are entirely ignored by their father.³⁴ On the other hand, why are they standing out of sight (perhaps behind the *skēnē*), since they have just accepted Prometheus’ invitation and they are on their way to come down to him? What is the point of this delayed approach? Inoue argues that the delayed descent of the chorus to Prometheus is a dramatic device that represents the progression of their relationship from the initial detachment to their willingness to listen to his story, but it does not represent a total commitment to him.³⁵ However, one may argue that the chorus’ stance towards Prometheus is not fluctuating. They are, in fact, entirely committed to him from the beginning until the very end. As it seems to me, the chorus approach Prometheus and take up a position in the acting area close to him immediately after his invitation, exactly as they have promised, but, in the view of their father’s arrival, they leave the floor to him out of respect. Their respect towards their father has already become evident through their reference to their strenuous effort to persuade him to let them leave (vv. 130-131).³⁶ This delay has, from a dramatical point of view, two benefits: it surprises the audience through the unexpected arrival of Oceanus (who has al-

34. Griffith (1983) 138 argues that they do not leave the *orchēstra*. Taplin (1977) 256-258, however, shows the problems of both possibilities.

35. Inoue (1977) 257.

36. See Podlecki (2005) 166.

ready been mentioned) and keeps the spectators, who wait to see the interaction between Prometheus and the chorus, in a state of suspense.

Prometheus, however, is not initially convinced that the chorus is intent on listening his sufferings and sympathizing with him. The use of *καί* (“also”/“too”) in his question to Oceanus, namely if he has come as a spectator too (A. *Pr.* 298-299: *ἔα· τί χρῆμα; καὶ σὺ δὴ πόνων ἐμῶν / ἦκεις ἐπόπτης;*), makes clear what Prometheus thinks of the arrival and the role of the chorus. He seems to believe that the chorus has arrived merely to witness his toils.

Despite Prometheus’ doubts, the chorus not only listens to his sufferings, but also laments for his misery. The chorus’ leader describes its second ode (first *stasimon*) as a lamentation for Prometheus’ unfortunate state, which is accompanied by tears (A. *Pr.* 397-400). Their active participation in Prometheus’ grief is initially denoted with the verb *στένω* (to lament, to moan) and it becomes evident through the tearful expression of their compassion. Significantly, the (self-)description of their compassion for Prometheus is evident in the vocabulary of this passage, which is dominated by a strongly emotional metaphor of their tears as “moist streams”. In general, *στένω*, *στονόεις*, and *στόνος* are repeatedly employed as simple or compound words in the second choral ode.³⁷ More specifically, in lines 407-435³⁸ *στένω* is used four times in verbal form (*στονόεν*, *στένουσι*, *στένει*, *στένουσιν*), and once as the second constituent of an adjective (*μεγαλοστόνοισι*), in order to express the global participation in Prometheus’ grief. Moreover, a variety of words that denote pain and misery appear, such as the nouns *πήμασι* (*πήμα*, calamity), *ἄλγος* (pain, suffering) and the adjective *οἰκτρός* (pitiable).

While the first *stasimon* deepens Prometheus’ grief and renders the atmosphere of the whole scene unbearably painful, in the second *stasimon*, the gloomy atmosphere is momentarily interrupted by a pleasant memory of the chorus, who mention the last occasion they sang for Prometheus and explain, in this way, their long-standing friendship with the Titan (A. *Pr.* 553-560):

ΧΟΡΟΣ. [...]

τὸ διαμφίδιον δέ μοι μέλος προσέπτα

τόδ’ ἐκεῖνό θ’, ὅτ’ ἄμ-

φί λουτρὰ καὶ λέχος σὺν ὕμεναίονν

ἴοτατι γάμων, ὅτε τὰν ὀμοπάτριον ἔδνοις

37. For all these instances, see Griffith (1983) 158-9.

38. The passage will be discussed later in this paper from the scope of the emotions and the way they are depicted.

ἄγαγες Ἡσιόνα
πιθῶν δάμαρτα κοινόλεκτρον.

CHORUS. [...]

the wedding-song about

both your bridal bath and bed, which I was singing

for the sake of your wedding,

when you led my sister Hesione

after persuading her with wedding-gifts

to be your legitimate wife.

