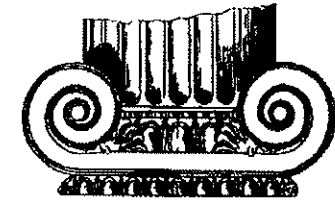
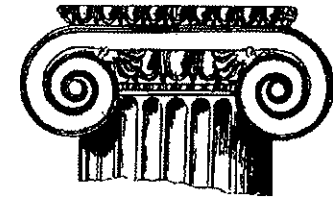


WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

A series edited by Catharine R. Stimpson



PLAYING THE OTHER



*Gender and Society
in
Classical Greek Literature*

FROMA I. ZEITLIN

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bed and accepting Odysseus who, in identifying them, has "persuaded her *thumos*" of his identity.

The entire scene of recognition that revolves around the ruse of the bed continually loops back upon itself, like the infinite turnings of a Möbius strip, as it plays off the entwined but also divergent issues of Odysseus's identity and Penelope's fidelity. It does so, as we have seen, through the device of an object that can be minutely described, located in space, and recalled to its functions and emblematic status through the opportunity given Odysseus to reclaim it in the act of narrating how he first made it. This is an ekphrasis, after all, that describes a work of art. Its function is to transform representation into narration, and it stands in an intermediate space "between the outward force of perceived events and the inner ability to perceive them," so that it may finally turn into a convincing sign-symbol of recognition.⁶⁸

But there is one last paradox. The conditions of its representational function ensure its unrepresentability. No blueprint can be extracted from the details of the bed's manufacture, and in the long tradition from antiquity to the present day, no artist seems to have taken up the challenge to translate its presence into a visual reality that we may view with our own eyes. It is precisely the vivid and concrete reality of its material existence that ensures its efficacy as the double-sided sign it was meant to be, but to retain its powers of persuasion, it must remain what it always was: a mental construct, an image in the mind's eye.

68. Prier 1989, 114, on the general properties of *sēmata*.

•TWO•

Signifying Difference: The Case of Hesiod's Pandora

The myth of Pandora is a variant of a well-known theme in myths of origins the world over. The story of how and why woman came into the world accounts for the fact that there are not one but two sexes. Logically, both male and female should come into existence at the same time as the human species is created. Each is the complement of the other, each indispensable to the other's identity. As a pair, they attest to the universal fact of gender in nature and assure reproduction of one's own kind.

The mythic imagination does not view matters this way. More often than not, woman is an afterthought, created as a secondary category following the emergence of man. Her ontological status is therefore not a self-evident or spontaneous fact. To account for her supplementary presence requires a motive, a reason, a purpose—in short, a myth. Two of the best-known examples of this type are the story of Eve in the Book of Genesis and the Greek myth of Pandora, as recounted by the archaic poet Hesiod. Each in its own way conforms to this pattern: Eve is created from Adam's rib as a companion to ease his loneliness; Pandora is fashioned at Zeus's orders in retaliation for the Titan Prometheus's theft of fire. Whether created by the supreme male deity out of compassion or anger, woman makes her entry onto the scene and thereby provides the occasion for an aetiological narrative that tells how through her agency the world was transformed into its present state. Her secondary status operates as a signifier of difference and disruption that brings about the so-called "human condition." That is, she introduces death, woe, and evil into the world, along with the laborious toil of human existence.

Hesiod tells the myth of Pandora in two versions, the first in the

A version of this essay was presented as the Heller lecture at the University of California—Berkeley (1991), the Jane Ellen Harrison lecture at Cambridge University (1991), the George Walsh Memorial lecture at the University of Chicago (1992), and the Humanities Council lecture at Princeton University (1992).

Theogony, a cosmogonic poem, and the second in the *Works and Days*, a didactic work of wisdom literature. In each case, she figures as the outcome of a game of wits between Prometheus and Zeus that revolves around a series of deceptions and counter-deceptions in connection with the exchange of gifts. Zeus wins, of course, and in return for the theft of fire, he has Hephaistos, the artisan god, fabricate the first woman as a molded creature, who astounds men by her god-given beauty and ruins them by her thievish nature.

In recent years these two Hesiodic versions have attracted a great deal of attention, which can be ascribed both to the development of more sophisticated techniques for interpreting the discourses of myth and to the current interest in the cultural construction of gender categories. These newer methods address the underlying logic and coherence that govern the structure, language, and content of mythic narrative, and aim to situate a given myth in its literary and sociocultural contexts in order to take account of its wider ideological resonances in the processes of cultural formation. Despite important differences in detail and purpose, the two versions have been read together as two halves of a single extended narrative that mutually illuminate the double-sided question of the origin of woman and woman as the origin. Let me first recall the outlines of these two accounts.

The version in the *Theogony* begins with Prometheus's fraudulent division of the portions of the sacrificed ox allotted respectively to gods and men. Zeus chooses the inedible bones concealed beneath a covering of gleaming fat. For men is reserved the meat hidden under the unappetizing casing of the animal's belly. In angry retaliation, Zeus refuses to give (i.e., hides) celestial fire, whereupon Prometheus steals it, hides it in a hollow stalk, and brings it to men without being seen by the gods. When Zeus perceives "the gleam of fire," he counters by creating woman as a "beautiful evil" (*kalon kakon*), an "anti-fire" (*anti puros*)—an exchange "instead of" or "in recompense for" fire. Hephaistos fashions her of earth in the likeness of a young virgin, and Athena robes her as a bride in silvery garments, with a veil, garlands of flowers, and a golden crown. Thus adorned, she is a wonder to behold (*thauma idesthai*) but also a dangerous trap (*aipeus dolos*). Brought to men, she is a continual source of woe to mortals (*pēma mega thnētoisi*), an unwelcome supplement to those with whom she dwells (*Th.* 561–91).

Like a drone she sits within the house and reaps the fruits of others' toil to fill her belly. And a second evil is added to the first, for if a man avoids marriage he looks forward to an old age without anyone to care for him and after his death his estate is divided among his kinsmen. But even for a man who relents and takes a good wife—that is, one whose heart is in agreement with his—Hesiod still maintains that "all through

life, in her and by her, misfortune will come to balance out the good" (*Th.* 594–609).

The other version in the *Works and Days* omits the scene of sacrifice but adds a second unhappy consequence of Prometheus's deception in that now the gods also keep hidden from men the source of their livelihood (i.e., the grain that must be seeded in the earth). Again in his anger at the theft of fire, Zeus determines to create a great woe (*mega pēma*) for men to bring them delight while also encompassing their destruction (*WD* 46–58). But this time the creation of Pandora is recounted in more detail.

Hephaistos molds the lovely shape of a maiden out of water and earth, with a face resembling the immortal goddesses but endowed with the "voice and strength of humankind." Athena is to teach her weaving, Aphrodite to pour grace (*charis*) over her head and "cruel longing and cares that weary the limbs." Hermes adds a shameless (doglike) mind and a thievish nature. Athena now dresses her like a virginal bride, while Aphrodite's representatives, the Graces (*Charites*) and Persuasion (*Peitho*), give her golden necklaces and the Hours (*Horai*) crown her with spring flowers. At the end Hermes names her Pandora because, as the text says, "all [*pantes*] the gods gave her a gift [*dōron*], a sorrow [*pēma*] to men who live on bread" (*WD* 59–82).

