

*Gastér, Nédys, and Thaumá: Feminine Sources of Deception and Generation in Hesiod's
Theogony*

by

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I dedicate this thesis to my grandmothers, Katherine Kaner Myers, Lily Olivo Boulding, and Mary Ellen McCaffrey Johansen, and especially to my mother Sally Myers Boulding, my unending source of support and inspiration.

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Abstract

Through his characterization of Gaia, Metis, Athena, and Pandora, Hesiod attributes the potential for generation and deception to feminine sources and describes how the masculine characters, such as Ouranos, Kronos, Zeus and Hesiod himself, must overcome and sublimate these feminine sources to establish political and poetic authority in the *Theogony*. Following the motifs of the stomach (*gastêr*), womb (*nêdys*) and wonder (*thauma*), I show how a fundamental tension in the cultural context of the Greek *oikos* influences Hesiod's seminal text of Greek mythological thought. Hesiod uses these myths to raise his status from the station of a shepherd claiming to achieve a divine inspiration, the result of which is the ability to transgress geographical, temporal, and metaphysical boundaries and thus to achieve poetic immortality.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 General Introduction Hesiod's *Theogony*

Hesiod begins and ends his didactic poem about the beginning of the *kosmos* with an invocation to the Muses. Here and in the characterization of Gaia, Metis, Athena, and Pandora we see how Hesiod consistently attributes the potential for generation and deception to feminine sources and describes how the masculine characters, such as Ouranos, Kronos, Zeus and Hesiod himself, rely upon feminine sources for their political and poetic authority. Before briefly surveying the themes that guide my analysis of the three components of the *Theogony*—the proem, the succession myth, and the myth of Pandora—I will first outline a fundamental tension in the theoretical structure of the *oikos* as Hesiod presents it in the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*.

1.2 The Tension Inherent in the Structure of Hesiod's *oikos*

Our primary textual evidence for the theoretical understanding of the *oikos* derives from 4th and 5th century Athenian texts rather than Hesiod's world of 7th or 8th century Boetia. Although the structure of the Athenian homes and families would have been vastly different in the agrarian societies of Hesiod's archaic period, a fundamental ambiguous view of women is present in both the generalized theoretical understanding of the Athenian *oikos* and the idealized *oikos* that Hesiod presents in the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*.¹ The generalized and theoretical understanding of the Greek *oikos* was

¹ The dating of the poetry attributed to Hesiod is based on Herodotus' claim that Hesiod lived four hundred years before his time. It is beyond the scope of my thesis to get into the arguments about the dating of Hesiod, but it suffices to say that he lived hundreds of years before Aristotle, Xenophon, Aristophanes, and the other sources that we have for

a means of defining borders in a spatial as well as conceptual manner: it marked the division between outer and inner, in other words, the division between the private and the public, while defining the members of the family as distinguished from strangers.

Aristotle defines the *oikos* as parents and children² and Xenophon, in the most famous ancient text on the workings of the *oikos*, the *Oikonomikos*, defines it as “a unit of production, a unit of consumption, and ... a unit of reproduction.”³ Gender roles are inherent in this definition of the *oikos* in a patriarchal and patrilineal society, for “one unit of reproduction” would be composed of a free-born husband, wife, and their children. In contrast to the husband, who continues his family line and remains within his original *oikos*, the wife is necessarily brought into the *oikos* from outside, through the process of marriage exchange.

Due to marriage exchange, there is always a tension and contradiction inherent in the definition of the family, because it is always composed of an original member and a stranger who comes from another family. Hesiod’s *Works and Days* presents the ideal ‘*oikos*’ as the private space of the family in contrast to the outside world where exchange occurs, but the initial act of marriage exchange subverts these divisions. There is thus a fundamental tension inherent in the structure of Hesiod’s *oikos*, which derives from the paradoxical status of women in relation to the *oikos*: a wife was seen both as both a constitutive member of the family and as a potential threat to the security of the family.

the conceptual reality of the *oikos*. In the archaic period, from what we can tell, the patterns were of nucleated settlements with outlying fields (rather than a North American pioneer style rural house with fields or Roman elite estates).

² Aristotle *Pol.* 1252a25ff; cf. Cox 1998: 132.

³ Cox 1998: 131.

In the articulations of the idealized *oikos* in Hesiod and the later Athenian sources, the *oikos* was structured in such a way as to keep the private in the private sphere to the greatest extent possible, and, concomitantly, to safeguard the patrilineal bloodline from external disruption, thereby protecting the economic security of the household goods as well as the members of the family. Nevertheless, the wife threatened this security for two related reasons: first, the man had to engage in an act of exchange in order to bring a wife into the household in the first place, and, second, a woman was not only an object of exchange but also an agent of exchange, capable of consuming too much, presenting false heirs as true heirs, or exchanging herself to a rival household.

There is also a secondary division between the outside and inside within the Athenian *oikos*, which encompasses the fields and estate as well as the buildings. Although the fields would be outside in relation to the buildings of the *oikia*, they would still be considered private spaces. In both cases, women are traditionally kept contained in the inner private space and these gendered distinctions between space map onto the primary gender occupations and roles, as well as the division of property and wealth.⁴

⁴ I recognize that feminist scholars and specifically feminist classical scholars have worked to expose the limits of binary thinking, however, it is a commonplace that “most ancient Greek philosophical and ideological discourse operates according to just these kinds of pairings” Lyons 2012: 49-50. Lyons 2012: 50. David Cohen 1990; 1991 shows how these roles are ideologically constructed, for the wealth of the house can be categorized as stored things (*keimēlia*) and those on hoof (*probate*). These map onto the inside vs. outside schema, but not the feminine as inside, masculine as outside. As noted above, women were responsible for the textiles and baskets that might be a part of the *keimēlia*, but mostly these precious objects would be in the masculine domain as objects made of precious metals, the work of a specialist, which are obtained from outside the house, whether through war, gift-giving, or occasionally trade. The *probate*, herd animals, would live mainly outside the *oikia* and were thus tended by men. However, they provided the raw material for woman’s textile productions. See Lyons, 77-90. On the textile industry and trade in ancient Greek see Glotz 1920; 1967: 131-32.

Women were assigned tasks that generally keep them indoors, or at least inside the estate, and they were restricted from engaging in economic exchanges between households, with the noted exception of the marriage exchange, where women were the object of the transaction.

The cause of the restriction of women to the inner sphere derives from the cultural manifestation of the patriarchal society, since the desire to restrict women from movement outside of the *oikos* was a desire to ensure that the wife would beget only legitimate children who would grow into legitimate heirs. Borders can never be fully enforced, however, and the fact of marriage exchange, as fundamental to the construction of the *oikos*, destroys the possibility for tidy distinctions, since a wife is always brought into the household from without.

The ideal of the containment of the female after and before the marriage exchange is complete would never have been fully realized. The division between private and public is not an exclusive provision, for “when women say they never leave the house there is always an asterisk. In practice what they mean is that they never leave the house except in the performance of socially sanctioned activities.”⁵ As well, the restrictions to remain within would only apply to free women, members of both the *oikia* and the *oikos*, rather than slave women, members of the *oikia* only, for, although both slave women and free women would bear children, free women were the only legitimate mothers, which is to say that only the free married wife could produce an heir for her husband. Free women were the only legitimate means of freeborn reproduction whereby the patrilineal system

Aristophanes often portrays women as very fond of imported fabrics and articles of clothing. See Lyons 2012: 125, note 119.

⁵ Lyons 2012: 50, and 124-125 note 117, where she notes that this rule applies only to elite women, rather than slave women.

could perpetuate itself, and thus free women were relegated to the private realm of the inner *oikos* to protect against the possibility of producing an illegitimate heir.⁶ Ultimately, however, before the advent of paternity tests, it was within the woman's power to present false heirs as legitimate children; this fact grounds the gendering of the concept of deception as a feminine trait.

It is a commonplace in the Greek literary tradition as it has come down to us that women are objects of exchange, as gifts traded amongst men, prizes won in war or games, and daughters given in marriage.⁷ Lévi-Strauss is famous for his analysis of the marriage as the original exchange and woman as the original object of exchange,⁸ since the *telos* of an ancient Greek woman was to become a wife, to transfer from her original

⁶ In the rest of my argument I refer to free women only due to the lack of literary evidence concerning slave women. Most of the female characters in Greek literature of any interest are free women, with the exception of free women who have been enslaved, such as Hecuba and Andromache.

⁷ Helen is perhaps the most famous example of a captive woman in Homer's *Iliad* and the following tradition. Other examples of the exchange of women in the *Iliad* include when Agamemnon attempts to appease Achilles with the gift of seven captive women (*Il.* 9.128, 130) and offers the choice of one of his own daughters in marriage (*Il.* 9.144-47). Also Briseis (*Il.* 1.275-76) and Chryseis (*Il.* 1.118-20) are awarded to Achilles and Agamemnon as prizes (*geras*) and Achilles offers woman among other prizes during the funeral games (*Il.* 23.259-61). It is important to note that with the exception of Sappho and a handful of other fragments, in the Greek literary corpus as we have it, only half of the possible dialogue between archaic Greek men and women exists. We cannot know what women's points of view on marriage and other topics were or whether they existed in written form, with the notable exception of Sappho. This means that the male voices we do have could be in dialogue with inaudible female voices.

⁸ Lévi-Strauss struggles with this double identity in his analysis of the overlap of the exchange of words and the exchange of women, saying, "The emergence of symbolic thought must have required that women like words, should be things that were exchanged ... But woman could never become just a sign and nothing more, since even in a man's world she is still a person and since in so far as she is defined as a sign she must be recognized as a generator of signs." Lévi-Strauss 1949; 1969: 496.

oikos to another.⁹ This is expressed through the fact that the word for wife is also the word for woman: *gunê*,¹⁰ and “an indications of the fundamental nature of this association can be seen from the archaic tradition in which the creation of woman and the invention of marriage are one and the same (evil) thing.”¹¹ As Pausanias puts it, before Pandora there was no *gunaikōn genos*, which is to say both that there were no women, and thus, no wives.¹²

The necessary engagement in exchange as a fundamental act of establishing the *oikos* not only goes against the conceptual framework of the *oikos* but also opposes the ideal of *autarkê*, which Hesiod articulates as the guiding tenet to living well, saying,

οὐδὲ τό γ' ἐν οἴκῳ κατακείμενον ἀνέρα κήδει.
οἴκοι βέλτερον εἶναι, ἐπεὶ βλαβερὸν τὸ θύρηφιν.
ἐσθλὸν μὲν παρεόντος ἐλέσθαι, πῆμα δὲ θυμῷ
χρηίζειν ἀπεόντος.

The possessions a man has in his home do not trouble him.
It is better to have them at home, for whatever is out of the gate may mean loss.
It is good to make use of what you have at hand, but a grief for the heart
to desire what is not at hand.¹³

Hesiod thus bases his argument in the *Works and Days* about the best and most just way to live out this ideal on an argument that it is better not to want what you do not already

⁹ This idea can be seen in the emphasis in archaic sculpture of the *kore*, the generic perfect maiden embodying the role of future fertile wife.

¹⁰ As it is in many other languages, see Lyons 2012: 21.

¹¹ Lyons 2012: 21.

¹² Pausanias, 1.24.7.

¹³ Hes. *Op.* 364-369. Hesiod is also the proleptic founder of the political Libertarian view. The positive view of *autarkeia* persists in the classical period but both Plato and Aristotle redefine this ideal in the *Republic* and *Politics* respectively. They both reveal the contradictions it entails and modify the ideal to refer to the ability to provide and procure everything necessary to care for oneself and one's own, whether or not some of it is produced by others. In Plato's dialogue *Charmides* 161d10-162a2 Socrates makes fun of the man who desires to disregard specialized skills and construct everything himself. For a contemporary example of such a man, see my father.

have, or at least have the means to grow or build yourself. But there is no way to achieve this ideal in the foundation of an *oikos*; you cannot grow a wife out of the ground. As well, the process of marriage exchange “often includes the exchange of precious objects that can also only be made or acquired from outside.”¹⁴ Not only do men need to participate in a cycle of exchange to acquire a wife, but they also need to participate in exchange to acquire the proper currency to participate in marriage exchange, which is why the myth of Pandora is so central to Hesiod’s didactic message about the fundamental tensions in the establishment of the *oikos* and the danger inherent in exchange.

The second source of anxiety is that women are not merely inanimate objects of exchange, but also capable of becoming the agents of exchange, which both violates the private nature of the institution of the *oikos* and stands at odds with the desire to retain women in the private realm in order to protect the legitimacy of the bloodline.¹⁵ In Lyon’s words,

as much as men may define women as exchange objects, there is always the possibility that women will find a way to express their own agency—in the Greek mythic context, usually by giving themselves away again. In doing so, they often are responsible for the circulation of wealth as well as their own persons.¹⁶

On account of the ever-present potential threat that woman pose to the economic security of the *oikos*, the anxiety connected with exchange in archaic and classical Greek culture

¹⁴ Lyons 2012: 47.

