

Prometheus:

- very long black beard (but on ... +?)
- light coming through ... to cast shadow ... (to cast from above?)
- ... of curved face as just a ...

... large ... going through ... he held (like liver) to create light at ... to be dispersed through grain, cables, dice, and ... through stone like ... his liver ... real rock insert ... opening in side

Chiron (or Cheiron)

- Centaur renowned for his wisdom, justice, and skill in many arts taught him by Apollo + Artemis. Had many friends among men + taught many great heroes of Antiquity - eg. Heracles, Jason, Achilles, Peleus. Lived in cave on Mt. Pelion until driven away by Lapiths. Wounded accidentally by poisoned arrow of Heracles intended for other Centaurs. So much pain caused him to willingly give up his immortality to escape it. Gave his immortality to Prometheus. Zeus placed him among the stars as constellation Sagittarius, the Archer.

*Asklepios was brought up by his father, Apollo, and taught the secrets of medicine - was sent to Centaur Cheiron on Pelion for his education - was famous expert in + teacher of medicine with great powers to heal - said to even raise the dead which angered Zeus + caused his death - was worshipped as god after his death + pilgrims went to his sanctuaries

Legend of Asclepius - Snake on staff - for medicine

Prometheus ↓

Centaurs - wild savage race given to wine, women, war
 - threatened peace + balance of human societies,
 - lived in forests.

"... the Centaurs, despite being born of a mortal, refused to reconcile themselves to the laws and values that governed human societies. It might therefore be said that both the defeat of the Giants and the defeat of the Centaurs symbolise the victory of civilisation over anarchy"

Prometheus (who foresees)

- cunning
 - a Titan, but remained neutral during the Revolt of the Titans (but held a grudge) - or fought on side of Zeus?
 - later tradition has Prometheus as creator of mankind
 - with earth and water - some said with his own tears fashioned body of first man into which Athena breathed soul and life. (This creation seems to have taken place only after earlier race of man destroyed in the deluge)

see relationship to Mary Shelley's Frankenstein

(see story of boxes or sacrifice)
 - angered Zeus with his cunning who then withheld fire from race of men on earth but astute Prometheus stole fire from Hephaestus' forge. (Another version says he lighted his torch from wheel of the sun) Zeus ordered Hephaestus to create a beautiful creature who received special gifts from the gods = Pandora - first woman; an evil to man.

P - regarded as benefactor of mankind, champion of mortals

against tyranny of Zeus - brought gift of fire + prepared way for civilization + culture. Also seen as creator of man - "moulding him out of clay in the likeness of the gods and endowing him with the qualities of various animals."

- further punished by Zeus - bound to rock with chains.
- by day eagle fed on his liver which renewed itself each night. Herakles finally killed the eagle + set Prometheus free.
- Different versions here - Prometheus' secret from Zeus.
- Aeschylus → (reason to kill him)
- or P giving Herakles aid in finding golden apples of Hesperides.

- Chiron presents P. with his own immortality

give each other relief in the end.

* note: how Chiron is wise, just, civilized amongst race of wild + violent centaurs.

- how Prometheus is clever, wise (foresight), benefactor amongst wild race of Titans (Giants).

- both are civilized, humane benefactors of mankind although from wild races pre-dating humanity.

{ "Chiron's Cry" "Chiron's Lament" "Chiron's Call"
 "Chiron's Caper" (possible title) or "Chiron's"

from Harper's July 2001 pg. 58) "According to medieval man," Rosen ^(E. famous plastic surgeon) said to the conventory, "finally coming clear, 'a monster is someone born with congenital deformities. A marvel,' he explained, 'is a person with animal parts - say, a tail or wings.'"

'Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds': We Shall Be Changed

by Marina Warner. (Oxford lecture series 2001)

All things are always changing,
But nothing dies. The spirit comes and goes,
Is housed wherever it wills, shifts residence
From beasts to men, from men to beasts, but always
It keeps on living. As the pliant wax
Is stamped with new designs, and is no longer
What once it was, but changes form, and still
Is pliant wax, so do I teach that spirit
Is evermore the same, though passing always
To ever-changing bodies.

} from Ovid:
(previously quoted re: "False Solomon's Seal")

re: Water

- first cause - Porphyry - Souls of the dead are drawn to water because it is the essence of rebirth.

Celtic = water = access to the other world

Hebrew = at the creation "the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters"

- medieval heretic Marguerite Perle (see opusa by Perle's term for God = the "Far Near" Anne Carson)

- man shedding his skin while walking - like snake (also O Long + warning of Heaven)

series } No. 1. Ice + Ice Dr. Prometheus
for large scale ice/arctic ptgs - (Heggy of Harsya's
re: red blood of dead polar bear on white snow)
- very small scale ptgs in huge snow/ice ground
see Harsya's reference in Kest mode - Ben Image

Aeschylus - "Prometheus Bound"

Shelley - "Prometheus Unbound"

me - "Prometheus Rebound" (eg. climate change)

also: red, white, + blue Prometheus
 or Prometheus in Red, White, and Blue
 (use Bald Eagle)

Barnett Newman - do black (tar?) "zip" over
 whites of snow/ice.

