PROMETHEUS UNBOUND
Shelley, Legendre and the Psychoanalysis of Law

Adam Gearey[*]

Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* tells of an escape from established structures and a revolt in the name of love. Reading *Prometheus Unbound* will allow a recasting of key notions used by the psychoanalyst and mythographer Pierre Legendre. Love is not to be identified with the desire for the institution, but with a poetic and utopian imagination of human possibility. At the same time, reading Legendre alongside Shelley assists in an approach to the poet that does not simply restate his 'humanism'. The politics of *Prometheus Unbound* can be understood as a vision of what Legendre has christened 'the void'. Contra Legendre, Shelley's work suggests that the only way to relate to the profound emptiness that defines us is to mythologise the strength necessary to accede to the empty place of power. Realising the void allows a refiguring of patriarchal genealogy. The play prompts the rediscovery of the theogony, a mythic narrative that disrupts the genealogical principles of legitimacy. If this is associated with the role of the imagination and the poet as the 'legislator' of love, *Prometheus Unbound* can be read as a progressive reinterpretation of the Legendrian legacy.

The great secret of morals is love.[1]

Introduction

What can Prometheus, the over-reacher, the thinker of crooked thoughts, tell us about a way of reading the work of Pierre Legendre?

Pierre Legendre's contribution to the study of law is his insight into the essentially mythic nature of the legal institution. The positive order of law is profoundly dependent on 'another scene' — a truth to which legal modernity is blind. However, despite Legendre's championing of the other scene of law, his work is not normally associated with critique;[2] it tends to lead to an over-

[*] Lecturer in Law, Birkbeck College, University of London.

[1] Shawcross (1909), p 131.

[2] Critique is meant here in a non Kantian or Marxist sense. As the title alludes, it could possibly be coordinated with Jacques Derrida's notion of deconstruction as expressed in the seminal *The Force of Law*: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority' (Derrida, 1992), pp 3–68. Deconstruction can be glossed as a 'maximum intensification of a transformation in progress' (1992, p 9). It might be possible to understand this cryptic expression as a call to produce new readings of

emphasis on fixed and immutable structures associated with the inescapable presence of Roman law. The subject is always 'captured' by the institution. The way to read, or reread, Legendre is not necessarily to see his work as inherently reactionary.[3] Indeed, there is a strong critical element to his work that has certain points of contact with other critical approaches to modernity. Legendre describes a structure that is of radical potential and, if this sense becomes lost in his own work, it can be reconnected with a radical poetic myth of opposition of the tyranny of law. Uncovering a myth of opposition in Legendre's work can be initiated by reading Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* as a work which covers the same mythic territory, but stages a different beginning of community and politics.

The Shelley text tells of an escape from established structures; a revolt in the name of love. Elaborating this revolt will mean extending the sense in which key Legendrian terms can be recast. Love is not to be identified with the desire for the institution, but with a poetic and utopian imagination of human possibility. At the same time, reading Legendre against Shelley assists in an approach to the poet that does not simply restate his 'humanism': the politics of *Prometheus Unbound* can be understood as a vision of what Legendre has christened 'the void'. Contra Legendre, Shelley's work suggests that the only

texts that are themselves in constant transformation as they are read, reread and debated. It would also be to commit to a form of politics that, in Richard Beardsworth's words, is progressive and 'left wing' as it seeks the invention of a 'democracy to come' (1996). As far as its intervention in the law school and legal pedagogy is concerned, this could be a bringing together of a 'deconstruction motivated by literary theory' or philosophy and 'critical legal studies' (1996), p 9 to produce radical approaches to problems in jurisprudence focused on questions of legitimacy and authority. For an elaboration of this position, and what it could mean for a program in law and literature, see Goodrich (1998). Any further elaboration of the dis/conjunction between Legendre and Derrida must remain outside the scope of this article but, as is suggested by the reading of Shelley, it would make for a disturbance in Legendre rather than a trashing of his work. It may be that Shelley's oeuvre is a privileged site for this reworking of psychoanalysis and deconstruction. As pointed out in Blank (1991), p 247, Hartman (1987), meant as a 'manifesto of contemporary hermeneutics', was first 'conceived as a book about Shelley.' Any reassessment of the claims of deconstruction could perhaps return to this manifesto, which was also influential in postmodern legal scholarship: see Douzinas et al (1991), in particular part IV, pp 199–271.

[3] See Douzinas (1988), pp 18–23: 'A critical jurisprudence must question the conservative repercussions of his judicial anthropology' (p 18). In this reading, Legendre is associated with the negative Catholic reaction to modernity. From a critical perspective, Legendre's relevance is his style of thinking, his recovery of a judicial logic that contributes to law's hold over the social world. Pottage, in Douzinas et al (1994), pp 147–187, opposes the work of the French scholar Luce Irigaray to Legendre as a more progressive articulation of a critical appropriation of psychoanalysis. These are essential texts for the present reading. Its conclusion might challenge the extent to which Legendre's text can be identified as essentially either reactionary or closed to a radical thinking of eros and the space of love.

way to relate to the profound emptiness that defines us is to mythologise the strength necessary to accede to the empty place of power. Realising the void allows a refiguring of patriarchal genealogy. The play prompts the rediscovery of the theogony, a mythic narrative that disrupts the genealogical principles of legitimacy. If this is associated with the role of the imagination and the poet as the 'legislator' of love, *Prometheus Unbound* can be read as a progressive reinterpretation of the Legendrian legacy.

Pierre Legendre: Psychoanalysis as a Myth of Law

The starting point for this inquiry is an understanding of the conjunction between myth and reference. In Legendre's project, there is a tendency to define myth as the working out of a central form that repeats itself through time:

> The very rich history of the term dogmatic is the history of the textual spaces which are put in play in the fabrication of the subject's bond to a mythological reference.[4]

Myth describes a function that underlies and founds the social: myth is central to the fashioning of the human subject. It describes an inherently hierarchical or 'stratified' idea of social space where the human world is dependent upon the divine. The divine as such is inaccessible: someone, or some ritual, must 'speak' for it. At this point, Legendre's work touches upon those histories of law that see the roots of law as synonymous with a priestly class controlling both legal and religious rituals. Rather than restricting this moment to the prehistory of law, though, Legendre considers law's articulation of social foundations as essential to all social order. This broader understanding is termed *dogmatic communication*. Dogmatic communication is the transmission of the fundamental social myth. In the history of the West, dogmatic communication is marked by the conjunction of Classical and Christian cultures. In Roman law terms, it describes an inherently hierarchical or 'stratified' idea of social space which sees the human world as dependent upon the divine. The truth of dogmatic communication is the passage of messages from one world to the other, from divine to human; it 'constitutes an order of fiction which organises the transmission of words and texts organised between two structurally differentiated levels'. It must concern the promulgation of both spoken and written texts which define the human space as that which draws upon and is predicated on the divine and inaccessible. In the world view of medieval Christianity, Roman law contributes to the concept of stratified communities united in their devotion to Christ.[5] These terms will be examined in more depth later, as it is necessary to first consider the

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4 Goodrich (1997), p 104.