¹⁵ Lyons 2012: 19.

¹⁶ Lyons 2012: 19. Irigary 1985 makes the suggestion that women could remove themselves altogether from this exchange, but this is a difficult option. It would take a nun or nymph who would desire the consequent loss of identity, such as Daphne, or the eternal punishment, such as the Danaids. See Lyons 2012: 117 note 56.

is focused on women to an extraordinary degree.¹⁷ As Redfield articulates it, this fear derives from the fact that “in a society founded on the idea of the circulation of women, the possibility that a woman’s circulation will not end in marriage remains an ever-present threat.”¹⁸ The threat of unrestricted circulation is compounded by the fact that women are exchangeable objects of an inconvertible rank; they are costly, irreplaceable and difficult to safeguard. Although women are precious *objects* brought into the household in order to establish it as a household, they are also capable of destroying both the wealth of the household along with the constitution of the household itself.

A wife can destroy the household wealth in three ways. First, she can consume too much of the resources of the house, or produce children who consume too much. Second, she can produce illegitimate heirs who disrupt the bloodline and effectively steal the household as false decedents both during the husband’s life and after his death. And finally, she can give herself away to another man, along with intimate information about the *oikos*. Lyons and Gernet show that these three factors result in a frequent theme in the mythology of archaic and classical Greek of deadly exchanges that occur at the moment of disruption or crisis in a marital relationship.¹⁹

Helen, as the paradigmatic wife who gives herself away and causes a decade of warfare and the fall of a civilization, is the most famous and most destructive example of

¹⁷ Transcultural analysis reveals that this anxiety is present in nearly all societies. See, Mauss [1925] 1990, Sahlins 1972, Parry 1989, and most recently, Lyons 2012: 20. For the theme of “traffic in women” see Rubin 1975 and later elaborated by Sedwick 1985.

¹⁸ See Redfield 1982. Lyons 2012: 47 adds that “the economic stability is often connected with the fidelity of the wife” and points to Odysseus’ question to his mother in Hom. *Od.* 11.178-79.

¹⁹ Lyons 2012: 20, Gernet [1948] 1981.

the dangerous wife in Greek literature.²⁰ Not only is she known as a figure pointing to the potential wiliness of women, but Helen also becomes the locus of a debate about the nature of justice and rhetoric.²¹ Clytemnestra, in Homer's *Odyssey* as well as Aeschylus' trilogy of tragedies, the *Orestia*, is another mythological wife who takes herself and the economic power of the household out of her husband's hands. Both these characters stand in opposition to Penelope, who represents the opposite but equally powerful role of the presumably faithful wife using her feminine wiliness to safeguard the household stores to the greatest extent possible and retain the identity of the *oikos* for the return of her husband.²²

These characters point to the potential economic power that women may have held and the potential male anxiety surrounding this power. As Lyons articulates it "the theme of perverted protocols of exchange suggests concern about the additional economic (and affective) power to which the sexually mature woman may lay claim once she is established as wife and mother in her husband's household." Despite the frequent occurrence of deadly gifts to and from women, however, Lyons argues that "a wealth of literary and historical documentation from the archaic and classical periods represents women as having little to no economic power."²³ Although the assumption of women's economic exclusion has been challenged in recent years by social historians of classical Athens "who argue that a degree of power was available to some aristocratic women

²⁰ Lyons, 2012: 38 argues that "in the figure of Helen can be seen the greatest fears about the behaviour of women in marriage. They may be unfaithful, cause alienation of the household wealth, and continue to circulate among marriage partners long after they are assumed to be safely settled in one particular household." See also, Redfield 1982: 192.

²¹ See Steisichorus' *Palinode*, Gorgias' *Defense of Helen*, and Euripides' *Helen*.

²² Penelope's loyalty is never a certainty for there is always a hint of dangerous waywardness in her, as there is in Odysseus in his own right.

²³ Lyons 2012: 20.

through the institution of the dowry,”²⁴ nevertheless this economic power “found its expression entirely within the domestic sphere, without in any way threatening the official gender ideology of classical Athens, which does not greatly differ from that expressed in the earliest Greek texts.”²⁵ Thus, the economic power women held was relatively insignificant, which does not alleviate the conceptual tensions in the construction of the patriarchal *oikos*.

In Greek mythic thinking, a frequent quality of heroes is mobility—for example we can consider Odysseus, Theseus, and Heracles—whereas the quality associated with the female is stability, since she must tend to the home fires—we can consider Penelope, Phaedra, and even Clytemnestra—but all the same it is the daughter’s *telos* to leave her original home and be exchanged in order to become another man’s wife—for example Helen, Medea, and Ariadne. However, once exchanged, the ideal Greek woman remains inside, remains faithful, and remains vigilant, keeping a close watch over the household possessions. The difficulty lies in transitioning a woman from a stranger into a wife and the impossibility of commanding faithfulness in this situation.

1.3 Feminine Generation and Deception in Hesiod’s *Theogony*

²⁴ Lyons 2012: 20. See Hunter 1989a, 1989b, and 1994; Foxhall 1989 and 1996; Cox 1998. Friedl 1967: 105-7 offers a parallel from twentieth-century Greek villages, where women’s power derives from the dowry they bring to the marriage. Ormand 1999: 22 discusses the economic power women govern in marriage over capital they do not own. Lyons adds that “the case for the economic power of women has been made by social historians relying on nonliterary sources, particularly orations delivered in court cases, and their conclusions are highly contested.” Lyons 2012: 20-21 notes that these sources “are not unmediated transcriptions of social realities, but rather *representations* of social realities every bit as ideologically conditioned as the scenes presented onstage.”

²⁵ Arthur 1984: 19. It is important to note that the world in which that ideology was formed and manifested itself was vastly different because laws and law courts governed many aspects of inheritance and dowries in classical Athens in ways that it could not have in archaic communities..

In the *Theogony*, Hesiod tells the story of the origin of everything: how the gods come into existence and how the universe becomes an ordered whole out of a disordered Chaos.²⁶ In contrast to the origin stories that attribute the order of the universe to a divine craftsman or the plan of a monotheistic godhead, according to the *Theogony* the universe acquires its definition and successively developed order through the genesis of the gods who are born into the universe from other gods, either through parthenogenesis or through sexual reproduction. Hesiod categorizes this ability and this desire to bring children to birth as feminine. The primordial earth goddess, Gaia, along with the other female goddesses in the succession myth who introduce multiplicity into the world through their reproductive powers, represent this generative principle. In contrast Hesiod genders the unifying and stabilizing principle as masculine, which becomes manifest in the characterizations of Ouranos, Kronos, and Zeus.

In this myth the reproduction of progeny is analogous to the production of deceptive plots because the feminine goddesses who desire to bring their children to light must outwit the masculine gods who use their force to attempt to secure their kingship. Thus the feminine generative principle is equivalent to the feminine duplicitous principle, which Hesiod illustrates through Gaia's trickery, foreknowledge, prophecy, and ability to cooperate with her children to combine cunning and courage against stronger opponents.

The main succession myth narrative of the *Theogony* is thus the story of the conflict between feminine and masculine principles, between multiplicity and unity, which is to say, the struggle over the control of reproduction and the control over

²⁶ See Stoddard 2004: 6-15 for a discussion of the divergent scholarly opinions on Hesiod's identity within the *Theogony*. The question of the authorship of the *Theogony*, as well as the other texts attributed to the poet Hesiod, are beyond the scope of my investigation.

transformative intelligence (*mêtis*) itself. Each stage of the succession myth results in progressively more developed forms of justice and kingship, finally cumulating in the reign of Zeus, where Zeus sublimates the feminine generative principle into himself and gives birth to Athena, an eternally loyal daughter who exists in a liminal state between both genders. Zeus' ingestion of Metis symbolizes his ultimate triumph, for he displays the ability to overcome generation itself, to defeat the threat of a stronger heir even before his birth and instead beget an ever-loyal and ever-virginal daughter.

In both the proem and the catalogue of Zeus' symbolic marriages, which frame the succession myth, the Muses are characterized by their ability to sing Zeus' praises and to mediate this ability to chosen mortals like our poet, Hesiod. This places them in a position similar to Athena, since these immortal females are all Zeus' eternally loyal and virginal daughters who exist in order to safeguard the stability of his governance. When Hesiod describes his own epiphany with the Muses they tell him, "we know how to tell many lies that sound like truth | and we know, if we wish, to sing true things" (ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα, | ἴδμεν δ', εὔτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρόσασθαι) and this cryptic distich displays the characteristically feminine ability to deceive, which is represented by the mothers' ability to present an illegitimate heir as a true heir. This potential deception is a fundamental source of anxiety because it can corrupt an *oikos* from within and disrupt the continuation of the male line. In order to produce a true poem which will allow him to transgress the boundaries of mortality, Hesiod must perform a feat analogous to Zeus' consumption of Metis. He does this through his poetry, by presenting the story that grounds the source of the power from which he claims to derive his poetic power.

1.4 The Stomach and the Womb in Hesiod's *Theogony*

The theme of the stomach (*gastêr*) as a defining characteristic of mortals runs throughout the *Theogony*. In the Proem the Muses insult the shepherd Hesiod when they appear before him by calling him a mere belly. As such they identify the distinction between mortals and immortals, for mortals have continuous and necessary physical appetites such as the need to consume food. This separates human beings from gods and shows how they are more similar to the sheep that the shepherd tends. But the stomach also points to the potential for the reception of poetic and prophetic powers, since divine inspiration is said to be received through the stomach, as I argue below. This makes Hesiod's poetic production analogous to the reproduction of physical progeny through the female womb (*nêdys*). In the end, it is Hesiod's ability to claim inspired and divinely sanctioned authorship of the *Theogony*, which allows him to produce something analogous to both Athena and Pandora, a created being with a voice of its own.

The succession myth can also be read as a contest between the control of the stomach and the womb, of the desire to beget and the desire and power to bring to birth. Throughout the stages of the succession myth the male *gastêr* is transformed into a *nêdys* which is capable of first concealing and suppressing its children, and then finally in Zeus and Mêtis' case, of bring to birth a child through the male womb. Since the subject matter of Hesiod's poem is ultimately Zeus' triumph over and sublimation of the feminine ability to bring to birth and deceive, and since Hesiod claims that through the epiphany with the Muses, he is inspired with Zeus' wisdom via the Muses, he is making the claim to have Zeus' ability to transgress the mortal boundaries imposed upon himself as a human through his production of true poetry.

The stomach (*gastêr*) is also a main theme in the myth of Pandora because Pandora is ultimately the final recompense for the sequence of deceptions that begins with Prometheus' trick of presenting a stomach that conceals a portion of meat and bones concealed in gleaming fat. Consequent upon the introduction of fire to man, Pandora introduces the fact of appetite, decay, and mortality to man. With fire and Pandora men receive the danger and the power that both bring, for fire is a hungry and destructive force but it is also necessary for the ability to create through technology and to communicate with the gods through sacrifice. Thus, on the one hand Pandora is a disguised stomach who appears to bring wealth and satiety to her recipients, but in fact only increase their hunger. On the other hand, she is the first woman—the first wife—and introduces the institutions of marriage exchange, the *oikos*, and children, which means that she introduces the fact of reproduction along with mortality to mankind. Overall Pandora illustrates Hesiod's ambiguous view of women as paradoxical wombs and stomachs, on whom he places the blame for mortality, but also the potential but always partial cure through the ability to generate children, which makes the creation of Pandora analogous to the act of poetic creation.

Chapter 2: Feminine Authority and Hesiod's Authorship in the Proem of the *Theogony*

2.1 Introduction: Hesiod's Muses

In this chapter I examine the basis of Hesiod's claim to poetic authority in the proem of the *Theogony*. By claiming that the truth of his presentation of the *Theogony* originates in Zeus' wisdom and is then mediated by the Muses to him, Hesiod attributes the legitimacy of his poetry to a divine source. In making this claim he has three purposes, all related: first, to honour Zeus; second, to argue that his account of the story of the origin of the gods is true; and third, to elevate himself out of his initial lowly status as a shepherd into the status of divine poet, a status that places him among the godlike kings and nearly into the ranks of the immortals themselves. As I will show, Hesiod derives the elevation of his status from his ability to bring to birth a poem that transcends the limits of time in its immortal subject matter and in its potential to allow Hesiod a posthumous and everlasting voice.