Sublime → Barnett Newman

→ Anne Carson (+ myth.)

sculpture → Entropic Prometheus?

- freezer with design in blue + orange
 dyed ice cubes - colours = direct opposites
 (to become a neutral if
 melted together)

- energy needs difference in order to be
 able to do work - fire + ice = blurred = entropy ↑
 (greater the entropy, less available the energy)

[etymology: G. Entropie: GK. en-, in + GK. trope, transformation]

- Prometheus series of encaustic lg. snow/ice cliffs.
 uninked - touch of orange / permanent type fig

even worse. For as an independent spiritual power, death is a very depraved force, whose wicked attractions are very strong and without doubt can cause the most abominable confusion of the human mind."

(Also, "Sisyphus, the Dung Beetle" - the sacred and the obscene, ^(or, at least, the profane) brought together - Egyptian veneration of scarab. Other pieces uniting sacred + profane - "Horizon" (1989?) "Prayer beads" (1995)

19. 246 Settembrini - "... because I am a friend of humankind, just as Prometheus was a lover of humankind and its nobility."

11. 350 (re: ocean liner) ^{Sanatorium as} "... and there was ... even a kind of frivolous provocation about that perfect comfort, somewhat like what the ancients called hubris ... "I am the king of Babylon," and that sort of thing - in a word, sacrilege. On the other hand, however, the luxury on board manifested a great triumph of the human spirit and human dignity - for in bearing luxury and comfort out onto the briny, foamy deep and boldly maintaining it there, man was, so to speak, setting his boot on the neck of the elements, of savage forces, and that manifested the triumph of human civilization over chaos, ..."

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Settembrini: "But the hubris of reason set against the dark powers is the highest form of humanity, and as such it evokes the rage of the envious gods; per esempio, when such a luxury ark founders and plummets to the depths, that is a downfall with honor. Prometheus's deed was one of hubris as well, and his torments on the Scythian cliffs are for us a sacred martyrdom. But what about the other kind of hubris, when a man perishes in wanton experiments with the powers of unreason, with forces hostile to the human race? Is there honor in that?"

I don't remember any specific naming of the Titanic as the Occident in mind, but am for the first time noticing the wrong of ship's name since Prometheus was a Titan

- Titanic - (even movie has line 'I am the king of the world!')

- also space shuttle crash

Iconic - hubris leading to WWI = powers of unreason
last scene in novel when HC has his boot on death (dead soldier). + U.S. in Iraq etc.

pg. 386

(re: a fourteenth century Gothic sculpture)

Naphta: "Works of art from a world in which the soul expresses itself... are always beautiful to the point of ugliness and ugly to the point of beauty. It is indeed a law. We are dealing with beauty of the Spirit, not of

Gramsci's aphorism = Pessimism of the intellect,
optimism of the will.

Jeremy Harding on Rimbaud's "Last Poems":

"... Rimbaud, after all, disliked these poems because they had already taken what he called the 'alchemy of the word' too far, straying into a domain of beautiful babble and hermetic invocation. As a reader, one is free to disagree. The 'Last Poems' work because they have abandoned the search for the philosopher's stone, picked up something more palpable and gone on to bring blood from it. Rimbaud didn't see it that way."

[Many similarities between trajectory of Rimbaud's short career + Duchamp's]

also see Picasso's "Woman in White" - related to Job - foresight

oil drilling, like avuls - Prometheus series
- the sublime - "shock + awe" (war (a: frag))

re: Prometheus lit. - go back to Mary Shelley's
Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus

- Robert Lowell did version of Prometheus Bound
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning did translation of Aeschylus
- Aeschylus' was to be first of trilogy - (Shelley took on idea of 2nd to be "Prometheus Unbound", 3rd "Prometheus the Fire-Carrier")

Borges in interview - "The instructive is what counts in a story. What the writer wants to say is the least important thing; the most important is said through him or in spite of him."

Borges - "I have a poem called 'Cosmogony' in which I say it is absurd to think the universe began with astronomical space, which presupposes, for example, light, which came much later. It is more natural to think that in the beginning there was an emotion. Well, it is the same as saying, 'In the beginning was the Word.' It is a variation on the same theme."

- relates to magic and role of the symbol for Symbolists and Yeats - (see Kermode's "Romantic Image").

Carol Shields - Stone Dances - pg 63

"He has come to believe that the earth's rough minerals are the signature of the spiritual, and as such can be assembled and shaped into praise and affirmation"

↳ could relate to Bonethan's story

- LRB 4 December 2003, p. 26.
 Matthew Reynolds reviewing "Selected Poems" by
 Giuseppe Ungaretti, translated by Andrew Frisard

Mattina

Morning

M'illumino
 d'immenso

I illumine me
 With immensity

of Morning

(one version of translation
 by Allen Mandelbaum)

Immensity
 illumined me

(2nd version by
 Allen Mandelbaum)

- discussion of retranslatability of this poem
 very good - like trying to discuss visual art
 but most critics don't acknowledge
 or try to draw attention to how the
 work resists even description - Best
 works are least translatable.