5 For an elaboration of this notion of society, see St Augustine (1972), in particular book XIX. For commentary, see Deane (1963), pp 78–153. For further consideration, see Figgis (1921), pp 51–68.

Legendrian notion of the 'text' to properly appreciate the structures with which this article is concerned.

The text represents a 'universal structure'[6] that also includes oral culture. Although in oral cultures the text may not take the form of the written word, it may be present as a particular ritual or set of ritual practices that fulfil a similar structural function. In whatever form it takes, the text returns to the idea that dogmatic communication involves a 'transmission' of messages that are predicated upon reference back to the fundamental truth of the foundational reference. The transmission of the text is the 'dissemination' of a discourse that for the society in question has the status of truth. To engage with the text is to accept its hold, to submit to a 'pre-existent' embodiment of the truth. The text itself bestows on the interpreter the authority to interpret and thus carry forward the function of reference. In other words, the truth of the text is largely a notion of the conditions of its own remembrance, perpetuation and continued dissemination: 'The discourse of truth is the discourse of the reproduction of truth.'[7] This theory of hermeneutics is a long way from the idea that it is a particular content of the text that is transmitted. Communication is here no more than a ritual that perpetually stages and restages the 'founding reference'.[8] In this way, it is as if Legendre removes any consideration of chronology from his account of interpretation.

The aspect of dogmatic communication that forms the link between the institution and the individual is the interdiction, a term developed within psychoanalysis. However, unlike dogmatic communication, which can be thought of in terms of a content and a form, interdiction is itself an 'empty category'. The interdiction is not the incest taboo; rather, it is a space 'between or among', or 'an utterance which stages speech'.[9] Only after speech has been staged does the 'normative' content of law become relevant. Interdiction operates on a principle of 'division'. This is a passage through a 'symbolic void'[10] which is the experience of a birth into language. To become a speaking being, the child has to be separated from its mother and realise that language can always summon in words, even if it cannot completely replace the lost object of desire. Learning that language represents is to accept the interdiction, the original separation from the maternal object that reappears in linguistic representations. Interdiction is thus the Oedipal scene revisited.

As the Oedipal scene is now expressed as an entrance into language, there is another essential aspect of the experience of division that needs to be approached. To be divided is not just to realise that words represent things, but to know that the subject itself is a subject of language: when you understand that your name represents you, you become the object of an address when you think of yourself or are called by others. When Legendre writes that 'dogma ...

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6 Goodrich (1997), p 152.

7 Goodrich (1997), p 155, Legendre's italics.

8 Goodrich (1997), p 156.

9 Goodrich (1997), p 140.

10 Goodrich (1997), p 141.

problematises speech as the representation of an other',[11] he is referring to this essential feature of signification. He returns to this theme repeatedly. It is 'the prevalence of the order of the signifier in humanity', which can be glossed in Lacanian terms as the 'imaginary function of the phallus'.[12]

Genealogy is directly related to interdiction. If interdiction is a speech that divides the subject and allows it to become a speaker of language, genealogy is an extended notion of the social function of interdiction which exists in the kin group or the community into which the subject is born and positioned more broadly by speech; 'spoken in advance'.[13] In this sense, the origin is always prepared for any individual subject. At this point, Legendre's description of genealogy takes a turn towards the most crudely deterministic as it describes genealogical order as destiny, or *Fata*. However, it must be remembered that this means no more than the fate of the human subject is to become subject and object in language. Legendre can be defended from accusations of a crude form of determinism. It is in language that the genealogical order functions. The subject occupies a position in a kinship structure, which is preserved by the legal rules that determine succession and inheritance. Switching registers, Legendre begins to speak in terms of the necessity of instituting the 'Third' of language. Genealogy can account for an insertion of the subject into a social order, but to sharpen the analysis there is a necessity for a term which can describe the 'normative' dimension of a law that operates in and through communication.

Legendre's use of Hermes' name to outline the 'dogmatic function' is motivated by the need to recover a mythological dimension which has been lost with the ascendancy of scientific accounts of communication.[14] Politics, as a realisation of social speech at a level more general still than genealogy, has to take this function seriously and effectively provide the means of 'manufacturing' the 'montages' that will sustain social life. Politics is the function of interdiction writ large. Like the enigmatic symbol of the parent, it must be able to provide a foundational scene for the community at large. This means not only that politics can be imagined as a form of speech, but it must also deal with what is fundamentally absent or lost and evoke it through representations. Politics must speak for the 'absent Object of power'.[15] The object of power is absent because, as 'dogma' suggests, the whole point of communication is to create a stratified community that draws its being from a divine figure whom speaks for it. Alternatively, the 'absent Object' is the

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11 Goodrich (1997), p 142.

12 Goodrich (1997), p 141.

13 Goodrich (1997), p 143.

14 Legendre's opposition to social science rests on the argument that, in a reified social world of 'things', the conventional apologetics of law can do no more that stress efficiency and the monitoring of statistics. It is necessary to recover the sense in which speech, understood as dogmatic communication, can only function as the maintenance of the social bond if it stages interdiction and provides an ongoing sense of being.

15 Goodrich (1997), p 146.

'absolute other'[16] that can only be represented or referred to through images. The role of the messenger is to mediate between this 'alterity'[17] and the institutions that are constructed in the name of the other. Legendre describes this as the 'lynchpin of historical systems of representation',[18] thus suggesting that it is an essential and inescapable function. However, it is a function that can only be 'mythical' in the sense that, to speak, the object from which the subject is divided has to be inaccessible and unapproachable. It can only be mediated through representation. It is what remains presupposed, but absent, in every message.