Hesiod employs the female figures of the Muses, Gaia, Aphrodite, and Pandora to characterize the ability to conceive, deceive, mediate, and bring to birth as feminine. Thus, the ability to produce a true poem which relates the story of the birth of the gods relies upon the mediation of a divine feminine power to the male poet. In order for Hesiod to claim that the *Theogony* is a true account of the birth of the gods he must prove that he has taken on these feminine abilities. To do this, Hesiod must accomplish a feat that is analogous to Zeus' sublimation and consumption of the feminine forces at the *telos* of the succession myth that follows (discussed below in Chapter 3) — this is, to Zeus' ability to assimilate the feminine ability to generate both literal and metaphorical children, to produce progeny and plots, into his dominion through the ingestion of Metis

and the birth of Athena. Hesiod's assimilation of feminine ability takes place when the Muses appear to him as a shepherd on Mount Helicon; through this specific claim to the experience of a divine epiphany, Hesiod also articulates a hierarchal structure both in the cosmos, situating the gods above human beings and human beings above animals, and within the human race, wherein the king and other human beings closer to the divine rule over human beings who are closer to animals.

The main scholarly controversy surrounding the Proem of the *Theogony* centers on the question of whether Hesiod is situating himself as a passive conduit for the voice of the Muses or whether he is claiming an active authorship in order to take more credit for the composition of the poem. According to the most persuasive reading, Hesiod both characterizes himself as divinely inspired by the Muses and shows how the mediated powers they provide result in his acquisition of a greater degree of honour on the scale of human hierarchy. Thus, while honouring and praising Zeus in his poem, Hesiod simultaneously claims to be graced with the same honour and praise he employs.

To prove the claim that he derives the legitimacy of his poetry from the Muses, Hesiod elaborates the Proem of the *Theogony* by extending the invocation of the Muses into a complex hymn. In comparison to Homeric invocations of the Muses, Hesiod's invocation is much longer and includes a catalogue of the Muses' musical abilities and a description of their divine nature as beings who exist outside of the constraints of time and control, as daughters of Zeus and Memory (Mnemosyne), both memory and truth and falsity. The complexity of the invocation hymn is itself proof of Hesiod's claim that the Muses possess these qualities and mediate them to mortals, specifically to Hesiod

himself. In this way, the proem of the *Theogony* is a self-reflective commentary on the nature of poetry itself.

2.2 The Music of the Muses in the Proem of Hesiod's *Theogony* Compared to other Hesiodic and Homeric Invocations

Although it is a commonplace for Ancient Greek poets to invoke the Muses at the outset of long poems, Hesiod expands upon the convention in a way that underlines the importance of the Muses and introduces the main themes of the *Theogony*: the ordering of the universe with Zeus as the king overall, the wretched and liminal status of human beings as mortals existing between the realms of animals and gods, as well as the flawed answer to the anxiety caused by the facts of birth, hunger, and death through the introduction of patriarchal subordination of the feminine generative principle to the male unifying and ordering principle.

If we compare Hesiod's invocation of the Muses in the *Theogony* to his invocation in the *Works and Days* as well as Homer's invocations in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, we see that the *Theogony* invocation is not only much longer and more complex but also places a greater degree of emphasis on the Muses' skills and on the characterization and role of the poet.²⁷ The proems of the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* both invoke the Muse(s) in the opening line and ask them to sing of the subject matter of the following poem in a way that acts as a overture, anticipating the main themes and events of the narrative. In the proem of the *Iliad*, Homer says,

μη̄νιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος

²⁷ Stoddard 2004: 64-69 compares these invocations to argue that the Homeric narrator adopts a more passive voice as a conduit of the Muse, whereas the Hesiodic narrator takes on a more active role as a way of establishing his own poetic authority apart from the Muses.

οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρί' Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε,
πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν
ἠρώων, αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν
οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι, Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή,
ἔξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε
Ἄτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.

Of the wrath may you sing, Oh goddess, of Peleus' son Achilles,
that brought countless sorrows upon the Achaeans.
Many brave souls it sent hurrying down to Hades,
and many heroes became prey to dogs
and all the vultures, for so the will of Zeus was fulfilled
from the day when they first quarrelled,
the son of Atreus, king of men, and great Achilles.²⁸

Here the Muse goes unnamed, since she is referred to only obliquely as the goddess (*thea*).²⁹ Since in archaic hexameter poetry the first word of a poem would point to its main subject matter, there is a much greater emphasis placed on Achilles' "wrath" (*mênis*) than there is on the Muse, which signifies the main theme of anger that characterizes the poem. In comparison the poet begins the *Odyssey* with the following proem:

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν:
πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,
πολλὰ δ' ὃ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὄν κατὰ θυμόν,
ἀρνύμενος ἣν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων.
ἄλλ' οὐδ' ὣς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ:
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο,
νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἥελίοιο
ἦσθιον: αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ.
τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, θεά, θύγατερ Διός, εἰπέ καὶ ἡμῖν.

About that wily man tell, O Muse, who wandered
long and far after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy.
He saw the cities and knew the minds of many men,
But suffered at sea many sorrows in his heart,
struggling for his soul and safe homecoming for his companions.

²⁸ All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. Hom. *Il.* 1-7.

²⁹ Hom. *Il.* 1.

but he didn't save his companions, although he desired to
for by their own sheer recklessness they died,
fools, who devoured the cattle of the Sun-god Helios;
who then took their homecoming from them.
From whatever source tell us too, O daughter of Zeus, of sundry things.³⁰

The narrator does address the Muse directly here in the first line, as well as in the seventh and final line of the Proem, as “goddess, daughter of Zeus” (*thea, thugater Dios*), but the emphasis is still on Odysseus, the main figure of the poem, to whom the poet alludes in the first word, “man” (*andra*).

In contrast to the heroic subject-matter specified in these two epic proems, the very first word of Hesiod's *Theogony* is μουσᾶων, the genitive plural form of the Muses, which indicates the subject matter central to the *Theogony*.³¹ It may be argued that the first word of Hesiod's *Works and Days* is also μοῦσαι, so the focus on Muses is not exclusive to the *Theogony*. Moreover, the invocation to the Muses in the proem of the *Works and Days*, though also important to his themes, is much shorter and less narratologically complex than in the proem of the *Theogony*, in which the Muses appear as characters and the subject matter is their epiphany before Hesiod. The invocation to the Muses in the *Works and Days* is only ten lines long (1-10) whereas in the *Theogony* the invocation to the Muses is extended into an 115-line hymn which praises the Muses, requests that they sing of the generations of the gods, and tells the story of Hesiod's own epiphany (1-115).

The very first line of the *Theogony*'s proem illustrates a double meaning which is present in the whole text, namely that the poet is singing *about* the Muses while also

³⁰ Hom. *Od.* 1-10.

³¹ Hes. *Th.* 1. All text citations of Hesiod are taken from West 1966 and 1978. On the genitive form of this word see West 1966: 151 note 1.

singing *with* the Muses: this makes the honouring reciprocal, as the praise Hesiod sings comes about through their inspiration and Hesiod's praise of the Muses is also always praise of himself. By beginning with this invocation, "from the Muses who dwell on Mount Helicon let us sing" (μουσάων Ἑλικωνιάδων ἀρχώμεθ' αἰεῖδεν), Hesiod uses an ambiguous genitive form in the first word, μουσάων, which can either be translated as enjoining song either 'on' or 'from' the Muses. If Hesiod is asking to sing *from* the Muses, he is indicating that they are the divine source of the poetry but if he is singing *on* them, he is anticipating the subject matter of the proem.³² Furthermore, the first person plural of the hortatory subjunctive and infinitive, ἀρχώμεθ' αἰεῖδεν, could encompass the (so to speak) 'royal we,' referring only to Hesiod himself, or it could include the Muses in the group of singers. In either case readers have noticed how "the emphatic plural gives an unexpected pre-eminence and energy to the poet's decision (hortatory subjunctive) to begin his song."³³ Finally, the repetition of the four omegas grants this opening line a fittingly elevated magnificence for a listening audience.³⁴

2.3 The Structure of the Proem: An Invocation Expanded into a Hymn

As a narratologically complex introduction to the poem as a whole, which shifts from the narrator's voice to a direct quotation from the Muses to an indirect quotation, the proem is an intricate hymn rather than a mere invocation.³⁵ Hesiod uses the form of

³² In the first instance this could be a genitive of agent construction. Hesiod also invokes the Muses at two later points in the *Theogony* (965-66 and 1021-22) but these latter invocations provide no specific information and function as a means of marking a transition to a new subject matter.

³³ Pucci 2009: 38.

³⁴ Aristides first notices this (*On Rhet* I.14).

³⁵ Scholars have recognized the characteristically hymnic nature of the Proem. c.f. Friedländer, Walcot 1957; van Gronigen 1960: 256-62; Minton 1970, Janko 1981:20-22, and others.

the proem to frame the important narrations which show both the Muses' powers as well as his own divinely inspired poetic powers. This becomes clearer if we divide the poem into six sections, or three sections with two parts to each: in the first section Hesiod not only invokes the Muses, but also describes the musical prowess of the Muses while listing the gods whom they praise (1-21); in the second section Hesiod recounts his own epiphany, which scholars term the *Dichterweihe* (22-34); in the third he returns to describe the Muses' habitual activity of singing to Zeus on Olympus (35-52); in the fourth he recounts the birth of the Muses (53-62); he follows this with the fifth section where he describes their actions after their birth: their hymning of Zeus and their bestowal of eloquence, political power, and poetic power to mortals (63-103); finally, in the sixth section he instructs the Muses what to sing and transitions into the main body of the *Theogony* (104-15). Thus, by framing the narration of his own epiphany, the Muses' birth, and the song that he requests between catalogues of the Muses' general characteristics, Hesiod shows how the Muses are supreme singers governing and delivering poetic ability to mortals, while also establishing the legitimacy of his own poem. This allows Hesiod to foreground poetry and language itself, by bringing the poet into his own poem not only as the narrative voice, but as a character as well, pulling the bard onto his own poetic stage.³⁶

2.4 Characteristics of the Muses: Mediators of Divine Poetry

In contrast to the invocations in the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Works and Days*, where the Muses are only mentioned briefly, in the *Theogony* Hesiod presents an intricate

³⁶ Cf. Pucci 2009: 38. On the technique of foregrounding, Culler 1997: 28-29 writes, "Literature is language that foregrounds language itself: it makes strange, thrusts it at you ... In particular poetry organizes the sound plane of language, so as to make it something to reckon with."

picture of the Muses. He emphasizes their immortal nature, their musical abilities, and their ability to mediate their skills to mortals through first describing their geographical home, second articulating their beautiful and mysterious appearance, and finally by cataloguing the divine subjects of their songs. Hesiod situates the Muses geographically on Mount Helicon, which is a fitting home for them not only because it is renowned for its “great” (*mega*) and “holy” (*zatheon*) status but also because, as the physical space between the heavens and the earth, the mountain is the perfect stage to allow access between the gods and mortals.³⁷ The holiness of this place and its ability to mediate this divinity on behalf of mortals are also indicated in the images of the “well-spring” (*krênên*) and “the altar of the very-mighty son of Kronos” (*bōmon eristheneos Kroniōnos*), around which the Muses dance. The fount allows mortals to drink the holy waters, taking them up into themselves as form of refreshment and sustenance and the altar allows mortals to offer their sacrifices and pour libations for the gods to drink. Thus, both function poetically as images of the theurgical interactions between the gods and mortals.³⁸

After situating the Muses in this holy and liminal space, where the divine is accessible to mortals, Hesiod relates the beauty and mystery of their physical appearance. Both the beauty and the purity of their “delicate complexions” (*terena chroa*) is shown through the way that they wash their bodies in holy sources of fresh water,³⁹ before they “make their beautiful, desire-inciting dances upon highest Helicon and move with swift feet” (ἀκροτάτῳ Ἑλικῶνι χοροὺς ἐνεποιήσαντο | καλοῦς, ἡμερόεντας: ἐπερρώσαντο δὲ

³⁷ Hes. *Th.* 2.

³⁸ Hes. *Th.* 3-4.

³⁹ Hes. *Th.* 5-6.

ποσσίην).⁴⁰ There is also a mysterious and mystical quality to the Muses, which Hesiod shows in the image of the “thick mist” (*êeri pollê*), in which “they are veiled” (*kekalummenai*) as they “utter their song with lovely voice” (ἐννόχια στεῖχον περικαλλέα ὄσσαν ἰεῖσαι).⁴¹ Since the Muses are both veiled in mist, but also able to incite desire with their dances, implying that they can be seen, Hesiod characterizes them as barely visible, or visible in a tempting but not satiating way that leads to the desire to see them again. The “voice” (*ossa*) of the Muses is distinguished from human voices not only by the epithet “very beautiful” (*perikallês*) used to describe them but also by the word-choice itself. In Hesiod *ossa* is used for divine voices suitable to divine beings exclusively, in contrast to *audê*, which Hesiod uses when he describes how the Muses breathe a divine voice into him (Hes. *Th.* 31).⁴² Through these characterizations Hesiod shows that the subject matter of his song is the fact that the Muses do not only inspire mortal poets to compose and perform songs and dances but also perform these dances themselves.