The chorus informs the audience that they had sung a hymenaeus-song at Prometheus' wedding with Hesione. The joyful occasion of his wedding contrasts entirely with his current situation. Thus, the nuptial song that the chorus performed on that occasion differs strikingly from their song on the current occasion.³⁹ Indeed, the language of the passage suggests self-referentiality; the deictic gestures *τόδε μέλος ~ ἐκεῖνο* accompanied by the adjective *διαμφίδιον* (completely different) highlight the contrast between the two choral songs for Prometheus.

In addition, I would assert that the verb *προσπέτομαι* (to fly towards) implies a certain metapoetic self-consciousness. It is the second time that the author uses this verb in this tragedy. In the first instance,⁴⁰ the verb *προσπέτομαι* (*προσέπτα*) was used by Prometheus to describe the sound and smell that came to him because of the arrival of the chorus, whereas, here, it is chosen by the chorus to describe the arrival of the past song (*μέλος*). In both instances, the verb is linked with the 'flying' movement of the chorus in the air. One could, therefore, maintain that the 'flying' choral song reflects the 'flying' arrival of the chorus in the *parodos*.

The pleasant memory of the former wedding-song appears, however, unconnected with the context. The plausible question about what has caused this memory remains unanswered. There is no doubt, however, that it procures a certain dramatic effect, because it breaks the bleak atmosphere with a bright and cheerful description, while it also draws attention to the *hic et nunc* of the choral performance. In addition, as Griffith argues, it "serves both to highlight Prometheus' fall from happiness ... and to prepare us for the arrival of Io..."⁴¹ Certainly, the emotive voice of the chorus, by emphasizing the happiness of the past and the misery of the present, helps to define

39. Cf. Hecuba's verses 145-152 in Euripides' *Troades* on the cheerful old days in the palace. See p. 135.

40. A. Pr. 115: [...] *τίς ἀχώ, τίς ὀδυρὰ προσέπτα μ' ἀφεγγής* [...].

41. Griffith (1983) 188.

the role of the Oceanids, who stand by Prometheus on every occasion of his life, happy or unhappy, as true friends.

EMOTIONS

Emotion theorists have determined the various components⁴² of emotions, regardless of the kind of emotion under examination. Tappolet⁴³ lists six different components:

Roughly, these components are a) a sensory perception or more generally an informational component, b) a kind of appraisal, c) physiological changes, d) conscious feelings, e) cognitive and attentional processes, and f) an action-tendency or more generally a motivational component. (326)

In the *Prometheus Bound* the chorus' songs function mainly as a strong expression of communal sympathy and commiseration.⁴⁴ From the moment of its entrance, the chorus shares Prometheus' emotions of pain and sorrow. In the *parodos*, at the sight of the Titan's sufferings the frightened chorus reacts with tears (A. Pr. 144-6):

XOPOS. λεύσσω, Προμηθεῦ, φοβερά δ' ἐμοῖσιν ὄσσοις
 ὀμίχλα προσῆξε πλήρης
 δακρύων σὸν δέμας εἰσιδούσα
 [...]

CHORUS. I see, Prometheus;
 and a cloud of fear came over my eyes, filled with tears,
 the moment I saw your body
 [...]

The Oceanids describe the stages of their physical and emotional reactions at Prometheus' view. Through the visual perception of the Titan (*λεύσσω*, *εἰσιδούσα*), the Oceanids are immediately conquered by fear (*φοβερά* ... *ὀμίχλα*), because they implicitly appraise Prometheus' situation as frightening. Their eyes are filled with tears (*ὄσσοις* ... *πλήρης δακρύων*), which may be regarded as pointing to a physiological change. The fact that they are able

42. Ben-Ze'ev (2010) 47 remarks that: "The difference between typical characteristics and basic components is that characteristics are properties of the whole emotional experience, whereas components express a conceptual division of the elements of this experience."

43. Tappolet (2010) 325-45.

44. On the role of the chorus as a voice of commiseration, see Segal (1997) 67-8.

to describe in detail the nature of their emotions and the emotional process they experienced shows that they are conscious of their feelings. The last two stages of Tappolet's list are missing, but this can be explained by the fact that the Oceanids feel fear for someone else, not for themselves, and, therefore, there is no need to proceed to more advanced thoughts or actions.