Kathleen Jamis
 "Into the Dark"
 LRB 18/12/03

- also - use this poem re: Prometheus series

↳ - Prometheus series - harken back to sperm
 "As the ferry drove on, the rigs
 grew smaller, until they were at
 the edge of vision, at the edge of
 the night, as I imagine distant
 icebergs must look, only on fire!"

Whale hunt + need for oil.
 - also - oil slicks/oil paint - wax?
 or like tar "zip" B.N.

oil platforms, rigs in sea - lit-up

imprisonment is irrelevant — that we see the most devastating effects: in zoos, in laboratories, institutions where the flow of joy that comes from living not in or as a body but simply from being an embodied being has no place. ☹

p. 187-8 "Inwardness. Can we be one with a god profoundly enough to apprehend, to get a sense of, a god's being? A question that no one seems to ask anymore.

Other modes of being. That may be a more decent way of phrasing it. Are there other modes of being besides what we call the human into which we can enter; and if there are not, what does that say about us and our limitations?

... it sounds to her a Kantian kind of question.

'Gods do exist,' writes Friedrich Hölderlin who had read his Kant, 'but they carry on their lives somewhere up above us in another realm, not much interested, it would seem, in whether we exist or not. In bygone times those gods bestrode the earth, walked among men. But to us modern folk it is no longer given to catch a glimpse of them, much less suffer their love. 'We come too late.'"

Re: Prometheus series.

- also for Prometheus series - footprints of bird
(hawk) in snow - make wire version for stamping,
(eagle) pecking on surface - red spots
Elizabeth Costello!

pg. 213 [woman] - "What are you saying in your confession?"
[E.C. (writer)]: "What I said before: that I cannot
afford to believe. That in my line of work
one has to suspend belief. That belief is
an indulgence, a luxury. That it gets
in the way."

[woman] "Really. Some of us would say the
luxury we cannot afford is unbelief."

[E.C.] She waits for more.

[woman] "Unbelief - entertaining all possibilities,
floating between opposites - is the
mark of a leisurely existence, a
leisured existence." The woman goes on.
"Most of us have to choose. Only the
light soul hangs in the air." She
leans closer. "For the light soul, let
me offer a word of advice. They may
say they demand belief, but in
practice they will be satisfied with
passion. Show them passion and they
will let you through."

love no more
weighing of souls
feathers on balances etc.

A = "Night shall screen day with her
star-embroidered cloak" [Prometheus 24]

47. " . . . We are still in a time before
grammatical analysis is thinkable,
before the intellectual chasm between
signifier and signified has opened up.
A word, for him [Aeschylus] seems still
to be a vision. And in fact the unitary
mode of seeing and feeling casually
revealed in these little word-groups
appears at all levels of Aeschylus' art.
Apparently separate phenomena, for him,
pass into each other and illuminate each
other."

= treacherous waters

52 "At the eastern end of the Euxine towers
the Caucasus, a massif of unknown
extent; somewhere among those airy peaks
Prometheus was savagely punished by
the eagle of Zeus in the lost
Prometheus Unbound."

58 ^{book 47} Prometheus Pyrkaeus formed the finale of
the tetralogy that included the extant
Persians.

59. "Probably more than a decade later,
Aeschylus was to compose three solemn
tragedies under the name of this

ancient and mysterious deity, whose exploits and sufferings had occurred so far back in the history of the mythic universe. In the satyric play that we are now considering [Prometheus Pyrkaeus], however, the poet landed this same god among the frisky satyrs. It had the marvelous theme of "the first appearance of fire on this earth."
(part of song remains + is quoted)

67 Aeschylean dramatic work tends to progress:
" from verbal to visual;
from ambiguity to clarity;
from human to divine.

"Even in Prometheus Bound and its associated fragmentary plays, that pattern seems only to have been varied to the extent that the initial situation was already set on the divine (or Titanic) level; what little we know of the sequel suggests that in this case a fearsome ambiguity in the divine order itself may finally have been resolved by the visual token of the Garland."

121 from what has become known as the
"Hymn to Zeus" from Agamemnon -
The God who has:

quotable for
Prom. Series

→ "Brought human beings on the road to wisdom:
By setting firm this law:
Through suffering, learning!
At the heart's gate, even in sleep,
Agony of remembered pain
Falls drop by drop, and even to the unwilling
Come wisdom and restraint.
And do the spirits who sit at the august table
Through violence show their kindness?"

[like Old Testament God] - see quotes from Job,
(+ pg after next - "Stone's novel")

5/2/04

URS

Harriet Martineau wrote Life in the Sick-Room
in 1843

"Martineau had long been familiar with the
'impassable gulf between the experience of
the sick and the well' - ..."

"Elsewhere Martineau seems to agree that the
sick actually see further than other people

"... argues that it is 'incomparably the
happiest plan for the sick one to live
alone; ..."

"Everything but truth becomes loathed in
a sick-room."

re: Cy Twombly - "Petals of Fire" (1989) are
lubricious dabs of black and
blood red, spilling into the virgin
white space around them.

re: "om mani pad me hum" :

"The six syllables of this mantra stand
for six levels of existence - the world
of gods, the Asuras (jealous gods),
human beings, animals, the world of
hungry ghosts, and hell. Its
strikingly simple form contains all the
teachings of the Buddha and its most
common translation must therefore
necessarily take recourse to metaphor:
"Behold! The jewel in the lotus!" For the
Buddhists the lotus blossom rises out
of the mud and unfolds on the surface
of the water since it requires no
earthly roots, it symbolizes detachment.