Now follows the familiar story of how Pandora was sent as a bride to Epimetheus, who had been warned by his brother Prometheus (Foresight) to accept no gifts from the gods. In true fulfillment of his name (Afterthought), he takes her in and regrets it later. For Pandora's first act is to remove the lid of the jar she brought with her, releasing all the evils and diseases that now wander silent and invisible over the earth. By Zeus's will, only Hope or *Elpis* is left behind in the jar (*WD* 83–104), an ambiguous quality to whose meaning we shall return.

The most influential analysis of this myth is that of Jean-Pierre Vernant¹ (with further elaborations and refinements/correctives by Nicole Loraux and Marilyn Arthur [Katz]).² Vernant demonstrates a series of homologies, inversions, and correspondences between all the different elements in these narratives: the various animal parts of the sacrifice apportioned by Prometheus (*Theogony*); the fire first hidden, then stolen, then hidden again (*Theogony*, *Works and Days*); the grain now hidden in the earth (*Works and Days*); the jar that conceals all evils (*Works and Days*); and the first woman, lovely to look at but defined as a belly (*Theogony*). Taken together, these now define the new and permanent quality of human life, its ambiguity and deceitfulness—a mixture of evils concealed under beautiful exteriors and virtues under ugly ones.

1. Vernant 1980, "Prometheus"; 1979, 21–86, 224–37.

2. Loraux 1981a, "Race"; Arthur [Katz] 1982, 1983. See also Pucci 1977.

In one or another of her aspects, Pandora herself corresponds to each term of these several transactions that always operate under the seemingly opposite modes of giving or not giving (hiding) gifts, but that on closer inspection prove to be variations on the single theme of giving through concealment and trickery. Like the sacrificial portion of food offered to the gods, Pandora has a beautiful exterior and a worthless interior. Like the portion offered to men, concealed in the belly (or paunch) of the ox (*gastēr*), she is a hungry belly, insatiable of food. Above all, in direct and inverse return for the celestial fire stolen by Prometheus, Pandora comes equipped with a thievish nature and is later likened to a fire that consumes and withers man by her appetites for both food and sex (cf. WD 704–6). Seed, on the other hand, applies to the germ of technological fire, which unlike its celestial parent, must now be engendered and stored in a hollow container (the narthex stalk): it applies, too, both to the seed the farmer must plant within the earth and to the one he deposits in his wife's belly to produce children.

Pandora therefore emerges as none other than the symbol of ambiguous human life. In her appearance, her gifts given by the gods, she echoes the divine. By her bitchlike mind and the primacy of her bodily requirements she approaches the bestial. By her human voice and status as wife she is human. But, as Vernant concludes, she is also the reverse of man, forming another and fundamentally different breed. Man and woman cannot converse with one another because she conceals the truth in order to deceive. At the same time, the conditions of her creation establish the fundamental triad of activities that are central to Greek views of culture: sacrifice (relations of men and gods), agriculture (men and nature), and marriage (men and women). The last two categories are especially linked in Vernant's discussion by the analogy, so familiar in Greek thought, that likens the woman to the earth and gives men the task of seeding both the womb and the earth.

Every detail contributes to the logical coherence of the whole. Woman has her designated place and aetiological function in this mythic account of the foundations of human culture that accords well with consistent Greek values, preoccupations, and priorities. The view from a cross-cultural perspective, however, casts some intriguing shadows over this instantiation of a widely diffused mythic archetype, which goes so far in its negativity as to unbalance any tidy scheme of a universe that consists of mixed goods and evils. In particular, the Greek version is conspicuous in creating woman as a separate and alien being, the first exemplar of a race or species, the *genos gunaikōn*, who as the agent of separation between gods and mortal men remains estranged, never achieving a mediated partnership with man.

In the first place, we note that this radical disparity between the genders is founded on the absence of any general myth of anthropogony. Woman is created on her own without any parallel or preceding account of how the category of man came into existence.³ A further sign of woman's uniqueness is her mode of production, differentiated from all the other acts of begetting recorded in the *Theogony*. "Woman is anything but a natural being."⁴ She is a gift, a technical invention, an artisanal product, a work of art, an artifice. Finally, in contrast to man, who evolves in stages over time—as, for example, in the parallel tale of the Five Ages in the *Works and Days*—woman's nature is static and unchanging. The sum of her attributes is fixed from the beginning, defined by the circumstances that brought her into being, a material sign that crystallizes the essence of these previous transactions into a permanent, tangible form. She is a hybrid mixture of qualities drawn from different elements and different spheres that combine into a blend, at once an original product and an imitation, whose purpose and nature are to deceive.⁵

Two additional factors support this gloomy picture. Woman is not created as a companion to remedy man's solitude—as we are told, for example, in the biblical account of Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:21)⁶—but rather as a punishment (not even merited through human fault). Second, there is no reconciliation after the fact, since even if Hesiod can broach the possibility of a companionable wife (*Th.* 608), male and female roles maintain a drastic asymmetry. There is no basis for a division of labor between the sexes that would ultimately make them partners, albeit unequal ones, in the conduct of mortal existence. Thus, while Vernant's reading of the cultural implications of the myth of Pandora remains valid in more general terms, it cannot explain the special features of Hesiod's economy: his insistence on the fact that only men work while women re-

3. For these issues, which many have observed, see in particular the acute analyses of Loraux 1981a, "Race," with relevant bibliography. For Greek creation myths in a comparative perspective, see Guarducci 1927.

4. Loraux 1981a, "Race," 83.

5. I am persuaded by Saintillan (1995) and Vernant (1995) that the concept of an "imitation of a model" cannot wholly be applied to the making of the first woman, since the artisanal gods also imbue this fabricated object with the life energy of *charis* (charm, glamor). Nevertheless, in designating Pandora as an inescapable trap (*dolos*) and as a *kalon kakon*, the text suggests a fundamental gap between appearance and reality that implies more than her status as a gift or *agalma*.

6. I acknowledge but do not discuss here the problem of the two accounts in Genesis of human creation, the first of which suggests that male and female came into being at virtually the same time: "And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (1.27). Both versions, however, insist on the parity of one male and one female, destined to form the first couple.

main perpetually idle, useless drones who sit within the house, "filling their bellies up with the products of the toils of others" (*Th.* 599) and providing a source of endless disaffection, which leads to the conclusion that even in the case of a worthy wife, "evil still continually contends with the good" (*Th.* 608–10).

Women could contribute to the household, for example, with their typically feminine skills of weaving, already given by Athena to Pandora at her creation (*WD* 63–64). Male and female could be active in their respective domains, as Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* prescribes, the man working outside to increase his household's wealth and the woman managing the stored-up goods. Above all, as wife and mother, woman herself is also a giver, not just a taker, of gifts, because she produces children from her belly and gives them nurture (*trophē*). Hesiod only elliptically acknowledges that woman is needed to produce offspring, viewing this reliance as a second source of evil that follows upon the first complaint that had characterized women as drones: "Whoever avoids marriage [*gamos*] and the baneful works of women [*mermera erga gunaikōn*], and is not willing to wed, reaches deadly old age without anyone to tend his years [*gērokomos*], and though he at least has no lack of livelihood while he lives, yet, when he is dead, his kinsfolk divide his possessions amongst them" (*Th.* 602–6).