The formulaic parallels in this opening scene not only establish the eternal youth and virginal qualities of the Muses but also evokes a dynamic picture of a world that is at rest for the divine and in conflict for mortals. It is very possible that Hesiodic poetry existed before Homeric poetry and thus there is no consensus as to which poetry is

⁴⁰ Hes. *Th.* 7-8.

⁴¹ Hes. *Th.* 9-10.

⁴² Agar 1915 proposed that Hesiod’s use of ὄσσα is “an innovation and importation of later times” because Hesiod uses it to denote the conflict between heaven and earth (701) and also the sounds that Typhoeus makes as a bellowing bull (833). In Homeric poetry, in contrast, ὄσσα translates to “rumour, report” instead of “voice” and is personified by Zeus’ messenger Ossa. Derek Collins 1999: 241-252, following Fournier 1946: 228, argues for this distinction by surveying the usage of ὄσσα in Hesiod, Homer, and the Homeric Hymns.

echoing the other. In either case the similar descriptions emphasize the beauty, purity, tenderness, delicacy and most importantly, virginity of *kore*. Hesiod uses these qualities to emphasize the unity of the divine father-daughter relationship between Zeus and the Muses. The shimmering quality of their raiment mirrors the description of Eurynome (fr. 43a M-W 73-74). The tenderness of their limbs and the delicacy of their movement evokes the description of Atalanta, just as the pure water in which they bathe recalls Coronis (fr. 59 M-W 4). The fragment with the most parallels is that of the daughters of Parathon (Fr. 26 M-W).⁴³ The Muses, like their companions the daughters of Parathon, shun Aphrodite in order to remain *parthenoi*. The absence of impending marriages for the Muses, their permanent status as *parthenoi*, anticipates the birth of Athena as the paragon of the alliance between male ruler and female progeny, which I will discuss below.⁴⁴

Hesiod returns to a general description of the Muses' musical abilities, divine nature, and role as mediators between gods and mortals in lines 63-103. Here, the Muses live beside the personification of the Graces (*Charites*) and the personification of desire (*Himeros*),⁴⁵ which signifies that the Muses act as mediators of grace and desire, or desire-inducing songs to mortals. In other words, they grace mortals by providing the

⁴³ See Arthur 1983: 98,100 who notes that the “insistence on virginity is a common characteristic in such descriptions,” arguing that “in such a context, the adjective ‘ἐννοχιαί’ (10) points up the Muses’ immunity to everything associated with “dread Night”: death, gloom, sexuality, and deceit.” But Arthur does not explain how this functions in relation to the Muses’ famous deceptive abilities, as discussed below.

⁴³ Arthur 1983: 99. This is a moment of “dynamic stasis, a freedom from the process whereby the daughter, given out in marriage and thereby inserted into the historical cycle, produces a son to displace the father.” I will expand upon this relationship in the section on the birth of the Muses as well as the following chapter on the succession myth

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⁴⁵ Hes. *Th.* 63.

ability to compose graceful poetry, through which mortals can praise the gods and make themselves more godlike. The Muses' power to connect the divine and mortal realms is also presented in the image of the Muses travelling between the earth and the heavens when they visit Olympus to sing their songs.⁴⁶

The power that Hesiod attributes to the Muses in their ability to bestow eloquence is influential poetically as well as politically, for they are responsible for making famous the “laws of all and the sage customs of the immortals” (πάντων τε νόμους καὶ ἤθεα κεδνὰ | ἀθανάτων) through their songs⁴⁷ and they not only broadcast Zeus' just distribution of honour as well as his defeat of Kronos but also participate in the distribution of honour by providing the power of eloquence and persuasion to the lords whom Zeus has chosen.⁴⁸ To show this Hesiod describes how the Muses provide eloquence to whomever they Muses honour and attend:

τῷ μὲν ἐπὶ γλώσση γλυκερὴν χεῖουσιν ἔερσην,
τοῦ δ' ἔπε' ἐκ στόματος ρεῖ μείλιχα: οἱ δέ τε λαοὶ
πάντες ἐς αὐτὸν ὀρῶσι διακρίνοντα θέμιστας
ἰθείησι δίκησιν: ὃ δ' ἀσφαλέως ἀγορεύων
αἰψὰ κε καὶ μέγα νεῖκος ἐπισταμένως κατέπαυσεν:
τοῦνεκα γὰρ βασιλῆες ἐχέφρονες, οὔνεκα λαοῖς
βλαπτομένοις ἀγορῆφι μετὰτροπα ἔργα τελεῦσι
ῥηιδίως, μαλακοῖσι παραιφάμενοι ἐπέεσσιν.
ἐρχόμενον δ' ἄν' ἀγῶνα θεὸν ὧς ἰλάσκονται
αἰδοῖ μειλιχίη, μετὰ δὲ πρέπει ἀγρομένοισιν:
τοίη Μουσάων ἱερὴ δόσις ἀνθρώποισιν.

they pour sweet dew upon his tongue,

⁴⁶ Hes. *Th.* 68.

⁴⁷ Hes. *Th.* 66-67.

⁴⁸ Hes. *Th.* 74. Catharine Roth 1976: 338 argues that Hesiod and Solon illustrate an association between the Muses, “as personification of oral tradition, and the rulers, as the administrators of justice.” She includes an interesting etymological argument about meaning of the word *dikē*, which, as both a noun deriving from *deiknunai*, “show, point out”, and also possibly a cognate with the Latin *dīcere*, ‘say, speak,’ could connote both the “mark” or “boundary” and/or “that which is declared.”

and from his lips flow gentle words. All the people
look towards him while he settles causes with true judgements:
and he, speaking justly, would soon make wise end
even of a great quarrel; for
therefore are these lords prudent, because when the people
are being misguided in their assembly, they set the matter
right again with ease, persuading them with gentle words.
And when he passes through a gathering, they greet him as a god
with gentle reverence, and he is conspicuous amongst the assembled:
such is the holy gift of the Muses to men.⁴⁹

Hesiod uses to the image of “sweet dew” (*glukerên...eersên?*)⁵⁰ poured into the mouths
of the human beings to represent the *fluency* that the Muses pour into the mouth of these
people and the flowing quality of the rhetoric that the recipients are then able to employ:
from the lips of the Muses’ chosen subjects “gentle” or “honeyed” (*meilicha*) words flow
forth.⁵¹

Here the eloquence that the Muses deliver is consonant with their gift of musical
abilities in the form of jurisdicative and political fluency: they provide their chosen lords
with the ability to distribute justice through well-founded judgments and convince others
of the correctness of these judgements, which results in the termination of violence and
the stabilization of the ruler’s governance. This is seen in how the inspired lords dole out
their justice easily by “persuading with gentle words” (*μαλακοῖσι παραιφάμενοι*
ἑπέεσσιν).⁵² Hesiod can thus call these lords “prudent” (*echephrones*) because they are
able to make wise decisions in each case and easily settle conflicts. These persuasive

⁴⁹ Hes. *Th.* 83-93.

⁵⁰ Hes. *Th.* 83.

⁵¹ Hes. *Th.* 84. *glossa* also translates as ‘language’, just as we would say ‘the Greek tongue’ to refer to the Greek language.

⁵² Hes. *Th.* 90.

abilities are consonant with the musical power, which the Muses mediate from Apollo to mortal singers, but the lordship finds its source in Zeus himself.⁵³

In this section Hesiod shows how the gifts of the Muses are so powerful that they make the mortal recipient exceptional because they bestow not only the divine knowledge of the gods and right judgments but also the Muses' linguistic abilities to persuade, which effectively transforms mortals into more godlike beings. For example, as a result of the lord's gentle words, he is esteemed in the eyes of his subjects, for "all the people | look towards him while he settles causes with true judgements" (οἱ δέ τε λαοὶ | πάντες ἐς αὐτὸν ὀρῶσι διακρίνοντα θέμιστας | ἰθεῖησι δίκησιν).⁵⁴ Furthermore, Hesiod relates how when this graced person "passes through a gathering, they greet him as a god | with gentle reverence, and he is conspicuous amongst the assembled" (ἐρχόμενον δ' ἀν' ἀγῶνα θεὸν ὧς ἰλάσκονται | αἰδοῖ μελιχίη, μετὰ δὲ πρέπει ἀγρομένοισιν).⁵⁵ This praise of gifted lords extends to all those who are inspired by the Muses, including Hesiod himself, as they share in the gifts that make men like to the gods.

Hesiod continues to extol the power of the Muses, expounding upon their ability to deliver not only justice but also happiness to men, for they bring happiness through a curating of memory, a forgetting of pain and a remembrance of the stories of the men of old and the Olympian gods;⁵⁶ they can relieve the distress that a person experiences

⁵³ Hes. *Th.* 95-96.

⁵⁴ Hes. *Th.* 84-85. In the dark age and early archaic world the term *basileus* seems to apply to the men (probably the most prosperous landowners) of certain notable and elite families who wielded political and social power within the early *polis* (the beginnings of later oligarchies). *Basileus* was a flexible term used for those in positions of power, not indicating a specific kind of office or title or power until much later, rather being a human equivalent to the power of Zeus as ruler of the gods.

⁵⁵ Hes. *Th.* 91-92.

⁵⁶ Hes. *Th.* 98-103

through “singing the glorious deeds of ancient human beings | and the blessed gods who inhabit Olympus” (θεράπων κλέεα προτέρων ἀνθρώπων | ὑμνήσῃ μάκαράς τε θεούς, οἳ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν),⁵⁷ which allow their audiences to forget their heavy hearts and not remember their worries. Hesiod himself sings of the blessed gods and thus not only aligns himself with godlike lords, but also claims to be able to make these lords “blessed” (*olbios*). Through his poetry, Hesiod elevates himself from the social position of a lowly shepherd in the fields to the level between lords and gods.

When he describes the Muses’ birth and lineage, Hesiod provides a mythological and etymological explanation for how they derive their ability to curate memory in such a way as to relieve their audiences of cares and bring them happiness. Framing the story of the birth of the Muses between general exposition of the Muses’ characteristics (53-63), he describes how the personification of Memory (Mnemosyne) begets nine daughters after lying with “cunning” (*mêtietia*) Zeus for nine months. The Muses inherit the power to induce memory as well as to induce forgetting, since Mnemosyne is described as “a forgetting of evils and a rest from sorrows” (λησμοσύνην τε κακῶν ἄμπαυμά τε μερμηράων).⁵⁸ This description recalls the way Hesiod describes the Muses’ power to curate memories in such a way that allows humans to forget their pain through remembering the deeds of gods and ancient men. As well, since the Muses “of one mind, care for a song in their hearts, and hold a spirit free from care” (ὁμόφρονας, ἧσιν αἰοιδῆ | μέμβλεται ἐν στήθεσσι, ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἐχούσαις),⁵⁹ they can make human beings happy by transferring their carefree and like-minded (ὁμόφρονας) qualities to mortals through

⁵⁷ Hes. *Th.* 100.

⁵⁸ Hes. *Th.* 55.

⁵⁹ Hes. *Th.* 60-61.

poetry, another of their abilities implicitly communicated to Hesiod himself in his epiphany. Before considering the episode of the *Dichterweihe*, however, I will first show how the content that Hesiod ascribes to the Muses' songs aligns with Hesiod's claim that a divine authority sanctions the *Theogony*, and to raise himself through his poetic success.

2.5 The Content of the Muses' Songs: They Sing of the Gods

We have seen above that, in the three sections in which Hesiod describes the subject matter of the Muses' songs (11-21, 43-52, and 104-116), he shows how their power to honour the gods by singing about them derives from their parentage and their existence outside the constraints of chronological time. They can begin and end their song by honouring Zeus while also accomplishing what Hesiod aims to present, the chronological order of the coming to be of the cosmos, the genealogy of the gods. Hesiod's ability to harness these powers is apparent in the complexity of the narrative form of the proem and the body of the *Theogony*. Turning to the descriptions of the content of the Muses' songs, we see that Hesiod claims an active voice that is able to sing of the gods along with the Muses.

In the first iteration of the Muses' song (11-21), which scholars name the "first Theogony", Hesiod shows how the Muses honour the gods according to importance rather than chronological supremacy. Here the Muses praise Zeus first, followed by Hera, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Poseidon, Themis, Aphrodite, Hebe, Dione, Leto, Iapetus, Kronos, Eos, Helios, Selene, Earth, Oceanus, Night, "and the holy race of all the other deathless ones" (ἄλλων τ' ἀθανάτων ἱερὸν γένος αἰὲν ἔόντων);⁶⁰ this is clearly not an

⁶⁰ Hes. *Th.* 11-21

anticipation of the order of the succession myth in the body of the *Theogony*, since, instead of beginning *ex archês* with Chaos, they begin with their father, the supreme ruler Zeus and proceed backward from the Olympian gods to earlier deities without clarifying the relations between the gods—except in Athena’s case where they emphasize her relation to Zeus as his “daughter” (*kourên*).⁶¹ Rather than anticipating the order of the *Theogony* proper in a microcosmic form, here Hesiod begins with Zeus, the *telos* of the succession myth. Thus, by placing the *telos* at the beginning and displaying a reverse of the chronological narrative, Hesiod emphasizes the Muses and his own mastery over the subject matter.