As well as describing universal structures, Legendre's work also concerns itself with a particular history and a specific structure of law. Legendre allows an insight into one of the foundational moments for the Western tradition: the coming together of Classical and Christian cultures. Developing this theme means studying briefly the question of love and the creation of both personal and cultural identity. It is around this question of love that the institution of law is created. Within the confines of this article, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive treatment of this theme, but it can be outlined by looking at Legendre's bringing together of Ovid's fable of Narcissus and the tradition of the Veronica, the representation of the face of Christ[19] In Ovid's fable, Narcissus falls in love with his own image reflected in a pool. Unable to do more than admire his own beauty, Narcissus fades away. Ovid's tale carries a truth that can be elaborated by psychoanalysis: to know oneself is to recognise one's own reflection; identity can only come about through the 'dividing third' — the mirror that allows a relationship with the self. To reach a sense of self, one has to 'master' this 'distance' of the self from the self. If one fails, one shares Narcissus' fate: erasure and non-being, a literal disappearance. But there is another element of this story that is essential to the Christian development of the Narcissistic scene. Narcissus falls in *love* [italics mine] with his image. In other words, what is essential for identity is some form of desire for the self. This desire, of course, has to be mediated — it has to pass through the reflecting third as it is structured Narcissistically: the lover has to have an image with which to fall in love. How does Christian religion develop this structure?

In his *Introduction to the Theory of the Image*,[20] Legendre writes that Christianity makes use of, but moves beyond, the Narcissistic structure of love. Remember that Narcissus reveals the necessary love of the self that has to be reflected back to the subject by the mirror. The Veronica is a representation of

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16 Goodrich (1997), p 147.

17 Goodrich (1997), p 147.

18 Goodrich (1997), p 146.

19 Goodrich (1997), p 227. In the Roman Catholic tradition, the *imago dei* was created when Christ pressed his face to a piece of cloth and then presented it to Veronica. There are, however, different stories: one account tells how Christ's image appeared on a cloth used by a woman to wipe Christ's face as he went up to Calvary.

20 Goodrich (1997), pp 211–55.

the face of Christ which the believer, in venerating, considers not only an image of divinity but also an image of her own true self. Here again is the paradox of identity. Although the believer recognises the *imago dei* as a reflection of the true self, it is also a representation of 'something incommensurable'[21] — complete alterity, or divinity. True self, then, is forever separate from what allows it to become authentic: the *imatatio Christi* after which the believer strives. This distance, this separation of the human and the divine, has to be 'staged'. It has to take on some form of representation for the believer to counter the threat of emptiness, failure of identity and the loneliness of the created in the absence of the creator. This is the work of the ritual and ceremony of the Church. Moreover, it is precisely the love of the believer for the objects of worship that binds together both a personal and communal identity in the brotherhood of the Church. The 'structure' of this knot which ties the subject to the institution can be divined by reference to St Augustine's description of the 'liturgical order' as a 'structure of love': the subject must fall in love with the institution.[22] Love, then, could be described as the ontology of the subject as a desiring creature. The human being as the subject of desire is forever in pursuit of the lost and desired object.

Christianity makes use of Roman law in defining and perpetuating this structure. Roman law has shown itself to be flexible, adapting itself to various historical contexts, from its formal use in the development of the common law tradition to the more concrete way in which it provided the axioms for the law of the Holy See. Even when Roman law is most forgotten, or when — as at present — 'science' attempts to usurp its prerogatives, its essential function cannot be replaced or ignored.[23] The law speaks 'in the name of' something other; law ventriloquises. The voice of the law is that of the Pope or the Emperor, himself an 'alienated body',[24] a representation of the other in whose name the Father speaks. The law is the site that gives the 'space of fiction':[25] the symbolic void which separates signification from its absent source. To approach Roman law is to consider a discourse that allows the truth to appear;[26] it is a logic of messages. Roman law lays down a way of 'staging' functions which psychoanalysis considers as necessary to social being: the institution and reproduction of human life. This is a 'non-negotiable principle',[27] or a 'principle of universal legislation'.[28] Identifying this principle

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21 Goodrich (1997), p 228.

22 Goodrich (1997), p 107.

23 That function is the 'mythological' foundation of the social bond. It can be demonstrated by reference to the scholasticism of the Middle Ages that concerned the reception of Gratian's *Decretals* in around 1140 and the composition of the first glosses and commentaries in the mid-thirteenth century. Scholasticism developed the materials that allowed the law to speak.

24 Goodrich (1997), p 109.

25 Goodrich (1997), p 110.

26 Legendre (1983), p. 132.

27 Goodrich (1997), p 116.

28 Goodrich (1997), p 116.

means stripping away discourses on popular rights that have proved obstructive of the truth of Roman law.

Must it be the fate of humanity to become subject to the institution of law?

Poetry and Myth: Why Read Shelley?

Turning to Shelley brings into focus a questioning of the structures that Legendre describes. Shelley's work does not suggest that Legendre should be rejected, rather that there is a way of creating a more radical way of developing insights into the mythic nature of the law. Shelley locates the law in powerful yearnings and anxieties of the human being that express themselves in poetry rather than in bondage to a particular institution. How can this insight be developed in a way that is informed by psychoanalysis interpretation, but which resists becoming merely another object to be claimed by the Legendrian project?

For Shelley, the role carried out by Legendrian mythology — the positing of the human community as dependent upon a mediated 'other' — is performed by poetry. The consequences of this distinction need to be explored. Poetry is 'connate with the origins of man'; it mediates between the ineffable and the human imagination. 'Truth', in poetry, can only be expressed in metaphor — perhaps most famously in the image of the poet's imagination as the dying embers that are fanned by the breath of an inspiration over which the artist has no control. But this is not only a vision of poetic inspiration. Shelley sees the poetic imagination as a source of value, a value that is perceived by all but that has to be expressed poetically. In this account of poetry, there is a conjunction between the poetic and the legislative that rivals Legendre: 'Poets who express this indestructible order are not only the authors of language and music ... they are the institutors of laws, and the founders of civil society.'[29] It