All is inference. Nothing is stated directly—neither sex nor procreation. There is only *gamos* (marriage), the allusive *mermera erga gunaikōn* (what are these *erga*? cf. 595), the equally vague *gērokomos* (who is this?) and the emphasis on man's old age, his death, and its aftermath.⁷ We typically take this passage to mean that if the creation of woman interrupted the presumed commensality of men and gods, when they feasted together and shared the same food, it also confronted man with a mortality that she alone can remediate in the compromise of providing progeny to take care of him in his old age, who will live on after his death and, as his substitute(s), maintain (and increase) the fruits of his labor. But in extracting this reading, we also fail to take the full measure of the evasions and ambiguities that complicate both this text and that of the account in the *Works and Days*, where, in the context of agricultural labor, woman's sexual and reproductive roles remain still more discreetly obscured. Let us take a closer look.

First is the problem of sexuality itself: a natural instinct, fueled by the mysteries of desire and accompanied by pleasure in physical contact, yet also fraught with ambivalence. In Hesiod, woman's lovely exterior, enhanced by those adornments of sexual allure, proves only a snare and delusion, a "hopeless trap" (*Th.* 589; *WD* 83). The *Theogony* dwells on the

effects of her appearance, the stupefied wonder (*thauma*) of those who gaze at her, both gods and mortals alike (*Th.* 575, 581, 582, 584, 588), and the seductive charm (*charis*) that radiates from everything she wears. But in the *Works and Days* we learn further that this *charis* is inseparable from "painful longing" (*pothon argaleon*) and "cares that devour the limbs," all equally gifts of Aphrodite (*WD* 66).

We note too that in both texts, far from "cleaving together and becoming one flesh" as the biblical account tells us (Genesis 3:24–25), or even "mingling in love" (*philotēs*), as the canonical euphemism in Greek texts (and elsewhere in the *Theogony*) would have it, man and woman remain distinct and disjointed entities. Pandora may be arrayed as a bride in a proto-version of marriage and given as a wife to her foolish husband Epimetheus in the *Works and Days* (cf. *Th.* 511–14), but oddly enough, nowhere are we told of any carnal activity between them or again, as the parity of the biblical story suggests, of a mutual awareness of themselves as genitalized beings once they have come into their fallen state (cf. Genesis 2:25 and 3:7).

The dangers of sexuality as encroachment on the autonomous male body and the potential imbalance of its humors, the limitations or qualifications set to its unrestricted enjoyment, its separation from a specified love object, and the attribution of unbridled (extravagant) sexual appetites to women are characteristic and recurrent features of Greek attitudes. Later medical and philosophical texts will spell out the dangers to men's health in taking sexual pleasure, as Foucault's astute analysis reminds us,⁸ but the framework in its most negative form is already in place in Hesiod, particularly in the context of woman's creation as an *anti puros*, a "fire" that takes the place of the one that was stolen. Sex is treated as an unequal transaction by which woman steals man's substance, both alimentary and sexual, and by her appetites even "roasts man alive and brings him to a premature old age" (*WD* 705). Thus in the *Works and Days* men are later warned to beware of making love in the summertime, because this is the time when "women are most wanton, but men are feeblest, since Sirius, the Dog Star, parches the head and the knees and the skin is dry through heat" (*WD* 586–89). No wonder then that sexuality is viewed as a less than mixed blessing, since men and women do not share the same rhythms or seasons of desire, and woman's desire, in any case, consumes the man and robs him of what is his own.

But the second and corollary point may be more essential. This is the ambivalence about women's reproductive capacities, which may account even more strongly for the notable imbalances we find in Hesiod's economic system. As Loraux points out, in the *Theogony* woman is not even

7. See further note 18 below.

8. Foucault 1985.

modeled in "the canonical image of the reproductive good wife. If the text implies that with the woman, marriage appears and therefore reproduction, the function of fecundity is hidden. Nothing indicates that the woman is expected to 'imitate the earth' as the standard Greek representations of fertility suggest."⁹ Hesiod in fact explicitly separates woman from the bountiful earth by inverting the usual etymology of her name from an active to a passive construction, from the one who gives to the one who is given. Not "the giver of all gifts," as a related epithet of Gaia (Earth) indicates, "Pandora" is here glossed as "the one to whom the gods have given all gifts" (WD 80–82).¹⁰

Additionally, the suppression of woman's fertility means ignoring the value of her experience in childbirth, the *ponoi* of her suffering and travail. In other Greek contexts these are sometimes made equivalent to the trials and labors (*ponoi*) of men engaged in battle and other heroic endeavors, exemplified in Medea's famous statement that she would rather stand three times in the forefront of battle than bear a single child.¹¹ Here, by contrast, only man is burdened with *ponoi*, the doleful exertions of daily life, attributed in fact to woman herself who has imported them into his present existence (WD 90–92).

The significance of these two omissions is again reinforced by comparison with the parallel story in Genesis of Adam and Eve: expelled from the garden of Eden, the male is condemned to bring forth his daily bread by the sweat of his brow (i.e., agriculture) and the female to bring forth children in pain and travail (Genesis 3:16–19). Their mutual dependency is further emphasized by God's earlier injunction that they be fruitful and multiply, populating the earth with their numberless progeny (Genesis 2:28).

In short, the biblical story reflects a shared existence and responsibility, once woman has been created; it also suggests an economy of abundance, proliferation, and expansiveness. The Hesiodic tale, in contrast, is rooted in an economy of scarcity, parsimony, and anxious surveillance over what man has patiently accumulated by and for himself.¹² To cap it all, far from being characterized in the *Theogony* as the "mother of all

9. Loraux 1981a, "Race," 88–89.

10. With Loraux (1981a, "Race," 89n.73), I too insist on the significance of Hesiod's etymology as a deliberate "counterstatement" to the standard meaning.

11. See Loraux 1981b on childbirth and Loraux 1982 on the meanings of *ponos*.

12. For the earlier abundance and prodigality associated with the Charites that belong to the world of the gods and the Golden Age, see Saintillan 1995. The economy of scarcity and parsimony is best summarized in WD 354–69. On the biblical world view see, for example, Eilberg-Schwartz 1990, chap. 6; and Cohen 1989, chap. 1. I hope to amplify these differences elsewhere.

mankind," as Eve is described in the biblical account (hence the etymology of her name, Hava, Genesis 3:20), Pandora is named instead as the origin only of the *genos gunaikōn*, the "race of women," as though to deny, or at least to elide, the drastic notion that men are from women born.