→ Prometheus, a Titan, was a god who
preceded the Olympians. Based on their
behavior, one could easily call the
Olympian "jealous gods" (as with Zeus in
"Prometheus Bound") so I find this Buddhist
hierarchy interesting in how it echoes the
Greek.

Video installation starting point -

- dm room

- false floor, walls + ceiling punctuated by small holes behind which are floor - microscopic activity -

or
2
separate
installations

walls - sped-up images of decay - eg seed sprout to grow + die
egg to insect, predation, aging,
on small scale in nature

ceiling - stars, universe in motion

one = wall images = life → death, decay

one = floor + ceiling = microscope mirrored in macroscopic

Sartre - "a victory described in detail is indistinguishable from a defeat"

from Harry Mulisch -

"Happiness was not freedom from chains but release from chains. Chains were an indispensable part of happiness!"

re: my illness + "Prometheus Rebound" series.

Notes re: Prometheus Rebound Series:

"sfumato" - [Italian, past participle of "sfumare",
shade off, from S - Ex + fumare, smoke]

= sfumato < smoke (see mountains in background
of Da Vinci - eg. Mona Lisa.)
volcano? (where there's smoke there's fire)

promethium = a radioactive element of the
lanthanide series occurring
in nuclear waste material.
Symbol: Pm; atomic number: 61.
(at. no.)

jinni (also jinnee, jinn, djinn) = in Muslim
mythology, an intelligent being lower
than the angels, able to appear in human
and animal forms, and having power
over people. [Arabic jinni, pl. jinn; compare
genie]

see East
vs.
S. habits
etc

genie = a spirit of Arabian folklore,
esp. one contained within a
bottle, lamp, etc. and capable of
granting wishes.

ate

brother of Prometheus → was give Pandora with jar of evils. (like jinn in bottle.)
smoke from lamp - problem of getting jinni back
in the bottle, etc.

Prometheus
trans
per thought

Prometheus Pyrrhoros = "Fire-Carrier"
= title of Aeschylus' 2nd (lost) play in trilogy
of Prometheus

Re: Prometheus Rebound Series;

- Prometheus = "Foresight" { for piece with glacier + re
see "Touching the Void"
Joe Simps

* see quote from Thomas Mann's Magic Mountain
earlier in this journal. - Prometheus + hubris
- also setting of Magic Mountain puts
main character in position of P. = Mann's
preoccupation with positive + negative force
of creativity → genius vs. neuroses/disease
Main character not as intellectually
presumptuous as Settembrini or Napht.
but ends with defiance of death (?) -
(stepping on corpse).

- some ^{slight} similarity between Job + Prometheus is
that God/Zeus is cruel, capricious,
arbitrary; and Job, while not a creator,
does in his way show defiance = "Though
He slay me, yet will I trust in Him;
but I will maintain my own ways before Him."

- from Hymn to Zeus in Aeschylus's
Agamemnon:

"And do the spirits who sit at the
august helm / Through violence
show their kindness?"

- the sublime - contemporary vs. Burke, Longinus
idea of "Atainment" - see later notes re. Ian McEwan's book.

- oil drilling, oil rig, } hubris, ;
Whistler's Nocturne in -

- iceberg - (Lawren Harris) ^{see "The Convergence of the Tides" = poem by T. Hardy about Titanic}

- eagle of Zeus (see earlier quote in this) ^{journal from the Iliad - re: golden rope of Zeus}

"Deus Ex Machina"

- have eagle hanging from rope - source of rope outside top frame of ptg.

- blood dripping from beak.

= fire/ice/snow/water + sky

- bald eagle - ~~War~~(?) - red, white + blue Prometheus - Barnett Newman - "Who's afraid of..."

- also could have eagle footprints imprinted in paint - actual scale - flipping from flat "real-space" to vertical illusionistic space.

→ Deus Ex Machina = Latin for "a god from a machine". = practice of some Greek playwrights (e.g. Euripides) to end drama with a god who was lowered to the stage by a mechanical apparatus + solved problems of human characters. = forced + improbable device (actually more like Hercules in this myth)

→ Barnett Newman - "Prometheus Bound 1952" (also "Voice of Fire" - Nat. Gallery; "White Fire" - Basel)

"Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue" = reference to Mondrian's "Composition with Red, Yellow, and Blue" [I could do "Who's Afraid of Red, White + Blue"]

3rd play of trilogy - Hercules killed eagle to release P. in one version of myth.

Re: Prometheus Rebound:

Mary Shelley - Frankenstein, "a modern Prometheus"
 P.B. Shelley - "Prometheus Unbound."