[29] Shawcross (1909), p 124. In *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley makes a foundational distinction between reason and imagination. Reason is the principle of analysis, imagination that of synthesis; the latter appears as essential to the former. Without imagination, reason appears merely as a way of perceiving the world. Imagination is the source of both 'value' and the 'integrity' of thought. Their relationship is described as that of 'instrument to agent' or 'shadow to substance': (1909), p 120. Both these metaphors are interesting, but further reflection is outside the scope of this article. One further point of interest is a comparison with Legendrian psychoanalysis. Shelley gives primacy to imagination rather than reason as the point of access into the symbolic order. A further investigation could be made of the relative importance that Shelley and Legendre attach to vision, aurality and sociality. In the Shelleyan 'primal scene', a 'child at play by itself' expresses its delight in the sounds that it makes. Poetry is, at root, an expression of the inarticulate delight, a perception that predates language. It is only later that the faculties develop, the child enters the symbolic order and poetry as a sophisticated arrangement of words and sounds comes into being. Like the perception of delight, the social situation 'begin to develop ... from the moment that two human beings exist': (1909), p 122. The human child is at once alive to 'social sympathies'. Expressed tentatively by Shelley is the notion that a connectedness precedes language and can, in certain senses, be expressed by poetry. *Prometheus Unbound*

is at this point that the Shelleyan and the Legendrian projects undoubtedly coincide. Shelley's vision, however, does not lead to an exclusive association of law with an institution that can speak for it. The claim that poetry addresses the 'moral nature of man'[30] describes a need in the human to respect the other. Respect is central to the definition of love: to be 'good', a man must 'place himself in the place of another and of many others'. There are deliberate echoes of the Gospel in this statement that will be explored presently. For the moment, it is necessary merely to note that the Shelleyan notion of love that is central to *Prometheus Unbound* takes the Gospel as an essential reference point.

Developing Shelley's notion of morality requires a reference to a paradox. Although poetry is 'moral', it does not appear to have a content. Shelley states that 'a poet ... would do ill to embody his own conception of right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time, in his poetical creations, which participate in neither'.[31] It would seem, then, that the 'morality' that underlies the law for Shelley names that which cannot be definitively named. Morality exists in this constant urge to honour the other; it is impossible to specify an ideal content that would exhaust this passion. It is in this sense that poets are prophets, 'unacknowledged legislators'[32] who address futurity. Futurity, as the time of things that are to come, is open: the future cannot be foretold. All that can be said with certainty is that the urge to honour the other will affirm itself in the repetition of 'words which express what they understand not': the valueless value of morality. Shelley's introduction to *Prometheus Unbound* elaborates this thesis.[33] Like morality, poetry is a form of writing that is in

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may develop this thesis to the extent that an experience of the void is necessary to poetry, and hence a radical sense of limitation but, as will be demonstrated late in this essay, the Shelleyan void can be distinguished from that imagined by Legendre.

30 Shawcross (1909), p 131.

31 Shawcross (1909), p 132.

32 Shawcross (1909), p 159.

33 To counter the risk of imposing too much structure on the Shelleyan corpus, it should be pointed out that commentators have developed a number of conflicting positions on the question of myth in Shelley's poetry. Hogle (1988) proposes a reading of Shelley as an 'anti-mythologist'. This is a reaction against an earlier phase of criticisms that saw Shelley as the 'supreme' myth-maker of the Romantic tradition, informing studies like Abraham (1971), Frye (1968) and also Bloom (1959). Behind these readings are various expressions of the need for unity between the human and the natural — or even, in Bloom's study, a transcendence of subject and object. Another key theme is that Shelley's myth-making is a return to primal impulses that project human aspirations on to natural processes. This can be informed by a mythic syncretism seeking an underlying myth that could unite all individual narratives. Hogle reads Shelley as turning away from these 'established myths' and creating 'alternative figures' rejecting 'symbolic systems of control': (1988), p 171. Hogle's Shelley understands myth as a form that is local to a particular time and place and resists reduction to essential, overreaching narrative forms. The understanding of the theogonic form of *Prometheus Unbound* would cohere with Hogle's sense of Shelley as anti-mythologist.

constant reinvention. Shelley locates his writing at a point of transmission, an interchange between different versions of the myth of Prometheus. Just as the Greeks did not see themselves bound to a fixed form, Shelley finds in the Prometheus myth the possibility of its reinterpretation. The retelling of myths shows a struggle, a conflict between the present and the past, between inheritance and innovation. The Greeks resisted 'a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition'.[34] There can be no fetishisation of authority: the text always invites its reinterpretation. As Shelley's play is a fable of resistance, this approach is entirely consistent with his substantive refiguring of the myth. It is not his objective to recover Aeschylus' lost text or write the great reconciliation of the tensions produced by *Prometheus Bound*; he was 'averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of the reconciling of the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind'.[35] Prometheus's revolt has to be sustained; the energy has to be continued. Indeed, the writer as seer and prophet — the 'bold inquirer' — was the catalyst in the 'fervid awakening' of the 'public mind' [36] that 'shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive forms of the Christian religion' and remains the engine of history. Shelley is announcing a politics of representation, a visionary poetry that will reform 'institutions'.[37]

Revolt, then, is both a question of style and an evocation of what is to come. Shelley's utopianism offers an alternative to Legendre's psychoanalytic politics of myth. This complex of themes are drawn together in Mary Shelley's commentary on her husband's play. She discusses a particular comment of Shelley's on Oedipus Tyrannus: 'Coming to many ways in the wanderings of careful thought.'[38] There are two important and inter-related themes here. Mary Shelley's identification of a 'wandering' style of thought can be elaborated by referring to the etymology of the word.[39] It suggests travelling without a destination (even incoherence or delirium). At this level, it might describe the Shelleyan imaginative delirium that lies behind poetry. More specifically, though, it echoes Shelley's idea of the writer who chooses her own way. To extend this sense, and to relate Shelley's writing to the Prometheus myth, it will be necessary to see the connections between this question of style and the form of the theogony in which the Titan is first named. Strictly, a theogony deals with a genealogy of the gods, but it will be argued in a way that is comparable to Shelleyan 'wandering' and retelling. Shelley's play can be placed in a theogonic context. When Shelley set about writing *Prometheus Unbound*, he imagined that he was engaged with a reinvention of the myth. However, before this theme can be developed, a second aspect of Mary Shelley's commentary must be examined. She writes

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34 Zillman (1968), p 35.