On another reading, this first catalogue of divinities displays the gulf between and the divine and mortal, one that transitions from the timeless realm of the Olympians, beginning with Zeus, through those who define the mortal temporal order, such as Helios, Ēōs, and Selene, to the personifications of the Chthonic realms of primordial forces, Gaia, Okeanos, Nyx, concluding with a scene of human activity. This transition from atemporal existence to temporal necessity can be seen in the contrast between “existing forever” (*aien eontôn*) at the end of line 21 enjambed with “someday now” (*nu poth*) at the beginning of line 22, which marks the transition between Hesiod’s first section on the general characteristics of the Muses to his second on the specific narrative episode of the *Dichterweihe*, which I discuss below.⁶²

In contrast to the first description of the Muses’ song, Hesiod’s second description relates how they celebrate the gods from the beginning:

αἱ δ’ ἄμβροτον ὄσσαν ἰεῖσσαι

⁶¹ Hes. *Th.* 13.

⁶² Arthur 1983: 100.

θεῶν γένος αἰδοῖον πρῶτον κλείουσιν ἀοιδῆ
 ἐξ ἀρχῆς, οὓς Γαῖα καὶ Οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ἔτικτεν,
 οἳ τ' ἐκ τῶν ἐγένοντο θεοί, δωτῆρες ἑάων.
 δεύτερον αὖτε Ζῆνα, θεῶν πατέρ' ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν,
 ἀρχόμεναί θ' ὑμνεῦσι καὶ ἐκλήγουσαι ἀοιδῆς,
 ὅσσον φέρτατός ἐστι θεῶν κράτει τε μέγιστος.
 αὗτις δ' ἀνθρώπων τε γένος κρατερῶν τε Γιγάντων
 ὑμνεῦσαι τέρπουσι Διὸς νόον ἐντὸς Ὀλύμπου
 Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο.

they, uttering their immortal voice,
 celebrate first of all the revered race of the gods in song
 from the beginning, those whom Earth and wide Heaven begot,
 and the gods sprung of these, givers of good things.
 Then next, the goddesses sing of Zeus, the father of gods and men,
 as they begin and end their strain,
 how much he is the most excellent among the gods and supreme in power.
 And again, they chant the race of men and strong giants,
 and gladden the heart of Zeus within Olympus,—
 the Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus the aegis-holder.⁶³

In this iteration, Hesiod emphasizes that the Muses sing of the gods from “the beginning” (*ex archês*),⁶⁴ beginning with Gaia and Ouranos’ children.

Then Hesiod says something that seems contradictory at first, that the Muses sing secondly of Zeus, but that they also begin and end their song with singing his praises. But this paradox is resolved by the nature of the Muses, since they, the subject of their song, and the song itself exist outside of the constraints of linear time. As Hesiod emphasizes throughout the proem, the Muses’ song not only concerns the immortal gods but also continues ceaselessly from immortal beings. By describing their voice as “unwearying” or without rest (*akamatos*)⁶⁵ and an “immortal voice” (*ambroton ossan*),⁶⁶ Hesiod makes explicit that the Muses are not under the same chronological constraints of time and are

⁶³ Hes. *Th.* 43-52.

⁶⁴ Hes. *Th.* 45.

⁶⁵ Hes. *Th.* 39.

⁶⁶ Hes. *Th.* 43.

able to sing of the past, present, and future; they “sing of the things that are, the things that will be, and that have been | fitting them to the voice” (εἰρεῦσαι τὰ τ’ ἐόντα τὰ τ’ ἐσσόμενα πρό τ’ ἐόντα / φωνῇ ὀμηρεῦσαι)⁶⁷: thus the Muses sing *continually* of the past, present, and future, from the beginning and from the end at the same time, or, as we might put it since time is here observed objectively, outside of time.

Finally, Hesiod uses the third iteration of the Muses’ song to anticipate the main genealogies of the *Theogony*. Hesiod beseeches the Muses,

χαίρετε, τέκνα Διός, δότε δ’ ἡμερόεσσαν ἀοιδίην.
κλείετε δ’ ἀθανάτων ἱερὸν γένος αἰὲν ἐόντων,
οἱ Γῆς τ’ ἐξεγένοντο καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος,
Νυκτός τε δνοφερῆς, οὓς θ’ ἄλμυρός ἔτρεφε Πόντος.
εἶπατε δ’, ὡς τὰ πρῶτα θεοὶ καὶ γαῖα γέγοντο
καὶ ποταμοὶ καὶ πόντος ἀπείριτος, οἶδαμι θυίων,
ἄστρα τε λαμπετόωντα καὶ οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ὑπερθεν
οἱ τ’ ἐκ τῶν ἐγένοντο θεοί, δωτῆρες ἐάων
ὡς τ’ ἄφενος δάσσαντο καὶ ὡς τιμὰς διέλοντο
ἠδὲ καὶ ὡς τὰ πρῶτα πολύπτυχον ἔσχον Ὀλυμπον.
ταῦτά μοι ἔσπετε Μοῦσαι, Ὀλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχουσαι
ἐξ ἀρχῆς, καὶ εἶπαθ’, ὅ τι πρῶτον γένετ’ αὐτῶν.

Hail, children of Zeus! Grant lovely song
and celebrate the holy race of the deathless gods who are forever,
those that were born of Earth and starry Heaven
and gloomy Night and them that briny Sea did rear.
Tell how at the first gods and earth came to be,
and rivers, and the boundless sea with its raging swell,
and the gleaming stars, and the wide heaven above,
and the gods who were born of them, givers
of good things, and how they divided their wealth,
and how they shared their honours amongst them,
and also how at the first they took many-folded Olympus.
These things declare to me, you Muses who dwell in the house of Olympus,
from the beginning, and tell me which of them first came to be.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Hes. *Th.* 38-39.

⁶⁸ Hes. *Th.* 104-116.

In this invocation Hesiod reiterates the need to start at the beginning saying, “from the beginning, and tell me which of them first came to be” (ἐξ ἀρχῆς, καὶ εἶπαθ’, ὅ τι πρῶτον γένετ’ ἀπὸ τῶν)⁶⁹ as a way of transitioning into the beginning of the *Theogony* with the introduction of Chaos and the other primordial figures. Although he does not mention Chaos in this invocation, he does ask that the Muses sing of the children of Gaia and Ouranos, which anticipates the first stage of the succession myth. He also asks for the genealogies that derive from Nuktos and Pontos—the generation of the earth, sea, and sky—as well as their children, who give good things to mortals. Finally he requests the explanation of how they divide honour (*timai*) and wealth along with the story of how they came to rule Olympus. These subjects are all mirrored in the body of the *Theogony* proper.

Some scholars have argued that the distinction between this request and the characteristics of the Muses’ songs in the previous sections shows that Hesiod is establishing an active authority apart from the Muses.⁷⁰ Even if this is meant to signal to the audience that the narrator “intends to take an active role in shaping the *Theogony*,” he does invoke the Muses in order “to give general legitimacy to the poet’s words—which after all deal with matters not normally within the sphere of human knowledge.”⁷¹ Thus, the poet presents himself as a lowly shepherd requiring the Muses, who dwell with the

⁶⁹ Hes. *Th.* 116.

⁷⁰ See Stoddard 2004: 64-66 for an overview of the scholarship. Stoddard 2004: 64 sees Hesiod’s framing of this indirectly related hymn as a way of establishing his own poetic authority apart from the Muses. She argues “Hesiod seems to be openly denying total reliance on the Muses by effectively rejecting their style of cosmogonic poetry for his own,” adding that Hesiod demands that the Muses aid him in singing a song that is markedly different from this opening hymn.

⁷¹ Stoddard 2004: 66.

Olympian gods to teach him the truth about the gods, so that he may mediate this information to his mortal audience and thus grant *kleos* (renown) to himself and the gods.

2.6 Hesiod's *Dichterweihe*: The Transformation from 'Mere Belly' to Bard

As we have seen, throughout the proem Hesiod characterizes the Muses generally as divine beings who exist outside of the changing world of becoming and function as mediators between mortals and gods. In the *Dichterweihe*, Hesiod cites his sources, so to speak, by showing how the Muses appear to him and inspire his poetry, thereby establishing that his account of the birth of the gods is divinely sanctioned because the Muses "taught Hesiod the beautiful song" (Ἡσίοδον καλήν ἐδίδαξαν ἀοιδίην).⁷² In this section the poet also introduces two themes that pervade the *Theogony*: the motif of the ever-hungry stomach (*gastêr*) as the defining trait of human beings, one that separates mortals from immortals, and human susceptibility to deception, which as we shall see is vital to the myth of Pandora. Hesiod contrasts the lowly shepherd, a mere wretched belly, with the Muses, who control truth and falsity. Through the gift of the Muses, Hesiod is able partly to accomplish what Zeus does in the final stage of the succession myth, the control over the feminine powers of generation and deception. In this case, the creation that results from generation takes the form of poetry rather than progeny.

In the *Dichterweihe* the poet makes the narrator of the poem a character in the poem, which allows him to use the mythological form of his account to comment on poetry and to provide an image for the way that poetry allows for transgression of social and physical boundaries. Hesiod uses direct speech to emphasize the importance of his

⁷² Hes. *Th.* 22. Scholarly interest in Hesiod's mysterious *Dichterweihe* has produced a large volume of scholarship. The main question surrounding this section concerns how much of an active role Hesiod claims that he retains as a mortal poet.

epiphany, referring in this section to himself in the third person as a shepherd herding his sheep on Mount Helicon who learns the divine songs from the Muses when they appear to him. The *Dichterweihe* features the only direct quotation from the Muses in the proem, which stands out the more in a poem in which direct speech is noticeably absent. This poetic technique dramatizes the scene and allows the narrator's background voice step into the foreground.

Hesiod's self-characterization as a shepherd is neither incidental nor merely autobiographical; rather, situating himself as a shepherd allows Hesiod to illustrate the hierarchical divisions within the human realm as well as between the divine and human and to describe the poet's ability to transgress these boundaries as parallel to the shepherd's intermediate state. Since the job of the shepherd is to conduct and feed beasts in order to cultivate the raw natural materials necessary for human survival, this occupation illustrates certain characteristics that define the liminal status of human beings generally: for example the shepherds' control over beasts shows the hierarchical order in Hesiod's schema wherein the entity with a greater intellectual capacity rules over those with lesser intellectual capacities. Here the shepherd's position over his sheep mirrors the gods' position over humanity. Moreover, throughout the proem Hesiod identifies the hierarchical order within the ranks of the gods: beginning with Zeus and extending to the Muses who mediate Zeus' wisdom and power over mortals, who themselves are stratified into ranks of those who give orders and laws due to a closer connection with the gods, i.e. lords and priests, and their subjects, i.e. shepherds. The poet gains upward social mobility, so to speak, due to his connection to the Olympians *via* the Muses.

Hesiod emphasizes the divinity of the Muses in contrast to his lowly but intermediate station by describing them with double epithets, as “the Olympian Muses, the daughters of Aegis-bearing Zeus” (Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο) (25). This contrasts with the triple epithets with which the Muses abuse the shepherds: 1) “herdsmen dwelling in the fields” (*poimenes agrauloi*) 2) “evil disgraces” (*kak’ elegchea*) and 3) “mere bellies” (*gastêres oion*).⁷³ The three insults show the synchronic relationship between the geographical, ethical, and alimentary conditions of mortality.⁷⁴ Both the second and third terms of abuse also situate the shepherd in an intermediate state.

The characterisation of the shepherd shows not only the hierarchical division between the divine and human but also emphasizes the shepherd’s intermediate state. The shepherd lives in a geographically and ontologically liminal state, for *poimenes agrauloi* (“herdsmen dwelling in the fields”) has as its referent the horizontal opposition between the settlement and the wild and the vertical opposition between gods and men; thus *poimenes agrauloi* are located at the point of conjunction between the two systems—geographical and ontological. The shepherd inhabits both the “literal and metaphorical ... borderland between savage and civilized realms ... between mountain and plain, country and city.”⁷⁵ As well, his geographical ascent of mount Helicon allows the shepherd to interact with the Muses, and thus they exist between at the vertical point of conjunction between gods and human beings.

⁷³ Most modern scholars point out that this kind of abuse is typical in scenes of initiation and divine inspiration, but this does not contradict the fact that Hesiod could use these insults for a more complex as well as formulaic purpose. Hes. *Th.* 26. See West 1966: 160 and Thalmann 1984: 143.

⁷⁴ Arthur 1983: 100.

⁷⁵ Segal 1974: 289-308.