- In one version of myth, Prometheus is said to have created man after he was destroyed by deluge - molded him out of earth and water (his own tears) into which Athena breathed soul and life. (= link to imagined 2nd deluge from climate change = melting glaciers/icebergs + rising water level)

- again Da Vinci - see Deluge drawings
 → (also like Adam ← adamah - see red clay in Cradle in my "Pyx")

Adam = Lat. ← Heb. 'adham, man ← 'adhama, earth

also - Prometheus was bound with adamantine chains - adamant = legendary stone believed to be impenetrable

adamantine also means unyielding, inflexible, Latin adamas, adamant - untameable, from Greek (as A', damaō - to tame)

"The Idea of North" = title of Glenn Gould's radio documentary

(- find out equivalent of "Five-Carrier" in Inuktitut

Arctic phenomenon of fata Morgana = the apparent mirage of distant 'mountain' ramparts that is an illusion rather than a reflection of terrain beyond the horizon.

Thule = "a country described by the ancient Greek explorer Pytheas (c. 310 BC) as being six days' sail north of Britain, variously identified with Iceland, the Shetland Islands, and, most plausibly, Norway. It was regarded by the ancients as the northernmost part of the world (compare ultima thule).

"Just as the pearl is the oyster's affliction," Flaubert wrote in a letter in 1852 "so style is perhaps the discharge from a deeper wound." . . . Flaubert "wants us to believe, as a man of his times, that beautiful things are themselves terrible, that writing is the disguised autobiography of the afflicted soul, and that unredeemed nature is precisely this: a producer of styles and pearls and discharges, and indeed of sentences about what nature is like."

"Barville has written that for Hoffmannthal, 'the disjunction between the thing and the thing named, between signified and signifier, opened an

Law
willips
4/8/05

Vertiginous prospect, ---

- This describes the impetus behind my
Worldflower series of 1988-89.

"... for Banville memory is like an artist
without a vision, without anything as vivid
as a wound to compel him."

Whistler's Nocturne in Black + Gold: The
Falling Rocket ca. 1874
23 3/4 x 18 3/8"

(would be 9.12" x 23.75" for B.N.)
w. l.

(stripe would only be about 1cm wide)

Thomas Hardy poem about Titanic
(+ hubris) = "The Convergence of the Twain"

Matter holds a great tyranny - something
you really learn + come to respect as a
sculptor, particularly one like myself, always
trying to make new combinations of materials
do things they're not used to doing. But
the true power of the tyranny is experienced
in untreatable illness!

FIG. 72

Hopewell culture, Fort Ancient earthworks, Warren County, Ohio. Photograph published in Richard C. Morgan, *Fort Ancient* (Columbus: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1946). Barnett Newman owned a copy of this book.

Newman had written that, when experiencing the mounds, “multiple feelings vanish like the outside landscape.”²⁰⁰ The only feeling remaining is of a self within a place. “The feeling is that you’re here and out there is chaos,” said Newman; everything outside the place has, for a time, left your world.²⁰¹

A decade later, returning from his stint at the Emma Lake workshop in 1959, Newman wrote to tell his friend and collector Alan Power about the summer in Canada. His letter exists in at least four drafts, begun on the prairie of Saskatchewan, finished on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Seeing the prairie was a big event for Newman, much like the mounds had been. “I dreamed all my life to visit it,” he wrote in his second draft. In that version of his account, he referred to being able to see “both horizons,” meaning that the openness extended equally ahead and behind him. In the third draft, the sense of openness increases; Newman described being “surrounded by four horizons, a circle of 360 degrees [the prairie, extending equally in all directions], and a dome of 180 degrees [the sky above]—but on *land*—not at sea—the difference is tremendous.” In the fourth draft, the description is essentially the same, but he added, with a sense of disappointment, that he was unable to visit the tundra since it was a good thousand miles farther north. Whatever quality the prairie had, on the tundra it would be still more pronounced. Ironically, with all this attention to the land, Newman invoked “geogra-

phy” in a very different way, just as he admitted (in this private correspondence) to having “taught” something at Emma Lake: “I have taught [the Canadians] that geography means nothing. Place means everything, but place is created—and it is created by men with vision, with courage, and with the desire for freedom.”²⁰² Sculptor Robert Murray, participating in the workshop, testified that “[Barney] helped us get over our provincial paranoia.”²⁰³ While each of Newman’s paintings created “place” as each evolved inside his New York studio, he also seems to have believed that the tundra somehow already possessed this quality of “place.” A person arriving at the tundra would know he was “there.” So the relevant issue may have been how to make a painting like the tundra.

Indeed, when Newman was interviewed in 1962, he linked the tundra to his sense of the total space of his paintings:

It is by my declaration [of space] that my paintings become full. [My paintings] are never divided; nor are they confined or constricted.... Since childhood I have always been aware of space as a space-dome. I remember years ago shocking my friends by saying I would prefer going to Churchill, Canada, to walk the tundra than go to Paris. For me space is where I can feel all four horizons, not just the horizon in front of me and in back of me because then the experience of space exists only as volume.²⁰⁴



FIG. 73

Barnett Newman, *Voice of Fire*, 1967.
Acrylic on canvas, 214 x 96 inches (543.6 x
243.8 cm), National Gallery of Canada,
Ottawa. Purchased 1989