35 Zillman (1968), p 35.

36 Zillman (1968), p 39.

37 Zillman (1968), p 39. In a striking metaphor, the 'uncommunicated lightening' of the 'mind' of the poet, is always about to discharge and make and break forms.

38 Ingpen and Peck (1965), p 270.

39 Its root is the Anglo Saxon *wendan*, meaning 'to turn'.

that the key to the poem is the assertion that 'Love ... becomes the law of the world'.[40] It will be suggested that the Shelleyan theogony of Prometheus is created through a reference to a reworked Christian idea of love. The theogonic mediation between gods and the world is that between the 'holy spirit of love', uncapitalised, referring both to the aspect of the Christian Trinity, and the refiguring of the Christian mythos in the play.[41]

Theogony/Genealogy

Legendre reads myth as inherently hierarchical: in dogmatic communication, the mythological reference is mediated by a priesthood that preserves and transmits its truth. A study of myth might show, however, that this is not a necessary conclusion:

> Greek mythology knows of no creator of the world. Instead of creation myths, it contains theogonies, stories of the birth of the gods. Related successively...they form whole series of epiphanies, in which the world appears in divine aspects, from which it is built up. The creator of the world is a poet.[42]

Perhaps there is no singular mythology. Myth may be the ultimate plural form; a plurality that sustains itself in the face of the single, definitive justificatory narrative of legitimate power. In place of Legendre's mythology, and the genealogy that is its social expression, the theogony offers itself. Theogonies tend to establish both lines of inheritance and, simultaneously, to

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40 Ingpen and Peck (1965), p 271.

41 For an engaging analysis of the question of love in Shelley's poetry, see Ulmer (1990). Eros is structured in Shelley's poetry in a similar way to the Derridean supplement: as that which both completes the self and makes it incomplete: (1990), pp 7–8. That 'we must ... read Shelley's politics as an aspect of his rhetoric of Romantic love' (1990, p 18) makes for an approach to the text that studies the problems that emerge when poetic strategies attempt a reform of manners through making the reader adopt the ideas and projects of the author. The question remains as to whether eros can be separated from agape. An earlier study, Allsup (1976), discovers images of both expressions of love in the poetry. Shelley (1994) traces the union of eros and agape through Christian scripture and into *Prometheus Unbound* as part of a broader argument about influences on the play. A more critical approach relying on a theory of disjunctive union of eros and agape may be possible to as a way of reading Shelley and his location within 'Christian' culture. For an elaboration of the 'aporia' of eros and agape, see Gearey (1999).

42 Lamberton (1988), p.33. For a study of the influence of Hesiod on Aeschylus' *Prometheia*, see Solmsen (1949), pp 124–125. Solmsen argues that the version of Hesiod's Theogony that Aeschylus relied upon had already been added to by various 'interpolations' and that Aeschylus himself adapted the myth to suit the dramatic form.

be unable to control the connective and generative energies they produce. As one of the commentators suggests, theogonies have 'no authoritative form'.[43]

As discussed above, one of the most distinctive features of the theogony was its control by poets — 'they belonged to art, not cult'.[44] These stories of the divine and the mortal existed within poetic traditions that were not priestly — or, more dramatically, 'The Greeks had no Moses.'[45] Hesiod, in *Work and Days,* the poem *Theogony* and the fragmentary *Catalogues of Women and Eoiae*, provided some of the earliest forms of these myth texts — texts that also contain the first stories of the revolt of Prometheus. The recently discovered Derveni fragment[46] also contains narratives of creation that are linked with castration accounts of the gods. These have been interpreted as fables of the 'transfer of power'.[47] They have their roots in stories traceable back to a millennia before Hesiod's writings, in near-Eastern accounts including Sumerian, Babylonian and Ugarit variations. The Derveni fragment contains a commentary in an unknown hand on the creation story which relates to a myth of Zeus's incest with his mother. Thus the theogony contains the Oedipal scenes known to psychoanalysis, but before they have become associated with this archetypal figure. In the Derveni fragment, they are associated more with revolt — overcomings that are linked to the very possibility of the theogony as containing genealogies as well as counter-genealogies.

Although Prometheus is first named in Hesiod's *Theogony*, this is not a definitive identity. Hesiod's theogony of Prometheus returns to the Titan Iapetos. In the Iliad, Iapetos is banished to the eternal darkness, thus establishing the realm of the human, demarcating the world of time and change from the world of the gods and creating the tormented space of the human. Iapetos took Clymene and gave birth to Prometheus, Epimetheus and Atlas. However, the Hesiodic theogony of Prometheus, even within itself, contains other stories. Prometheus's mother could have been the Earth itself. For Aeschylus, this allows the association of Prometheus with Themis, or Gaia. Hesiod's theogonies also exist alongside rival accounts. Euphorion, the Alexandrian poet, gives Hera as Prometheus's mother and Eurymedon as his

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43 Lamberton (1988), p 39. There were two impulses which led to a relative fixing of the forms of the theogonies: the civic festivals in Athens in 561, which removed the poems from their creators and 'froz[e] and shackled them to institutional power', albeit not entirely reconciling the various forms of the myths, and eight centuries later when, in the face of the early Christians, the Greeks attempted to canonise and refine their own theologies.

44 Lamberton (1988), p 39.

45 In Kerenyi's description of the metaphysical aspect of the theogony, the form articulates not only the creative powers of men which bring the world into being, but the 'cosmos', the matter of the world. Cosmos is conceived of as separation of the divine and the human, an account of 'primordial beginnings'. See Kerenyi (1963), p 33.

46 Lamberton (1988), p 40. This was revealed in 1961 with the discovery of a papyrus 'associated with a late fourth century BC tomb in Deverni in Macedonia'.

47 Lamberton (1988), p 42.

father. Shelley continues the theogony by making Asia Prometheus' wife — she is also cited as his father's wife!

