

Prometheus

Behold, I am toward God as you are;

I too was pinched out of clay. - Job 33:6



The terror of Prometheus is this: Science brings humans across the Universe to meet their makers, who are effectively Pagan priests who practice self-sacrifice to bring life to barren worlds. One of the punch lines of Prometheus is that the engineers are genetically the same of humans, effectively making them different only in racial terms. Prometheus displays the Christian and Scientific hubris of modern man. Much like the plot of the original, *The Wicker Man*, the voyagers of Prometheus expect that another race will have drawn the same cultural, religious, or moral desires/delusions that they have at large, and it BLOWS THEIR MINDS when they don't.

One of the most important lines in Prometheus is Dr. Shaw's "I choose to believe." Jung on that concept:

"Bondage and possession are synonymous. Always, therefore, there is something in the psyche that takes possession and limits or suppresses our moral freedom. In order to hide this undeniable but exceedingly unpleasant fact from ourselves and at the same time pay lip-service to freedom, we have got accustomed to saying apotropaically, "I *have* such and such desire or habit or feeling of resentment," instead of the more veracious "such and such a desire or habit or feeling of resentment *has me*." The latter formulation would certainly rob us even of the illusion of freedom. But I ask myself whether this would not be better in the end than fuddling ourselves with words. The truth is that we do not enjoy masterless freedom; we are continually threatened by psychic factors which, in the guise of "natural phenomena," may take possession of us at any moment. The withdrawal of metaphysical projections leaves us almost defenseless in the face of this happening, for we immediately identify with every impulse instead of giving it the name of the "other" which would at least hold it at arm's length and prevent it from storming the citadels of the ego. "Principalities and powers" are always with us; we have no need to create them even if we could. It is merely incumbent on us to choose the master we wish to serve, so that his service shall be our safeguard against being mastered by the "other" whom we have not chosen. We do not *create* "God." We *choose* him."

Prometheus is an *Epic* of the same type as Gilgamesh. It involves a hazardous journey to a faraway land and the search for everlasting life. The hubris and greed of a single human awakens a great *Giant*. The defeat of which opens new horizons.

In Prometheus, humans come across as intergalactic ingrates who insist on their lives having existential meaning. Except Weyland, who knows life's meaning and wants more of it. The engineers should answer: "Isn't life enough?" The problem here is, that's not what the movie is actually about.

What Prometheus is about: rank and role, egalitarianism versus elitism. Egalitarianism sells brotherhood while elitism sells exclusivity, superiority. The end result of supreme elitism is absolute confidence of your own superiority; divine royalty. Then, the only difference between God and King is *mortality*.

Egalitarianism-Elitism is a spectrum and you can't generally have both, i.e. "It's lonely at the top." Vickers is the best example of this, as she never risks her own life for another person in the movie, never leaves the ship till she has to, and her own quarters is a self-contained habitat and rescue pod.

It has been argued that humans are the only conscious species on this planet, and therefore are the only species that can existentially fear their own death.

The "engineers" are the most terrifying alien in the movie, coming across as **giant creepy babies**. Which brings me to my next question; are the engineers conscious?

"The Hebrew word for Orion (Kesil) means properly "a lumbering gawk, clod" (not simply, fool, as commonly rendered). In Classical tradition, Orion was a giant. Homer speaks of him as "prodigious in size, and he is also so portrayed in Greek art. Latin writers call him Gigas, and in Arabic literature he is termed analogously, "the Giant" (al jabbar). The Hebrew name therefore reflects a common ancient belief that giants are gawkish dunderheads. Thus in German folklore they are frequently styled *dumme lутten* or "lubbers" and in Old Norse, *dumbr* or "numskulls." Some two hundred stories about stupid giants and ogres are listed in Aarne Thompson's standard Types of the Folk-Tale."