As the ethical component of the Muses' abuse, the epithet "evil disgraces" (*kak' elenchea*) situates the shepherd in a state of moral ambiguity, which mirrors the geographical liminality of their fields. For, "as dwellers in the fields" the shepherds' "relationship to the moral and ethical codes of the *polis*, ... the 'civilized realm' ('culture'), is tenuous and insecure; they exist in, as it were, a permanent state of 'lapse.'" ⁷⁶ Although Homer employs *κᾶκ' ἐλέγχεα* as a standard term of abuse in the *Iliad*, meaning "cowardly," ⁷⁷ scholars often translate it here in a more general way, as "lacking in moral knowledge" or "shameless." ⁷⁸ By calling the shepherds "evil disgraces" (*kak' elenchea*) the poet excludes them from the civilized virtues of courage, honour, and manliness, thereby placing the shepherd in the liminal category of the 'others' who are unable to achieve this virtue, such as women, slaves and foreigners. The term is thus "applied as a premonitory warning, and it suggests by its synonyms ("women," "shame") the polar opposites to the warrior ("man", "honor")." ⁷⁹ Just as this "shame" denotes both the ethical weakness characteristic of human kind, the third and final insult describes the weakness of human beings both literally and figuratively.

The third insult applied to the shepherds, "mere bellies" (*gastêres oion*), indicates the ever-present hunger that characterizes mortal life. On this interpretation, a 'mere belly' is a fitting description for a shepherd because shepherds are involved only in the base continual desire for food, since their employment deals with feeding their sheep in

⁷⁶ Arthur 1983: 102.

⁷⁷ Arthur 1983: 103.

⁷⁸ This insult does not appear in the *Odyssey*, but in the *Iliad* it is inscribed in the warrior's code of behaviours (*Iliad* 5.787, 8.228). Yasumura 2011: 99-100 interprets the Muses' address in relation to the metaphor that cites the "evil" race of women (Hes. *Th.* 598-601) as a way of stressing the poverty (593) and labour (596-597) characteristic of mortal life.

⁷⁹ Arthur 1983: 101.

order to eventually consume them, but the “stomach” (*gastêr*) symbolizes “*la condition humaine*” in general, since all human beings require food to continue their existence.⁸⁰

The scholia recognize that Hesiod draws a connection in this insult between the station and activity of the shepherd living in the fields and caring for beasts, who both have no other desires than filling their bellies, and the general character of humanity, glossing the words “mere bellies” (*gastêres oion*) with *περὶ τὴν γαστέρα μόνην ἀσχολούμενοι καὶ μόνα τὰ τῆς γαστρὸς φρονοῦντες*, and as Hesychius paraphrases, *τροφῆς μόνης ἐπιμελούμενοι*.⁸¹

In archaic poetry, the “stomach” (*gastêr*) can also serve as a metaphor for material hunger, signifying a laziness and tendency for outsiders to sponge off society.⁸² Indeed the stomach connotes both material hunger and more figurative forms of hunger,

⁸⁰ Detienne and Vernant 1979: 92-8. See also van Lennep 1843: 145, Luther 1935: 124-5, Latte 194:6 158, Otto 1955: 32, Frankel 1962: 105-6, Kambylis 1965: 62-3, Stroh 1976: 88 note 12 with further references, Kannicht 1980: 14, Neitzel 1980: 387, Arthur 1983: 100-4, or for a more tentative approach, Thalmann 1984: 144-6 and Pratt 1993: 108

⁸¹ Katz and Volk 2000: 123, citing *Σ Th.* 26b.

⁸² Svenbro 1979: 50-9, 70 argues that *gastêr* refers to laziness and dependence upon others for those who live outside of society, rather than a comparison between intellectual and material desire. Svenbro 1979: 50-9 says that “the notions of laziness (*paresse*), symbolically represented by the drone (*frelon*), of the beggar’s condition of dependency (*dépendence*), together with his consequent inability to defend himself against shame and insult (*humilité*), and his disposition to resort to lies (*mesonge*) to procure food for himself, are the beggar’s defining characteristics.” Including a detailed analysis of the word *gastêr* in Greek epic, he bases his argument off of an analysis of numerous passages in the *Odyssey* in which the demands of the *gastêr* dominant the disguised Odysseus (see *Od.* 6.133-6; 7.215-21; 15.344-5; 17.226-8, 286-9, 473-4 and 558-9; and 18.53-4, 362-4 and 380).

Arthur 1983, Thalmann 1984, Nagy 1990b; Nagy 1979: 261 note 4 accept Svenbro’s analysis; c.f. Vernant: 1979: 95. Svenbro 1976: 59 can be criticized for his inept interpretation of *Th.* 25-7, in which he argues for a dualistic position wherein Hesiod criticizes other poets of being useless societal sponges in contrast to his independent state. This view assumes that Hesiod is a poet before his inspiration. Verdenius 1972: 234, Judet de La Combe 1993: 26-30, and Katz and Volk 2000:124, attack this kind of reasoning.

both of which are characteristic of mortals in contrast to the divine Muses. Thus the race of mortals is an “evil disgrace” because they are doomed to be slaves to their stomachs, to their physical desires; it is not only the fear and pain of starvation, but also the desire to shore up resources as a way of preventing hunger—in other words, the mortal desire for unending gain—that makes human beings so wretched. In this way the first mention of the “stomach” (*gastêr*) introduces the major themes of reproduction, desire, and death in relation to the division between mortals and immortals that Hesiod expands upon in the following succession myth, as well as in the myth of Pandora.

In contrast to the *communis opinio* that the point of the Muses’ attack is to illustrate the concept that humans without divine inspiration are semi-bestial creatures concerned only with base necessities, the insult “mere bellies” (*gastêres oion*) could also allude to the connection between poetry and prophecy because the stomach (*gastêr*) is traditionally a source for prophetic insight.⁸³ The Muses’ characterization of Hesiod as a mere belly could thus refer to his capacity as a receptacle of inspiration, for “men who are ‘γαστέρες οἴον’ are vessels for the divine voice that the goddesses of poetry breathe into them; the force of ‘οἴον’ is that human beings do not become poets through their own doing, but are mere mouthpieces of the divinity, mediums to be possessed, just like the

⁸³ Katz and Volk 2000: 124-129, notes 18, 19 follow West’s analysis of *Th.* 32, West 1966 ad loc. and point to the connection between the singer Calchas and the divine voice that Hesiod is given. As well Katz and Volk 2000: 124 argue that anthropological research has shown that “the role of the poet and that of the prophet are intimately connected in many cultures, and it has been claimed that in Greece, too, poetry and prophecy originally formed a unity,” referring to Chadwick 1942; Kugel ed. 1990; Leavitt 1997. See Dodds 1951: 64-101 and Nagy 1990a. As well Katz and Volk 2000: 124 point to the fact that scholars “have shown that Hesiod’s encounter with the Muses contains many traditional elements found cross-culturally in stories of men’s initiation or inspiration by a divinity and is especially rich in parallels to those scenes in the Old Testament where prophets receive their call from God.”

lowlier ἐγγαστρίμυτοι.”⁸⁴ Scholars who follow this interpretation argue that the Muses are not so much abusing the shepherd as instead pointing out his capacity to be filled with divine inspiration. Although it seems an illogical stretch to argue that the word *gastêr* carries no connotations to material hunger, it is an important observation that *gastêr* also carries a prophetic connotation.

When the Muses call Hesiod a mere stomach, then, they indicate the mortal dependence upon the divine for prophetic wisdom, as well as their wretched base state. In other words, this scene illustrates not only the gulf between mortal and immortal, but also the possibility of bridging this divide. Each of the three terms which the Muses level at the shepherd characterize the human condition,

and hence both the fragility and ineluctability of all boundaries: between god and man, man and beast, male and female, truth and deception, outside and inside. But the irreducible and ultimate truth about the human condition is that men are “mere bellies,” *gastêres oion*; as such, this truth bears a close relation to the Muses’ famous and cryptic dictum.⁸⁵

The Muses’ abuse thus provides a glimmer of hope with the possibility for mortals of potentially, though always barely, being able to bridge the gap between the human and divine.

2.7 Muses Speak Truth like to Lies: Outline of Scholarly Interpretations

After the Muses abuse the shepherd Hesiod, they inform him that “we know how to tell many lies that sound like truth | and we know, if we wish, to sing true things”

⁸⁴ Katz and Volk 2000: 127 “on this reading, the connection of v. 26 to vv. 27-8 becomes clear: what the Muses are stressing is the total dependence of a poet on their inspiration, as well as their complete wilfulness in granting it. ... Since poets are 'mere bellies', they are able to sing only what the Muses tell them, in Hesiod's case the (supposedly truthful, see 32) song of the blessed, ever-lasting gods (33), as well as the praises of the Muses themselves (34),” an interpretation I do not entirely follow.

⁸⁵ Arthur 1983: 104. See below for the way that these three insults relate to the Muses’ “cryptic dictum.”

(ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα, | ἴδμεν δ', εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα
γηρύσασθαι).⁸⁶ In this statement, the poet uses the direct voice of the Muses to articulate their own linguistic and intellectual powers, but instead of clarifying, this statement effectively shows the ambiguity inherent to the Muses' abilities. They claim not only to know how to speak many lies (*pseudea polla*) similar to or resembling genuine things (*etumoisin*) but they also know how to speak true things (*alêthea*) when they wish to. What can this mean? What is the difference between ἐτύμοισιν and ἀληθέα? What does this imply for Hesiod's poetry? Before turning to my interpretation of what may be the most enigmatic distich in archaic poetry, I will first outline the main scholarly lines of interpretation.

The main interpretations of the Muses' distich can be divided into two general groups: the 'dualists,' who argue that the Muses distinguish between two categories of poetry,⁸⁷ and the 'monists,' who argue that the Muses' statement applies to all poetry equally, including the *Theogony* itself. The dualists note that in the first line of the distich, the Muses claim to relate lies similar to true things (27), and in the second line they claim the ability to relate true things (28) and thus they argue that Hesiod here implies that the Muses grant him a truth-speaking voice, as truth is deemed superior to lies and therefore the second kind would be preferable to the first. To support this view, these scholars point to the fact that Hesiod is inspired to sing of "the things that will be

⁸⁶ Despite the use of the plural, there is no need to assume that the Muses are speaking to group of shepherds. See West 1966: 160. The scholarly controversy surrounding this enigmatic distich is as unending as the song of the Muses. Many scholars derive a Hesiodic theory of truth from this couplet. See especially: Stroh 1976; Pucci 1977; Walsh 1984: 22-36; and Ferrari 1988. Through a possible allusion in Plato's *Republic* 382d2-3, Belifore 1985 interprets *Th.* 27.

⁸⁷ Katz and Volk 2000: 122.

and the things that have been” (τά τ’ ἐσσόμενα πρό τ’ ἐόντα),⁸⁸ which they take to be equivalent to ‘the truth’ and which could be a shortened description of the subject of the Muses’ own song, “the things that are, the things which have been, and the things that will be” (τά τ’ ἐόντα τά τ’ ἐσσόμενα πρό τ’ ἐόντα).⁸⁹ Most scholars agree that Hesiod claims that the *Theogony* can be classified amongst the true poetry, but there is much more debate among the dualists as to whose poetry exemplifies the false poetry. Some argue that there is no specific attack planned in this line and that it more serves to emphasize the truth-filled character of Hesiod’s poetry,⁹⁰ whereas others read a polemic argument here against competing poet(s), such as Homer,⁹¹ or a criticism of local theogonies and genealogies.⁹²

In contrast to the majority of scholars who subscribe to the ‘dualist’ view in one form or another, some dissenting scholars argue for the ‘monist’ viewpoint: these scholars interpret the distich as applying equally to all poetry, including Hesiod’s own work, arguing that poetry is fundamentally composed of a mixture of truth and lies. Some scholars within this group see this as Hesiod’s nod to the value of fiction⁹³ and others,

⁸⁸ Hes. *Th.* 32.

⁸⁹ Hes. *Th.* 38. This is also the subject of the seer Calchas’ songs (Hom. *Il.* 1.70).

⁹⁰ See Rösler 1980: 296-7 with note 34, Stein 1990: 11 and Rudhart 1996: 30.

⁹¹ Katz and Volk 2000: 122 note 4 provide a summary of the positions and a survey of the bibliography on this question: Friedrich Nietzsche 1995: 54 writes “Lies are Homeric, Truth is Hesiodic” *Lügensang ist homerisch, Wahrsang hesiodeisch.* ; See also Luther 1935: 125, Latte 1946: 159-63, Verdenius 1972: 234-5, Murray 1981: 91, Puelma 1989: 75, Arrighetti 1992, Finkelberg 1998: 157-60 and Pöhlmann 1998 : 247-51, Kambylis 1965: 62-3 and Kannicht 1980: 15-21 contend that Hesiod does not intend a polemic against Homeric epic, but rather an accurate description of the Epic genre.