If the theogony is open to this multiplication of narratives, then it is also a form that understands difference. In theogonic narrative, the male and the female appear as separate and distinct. This might not be the present feminist critical consensus that has condemned the form for its inherent patriarchal and misogynistic underpinnings. The exclusion of women from the theogony is seen as the foundation for the construction of logos or discourse as a space that is exclusively male.[48] Although these criticisms have a great deal of weight, if the theogony is read as a form in constant reinvention, then there is no necessary reason why it has to be a patriarchal form. For instance, in the incomplete *Catalogues of Women and Eoiae* there was a listing of genealogies that showed that the Hellenes went back to a common ancestor. This served a quasi-legal concern with inheritance and legitimacy.[49] When placed alongside the rigid insistence of the Legendrian genealogy on the patriarchal principle of power and transmission, the theogony thus appears a more dynamic form.[50]

Would it be possible to speak of a theogonic imagination that rewrites, that opposes fixed forms? What follows is an attempt to read *Prometheus Unbound* as just such an interpretation of the mythological energies that pass through Legendre's corpus.

Prometheus Unbound: The Myth of Revolt

In *Prometheus Unbound,* the Oedipus complex, the idea of interdiction, becomes read as the inescapable structure of revolt. This can be read through the Promethean mythos. Prometheus is a Titan. In the Titan myth there are distinct Oedipal undertones. Titan gave his brother Saturn the world, provided that he had no male children. Saturn begat Jupiter, and concealed his birth. Titan fought against Saturn and replaced him with his son. Juvenal continued the tradition by describing Prometheus as a Titan; the theme of the father's overthrow by the son thus continuing in the story.[51] Hesiod writes that the name Titan (essentially a term of abuse) stems from two Greek words,

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48 See Arthur (1982) and *The Dream of a World Without Women: Poetics and Circles of Order in the Theogony Prooemium* (1983), cited in Lamberton (1988), p 42.

49 Lamberton (1988), p 102: 'The reason why women are so prominent is obvious: since most families and tribes claimed to be descended from a god, the only safe clue to their origin was through the mortal women beloved by that god.'

50 If this dynamism is extended, then it might be suggested that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* 'the new Prometheus', is itself a continuing theogony. For an interesting reflection on a Legendrian interpretation of the Frankenstein, see Shutz (1995). Shutz writes that the Golem and the Frankenstein are 'the fruit of the operations of an absolute master' rather than the product of procreation. This contrasts with the 'origin of a human being[s]' which are not 'produced' but 'procreated'; the ungovernably of this process of procreation escapes 'all rule giving, all rule following'. The Golem shows that human subjectivity cannot be reduced to a rule-based model.

51 Kerenyi (1984), p. 688.

titainein, to overreach, and *tsisis*, meaning 'punishment'.[52] The name itself thus carries the trace of both the punishment of the father for the son's usurpation of his place and a suggestion of the son's creation of himself in an 'over-reaching' that creates identity in an act of desire that can neither be satisfied nor resisted. If the Titans represent the forebears of the human race, it would appear that they are marked with the same at the root of their being: they are born into conflict and struggle.[53]

Reading these myths from Legendre's perspective would mean elaborating how this notion of interdiction is related to the space of dogmatic communication. Prometheus is a figure who occupies the space between gods and men. In a phrase of Kerenyi's that echoes a Legendrian themology, the Titan performs the 'double task' of 'separating mankind from immortals' and 'complet[ing]' mankind itself.[54] The play is very much concerned with the communication and transmission of messages. The central message is Prometheus's curse of Jupiter, for which the Titan is dreadfully punished, chained to a desolate rocky outcrop. It could be said that this is the founding reference of the play. It stages both absent principle of power but, importantly, opposition to that power:

> Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
> Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
> Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
> Black, wintery, dead, unmeasured; without herb,

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[52] Bloom (1959), p 55.

[53] These themes are writ large in Shelleyan commentary. The play is a reflection of both inner struggles and a response to the failure of the French Revolution. Webb (1977, p 120) writes that the central concern of the play is that 'the revolution will only be real and effective in so far as we in our own lives are able to re-create it'. Prometheus is ultimately a symbol of the 'enhancement of human personality': (1977), p 121. Webb's position is elaborated by Sperry (1988), who reads *Prometheus Unbound* as a depiction of the problem of the degeneration of the revolution; Shelley's work is in a kind of dialogue with other English poets, such as William Wordsworth, who moved from a revolutionary to a reactionary position. Like Webb, he sees the play as stressing that the possibility of progressive change comes from realising inner virtue: (1988), p 75.

[54] Bloom (1959), p 57. The narrative of Prometheus's theft of fire begins with a detail — albeit outside of both the Aeschylean and Shelleyan corpus — that tells how the very notion of sacrifice as a mediation was corrupted by Prometheus. He sacrificed two bulls to Jupiter and, filling one of their skins with bones and one with flesh, asked the father of the gods which he preferred. Jove, duped by Prometheus's trick, chose the skin of bones. It was in revenge for this trick that fire was removed from the Earth, and Prometheus stole it back again. In a further variation on this story, told by Apollodorus, Prometheus made the first men and women from clay that he then animated with fire. Once again, this would place the human as an intermediary between the divine and the world of senseless matter. For a synoptic approach to myths of fire, see Frazer (1930).

Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life-
Ah me, alas, pain, pain ever, forever![55]

This direct address evokes the Father who, despite a brief appearance in the third act, remains both absent and presupposed by the action of the play. Jupiter may be the 'Monarch', but his omnipotence is challenged by this speech. In the original legend, Prometheus could have shared Jupiter's power as, with his cunning, he helped Jove defeat the other Titans. Here, though, is the original act of opposition. Its expression is interesting. Grammatically, the line is incomplete: the sentence begins a clause that is interrupted. Why is this? Why is Prometheus, who could have acceded to the place of power, unable to complete the clause? At one level, it suggests that the recollection is too painful; it has to be repressed. But this incompletion also dramatically illustrates that Prometheus's theft of fire is in itself a disruption, an interruption in the transmission of the power of the Father. The whole supposition of the play is that the Father cannot prevent the transmission of the dissident message.