The chorus' emotions are consistent throughout the play. Their initial spontaneous reaction at Prometheus' view remains the same until the end: first, the "piercing fear" that "irritated" their "heart" (A. Pr. 181-2: [...] ἐ-μας δὲ φρένας ἐρέθισε διάτορος φόβος· / δέδια δ' ἀμφὶ σαῖς τύχαις [...]); then, the "pain" from which their "heart suffers" (A. Pr. 245: ἡλγύνθη κέαρ), and, finally, their "trembling" as they see him suffering (A. Pr. 540: [...] φρίσσω δέ σε δερκομένα [...]). The profound emotional experience of the chorus is possibly communicated to the audience through trembling in singing and dancing, heavy breathing and fearful facial expressions (masks) and bodily gestures, in order to be convincing — but this is only speculation.

The Oceanids universalize their lamentation for Prometheus' misfortunes. In verses 406-414 the whole human world, which is thus sharply divided from the divine world, expresses its compassion for Prometheus' misfortunes (A. Pr. 406: πρόπασα δ' ἤδη στονόεν λέλακε χώρα). Every land shares his pain (vv. 214-24), which transcends the limits of the human world: nature (sea, Hades, rivers) participates, too, in Prometheus' grief with loud cries, moans, and roars (A. Pr. 431-5):

ΧΟΡΟΣ. βοᾷ δὲ <πόντοις ἅμα> πόντιος κλύδων
 ξυμπίτων, στένει βυθός,
 κελαινός δ' Ἄιδος ὑποβρέμει μυχὸς γᾶς,
 παγαί θ' ἀγροῦτων ποταμῶν
 στένουσιν ἄλγος οἰκτρὸν.

CHORUS. The sea waves cry aloud <together with sufferings>
 as they fall, the deep laments,
 the black abyss of Hades roars,
 and the streams of pure-flowing rivers
 lament your pitiable pain.

The language used by the chorus (βοᾷ, στένει, ὑποβρέμει, στένουσιν) echoes Prometheus' and the chorus' lament and effectively merges the natural, the human and the divine world by inviting the audience to take part in this universal lamentation. The emotionally shared space between all these parts renders Prometheus the archetypal figure of human heroic sorrow. At

the margin of the earthly world Prometheus' lot is foregrounded and idealized in human thought.

In the end of the play, the constant fear of the chorus as regards Prometheus' fate is substantiated: the Titan entirely exposed to the wild battle of elemental forces sent by Zeus, appears weak and helpless. The only thing that can be heard in this chaotic atmosphere is his heartbreaking lament (vv. 1080-1093). Zarifi, influenced by the earthquake scene in Euripides' *Bacchae* (vv. 576-610), suggests that an earthquake also happens in the *Prometheus Bound* (A. Pr. 1081: *χθὼν σεσάλευται* [...]) and she argues that this earthquake may have been 'danced' by the Oceanids as they disappear.⁴⁵ Everything in nature shakes, is in motion: the sea, the air, the earth, the sky. The world is dissolved in its four basic elements⁴⁶ and re-united to participate in Prometheus' sorrow and, in the end, to struggle over his tortured body.

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

As we have seen, in the *Prometheus Bound* the desert and inhospitable place 'hosts' Prometheus. The more hostile the place is, the more intense his punishment becomes. In this particularly unpleasant *topos* the whole drama unfolds. There is no spatial transformation. Apart from extremely short allusions to imagined places, the space of the play is the same from the beginning until the end. The repeated comments and the detailed descriptions of the place mark it as significantly essential to the evolution of the drama.

In this particular setting the protagonist is idle and the Oceanids do not dance up to a certain point; and, when they do, the manner of their dance seems to be rather absurd and strange. The absence of choral dancing reinforces the power of the collective voice, the power of the cry for Prometheus' fate. Prometheus' lament is accompanied by the song of the chorus and, eventually, by the lament of the whole nature. In reverse order, nearly at the end of the tragedy Prometheus is somehow 'danced' through the shake of the earth, which is, perhaps, caused by the rhythmic movement of the chorus. Prometheus' grief, represented through vocal and kinetic activity, becomes

45. Zarifi (2007) 236-7. However, Taplin (1977) 274 and Griffith (1983) 276-277 argue that the effects were left to the imagination of the spectators, whereas Podlecki (2005) 193, relying on l. 1080 ('in fact, not just in word'), suggests that there must have been an "attempt at realism" as regards "the accompanying stage action". Marzullo (1993) 1 sees the end of the Prometheus as a "strabiliante catastrofe" that cannot be represented.

46. On the description of the apocalyptic ending of the play, see Rehm (2002) 160-163.

universal, inviting thus the audience to break the boundaries of the theatrical space and take part in this profoundly tragic experience.

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