What factors might account for this harsh outlook on life? What issues are at stake in Hesiod's version that might lead to the view that woman is only a rapacious and famished belly, a "companion to Plenty but not to Poverty," a creature who takes everything without giving in return? Various socioeconomic explanations have been suggested: (1) a change in methods of agriculture, particularly the plow, better suited for men, that devalues women's contribution to subsistence; (2) a disembedded social organization of the Greek polis in this archaic period (eighth century), in which the private *oikos* or household is separated from communal, public life; (3) a growing scarcity of land and resources relevant to this age of colonization; and (4) class distinctions between aristocratic and so-called peasant attitudes.¹³

All these hypotheses may have merit to greater or lesser degrees, with respect to the proposed time and place of composition, but they cannot account for Hesiod's enduring prestige. These texts become canonical in Greek thought, both as the major account of the creation of the present world order under the hegemony of Zeus (over against competing versions) and as the authoritative statement of Greek values that revolve around the polarization of justice (*dikē*) and injustice (*hubris*). Hesiod's extreme rancor toward woman, while open to compromise and mitigation in other texts and other spheres of interest, still remains the touchstone of an underlying attitude concerning this intrusive and ambivalent "other," who is brought into a strange man's household and forever remains under suspicion as introducing a dangerous mixture into the desired purity of male identity and lineage, whether in sexual relations or in the production of children.¹⁴

A further difficulty with these "practical" rather than ideological considerations, as enumerated above, is the tendency to separate the creation of Pandora from its context instead of treating it as an integrated (and inserted) episode in a longer and more complex narrative.¹⁵ Pandora is not an independent entity in her own right, nor is her story in Hesiod a random digression. In both senses, she is a means to other—another's—ends, entering into the world at a critical moment of its formation. In each nar-

13. See, for example, Sussman 1984.

14. On woman's "otherness" and man's attempts to overcome or master her difference, see especially Pucci 1977, 111–13.

15. Arthur [Katz] 1982 is a notable exception.

rative, the creation of woman is introduced as the outcome of a quarrel between two males over the apportionment of rightful shares. In the *Theogony*, her story is a part of the larger struggle for power among divine forces, the result of the strife between Prometheus and Zeus. In the *Works and Days*, Hesiod's dispute with his brother Perses over the division of their inheritance is the situation that frames the Pandora myth, where it is used both as explanation and admonition. It accounts for the current conditions of our postlapsarian existence and warns what men must do to survive in the harsh environment of the Iron Age.¹⁶ Yet in both versions, Pandora's creation marks a conclusive rupture between men and gods. This means that Pandora not only defines the categories of male and female in the human sphere but also stands at the intersection of relations between gods and mortals. Given the anthropomorphic nature of Greek divinity, mythic discourse habitually dramatizes the issues of gender, sexuality, and reproduction from a double perspective, and perhaps nowhere more pointedly than in the confrontation between divine and human worlds underlying the two Hesiodic accounts. We must, therefore, approach the question of Pandora while bearing in mind both these sets of relations, with the twofold aim of placing Pandora in her Hesiodic context and Hesiod in the context of more extensive Greek attitudes about the female.

Let us turn then first to the human world, to the status of children and questions of reproduction in the household, before expanding the analysis to encompass the inevitable distinctions between mortal and immortal modes of existence. These, as I shall suggest, are founded on a two-tiered system of values, whereby femininity can be split between a primary role in the domain of the gods and a secondary, devalued role in the world of human affairs. This principle holds true in addressing the mode of Pandora's creation (the origin of woman) and also in appraising the limits on the roles and functions assigned her (woman as the origin).

Household Economy

There is a persistent strain of ambivalence in Greek thought about the nature and value of children. Although treasured as bearers of the family line, they are also a potential source of disappointment and sorrow. They may turn out well, of course, but, like the woman herself, they may eventually bring trouble to a man's household. A reference to just such an idea may be implied in an ambiguous passage in the *Theogony* that concludes Hesiod's remarks about marriage and its discontents:

16. On the parallels between the two quarrels, see Vernant 1979b, 54–57.

For a man who chooses to marry and gets an agreeable wife,
evil still continually contends with the good,
but he who meets up with an *atartëroio genethlēs*
(ἀταρτηροῖο γενέθλης)
lives always with unceasing grief in his heart,
and this is an evil that cannot be healed.

(Th. 607–12)

The crux of the problem lies in how we interpret the word *genethlē*. Does it mean “race” (i.e., of women) or “progeny” (children)? If *genethlē* refers to woman, then the passage contrasts two kinds of wives: a good one (in which case, the negative still vies with the positive), and a bad one, whose effect is unrelieved misery and woe. On the other hand, if we ask *why*, even in the case of an agreeable wife, evil is still said to contend with the good, then we may prefer to read *genethlē* as “progeny,” since even under the best of circumstances, children may well prove a mischievous bane to their parents. Each reading has its merits, and with no definitive way to resolve the dilemma (for the word appears nowhere else in Hesiod), scholarly opinion remains divided.¹⁷ But this uncertainty of reference may well be the essential point,¹⁸ as reflecting the double ambivalence about women and about the necessity of having children, the latter most fully expressed in the famous choral ode in Euripides' *Medea* (1090–1110):

... those who have never had children, who know nothing of
them,
surpass in happiness those who are parents.
The childless, who never discover
whether children turn out as a good thing

17. Many scholars prefer “wife,” including West (1966, *ad loc.*) and LfgrE (s.v.), along with Loraux (1981a, “Race,” 95n.103), but the arguments for excluding alternate readings are not supported by the diction.

18. Woman and child can often be conflated, as, for example, in the parable of the lion cub in Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 681–749. The problem of *genethlē* in Hesiod is heightened by yet another ambiguity in that the preceding passage never mentions the word *child* at all. What we hear instead is that “the man who does not marry . . . reaches baneful old age without anyone to look after him” (605). This caretaker or *gērokomos* is a word invented for the occasion (and found only here in archaic and classical literature). It is sufficiently obscure that West (1966, *ad loc.*) feels obliged to make clear that the text refers to “the son, not the wife,” a claim he bases (not without reason) on the well-known rule that the son is expected to provide *gērotrophia* for his parents in return for his own nurture. So too, in the sentence that follows, the son as heir to his father's possessions is not named but merely implied; his identity is inferred from the alternative, that in his absence, distant kinsmen (*chērōstai*) will later divide the man's estate (605–7). There are other, more suggestive reasons, as I will later propose, why the text refuses to name either father or child.

Or as something to cause pain, are spared
 many troubles in lacking this knowledge.
 And those who have in their homes
 the sweet growth of children, I see them always
 worn down by worry.

First how to bring them up well and leave them something to
 live on.

And then whether all their toil is for progeny
 who may turn out well or not remains unclear.

Finally (I paraphrase here), even under the best of circumstances, death may still carry them off.

Even more decisive for this argument, however, is the fact that the vexed passage in the *Theogony* concerning *genethlē* occupies virtually the same structural position as the mention in the *Works and Days* of the Elpis or Hope that remains in Pandora's jar. Each text marks the conclusion of the episode, and each is followed by a similar tag line: "So it is not possible to deceive or go beyond the mind of Zeus" (*ὥς οὐκ ἔστι Διὸς κλέψαι νόον οὐδὲ παρελθεῖν*, *Th.* 613) and "So there is no way to escape the mind of Zeus" (*οὐτως οὐ τί πη ἔστι Διὸς νόον ἐξαλέσθαι*, *WD* 105). In the context, Elpis functions as yet another ambiguous quality of mixed good and evil, a sign of the uncertainties of the future to which human life is now consigned. Hope is good if it inspires men to work and assure their livelihood, to fill their *pitōs* with grain, and bad if it lulls an idle man into illusory expectations for the future.¹⁹

For Vernant, the image of the jar represents the house or *oikos*, and woman is the ambiguous figure of Elpis, who resides within. In this reading, the jar replicates the domestic space of the household to which woman is consigned. She can therefore be correlated with Elpis because, like any wife, she may turn out well or badly. Other textual echoes support this idea of an enclosure in which the woman resides (cf. *Th.* 598 and *WD* 96–97), but the equation of woman and Elpis is more problematic. In the *Theogony*, even in the case of a companionable wife, evil still contends with the good, and in the present context of the *Works and Days*, woman is unequivocally named as an evil and a plague.