Message/Curse

Shelley's presentation of Prometheus's defiance creates an effective contrast between Prometheus's isolation and pain, and the persistence of his opposition to Jupiter: 'No change, no pause, no hope!-yet I endure.'[56] Elaborating this theme would mean studying the passage of the message in *Prometheus Unbound.*

The world initiated by Prometheus is not so much dependent on the divine as in opposition to and revolt against the divine. Prometheus divides himself from his divine origin when he curses the father of the gods. Shelley has Prometheus imagine himself as a limit figure, whose 'agony' is the 'barrier' to Jupiter's power.[57] Prometheus defines himself in his defiant opening lines with an apostrophe to the absent principle of power: 'Monarch of Gods and Daemons, and all Spirits/But One ...' Just as the address, and the scene of punishment, presuppose the supreme divine power, it also opens the site for its opposition. For Prometheus, to curse is to be able to curse again: 'The curse/ Once breathed on thee I would recall'. Indeed, this whole first act could be seen as focused on the curse and its repetition. Each repetition recalls the dread act of opposition: this is the secret that the 'voices' (who form a kind of chorus) also remember, but will not dare repeat. In Earth's speech, the memory of the curse remains in the land itself, the 'Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air'.[58] The repetition of the curse holds a clue to the interpretation of Prometheus' own gift of prophecy:

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55 Zillman (1968), p.49.

56 Zillman (1968), p 49.

57 Zillman (1968), p 55.

58 Zillman (1968), p 61.

Mercury: Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?
Prometheus: I know but this, that it must come.[59]

In the Shellyan mythos, the law of paternity is limited. The form of power must change. But how can the prophecy be linked to repetition and revolt? In *Prometheus Bound*, Aeschylus gave the revelation of the prophecy, the 'holy secret ... [cloaked] in mystery'[60] of Zeus's overthrow to a dialogue between the hero and the chorus. Shelley hints at it in an exchange between Prometheus and Earth that result in the summoning of the 'image' or 'phantasm' of Jupiter. The phantasm repeats the essential truth of the curse, which is also the secret of the prophecy, which 'yet' cannot be spoken. At the heart of the curse is a statement of autonomy:

Thou art omnipotent.
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And mine own will.[61]

Remember that the god-man speaks these lines. As humankind is effectively created in the image of Prometheus, this statement of revolt against the father of the gods suggests that men and women may be capable of a similar defiance. Prometheus's prophecy is not a glimpse of the future as such, but an expression of the tendency of human ontology to ask the question of its own being. To overthrow the reign of Jupiter is to become aware that the power of the gods is predicated upon the space of differentiation; the distinction between the divine and the human. Jupiter is powerful because he is 'on high', the personification of potentials that exist in the human imagination. Revolt reinterprets divine absence as a space of immanence, a source of human possibility. There can be no resuscitation of presence. It is not as if a divine plenitude can be replaced by a human plenitude. Human possibility is imagined between the limit experiences of love and death, experiences that cannot be put into words or be reduced to rational discourse. Coming to knowledge after the fall of the gods is finding in the gaps, differences and absences that exist between people a dwelling in the world. Given that this is the fallen world of death and time, these concerns lead inexorably to an examination of the void.

In *Prometheus Unbound*, the void is associated with the mysterious figure Demogorgon, who speaks the following lines:

If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets-but a voice
Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;
For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
On the revolving world? What to bid speak

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59 Zillman (1968), pp 75–76.

60 Zillman (1968), p 35.

61 Zillman (1968), p 67.

> Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change? To these
> All things are subject but eternal Love.[62]

What is the sense of these lines? They are a reply to the question: 'Who is the master of the slave?'

It would appear that we are all subjects of 'eternal Love', a response which would beg the question of the relationship of love to the abyss. Love, the sense of these lines suggests, is what makes it both meaningless to ask of the secret of the abyss, and what provokes the question in the first place. Love is the ground of possibility, but to know love means to face both the abyss and the questions of mutability; hence, to ask the questions that the play is asking. The Legendrian answer would be that the institution of the law must allow the void to speak and to capture the desire of the subject. For Shelley, though, the void provokes self-examination. Witnessing the messages the void can communicate means that:

> Each to itself must be the oracle.[63]

To move beyond the father, it is necessary to pass through a 'symbolic void', a vision of nothingness — or what the play calls the 'intense inane'. This is the penetration to the empty place of power: it is as if the fall of Jupiter is brought about by a recollection that his name is no more than a manipulation of the essential 'nothing'. Once again, though, this calls for repetition, for a realisation of the truth at the level of the individual: each has to become his or her own oracle. The realisation of the founding nothing, contrary to Legendre, cannot result in the permanence of the stratified, hierarchical community of the father. It leads, rather, to a democracy of zero, an individuation that is predicated on the examination of one's own relationship to the abyss.

This returns to the Legendrian question of the 'structure of love'. Throughout the play, Prometheus evokes the 'one' to whom he is subject, the 'one' God, whose reign exceeds even that of Jove. Although this 'one' perhaps suggests a ground, it is approached more usefully in a latter part of the play, where it resists definition as a single substance, a beneficent source of all being. The one does not seem to exist in a relationship of priority to creation; it appears to be immanent and in process. When Demogorgon is asked by Asia, 'whom callst thou God?' the response comes 'I spoke but as ye speak'[64] indicating that 'God' may be found in the preceding speech, or even in the dynamic of speech itself. Asia has been describing Prometheus's giving of the gifts to men; a list that includes 'speech, and speech created thought,/which is the measure of the universe'. Speech, then — unlike dogmatic reference — does not lead to the erection of traditional religion; rather, it 'struck the thrones of earth and Heaven'. Moreover, men began to appreciate the love 'Reflected

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62 Zillman (1968), p 143.

63 Zillman (1968), p 145.

64 Zillman (1968), p 143.

in their race'. Asia is then treated to a vision of the world from which she draws the following lesson:

> ... all love is sweet,
> Given or returned. Common as light is love,
> And its familiar voice wearies not ever.[65]

Love is commonality; it appears in exchange and reciprocity. Enabling love is the gap, difference or void that constitutes the abyss. The abyss as separation between lovers is what enables love as exchange. Love is a voice involved in dialogue; speech between equals its exemplification. It is the opposite of the master–slave relationship that exists between gods and men — indeed, 'it makes the reptile equal to the God'.[66] An essential element of this figuring of love are the echoes of the Gospel that run through the play.

Shelley's combination of the Gospel and Aeschylus can be read against Legendre's own mythologising of Narcissus and Christ. Commentators have often pointed to in the play is a strain of sympathy and compassion that Shelley, in contrast to Aeschylus, gives to the character of Prometheus. Alongside this speech are other references — most strikingly to a 'pale youth crucified'. There is a further connection that needs to be elaborated. In Aeschylus' version of the myth, as Kerenyi points out, the punishment of the withdrawal of the fire form mankind is not for Prometheus's crime. Rather, the gods consider it just that mankind should not have fire. This is contrasted with Prometheus's own later account of the reasons for the gift of fire.[67] He explains that he was inspired by 'too much love, too much friendship for men'; these lines set up a contrast between two ideas of justice — that of Jupiter's hierarchical set of privileges and another based on excessive love.