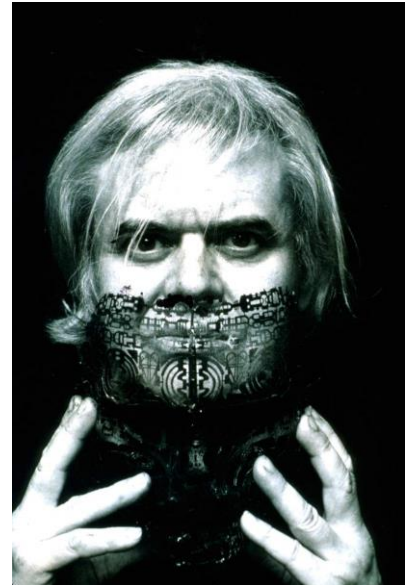
H.R. Giger the Swiss artist who created the original Alien and Engineer, whose name means "Giant."

C.J. Jung's treats the Old Testament God, in *Answer to Job*, calling him *unconscious*:

"The fact of God's unconsciousness throws a peculiar light on the doctrine of salvation. Man is not so much delivered from his sins, even if he is baptized in the prescribed manner and thus washed clean, as delivered from fear of the consequences of sin, that is from the wrath of God. Consequently, the work of salvation is intended to save man from the fear of God."

I think of this unconsciousness in the Gnostic sense as "blindness." Nevertheless, the Engineers appear to be angels, not gods. And the idea that the Engineers changed their minds about creating us has a War-in-Heaven type of vibe. Perhaps self-consciousness is something God reserves for himself? Are the animalistic destroying Xenomorph aliens the dark brothers of the civilized Engineers?

"Yahweh must become man precisely because he has done man a wrong. He, the guardian of justice, knows that every wrong must be expiated, and Wisdom knows that moral law is above even him. Because his creature has surpassed him he must regenerate himself. As nothing can happen without a pre-existing pattern, not even creation ex nihilo, which must always resort to the treasure house of eternal images in the fabulous mind of the "master workman," the choice of a model for the son who is now about to be begotten lies between Adam (to a limited extent) and Abel (to a much greater extent). Adam's limitation lies in the fact that, even if he is the Anthropos, he is chiefly a creature of a father. Abel's advantage is that he is the son well pleasing to God, begotten and not directly created. (think of the Engineer patting David on the head lovingly before decapitating him) One disadvantage has to be



accepted: he met with an early death by violence, too early to leave behind a [line, progeny] ...Abel is not the authentic archetype of the son well pleasing to God; he is a copy, but the first kind to be met with in the scriptures.” –Jung, Answer to Job

Regardless of the satisfactoriness of its religious symbolism, enjoyment of watching *Prometheus* is ruined by inexplicit actions of main characters: For example, Dr. Holloway, disappointed that the Engineers weren't godlike enough, that they also die and or are dead, going on a cranky drinking binge when he is needed most. Doesn't he realize there is no immortality without change?

And at the end of the movie, Dr. Shaw, rather than being pissed off that the alien's *first reaction is to kill us* is still a curious "why." Poorly written? Maybe not, as in the promotional material, it is shown that Dr Shaw is a *Job* type character, a true believer who wants to know the meaning of life for the right reasons; her aspiration is pure. Jung's Answer to Job: "Whoever knows God has an effect on him. The failure of the attempt to corrupt Job has changed Yahweh's nature." In the same way, Dr. Shaw's Christmas day birth to a Demon Chutlu Mollusk Monster directly changes her relationship with *God*.

The idea of warring factions either within the Engineer contingent or without is never fully explained. Why hasn't Earth been attacked since then? Are all the other Engineers dead? Will Shaw and David find another archeological find or a living culture when they get to *Paradise*?

David is clearly the only permanently likeable character in the whole movie. David is (morally) cold, not because he is a cyborg, but because he was asked to grow up too fast. That, and his parents are a-holes. In this sense, *Prometheus* is the same movie, thematically, as *2001 Space odyssey*, with machine and man racing each other to God. (But maybe *Paradise* will be) Why is everyone such an asshole to David? And, why is Dr. Holloway such an asshole in general? To make the viewer less upset when he is killed off later? Well it worked, because I *liked it* when he got alien-black-death-ebola.