But taken as an image that embodies an idea, the Elpis that is left in the jar corresponds most closely to the child (or the hope of a child) who resides inside its mother's womb. In this reading, Pandora's *pitōs* can be

19. Much has been written about whether Elpis is a good or an evil, or both. For convenient summary of the many views, see especially Verdenius 1985, 66–71; Saïd 1985, 123–30; and for extensive bibliography, Noica 1984. To be brief, I concur for the most part with Vernant that Elpis is an ambiguous quality with both negative and positive aspects (like Eris, Zēlos, Aidōs, and Nemesis). See his judicious discussion (1979b, 121–32).

correlated with the *gastēr*, her defining feature in the *Theogony*, and like the *gastēr* of the sacrificial portion that contained the edible portions of the ox, the *pitōs* too is an independent repository that conceals something within.

References in other texts to the child as the Elpis, or hope, of the household provide a strong argument for this identification.²⁰ But a more precise indication is the fact that later medical and philosophical texts associate and even correlate the womb with a container or jar. Throughout the Hippocratic corpus and the works of the later, more sophisticated anatomists, the woman's uterus is likened to an upside-down jar, furnished with two ears or handles. The *stathmos* or *puthmēn* (Latin *fundus*) is the base or bottom of the jar, located now on top; the *stoma* (Latin *os*), or mouth, lies at the bottom; and the neck (the *auchēn*, *trachēlos*, or Latin *cervix*) opens in a downward direction. The jar/uterus is modeled on features of human anatomy. It too has a mouth and neck. This nomenclature is also pertinent to the widespread idea of a correlation between woman's sexual and oral appetites, emphasized in the Hesiodic text as located below in the rapacious belly (*gastēr*) that fills up on man's substance. Popular and medical notions insist on a symmetry between a woman's two orifices, the mouth and the belly, reflected in prescriptions for gynecological therapy. A jar, as in Hesiod, has "lips" (*cheilē*, *WD* 97), and so does a womb (e.g., Aristotle, *Historia animalium* 7.3.583a16). The analogy continues in the notion of a seal or stopper that is needed to prevent entry, with the aim of preserving virginity or, conversely, of retaining the seed deposited in it to allow a successful pregnancy to occur.²¹

What does it mean, then, that Pandora comes equipped with her own jar, and that she removes the lid to open it, releasing a swarm of ills that now wander silent and invisible all over the world, leaving only Hope

20. Significantly mentioned in funereal epigrams (e.g., *Anthologia Palatina* 7.389, 453) and grave inscriptions (Peck 1955, nos. 661, 720).

21. For the medical texts, see Hanson 1990, and further discussion in Hanson 1992. See also Sissa 1987, 76–93 (on mouth and uterus), and 181–85 (on closure: "The closed body of the maiden corresponds to the body of the mother who, surfeited with children, has experienced the *symmysis* of her womb" [185]). On the idea of a seal or stopper for the uterus, see Hanson 1990, 324–30. Hanson disagrees with Sissa on how this closure was perceived, distinguishing between the mouth of the uterus and that of the labia. Sissa (178) understands the *pitōs* in Hesiod as the belly of the woman ("a faithful and fertile wife") but does not discuss the status of Elpis.

For the equation of the child and Elpis, see also Hoffmann (1986, 72–76), who notes the correspondence between marriage (*WD* 800) and the opening of a jar (*WD* 819) in Hesiod's agricultural calendar. Her arguments, however, take a different and nontextual direction, focusing on the connection with agriculture and on the abstract notion of the child as a signifier of mortality.

Might one understand the *mega pōma* that Pandora removes from the jar as a play on words with her own characterization as a *mega pēma* (e.g., *Th.* 592)?

within? This sequence of acts is what now determines man's condition: that he will suffer "ills, hard toil, and heavy sicknesses which bring the fates of Death upon him" (WD 90–92) with only Hope to deceive or console him. Elpis, of course, is a general, even abstract concept. Yet we may understand its import better if we take the measure of Pandora's actions. If the implicit analogy between Pandora and the jar holds true, then it is difficult to escape the conclusion that to open the *pithos* is equivalent to breaching her virginity, while to close the jar upon the Elpis that remains within marks the beginning of pregnancy, not yet brought to term. Under these circumstances, it is also difficult to resist the idea, even though it is nowhere directly stated, that what escapes from the jar equally escapes from the vagina in the most negative encoding of female sexuality,²² and that the child (or Hope), uncertainly placed between evil and good, is the single best, if still unsatisfactory, result.

The idea of the uterus as a jar or container is based on more positive associations. In its literal meaning, the *pithos* (or *aggos*) is a storage container for grain, oil, and wine, carefully sealed up with its contents and broached at the appropriate time and with the appropriate precautions for the prudent use of what it holds (WD 368, 815, 819; also 475, 600, 613). In ordinary social practice, it would be the woman's task to take care of these provisions, protecting them from pilferage and untimely opening, even as she safeguards the contents of her own *pithos*. The proprieties of household management support the analogy between the storage jar and the woman's belly, both of them sources of *bios* (life and livelihood) entrusted to the wife for safekeeping to assure the maintenance of her husband's estate. But in Hesiod, these two functions sharply diverge. Ownership is divided between the man's *pithoi* in which he has stored his goods and Pandora's jar filled with the evils it first contained. The jars, like the house in which they are kept, belong to the man, who has stored his provender in them for his exclusive use (WD 365–69, cf. 597–603). He alone negotiates the boundary between inside and outside ("Better to have your stuff at home [*oikoi*], for whatever is out of doors [*thurēphin*] may be subject to harm," WD 365). The reason, Hesiod says, is that "it is good to take from what is present, but a *pēma* for the heart to desire what is absent," WD 366–67. The same principle applies to the broaching of

22. This is a hypothesis I cannot prove. One example comes close: the myth of the Lemnian women, who were shunned by their husbands for unpleasant odors. The story has been related convincingly to myths of renewal of fire on the volcanic island of Lemnos with its sulfurous odors (closely associated with Hephaistos, we might add), but the point of Pandora's jar is that the evils it releases are silent and invisible, not ill smelling. From a medical standpoint, the opening of the jar-womb also releases menstrual blood, but again the analogy cannot hold, since blood is, of course, a highly visible substance outside the body.

the jar itself: "Take your fill [*koresesthai*] when the jar is first opened and then again when it is nearly spent" (368).²³ By contrast, the woman, that *mega pēma* sent to dwell with men and take what is theirs, is "no companion of Koros [satiety] but rather of Penia [poverty]." Whether taking his goods or dispensing her woes, she remains on the side of prodigality, as a signifier of both excess and lack.²⁴ In this economy of plenitude and emptiness, storage and loss, the woman's *pithos* thus stands in antithesis to the other one in his care. It is kept separate, as she is from him, in the conduct of the *oikos*, as though her reproductive potential (Elpis) were also contrasted with his parallel functions of conserving and increasing the household's resources (e.g., WD 376–77).²⁵

The logic of this contrast may be clarified by what follows in the *Works and Days* directly after the mention of the farmer's *pithos*. This is the preference, explicitly stated, for a family consisting of a single child: "There should be an only son [*mounogenēs pais*] to feed his father's house, for so wealth will increase in the home" (WD 376, cf. 271). The prospect of a second son (*heteron paida*) elicits the ominous remark that in that case, better to die old—or as the text is often read, the only son in turn should have another only son (WD 378).²⁶ We find this attitude ex-