The notion of sacrifice is also central to this echoing of the Gospels. The experience of love cannot be separated from that of the imminence of death. These concerns are focused in the Platonic image of the cave that appears in Act 3. Shelley has, however, transformed the image. There are complex sets of associations that create a tension between the sense of a returned Eden and the presence of death. The cave is a pastoral retreat, 'overgrown with trailing odorous plants', 'paved with veined emerald' and alive with 'ever-moving air,/ Whispering without from tree to tree.'[68] It is also a 'dwelling'. This shift of the register of the image suggests that the cave is a home; it is not the exile from the truth that appears in Plato, or even the world made new in the final reign of Christ. In the play, although this is a redeemed world after Jupiter's reign, it is still a world of time:

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65 Zillman (1968), p 151.

66 Zillman (1968), p 151.

67 Quoted in Kerenyi (1963), pp 119–123.

68 Zillman (1968), p 167.

> ... we shall sit and talk of time and change
> As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged —
> What can hide man from mutability?[69]

Prometheus, as a Titan, is an immortal here speaking to other immortals. Men, however, are destined to a world of change and of mortality; the shadow of death cannot be banished from paradise. Given that Prometheus continues to affirm love, it can only be presumed that Shelley saw the experience of mortality as a necessary component of his vision:

> The wandering voices and the shadows these
> Of all that men becomes, the mediators
> Of that best worship, Love, by him and us
> Given and returned ...[70]

Grammatically, this verse is difficult. The shadows and the disembodied voices are what men become; this becoming is itself both a mediation and a worship of itself at the centre of which is the experience of death that cannot be separated from becoming. This would return to Demogorgon's evocation of the void. The experience of becoming, of self-definition, has to mean that the individual takes the void upon themselves as the absences that constitute both love and death.

Realising human limitation is the basis of the politics of the play. It is the secret of the chorus of the spirits and the hours who sing for Panthea and Ione. It is their singing that builds in 'the void's lose field' a 'Promethean' work. This inspires Ione's vision that alludes to Ezekiel. In part, this vision is of the cycles of history, of the necessity of change — of the fall of empire and tyranny. It is linked to a principle that is forward looking and embraces the ceaseless passage of time:

> To defy power which seems omnipotent;
> To love, and bear; to hope, till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent:
> This like thy glory, Titan, is to be
> Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
> This alone is Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

Shelley's description of hope echoes that of love. However, whereas love is a principle of reciprocity, hope goes beyond death that is so central to the experience: it becomes linked with the very over-reaching that is the definition of the Titan. This over-reaching, though, is difficult to place in linear time. The paradise of the redeemed world both predates Jupiter, and could come again.

The curse is also linked, in the memory of the voices and in Prometheus's own recollection, with a dream of redeemed nature that exists in a time before,

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69 Zillman (1968), p 167.

70 Zillman (1968), p 169.

when 'through ... the o'ershadowing woods' he 'wandered once' with Asia 'Drinking life from her loved eyes'.[71] It is a memory that is associated with communion, with a pastoral image of the lovers which, as far as the play is concerned, has both been and is yet to come again after Jove's overthrow. Shelley links it, in a speech from Asia in Act 2 which depicts the establishment of human community:

> Cities then
> Were built, and through their snow like columns flowed
> The warm winds, and the azure ether shone,
> And the blue hills and shadowy seas were seen.
> Such, the alleviation of his state
> Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
> Withering in destined pain.[72]

This could be Shelley's rendering of the good city: the image is one of the harmonious coexistence of nature and culture, of the order of the city and the glory of the world. It this pastoral image that will return in the redemption of the world that follows Prometheus's release from torment. Language, writing, the curse and memory are thus all associated with an 'over-reaching' which appears as an imagination otherwise. What is essential, though, is this image of generosity: Prometheus gave the 'alleviation of his state'; it is exemplary of his love. It is an act of giving that echoes the notion of the Christ's giving of himself as redemption for the sins of the world. Shelley's image, however, places the possibility of redemption within the acts of men. This is not a recovery of a notion of human autonomy, though. These lines have to be read within the context of the play. Redemption, if it comes, must be worked through the relationship with the void and the mystery.

Legendre after Shelley

Can Prometheus become a symbol of a new way of reading? Legendre's work points out the cracks in modernity and shows a reliance on modes of thought that, although considered outdated, are essential to the creation of personal and communal identity. Psychoanalysis, as an analysis of these structures, has the potential to either engage in a questioning of the constitution of contemporary institutions, or become no more than an apologetics for the phallus — a mere record of a 'logic' that it finds played out in all places, at all times. If Oedipus is the symbol of this form of the psychoanalytical, then Prometheus is the champion of a more engaged way of thinking. Reading Shelley alongside Legendre suggests that there is a resource in the literary that can revise the insights of psychoanalysis and renew a project that always had a contact with a more questioning approach. *Prometheus Unbound* warns against the fetishisation of a psychoanalytic vocabulary. If the deconstructive turn was literature's 'revenge' on philosophy as a master discourse of thought, there is

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71 Zillman (1968), p 57.

72 Zillman (1968), p 143.

the sense that it could become trumped in turn by the rise and rise of psychoanalysis as a critical vocabulary. Shelley's Prometheus is also the hero of another quest, a search for a law that is not necessarily that of the state, but of an ontology of the human subject; a complex stated simply by Shelley:

> Justice, as well as benevolence, is an elementary law of human nature.[73]

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[73] Shawcross (1909), p 79. Ultimately, the meaning of myth, and this utopian urge in Shelley could be aligned with the work of Peter Fitzpatrick. See Fitzpatrick (1992). Fitzpatrick attempts to articulate myth as mediation between a world view and what lies 'ever beyond its limit' (1909, p 31), which allows for the creation, in mythic terms, of new forms of life to be imagined within the limits imposed by modern law. He argues that, although myth creates a 'real', endowing it with 'forms and norms' (1909, p 42), it can never completely mandate its reality. Legendre's myth of law can endow a 'real', but it cannot prevent its reinterpretation.

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