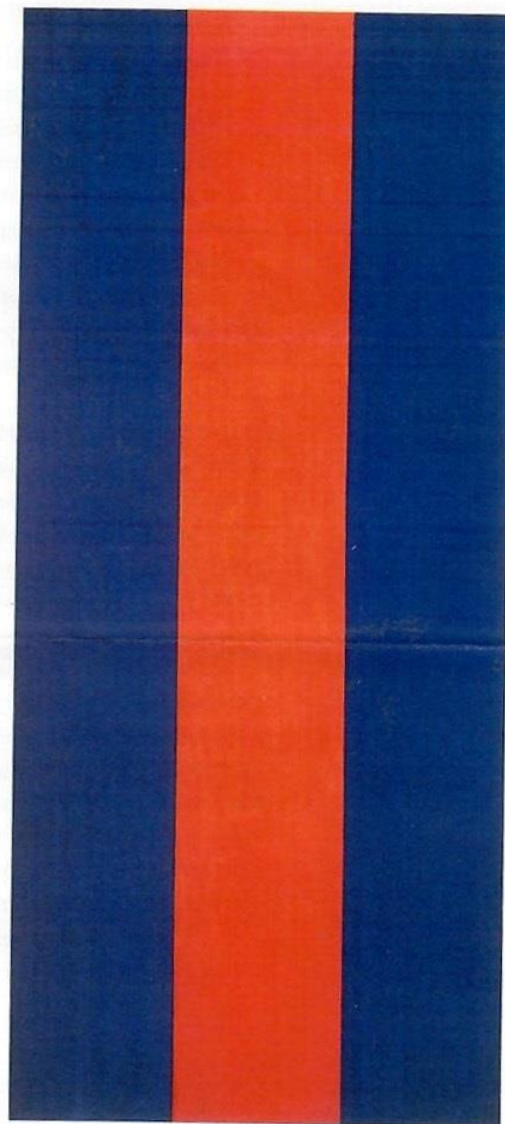
Stretching an analogy from landscape to architecture to painting, Newman seems to associate volume with containment or confinement, an imposed organization and limitation of space. When only two of the four cardinal directions are open to the distant horizon, volume results, which can be experienced as a corridor or tunnel that would direct one's movement, rather like a perspective box in a traditional painting. (Newman would encounter the tunnel effect, "a sense of confinement," when driving through a mountainous region of Brazil three years hence.)²⁰⁵ The attraction of the tundra, like the prairie, was its openness to "all four horizons," since no external points of orientation, such as distant mountains, were visible there. The tundra was an extreme version of the mounds or the prairie. Newman's related metaphor of the dome—a dome without structure, so to speak—would have seemed familiar to his contemporaries. He enjoyed taking the clichés of current interest and twisting them: during the 1950s and 1960s structural, architectural domes were widely publicized and many were being built.²⁰⁶

Brazil is not Canada, but Newman added to his account of the space or place of the tundra by relating that same "sense of place" to his varied experience of the South American terrain. Interviewed in connection with the Washington showing of the São Paulo exhibition, he described his paintings as creating a "space dome," the kind of feeling that one feels when one sees all four horizons. Then you know that you're there . . . [that] you are involved as an actual physical thing in space." This is perhaps the most important point. The kinds of landscape experience that interested Newman result in the individual's awareness of being corporeally present in a particular space, so that the "place" is as much a product of oneself as of the condition one confronts. "It's something about you're there alone," Newman told his interviewer.²⁰⁷ And even more revealing, he told another interviewer: "You're not looking at anything [there's not much to see]. But you yourself become very visible."²⁰⁸ He elaborated by recounting his travels:

In Brazil, we [Newman, Annalee Newman, and Elizabeth Baker] were driving through the mountains of Belo Horizonte, . . . everyone felt crushed. When we got to Rio, you stand on the beach, why does one feel exhilarated? . . . It's not that I'm bigger than that ocean. It's that somehow I'm in that space. I'm really involved in space. It's true space. Whereas in the other, I'm involved in relation to something else in space.²⁰⁹

To reiterate: with no relation, no direction, you are alone, you are visible—to yourself. This is being aware.

Relations were the essence of the "formal" art Newman opposed. Aware of the relations, you would not be aware of yourself. Yet a "tundra"



53

PROMETHEUS BOUND

1952

Synthetic resin on canvas

132⁵/₈ x 50⁷/₈ inches (337 x 129.5 cm)

Museum Folkwang Essen, Germany

Prometheus Bound is the only true black-and-white (as opposed to black-and-raw-canvas) painting that Newman completed in the 1950s. The title refers to the Titan in Greek mythology who defied Zeus by stealing fire from the gods and giving it to man, enabling humans to rise above abject savagery. Zeus punished Prometheus for his audacity by chaining him to a rock where an eagle devoured his liver each day, only to have it grow back each night.

Like *Day Before One* and *Ulysses* (pls. 51, 52), *Prometheus Bound* is an overwhelmingly vertical painting. A huge column of black bears down with crushing weight on a single band of white, miraculously not extinguishing its light. Newman took great care to create a field of black that, while monochromatic, is highly activated by brushwork. The thin black paint was scrubbed into the canvas in vigorous strokes in all directions. The band along the bottom of the canvas remained untouched, awaiting the application of white. Since the white paint was applied before the black was dry, the pigments mixed slightly along their border, with sparks of white reaching into the black and flecks of black seeping into the white.