23. Also instructive is a little-known myth, preserved in several late texts (Parthenius, *Erotica Pathemata* 28; Nicolas Damascius, frag. 19; Scholiast ad Apollonius Rhodius 1.1063; Eustathius, *Iliad* 357, 43f.; and cf. Strabo, 13.621c). Piasos, a ruler of the Pelasgians, conceived a passionate desire for his daughter, Larissa, and secretly raped her without revealing his identity. Learning the truth, she plotted the following revenge: as Piasos was leaning over a huge *pithos* filled with wine, she seized him by the legs and plunged him headfirst into the cask where he drowned. See Rudhardt (1981, 739), who is mystified by the tale, but the correlations are not difficult to find. Her action both parodies his plunge into her *pithos* and fittingly repays him in kind, since the use of wine was typically restricted to men, who had access to the containers (*pithoi*; cf. WD 359–69, "Take your fill when the jar is first opened and then again when it is nearly spent"; and also 597–603). Sexual and alimentary appetites are neatly joined, with the added element that wine encourages sexual desire. "Drunk" with passion, she drowns him in a surfeit of his own lust.

24. Pucci (1977, 86) also emphasizes Pandora's dual association with excess and lack (or loss), but in a different way: "She is an excess because she introduces toil as the way of producing what the earth once provided spontaneously, and a loss because toil does not fully restore the goodness of the preceding life." She thus corresponds, as he argues, to the Derridean "supplement," which is both an addition and a replacement.

25. For a discussion of the full and empty jar, see Vernant (1979b, 115–21), who notes the correlation between the two kinds of *pithoi*, but without reference to the continuing exclusion of woman from participating in the household.

26. West 1966, *ad loc.*; and, among others, Pucci 1977, 111. I prefer the first interpretation, which gives a straight progression: one, two, or many sons, but best to have only one. In the case of a second son, you should die old (presumably after having acquired sufficient wealth to divide it), and if you have many, then you need Zeus's assistance, since he can "easily bestow prosperity." As West remarks, this is "a typical Hesiodic provision for exceptions to the general rules at the discretion of the gods."

pressed elsewhere,²⁷ but in the Hesiodic economy in which women and offspring are viewed only instrumentally and in relation to the dynamics of masculine acquisition and retention, the potential proliferation of children poses a significant threat.

Woman is therefore defined as an economic liability. If her reproductive capacity is only to be tapped once, thereafter she is a surplus who does not increase the household wealth but rather diminishes the resources of both house and husband with her gluttonous appetite for both food and sex. She thus resembles neither the fields that are worked outside nor the bountiful Earth of the Golden Age (which, in Hesiod's version, at any rate, is populated only by men). Marriage and agriculture may be understood as two related spheres in which men toil and deposit their seed, but they are also disjoined in the case of Pandora. If man once took freely from the unstinting produce of earth, woman now takes from the abundant stores accumulated by man who, since her creation, has had to become the sole author of his own sources of nurturance.

Finally, the emphasis on raising an only child has a more pointed significance if we consider its thematic relevance to Hesiod's personal status as represented in the *Works and Days*. He is certainly *not* an only son: the entire poem is framed as a protreptic exhortation to his good-for-nothing brother Perses. We cannot recover the full details of Hesiod's complaints, but two issues seem to be evident. First, Hesiod has been in some kind of litigation with his brother over the division of their father's estate. Perses has somehow acquired more than his share by stirring up quarrels and has bribed the judges to sanction this unfair division. He has encroached on property that is not his, that rightfully belongs to Hesiod. If brothers must share, the portions at least ought to be equal, thereby satisfying the demands of Dikē (justice). But having only one heir to the patrimonial estate would do more than forestall the possibility of a fraudulent division leading to destructive *eris* (strife)—it would obviate the need for any division at all.²⁸

At one level, as Vernant has observed, the dispute between Hesiod and his brother concerning the fair division of their inheritance parallels the

27. Whatever the particular economic conditions of Hesiod's day might have been, the continuation of this attitude in the tradition is already mentioned by the various scholia (*vetera*, *ad loc.*) following Plutarch's commentary. See, e.g., Xenocrates, frag. 97; Aristotle, *Politics* 1274b19ff.; and Plato, *Laws* 740b–d, 923c–d, in the context of optimal family size and population control in the Greek polis. For a treatment of this complex topic, see, for example, Golden and Golden 1975, 345–58. Space does not permit a fuller discussion that would have to include, among other issues, exposure of the newborn.

28. The Scholiast, *ad* 376–78, already notes the possible relevance for Hesiod of the preference for a *mounogenēs*.

inequitable sharing of the sacrificial meal in the *Theogony* between Zeus and Prometheus.²⁹ But the characterization of Perses in the *Works and Days* also gives rise to a second analogy, for this Perses is an idler who must be persuaded to accept the divine necessity of labor so that he does not end up as a burden on others or even as a beggar. "If he had filled himself up with a year's supply of grain in reserve," says Hesiod, "then he could turn to the quarrels and strife in the agora to lay his hands on another's goods" (WD 33). It is after this first address to his brother that Hesiod tells the story of Prometheus and Pandora as the founding myth of why men are obliged to work and to accumulate the means of life through agricultural toil. This account is followed by the myth of the Five Ages with its emphasis on the relation between material prosperity and the pursuit of justice in the evolution from the Golden Age to the conditions of the present day.

In the *Theogony*, as we have seen, Pandora is compared to a useless drone, "no companion to Poverty but only to Plenty," who sits within and consumes another's goods. In the *Works and Days*, we learn that the gods gave her a shameless mind and a thievish nature. Perses, we may note, combines both her qualities in his unregenerate state. Like Pandora, he is deceitful and thievish (WD 322). Like her, he intends to acquire for himself what belongs to another. Like woman, he is an idler who does not work and belongs with Hunger (Limos) rather than Satiety (Koros), and he too is "like the stingless drones who waste the labor of the bees, eating without working" (WD 303–4). Pandora is the opposite of the "bee wife," who, as the archaic poet Semonides tells us, is the single and only paradigm of the virtuous wife. Perses, in turn, is a bee with no sting in him, a drone, like the woman, within the hive that is the house, assimilated now to her earlier identification as a drone in the *Theogony*.

Two inversions therefore come into play. First is the opposition between animal and human worlds, in which the bee community inverts the usual division of roles to assign the active part to the female and the passive to the male.³⁰ Although the woman-drone may seem to be occupying a position reserved for males, the analogy is operative only with regard to the management of the household, which, like a hive, consists of bees and drones. The industrious woman may well be compared to a bee, if she

29. See above, note 16.

30. On the problem of bees, drones, and gender inversion, see Loraux 1981a, "Race," 82; and Vernant 1979b, 107–14. Roscalla (1988) dissents from this interpretation to argue on the basis of ancient evidence that drones are not viewed as males, *per se*, but rather as an alien *genos*, the members of which, like the woman, enter into another's dwelling. Yet, given that *drone* is a masculine noun and *bee* a feminine one, there is no reason to limit the terms of the analogy, as Roscalla does.

fulfills her domestic functions; if not, she can be called, as here, a lazy drone who fills her belly with the fruit of another's work. For the man, however, whose place is out of doors and in the fields, the image of the drone in the hive can apply only if he loses his masculine dignity by refusing to work (*aergos*) and, like a woman, by living off the toil of others. Thus despite the proper alignment of male and drone, the indictment of Perses only attains its full resonance as an allusion to the Pandora of the *Theogony*—Pandora, whose story is told to Perses yet again, now in the context of the god-given necessity that decrees that men must earn their living by tilling the fields. In short, if Perses is a drone, it is because this woman, in negation of her positive image as the bee wife, provides a pertinent analogue to Perses himself.