⁹² As an argument contra local theogonies see Nagy 1990b: 45-7, for contra local genealogies see Svenbro 1976: 65-7.

⁹³ Katz and Volk 2000: 122 note 6 provide a summary of the positions: “This view was vigorously put forward by Stroh 1976 and subsequently heavily criticized, e.g., by Kannicht 1980, Neitzel 1980 and Rösler 1980. Pratt 1993: 106-13 proposes a similar

following Derrida's assertion of the *différance* that occurs in all language, argue that Hesiod here implies a recognition of the irrecoverable nature of truth as conveyed by language because of the gulf between signifier and signified inherent in language.⁹⁴

Following this line of interpretation, the problematic nature of language can be seen as another marker of the limit of mortal capacities in face of immortal powers.

The Derridian monist interpreters claim that the Muses have access to and power over the dissemination of the truth in the form of the resemblance (*homoia*) and truth (*alêthea*), for “no knowledge or power of utterance could be more complete” than the Muses’ because “the ability to utter falsehoods implies and requires knowledge of the truth.”⁹⁵ Thus the Muses are able to declare the extent of their unqualified knowledge and their powers of speech because they control both truth and falsehood.⁹⁶ Who, however, could determine the truth of this statement other than themselves? This question leads Bergren to conclude that “here the very utterance that proves the speaker’s consummate

reading, and Thalmann 1984: 146-9 and Heath 1985: 258-9 lean in the same direction but are more tentative; see also the literature cited in Neitzel 1980: 388 note 3 suggesting a different 'monist' interpretation: according to him, both verses refer solely to non-Hesiodic poetry, which Hesiod realized was characterized by some truth (28) and many lies (27), whereupon he decided to compose different, 'truthful', poetry himself.”

⁹⁴ See Pucci 1977: 8-44 and Arthur 1983: 105-107. Pucci 1977: 13 argues that since “[t]he "original" signified is always absent,” Hesiod, therefore, “cannot control the difference that marks his as any other discourse,” (27) which means his claim for truth can never be more than wishful thinking.” In Arthur’s analysis 1983: 106 “both the true discourse and false one are “imitations”, but the true *logos* imitates “things as they are”, while “the concept of false discourse derives from the idea of imitation as difference from things, simulation of identity with things,” therefore “in order to understand what Hesiod says” we must consider “the recognition that language itself—the *logos*—is a form of fiction, that representation itself is always, in some sense, a ‘lie.’” Ferrari 1988 provides an extensive critique of Pucci’s and Arthur’s Derridean interpretations.

⁹⁵ Bergren 2008: 14

⁹⁶ This claim is expressed in formulaic language also used by the Homeric narrator’s to describe Odysseus’ “Cretan tales,” which mingle truth and falsity (e.g. Hom. *Od.* xix 203).

knowledge of truth puts in question the truthfulness of that utterance,”⁹⁷ which leads her to apply the Muses’ statement to their own claim and thus show how it is a logical impossibility to ask how anyone would determine whether this statement itself is a false thing appearing to be true.⁹⁸

The ability to present at will either false things like to truth things or genuine things serves to indicate a control over knowledge of those things, but the difficulty is that the Muses’ claim is not in itself an adequate proof of this control. Ferrari criticizes this approach by arguing that the Muses’ claim does not imply that everything signified is separate from the truth of the signifier, i.e. that all language implies falsehood, but rather “that the power of speech can always be used to lie,”⁹⁹ for, just as declaring, “Believe me; I know,” may convince, it does not prove knowledge and so too the Muses’ assertion over their control of truth and falsity does not entail that they really have this control.

These critics miss that this distich introduces the theme of the feminine control over deception which pervades the subsequent text of the *Theogony*. The feminine aspect of the Muses as the perpetually virginal daughters of Zeus is not accidental: rather, the Muses control the appearance of truth and falsity in poetic language because of their divine nature, their parentage, and their feminine potency. While the Muses’ statement does imply that all mortal language can be used to lie, the Muses’ ambiguous abilities are

⁹⁷ Bergren 1983: 70.

⁹⁸ Bergren 1987: 89 thus applies the liar’s paradox to the Muses’ claim and compares Sextus Empiricus’ “version of the Cretan lie.” However, Ferrari 1988: 60 shows the inadequacy of this comparison, for “these are categorical demonstrations of truth and falsity, rather than the social and psychological problem of proving the truth of the Muses’ statement.”

⁹⁹ Ferrari 1988: 59 connects this to the notion of deception in exchange causing ‘bad’ exchange, versus true ‘good’ exchange. In other words, false things can always be mistakenly accepted as true. Ferrari does not point out that this statement does not hold in the case of the liar’s paradox.

theoretically characteristic of women generally because “by virtue of their particular knowledge, women can present truth or its imitation, whenever they wish, in both verbal and material constructions.”¹⁰⁰ In other words, the particularly feminine ability to gestate and produce a child implies that an area of knowledge exclusive to women exists: the mother has the capacity to present the false child as the true child, an ontological fact outside of the father’s control.¹⁰¹ This is the crux of male anxiety over marriage exchange, marital fidelity and the legitimacy of the bloodline in Hesiod’s patriarchal society; we see this theme played out in the *Theogony* in the struggle of the succession myth as well as introduced to mortals through Pandora as a punishment to keep mortals in their place.

With this enigmatic distich Hesiod characterizes the fundamental relationship between language and the female in early Greek thought: “a male author ascribes a kind of speech to a female and then makes it his own.”¹⁰² In this epiphany Hesiod situates himself as somewhat successful in appropriating the power of language, the control over generation and deception attributed to the female, but not as successfully as Zeus does at the culmination of the succession myth, to which we turn in the next chapter. In contrast to Zeus’ active power, the character of Hesiod the shepherd remains passively reliant upon the Muses to grant him eloquence and is still susceptible to the dangers that the figure of Pandora introduces to mortals: he characterizes himself as thus “forever plagued by his vulnerability to the woman as the ambiguous source of truth and falsehood.”¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Bergren, 2008: xi.

¹⁰¹ Until the advent of the Jerry Springer show.

¹⁰² Bergren 2008: 13.

¹⁰³ Bergren 2008: 13.

Most scholars get caught up in the Muses' difficult assertion to the shepherd Hesiod, but they do not take into account the implicit authorship of this direct quotation. This episode occurs within a proem composed by the poet and fulfills Hesiod's poetical goal: to honour the gods, to lend legitimacy to the *Theogony* as a whole, and to allow the poet to thus honour himself. The poet's presence is implied in the invocation to the Muses that surrounds his *Dichterweihe*, but suddenly he becomes a character in his own story as the Muses address him directly. In this way, the poet breaks the fourth wall and suddenly calls to attention his own presence. This introduces a question about the relationship between the author and the audience, which is latent in all poetic creation. In this account of his own epiphany, Hesiod "makes us conscious of the authority that, while listening to the first twenty-two lines of the prologue, we had quite unthinkingly accepted,"¹⁰⁴ and thus we can question whether Hesiod is lying to his audience as well as whether or not the Muses lie to Hesiod. As Ferrari asks, "Did this epiphany happen?"¹⁰⁵ But, of course, this epiphany is outside of the metaphysical possibilities of reality, which means of course Hesiod is "lying." The real question is how does this epiphany function *figuratively* in Hesiod's text? Hesiod claims that this encounter happened and within the encounter Hesiod allows the Muses to claim that they have the power to speak false things that appear true and at their will true things, and through this ambiguous episode he legitimizes his poetry without guaranteeing his poetry to be anything more than something that appears to be true. In other words, all inspired poetry requires the Muses' grace to have a chance of saying something true and the proem points not only to the authority and existence of the poet, but also to whence this authority derives, which is

¹⁰⁴ Ferrari 1988: 71.

¹⁰⁵ Ferrari 1988: 71.

ultimately from Zeus. Thus, overall this distich is also part of the praise of the Muses and of their father Zeus, as well as a praise that claims divine legitimacy for the poet.

2.8 The Gift of the Laurel Rod and Divine Voice

After the Muses address the shepherd Hesiod with their confusing abuse, the poet switches back to a narrative voice in order to much more clearly dramatize his reception of poetic authority.¹⁰⁶ He describes how the Muses present Hesiod with the gift of “a rod, a well-flourishing shoot of laurel, a wonderful thing” (σκῆπτρον ἔδον δάφνης ἐριθηλέος ὄζον | ... θηητόν) and they “breathe into him” (*enepneusan*) a divine voice (*audên thespin*). In return they bid the poet to sing continually of things present, past, and future, the race of the blessed gods, and themselves first and last.

The rod (*skeptron*) that Hesiod receives denotes the connection between the reception of poetic ability, prophecy, and political power, for elsewhere in archaic Greek epic the *skeptron* is carried by lords, priests, prophets, heralds and those speaking in an assembly, all people who are representatives of the gods, and are granted privileged access to eloquent speech.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, since the *skeptron* is described as a branch of a well-flourishing laurel tree, and the laurel tree was considered sacred to Apollo, the gift dramatizes the Muses’ mediation of Apollo’s musical and mantic powers to mortals.¹⁰⁸ The Muses endow the poet with these divine gifts by inspiring him with a “divine voice” (*audên thespin*) in order “honour the things about to be and the things which have been”

¹⁰⁶ Nagy 1992: 119-20 sees this scene as the the “key to his authorship.”

¹⁰⁷ West 1968: 163-4, note 30 notes that “elsewhere denotes the staff carried by kings (*Il.* I 279, 2.86, ect.), priests (*Il.* I. 15, 28), and prophets (*Od.* I 1.90, *A. Ag.* 1256) as the symbol that they are a god’s representatives; also by heralds (*Il.* I. 279, 2.86, etc.), and temporarily, by anyone that stands up to speak in the assembly of leaders (*Il.* I. 245, 2.79, 3.218, 23.568, ect.).

¹⁰⁸ Hes. *Th.* 94.

(κλείοιμι τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα),¹⁰⁹ an exhortation excluding the present tense, which some scholars argue is unnecessary, since mortals already have access to the present.

The Muses also anticipate the subject matter of the *Theogony* proper by requesting that Hesiod sing “of the race of the blessed gods that are eternally” (μακάρων γένος αἰὲν ἐόντων),¹¹⁰ and refer to the Proem in their final request in exchange for this gift, that the poet “hymn the Muses themselves first and last forever singing” (σφᾶς δ' αὐτὰς πρῶτόν τε καὶ ὕστατον αἰὲν αἰεῖδεν).¹¹¹ This line allows Hesiod to play on the assonance between αἰὲν αἰεῖδεν, which recalls the Muses' characteristic existence outside of the constraints of time, allowing them to sing forever, be sung forever and therefore to be honoured forever, while honouring those upon whom they bestow their gifts forever.

¹⁰⁹ Hes. *Th.* 32.

¹¹⁰ Hes. *Th.* 33.

¹¹¹ Hes. *Th.* 34.

Chapter 3: Zeus's Acquisition of the Feminine Powers of Generation and Deception in the Succession Myth

3.1 Introduction : The Succession Myth as a Conflict Over Reproduction

As the main narrative of the *Theogony*, the succession myth is fundamentally a story of the struggle to control reproduction. Specifically, it is a struggle between a duplicitous, duplicating feminine principle and a unifying, ordering male principle. It concludes with the male principle taking the feminine up into itself through Zeus's consumption of Metis and the subsequent birth of Athena. Thus, the succession myth illustrates the struggle against *succession* itself, the fact that the child continually replaces the father, in order to establish divine political stability. In the characterization of Gaia, Mêtis, and the other female divinities that populate the succession myth, Hesiod shows how the feminine principle is a generative principle and, therefore, the source of both reproduction and deception. As the source of the creative and generative abilities of prophecy and poetry, the feminine generative principle allows for mediation between the divine and mortal realms. Moreover, since reproduction in the *Theogony* is analogous to crafty verbal production, the final stage of the succession myth tells the story of how Zeus gains governance over sexual reproduction as well as over deception through verbal production. Hesiod thereby introduces an ontological and semantic stability at the divine level in the *telos* of this myth.

Through his account of the birth of the gods (*theogony*), which is also an account of the creation of the cosmos (*cosmogony*),¹¹² Hesiod explains how the world begins with undefined chaos and progresses to a stable order. This is a movement from unformed chthonic instability to ordered Olympian stability, which comes into place through male

¹¹² West 1966: 192 writes, "when your gods include Heaven and Earth, a theogony entails a cosmogony."

domination and the harnessing of feminine fertility. The progression requires first the generation and primordial filling up of the universe, for which reason Gaia, who is the feminine generative principle, is chronologically prior to Zeus, who is the full realization of the stabilizing male principle. This occurs through a three-stage development of progressively more complex versions of kingship and justice, beginning with the interaction between Gaia and Ouranos, followed by the interaction between Rhea and Kronos, and ultimately resulting in an ordered and stabilized divine realm governed by the male unifying principle of Zeus after his consumption of Mêtis. At each stage there is a conflict between the male desire to repress the threat of succession and the female desire to bring to birth children who will take their father's place.