Prometheus
ref.

R13
20 Apr. 06.

Amit Chaudhuri on Rabindranath Tagore -

"It would have been easy for Tagore to treat the Orient as a magical and occult resource, as Yeats did Ireland. Instead, radically, he inscribed it, in his vast oeuvre, into the trajectory of humanism and the 'high' modernist 'Easternness', in his work, is no longer incompatible with individualism, with self-consciousness about the powers and limits of language, or awareness of the transformative role of the secular artist."

- relates to my planned Prometheus series

"... implicitly, brought a far more profound response to life than Eliot's shallow (as Tagore saw it) urban angst. Tagore's rejection of Eliot and the decaying industrialised city of Modernism led younger poets and admirers like Buddhadev Bose to classify him as a late romantic, someone not quite modern. It's an impression that persists even today; as if a rejection of modernity as subject-matter - tenement housing, electric lights, offices, scenes of urban dereliction - were an infallible sign of distance from Modernism; as if the fact that

pg 170 "Combustion is the hidden principle behind every artefact we create. The making of a fist-hook, manufacture of a China Egg or production of a television programme all depend on the same process of combustion. Like our bodies and like our desires, the machines we have devised are possessed of a heart which is slowly reduced to embers. From the earliest times, human civilization has been no more than a strange luminescence growing more intense by the hour, of which no one can say when it will begin to wane and when it will fade away."

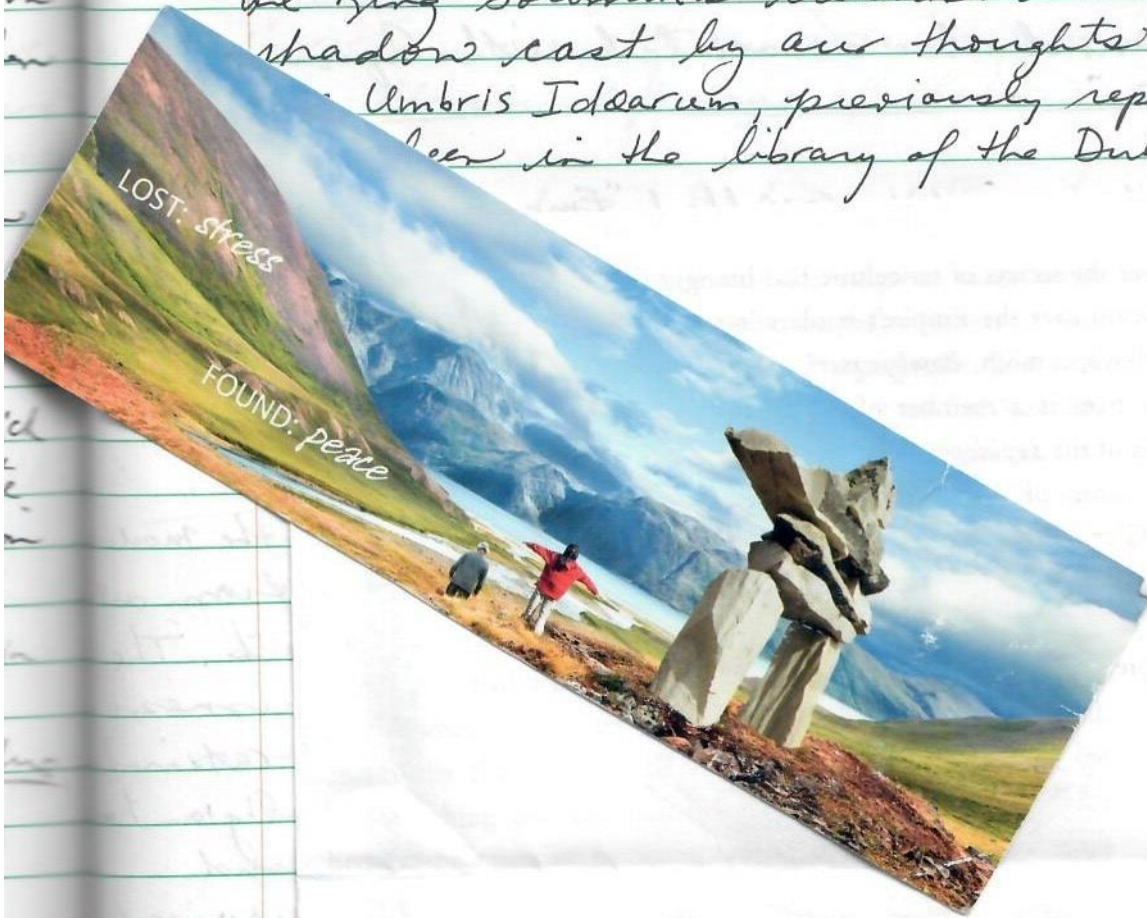
pg 173 narrator's dream connecting pattern of an English hedge maze + brain
 "... I saw the labyrinth, -... - a pattern simple in comparison with the tortuous trail I had behind me, but one which I knew in my dream, with absolute certainty, represented a cross-section of my brain."