The result is that Pandora occupies a double position in Hesiod's system of the household. She is, first of all, the potential overproducer of progeny, who in bearing more than one child introduces the risk of a fraternal rivalry that is exemplified in the *eris* between Hesiod and Perses. Yet she also serves as the model for Perses himself: a drone, a supplemental and unwelcome addition who takes what does not belong to her rather than working or giving in return.

Perses, however, may be persuaded to assume his proper masculine role and to enter into the economy of labor by which he may rightfully prosper as well as share in the generalized social rules for exchange and reciprocity ("Give to the one who gives, but do not give to the one who does not give . . . Give [*dōs*] is a 'good girl,' but Seize [*harpax*] is a bad one, the giver of death," WD 354–56).³¹ Pandora, by contrast, remains an ambiguous and untrustworthy entity, excluded from participation in the household economy. She is defined as an outsider, unwillingly brought by the man inside his house and carrying within her belly the equally ambiguous Elpis, who even if turning out well for man's future, is nevertheless restricted to the grammatical category of the singular (*mounē*), not the plural.

Several important consequences attend this Greek view of woman's origin and functions. We note first by contrast that the myth of Adam and Eve justifies both the social, even organic, dependency of wife upon husband and her subordination to his authority. She is born from Adam's rib as a creation secondary to his, and God later decrees a separate punishment for her in his injunction that along with suffering travail in childbirth, she will be ruled by her husband (Genesis 3:16). Yet in Hesiod, oddly enough, although woman's inferior status is strongly implied, the

31. Some critics have proposed that the second half of the *Works and Days* implicitly "corrects" Perses' vexing behavior in the first, whether in respect to Dikē or to good Eris. For the first, see Nagy 1982, 59; for the second, Hamilton 1989, 53–66.

husband's control over his wife is not unequivocally established as a "natural" social rule. In fact, woman seems to retain an intrinsic power over man. She can, by her appetites, enfeeble and impoverish him, seduce him and rob him. ("Do not let a flaunting woman coax and cozen and deceive you: she is after your barn," WD 374). Man has no effective means of retaliation, no sure way of exercising his authority. He can perhaps only minimize her inherent danger by taking a young wife, as Hesiod later advises, hoping thus to train her in his ways (WD 700). But in essence, his only options are to avoid woman by shunning marriage altogether, thereby losing his patriline and irrevocably fragmenting his substance, or to suffer the miseries she inflicts upon him. On the other hand, by undermining the woman's maternal functions of both nature and nurture, the myth separates her from the true underlying sources of her power. The story thereby ratifies woman's secondary and derivative status in man's household, emphasized by the mode of Pandora's own creation, since as an artisanal product accompanied by another artisanal product (the jar), she is also separated at the outset from the natural processes of generation by which the entire universe came into being.

Yet in his turn man has claimed neither his paternal role directly nor a potent virility. As Daniel Boyarin comments, "If the opening of the jar represents the breaching of Pandora's virginity, then she is made wholly responsible, as it were, for this act as well. The text refuses to record the first sexual act between a man and a woman, because by doing so it would have to reveal that which it seems determined to suppress, the simple fact that men are also agents in the performance of sex and thus responsible, at least equally with women, for whatever baneful effects it is held to have."³² Adam and Eve both eat of the fruit of the tree; both become aware of their identity as genitalized beings; both cover their nakedness, and they leave together when expelled from the garden of Eden. Hesiod's reticence on the topic of human sexuality and reproduction is all the more striking and significant, considering the broader aim of the *Theogony*, which is to recount the creation of the universe through the birth of the gods.

The creation of Pandora marks the definitive rupture between gods and mortals, forever separating them into different categories. Until now, we have focused on the import of this separation that determines the nature of relations between the sexes in the human realm, affecting men's lives for all time to come. But what of the other side? The creation of Pandora is only a single element in the larger creative project of the *Theogony* that constructs an extended evolutionary design in which gods play the central roles. Here the *Theogony* differs from Genesis in two striking

32. Boyarin 1993, 85, commenting on an earlier draft of this essay.

respects: first, as noted earlier, woman is created on her own without any parallel and preceding account of how the category of man came into existence; second, if Pandora is meant to stand for all humankind, as some critics have suggested, the text does not situate her creation as the final and culminating display of divine generative power. It occurs, rather, at a very different juncture, during the unfolding of a cosmogonic drama in which, unlike in Genesis, there is a multitude of gods—gods who themselves come into being by various means and at different moments of time. In these struggles at the divine level for differentiation, self-definition, and superior power, the place reserved in the text for Pandora's creation deserves detailed consideration in further assessing her roles and functions.

Mortals and Immortals

The essential aim of the *Theogony* is to establish Zeus's claims to supreme power over the universe and to chart the steps that lead to the eventual consolidation of his reign. These claims depend, in the first instance, on his gaining hegemony over the other gods and, in the second, on the decisive separation of gods from mortals. The two themes combine in the circumstances of Pandora's manufacture, since, with Prometheus as advocate of human interests, the quarrel between two generations of gods (Olympian and Titan) is also staged as a contest between gods and mortals.

Given the vast scope of this topic, I will focus on Zeus's rise to power in the frame of a succession myth that requires both the replacement of a father by a son (Ouranos by Kronos and Kronos by Zeus) and the eventual triumph of male over female, particularly with respect to rights over reproduction and matters of engendering and parentage—even, we might say, over the creative principle itself. The struggle begins with the castration of Ouranos (Sky) by his youngest son, Kronos, at the instigation of Gaia (Earth), the first maternal principle. In the face of the primordial father's refusal to uncouple from Gaia, castration is the drastic means she devises to allow their children to emerge from the mother's depths and see the light of day. But in his defeat, Ouranos initiates the first challenge to female fecundity, since his castration results in the birth of Aphrodite from his semen and in the engendering of the female Erinyes from the drops of his blood that fell to the earth from his severed phallus (*Th.* 184–200). In the second stage, Kronos may be said to imitate pregnancy itself by swallowing his children once they are born and, when forced to disgorge his progeny, “giving birth” to them through his mouth (*Th.* 453–500). In the last stage, Zeus absorbs the female into himself, swallowing the pregnant

Metis, principle of resourceful intelligence, and producing a female offspring—his daughter, Athena—from his head (*Th.* 886–95). Only in this way can he ensure the permanence of his rule, putting an end to the generational evolution of the male gods, and appropriating both the physical and mental creative capacities of the female in the interests of paternal—or, more accurately, patriarchal—power.³³