Being that this is a prequel to the original Alien movies, maybe it is trying to justify why androids are kept secret in the (original) Alien movies. Humans have an inherent tendency to treat David like an underling. David "risks his life to save Shaw" in the storm-head scene and she shows genuine gratitude. I look forward to seeing David and Shaw interact in the next movie. Perhaps that was the real reason David killed Holloway; because he loves Shaw. One of the premises in the pre-release viral-videos is that David *can* feel feelings, so maybe this is a possibility.

"There is nothing in the Desert, and no man needs nothing..."

"God doesn't build in straight lines." This line is pulled directly from the plot of Sci-Fi novel, *The engines of god* by Jack McDevitt. *Engines* and *Prometheus* are very similar thematically. I could easily write an entire article about the similarities between the two. Which brings up an interesting point, which is that Sci-Fi fans perceive these movies as living in the same rich continuum as other Sci-Fi. A non-fan of Sci-Fi would see *Prometheus* as a poorly developed plot combined with inconsistently driven character motives and an unsatisfactory ending. (Which is also true.) The problem with having a consistent plot with clear answers to the pressing questions is that any "answer" given will open up an entire gamut of new questions, ad infinitum.





David gives Dr Holloway the bioweapon/mutation goo in a glass of Armand De Brignac Silver champagne which has a spade on it, the ace of spades is commonly associated with death. The specific picture I chose has an interesting up/down placement on the drunk and undrunk champagne. Would David have put the drop in Dr Holloway's glass if the conversation between them been different?

The two most important books in terms of understanding morality in the modern world are Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* and Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*. Freud believed that violence, in terms of morality, is sublimated/traded for the comfort and safety of living in a peaceful society. The sneakiest thing the devil did was to trick people into thinking he exists outside of themselves, that is, the concept that evil is external. Evil is internal, the only thing the devil does is give people permission to use it. *Violence is a basic component of human character*. It's funny how the characters of Prometheus think that God (The Engineers) will somehow accept their children with open arms, instead he treats them (*unhesitatingly, I might add*) with violence.

In the Old Testament King David had a reputation of being a violent warrior king, while his son, Solomon had the reputation of being a peaceful king. There is an apocryphal tradition of Solomon being the original Goetic magician, enslaving evil spirits to build the temple of Jerusalem for him. From a modern psychological perspective, Solomon sublimated his warrior, destructive tendencies into creative, peaceful actions. Before Solomon, whose name means *peace*, could forge this kingdom, he was forced to kill several enemies of his father and one of his brothers who would have been a threat to his own power. These actions represent familial, ancestral "karma" which has to be dealt with before dealing with his own destiny.

Lacan on sublimation:

"Lacan maintains that creation ex nihilo operates in other noteworthy fields. In pottery, for example vases are created around empty space. They are primitive and even primordial artifacts which have benefitted mankind not only in the capacity of utensils but also as metaphors of (cosmic) creation ex nihilo. Lacan cites Heidegger who situates the vase between the earthly (raising clay from the ground) and the ethereal (pointing upwards to receive.) In architecture, Lacan asserts, buildings are designed around an empty space and in art paintings proceed from an empty canvass, and often depict empty spaces through perspective. In myth, Pan pursues the nymph Syrinx who is transformed into hollow reeds in order to avoid the clutches of the God, who subsequently cuts the reeds down in anger and transforms them into what we call panpipes (both reeds and panpipes rely on their hollowness to produce sound). Lacan briefly remarks that science and religion are also based around emptiness."

All of these symbols appear in Prometheus; the flute, the vase, and in addition, when the Engineers are fleeing like Syrinx they are portrayed as holograms which are indeed *hollow*. Additionally are Holloway's name, the hollow



mountain, etc, etc. "I can't tell you if it's natural or not, but what I can tell you is, it's hollow." It also looks a lot like Mount Meru.

Ridley Scott has stated that Prometheus II, *Paradise*, will introduce a new alien race. Hopefully this race will be *the actual gods*. We may have even been given a sneak peek what they will look like in the tomb/sacrificial room (big head room) murals. An Engineer is depicted skirting the grasp of a spooky clawed entity. The posture of the Engineer with the other alien/entity in the tomb/sacrificial chamber is similar to artwork depicting the Greek *Laocoon*. This might be a clue as to where they are going thematically with the next movie.