-book shows maze - my book work in Eye of Nature catalogue is similar -
 Cross-section of brain as painted for Seeing Blue
 not similar (brain sliced differently)

pg 255 - paraphrasing Chateaubriand on memory etc -

"I have become almost invisible to some extent like a dead man."

pg. 272 - on Thomas Browne's catalogue of remarkable books, Musaeum Clausum, or Bibliotheca Abscondita which may have listed a collection put together by Browne, but were more likely products of his imagination. "Among the rare books and documents in Browne's 'Museum' are King Solomon's treatise on the shadow cast by our thoughts, Umbris Idearum, previously reported to have been in the library of the Duke of Bavaria;



from
Lemon's Dict.
of Symbols &
Sacred Objects

Fennel: "Giant fennel stalks used to be sacred to fire-maker gods, like Prometheus, whose icons showed him with a fire drill in his hand. Prometheus was said to have brought down fire from heaven in a fennel stalk, to give it as a gift to humanity. 'Greek islanders still carry fire from one place to another in the pith of a giant fennel,' evidently because the pith is fire-resistant."

1. Graves, Robert. The Greek Myths Vol. 1 144, 149.

(fennel also associated with Aquarius)

- With regard to so-called "Empyrean" Ptg. (Milky Way)
- ! - see much earlier quote from Eco's The Name of the Rose - pg. 218 - on solving the mystery by looking at it from the outside, also pg 248 - Thomas Aquinas on metaphor

rs
8/6/06

Terry Eagleton: "Hegel thought it a mark of the modern age that philosophy had taken over from art and religion as the custodian of truth. The World Spirit had come to self-consciousness in his own head, rendering any less rational form of knowledge outmoded. Yet religion has retained its capacity to spark riots and launch civil wars, while art has survived"

→ "Pierre Hadot's absorbing book is written around a single phrase: "Nature loves to hide." That is a translation, or mistranslation, of a fragment that Heraclitus inscribed some 2500 years ago - It is alive and well. . . ."

pg. 141

From Dan Hacking on The Veil of Zeus: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature, Pierre Hadot
(LRB 10 May 2007)

"There are two overarching attitudes to nature, Promethean and Orphic. Zeus was disturbed that people were becoming too uppity, and hid fire away from their knowledge. Prometheus by trickery stole it, thus exposing one of the secrets of nature for us all to see. There is a raft of metaphors at work here. Secrets must be extracted from nature. The initial model is not the laboratory but the law. Nature must be brought to court and tried. In a trial, informants were tested by torture. Nature's secrets must be wrung from her."

"The great prophet of the 17th century was Francis Bacon, who proposed, as parable, that Prometheus invented experimental science."

[Then more about history of dominating nature by technology or technique (technē) and trickery . . .
"The Greek words that he translates as 'trickery' are none other than the ancestors of our word 'mechanics'."]

"Then there is the other attitude to nature, which Hadot calls Orphic: the poets, if you will, who are also in the laurel grove. The Orphic 'penetrates'

the secrets of Nature not through violence but through melody, rhythm and harmony... inspired by respect in the face of mystery and disinterestedness. Hadot singles out Leonardo as both Promethean and Orphic,"

re: Goethe "yet The Metamorphosis of Plants has an extraordinary 'feeling for the organism' - a phrase I take from Evelyn Fox Keller's study of Barbara McClintock, a stand-alone plant geneticist who thought in terms of organisms as collaborative wholes at a time when everyone else saw them as masterminded by genetic code and who won a Nobel Prize in 1983."

"Goethe thought Nature has secrets, but not that she is veiled. The shutters are on our eyes for not seeing what she shows us outright. Everything inside is also outside: inner and outer are one for those who will see, or so he said in a short poem, 'Epirrhema.' In about 1798 he wrote a marvellous love poem of two pages 'The Metamorphosis of Plants,' which joyously conveys the emotion behind his botanical tract. . . . Look out Michael Hamburger's version, in Christopher Middleton's Goethe: Selected Poems."

" 'Nature, it seems, must always clash with Art, / And yet, before we know it, both are one' - another of Goethe's poems, about 1800, Hadot has a good deal to say about the visual arts as ways of unveiling nature, especially in the Romantic era. . . . Hadot's idea is that the arts unveil nature by imitation, rediscovery and reportage. But that instinct is not specifically optic. Galilean science was prefigured in the high middle ages by the image of God the architect; the secrets of nature would be revealed by figuring out the machinery by which He made the world. Leibniz called that architectonic reason, and it is the essential obverse of Promethean intervention in nature, for you can mess with Her successfully only if you have some idea how she is put together.

[Then Hadot apparently ends by raising the subjects of Heidegger + dread, Sartre's Being + Nothingness and Nausea and Ian Hacking adds - "The closest thing to nothingness that can be imagined is a vacuum at zero degrees Kelvin. In classical mechanics, that is where nothing happens. Here lies one of the most marvellous paradoxes of quantum mechanics: an absolutely cold vacuum is a buzz of quantum activity." This, to me, is like a description of the sublime as nothingness!]