Before the narrative reaches this momentous event (*Th.* 886–900, 924–96), Zeus has already accomplished his first creative act in producing the first mortal female, Pandora. In so doing, he ratifies the definitive split between gods and men. Two questions therefore arise: Why is the story of Pandora placed where it is, and which dilemmas is the mode of her creation designed to resolve? Logically, Zeus ought to have instituted his sovereignty over the universe before turning his attention to the condition of mortals. But the text takes a curious turn and situates the quarrel with Prometheus and the subsequent division between gods and men just *after* the narrative of Zeus's own birth but *before* the narrative of the mighty battle against the Titans. The last challenge follows in Zeus's solo combat with Typhoeus, Gaia's last child, a monstrous offspring of her mating with the primal depths of Tartaros. Only after this victory are we are told that the “blessed gods finished their toil [*ponon*]” and in the wake of their struggle for honors (*timai*) with the Titans, “urged Zeus to rule and be king over them, by the counsels of Gaia. And he divided their *timai* in turn among them” (*Th.* 881–85). The story of the birth of Zeus and his rescue from his devouring father, Kronos, is itself preceded by another apparent interlude, introducing a remarkable female goddess, Hekate. Her appearance constitutes another kind of *hysteron proteron*, in that she is especially honored by Zeus, even though Zeus has yet to be born, and she presides over human activities in a world of men that is not yet constituted.³⁴

Why should this be so? Why should the “hymn” to Hekate *precede* the birth of Zeus, the centerpiece of the entire *Theogony*, and why should the story of Pandora *follow* directly after?³⁵ What logic insists on framing the birth of Zeus by the accounts of two female personages, who, taken together, form a complementary pair sharply divided into positive and

33. See this volume, chapter 3, 108–9, for a preliminary outline of this progression; for a full discussion, see Arthur [Katz] 1982. Bergren (1983) follows the same scheme. For the role and significance of Metis, see Detienne and Vernant 1978, chaps. 3 and 4.

34. Zeus's victory is, of course, forecast in the proem and alluded to at strategic intervals, including in the narrative of his birth, where it is mentioned just after Kronos swallows the stone (*Th.* 488–91).

35. Arthur [Katz] (1982) emphasizes this triadic structure. See also Boedeker 1983 and Clay 1984.

negative poles? Situated as two points on a continuum of feminine characters that leads from Gaia to Athena, including especially Aphrodite and Styx, the figures of Hekate and Pandora are distinguished from all the others, not least because each is defined in a significant relationship to both mortals and gods, particularly Zeus.³⁶

On the principle that the sequence of the narrative is itself a determining factor in the production of meaning, I propose in advance that Zeus's own ontological status is indeed predicated on this intersection between immortal and mortal realms, as he evolves from the first instantiation of a divine child to the figure of sovereign ruler under the title of "father of gods and men." Thus, while Hekate and Pandora have been rightly interpreted as important factors in together defining the ambiguities of the "human condition," they are also essential in constructing the definition of Zeus himself. Let us therefore take a closer look, starting with the passage about the goddess Hekate (long a puzzle to critics for its unusual length and content),³⁷ before turning to review the question of Pandora herself.

The Goddess Hekate

Hekate crosses the generational line that divides Titan from Olympian divinity. Zeus honors her above all the gods, and she is honored in turn by men and gods alike. She retains all the powers allotted as her share "at the first time, from the beginning," and she retains these privileges on earth, in the heavens, and in the sea, wielding her influence over all domains. The prestige of these prerogatives is underlined by her receiving them twice, once at the outset and then again from Zeus (411–12, 421–27). Moreover, these are formidable powers, far less restricted than those of other divinities to whom Zeus apportions their respective *timai* after the consolidation of his rule.³⁸ In her allotted role as intercessor between men and gods, Hekate is highly responsive to petition, bestowing her favor

36. Arthur [Katz] (1982, 69) proposes that "Hekate is . . . a sign . . . of the positive pole of female potency, a precursor to Athena and the other kindly daughters of Zeus, and the antitype to Gaia who struggles for supremacy with the male, to Aphrodite who subdues him through *philotēs* and *apatē*, and to Pandora 'the incurable curse' (612; cf. 588)." See also her interpretation of Styx (80–81).

37. On the role of Hekate in the *Theogony*, see the extensive study of Kraus 1960. More recently, see Marquardt 1981; and for more contextual readings, see Arthur [Katz] 1982; Boedeker 1983; Clay 1984; and Griffith 1983, 51–55.

38. It is true, as Clay (1984) observes, that Hekate acts in concert with other gods (such as Poseidon and Hermes), but the text stresses the universality, not the limitation, of her powers in all domains.

as she wills.³⁹ She is called upon by all men in all their diversified pursuits: war, athletics, horsemanship, navigation, law courts, and assemblies, as well as the work of tending herds and flocks. Her most important epithet is fittingly reserved for last; it is hers through the offices of Zeus, but it was so, it seems, from the beginning (450–52). This is her function as *kourotrophos*, "nurse of the young," a role that assures the continuation and well-being of life from its inception. Hekate is dedicated to fosterage but creates no new genealogical line of her own, for she remains forever a virgin.

What is more, she is called a *mounogenēs*, "a single-born child." She has no siblings, and oddly enough her father bears the name of Perses, which in the *Works and Days* is also the name of Hesiod's rival brother, whose lazy and thievish conduct occasions the admonitory tale of Pandora's creation.⁴⁰ Unlike that brother, she is a daughter, and unlike him, of course, she has no one with whom she must share. Quite the contrary. She receives more than her share; in fact, she gets it all—not once but twice.⁴¹ Her social position in Zeus's family circle is unclear. As a *mounogenēs* from her mother, Hekate seems to remain inside the maternal sphere. As a daughter without brothers, she is also like an *epiklēros* (heiress) of her father's line and hence comes under the special paternal protection of Zeus.⁴²

39. Note that Hekate's assistance is reserved for men, in marked contrast to her later associations, which are restricted to women and feminine spheres of activity. Clay (1984, 34), following Bollack (1971), insists on the ambivalence of the goddess's mode of intervention: Her "essential character . . . resides in the easy exercise of arbitrary power over success or failure in every human enterprise." Clay thus agrees with earlier scholars who glossed Hekate's name as "the willing goddess" (*hekōn, hekēti*), "the one by whose will prayer is accomplished and fulfilled" (34n.32). Judet de la Combe (1995) also subscribes to this view and goes even further in equating chance with disorder. The question of Hekate's volition is important, I agree, in defining her power. She can, as the text says, give and take away, as she wishes (*Th.* 442–46), but volition is not the same as caprice. The general tone of the passage is one of goodwill and kindness, as befits her genealogy from Phoebe, who bore both Hekate's mother, Asteria *euōnumos* (happily named), and the gentle Leto (406–8). On Leto and Hekate, see note 43 below.

40. Walcot (1958, 13–14) and Nagy (1982, 65) note this connection.

41. Marquardt (1981, 245), who views Hekate as belonging to another (Carian) religious tradition, proposes that "the absence of siblings . . . might also suggest an original genealogy outside the Olympian family." Nagy (1982, 65) offers the explanation that if Hekate were not a *mounogenēs*, she might split into two, like Eris (or Discord) in *Works and Days* (cf. 11–26). If she were divisible into a "primary positive and secondary negative pair," she would lose her beneficent status. He further argues that Hekate's all-encompassing powers make her an "ideal paradigm for the Panhellenic nature of Hesiodic poetry. . . . Accordingly, the invocation of Hekate at a sacrifice is tantamount to a blanket invocation of all the other gods as well."

42. See Arthur [Katz] 1982, 69. Arthur further equates Hekate's "social isolation" with "the universality of her powers," arguing that "Zeus' overvaluation of this goddess" is "a