Furthermore, each stage of this conflict is presented anatomically as a struggle over control of the stomach (*gastêr*) and womb (*nêdys*), to the extent that both organs signal the force of the physical desires to consume and produce. To control the *gastêr* and *nêdys* is to have power over the physical hunger to take in, as well as the drive to bring to light that which is begotten, which is to say that it is a struggle to control that which is covered and uncovered. A theme of the progression of justice runs parallel to the progression of reproductive control, for each stage of the conflict and the punishment thereof can be seen as a step along the progressive movement from vengeance and cyclical retributive justice to a stable distributive justice, which finds its cumulative expression in Zeus's reign.

3.2 Beginning *ex archês* : In the Beginning There Was Chaos

Hesiod begins his description of the how the gods come into being, as he had requested from the Muses, at the beginning (*ex archês*).¹¹³ He describes the very beginning (*prôtista*) as the spontaneous appearance of Chaos along with three other gods: Gaia, Tartaros, and Eros. For Hesiod the universe begins in a disordered, unstructured and ill-defined beginning, as manifest in the figure of Chaos, and, due to the undefined nature of this beginning, there is perforce an absence of kingship or justice. This is the first stage of existence prior to the succession myth narrative, which culminates in the opposite universe of this primordial chaos, namely Zeus's ordered cosmos.

With this beginning, Hesiod frames the opposition between negation and substance, as well as the opposition between the fertile disordered other and the well ordered and ordering male force. On the one hand, some scholars read Chaos as “a chasm, ... a yawning space,” which “is stuffed with darkness,”¹¹⁴ rather than a space devoid of everything. Others see it defined paradoxically by being indeterminate negation, which is not “a jumble of undifferentiated matter, but rather its negation, a featureless void.”¹¹⁵ In either case, Chaos is defined by its difficulty to be defined: the unending scholarly debate itself illustrates the inexpressible character of this primordial entity, which bridges the line between existence and non-existence.

On my reading, the most important aspect of Chaos is that it is distinctly non-male. Although grammatically neuter, Chaos is either characterized as female,¹¹⁶ a

¹¹³ Hes. *Th.* 11.

¹¹⁴ West 1966: 192. On Chaos, “chasm, gap, opening” and its generation, see Solmsen 1968: 325; Kirk-Raven-Scofield 1983: 38; H. Podbielski 1986: 253-263.

¹¹⁵ Clay 2003: 15.

¹¹⁶ West 1966: 193, 123.

gender-neutral deity,¹¹⁷ or a “sexually indeterminate figure.”¹¹⁸ An aspect of Chaos’ gender is its ability to generate offspring through parthenogenesis. Chaos introduces its characteristic indefinable obscurity into the world through its progeny Erebus and Night (*Nux*), who are begotten through self-differentiation.¹¹⁹ This parthenogenetic production introduces children that reiterate the features of their parent. In contrast, through sexual union, Night and Erebus produce children who represent a greater degree of definition in the figuration of Brightness (*Aither*) and Day (*Hêmeros*) (123-25),¹²⁰ a procreation that points to the way that Hesiod uses sexual generation as a driving force behind the progression of the succession myth, as I expand upon below. I argue that Chaos begins as a disordered force, which contrasts with the ordering male forces that follow and through the introduction of sexual generation it too is responsible for the introduction of an embryonic form of order.

¹¹⁷ Mondy 1989: 30.

¹¹⁸ Park (2014: 268, 280, note 24) notes that it is unclear how gender should be assigned to Chaos as well as the other three abstractions. However, “their relations and interactions with one another identify them as male, female, or neuter beings. The isolation of Chaos confirms its grammatical neutrality: it does not copulate or even interact with any other entity, male or female.” Attributing a neuter reading of Chaos based on parthenogenesis seems strange in an article wherein Park argues that parthenogenesis is a specifically feminine ability. See also P. Philippson 1936: 7–42. = 1966: 651–87 and Gigon 1945: 29–30.

¹¹⁹ Hes. *Th.* 123-125. Park (2014: 267) sees this parthenogenetic reproduction as the development of the same from the same, as opposed to the sexual reproduction between Night and darkness which produces Bright Air and Day (Hes. *Th.* 124-25). Clay (2003: 27) also notes that this is a more “progressive” generation, which “marks the beginning of time” measurably by the alteration of Night and Day.

¹²⁰ Hes. *Th.* 211-232. The conceptual children born from Night are black Fate, Death, Sleep, Dreams, Blame, Misery, the Hesperides, the Fates, the Dooms, the Spinners, Resentment, Deceit, Intimacy, Old Age, and Strife. Park (2014: 267) argues that Night’s children, though not generally constructive, “demonstrate the early function of parthenogenesis in establishing the timeless truths of existence, albeit the negative side of it.” Fritz Graf notes that these children are “the destructive powers that lurk in the depths of all being” (1993: 84). Zeus subordinates and sublimates the Fates (*Morai*) in the conclusion of the *Theogony*. See below on Hes. *Th.* 903-904.

3.3 Eros: The First Definition in the Cosmos

Chaos appears spontaneously along with Gaia, Tartaros, and Eros, three primordial entities that introduce the first level of distinction and differentiation into the unformed material of the world, including the gender distinction between the first male and female forces, personified as Tartaros and Gaia.¹²¹ In contrast to the gender-neutral and amorphous Chaos, the figure of Eros, who is the personification of a force that drives the genealogies that follow, introduces distinction to the world because desire requires a subject and object. Since he incites desire due to his beauty, Eros is able to control the limbs, minds, and wills of the divine gods:

ὄς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,
λυσιμελής, πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων
δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.

Most beautiful among the immortal gods,
Limb-loosener of all gods and all men,
who conquers the mind and wise counsels within them.¹²²

These qualities imply a certain level of distinction, since the ability of beauty to incite desire requires a beautiful object of desire and a subject capable of desiring.

¹²¹ Although Tartaros is also grammatically both neuter and plural here, elsewhere in the *Theogony* he is masculine singular (Hes. *Th.* 681, 721, 736,=807, 822, 868, with the exception of the neuter plural at 841) and he couples with Gaia as a male figure (Hes. *Th.* 821–22). See West, 1968: 194–195 and Beall 2009: 159–61. Since antiquity interpreters have debated whether or not Tartaros should be considered part of Earth here. See Clay 2003: 15–16 for argument of the progression of Tartara, as a neuter embodiment of the inner Earth, to the male figure Tartarus with whom Gaia couples. Beall argues that this personification of Tartaros represents one of the abodes of the Gods, as a mirror of Olympus, however this has little to no impact on my argument. West 1966: 192 sees this quick construction of the physical world as a way of building from the ground up, by starting with the foundation Chaos, the floor and walls Gaia and Tartarus, mountains and sea and following this with the roof, Ouranos. So that when the house is prepared its inhabitant can move in.

¹²² Hes. *Th.* 120–123. West 1968: 196 comments that “the beauty of the god of love is one of his most constant characteristics.” Pucci 2009: 46 note 26 notes that no other god, except Aphrodite is *kallistos* in Hesiod; see also Sellschopp 1934: 31.

Furthermore, Eros is interpreted as the driving force in sexual union, for, “he is ... present as the force of generation and reproduction” throughout the *Theogony*.¹²³ For this reason, Aristotle claims that Eros is the first principle on Hesiod’s schema:¹²⁴ desire is the primary causal force behind the moving and combining of things.¹²⁵ Modern scholars also see that Eros “signals the introduction of reproduction and gender difference, but he does not merely signify the union of sexual opposites ... [rather,] Eros represents any type of reproductive activity, asexual or sexual.”¹²⁶ In a sense, then, the stages of the following succession myth show the development of the act and products of Eros. Nevertheless, Eros is as substantial and present in the final stage of the Zeus’s reign as he is at this first primordial moment, but at the final stage he is harnessed to fulfill Zeus’s design for the cosmos.¹²⁷ This is to say that the primordial figure of Eros both introduces a primary level of distinction to the cosmos and that the effects of Eros’ force drive the succession-myth narrative, which ultimately results in the ordering of the cosmos.

3.4 Gaia: The Paradigmatic Feminine Force of Generation

Before considering the stages of the succession myth, it is important to see that Hesiod characterizes Gaia as a paradigmatic figure of unrestricted feminine generation who is necessary but must ultimately be restricted by a unifying principle, because of her monstrosity. As anthropomorphized generation, Hesiod presents Gaia as self-

¹²³ West 1966: 196. See James Redfield 1993: 31 who writes, “it seems that Eros has a role in all acts of generation.” Eros is not named again in the *Theogony*, with the exception of Hes. *Th.* 201 in a different connotation.

¹²⁴ Aristotle, *Met.* 984b23.

¹²⁵ Aristotle, *Met.* 984b 30-31. ὡς δέον ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν ὑπάρχειν τιν’ αἰτίαν ἣτις κινήσει καὶ συνάξει τὰ πράγματα. See also Plato, *Symp.* 195b-c.

¹²⁶ Eros works in two ways: “from within one body” and “to unite two entities in sexual union” Park 2014: 267, citing J. Rudhardt 1986 and J.-P. Vernant 1990: 466.

¹²⁷ As a god, Eros becomes Aphrodite’s assistant and is thereby taken into the Olympian order.

contradictorily the most stable figure, as the vast and immovable earth,¹²⁸ but also the most unstable as the source of “the infinite fertility of difference.”¹²⁹ In keeping with her power of creation through generation, Gaia is the source of cunning intelligence, which is manifest in her ability to devise the cunning tricks that drive the progression of the succession myth at each stage.

Gaia is “manifestly female,”¹³⁰ and insofar as generation represents the feminine, femininity manifest. This is shown not only in her personification as the stable material world of the physical universe, in other words the geographical expansion of the earth, but also as the personification of the fertile force that drives reproduction, progression, and change. Thus, we can imagine the Earth at this stage as a giant womb (*nêdus*). On the one hand, this quality makes her similar to *Eros*, who represents desire as the force that initiates two entities to unite in sexual union, because she too is a driving force in the progression of the succession myth. On the other hand, in contrast to *Eros*' force, Gaia personifies the drive that follows upon the act of sexual union, the desire to bring things into existence, in other words, to bring to birth.¹³¹ As an expression of this force, Gaia is the maternal progenitor for the whole cosmic and divine world, with the exception of Chaos.¹³² She is essentially the energy animating the *theogony* (the birth of the gods) and

¹²⁸ Sussman 1978: 61-62. Gaia can also be read as the fixed reference point for actions in space and time.

¹²⁹ Wismann 1996: 20.

¹³⁰ Her gender is reflected both grammatically and in her interactions with male gods.

¹³¹ Sussman 1978: 61 notes that for this reason “Gaia assumes a position of special importance.”

¹³² Hesiod mentions Gaia in the *Theogony* 23 times, with the exception of fr. 150.11 Hofinger [1975]. West 1966: 34-35 observes that “in the *Theogony*, as in the *Catalogue of Women*, the genealogies are basically matrilineal. The whole system of formulae with which the births are described places the emphasis on the mother, who is usually the grammatical subject. Some of them have no husbands Chaos, Eris; in part also Gaia and

as such Gaia acts according to the drive to release new life, which is begotten through pregnancy and tumescence.¹³³

On this reading, the cosmogony is an introduction of order to the universe through the interaction of sexual beings, whose creative acts result in definition and structure. This creativity through sexual union begins with tension and conflict between opposites, but, paradoxically, results in offspring who introduce new being into the world in a productive rather than destructive way. The conflict comes about through the male source's desire to prevent the bringing to birth of his already conceived and fully gestated progeny, in other words, to contravene with the *telos* of the sexual act.¹³⁴ In the end, rather than de-structuring the world, each conflict results in a more ordered, structured, and complex world.

Through the figure of Gaia, Hesiod characterizes the feminine power of generation as necessary but monstrous. Gaia's monstrosity is seen in her epithets, which

Nyx ; sometimes these are husbands, but they are nonentities Koios, Astraios, Palla. Both Ouranos' and Kronos' families are mother's children; and when it comes to Zeus's marriages, the children are much more closely connected with their mothers than with him—he steps in to take the credit for them Themis ~ Moirai, Demeter ~ Persephone, Mnemosyne ~ Muses. Only at the end of the *Theogony* does the arrangement of material imply the precedence of the father.” See Philipson 1936: 3, Schwabl 1955: 526.

¹³³ Sussman 1978: 161-162 argues that “constraint under pressure and release of what has been held comprise between them the fundamental dynamic of sexuality in this cosmos, and hence define movement toward creativity. The creation of a new being begins with tumescence and ejaculation; it is achieved through pregnancy and birth. Tumescence and pregnancy are parallel processes. Both involve a swelling, a filling up. They have in common that, once begun, the drive for release of what is within is irresistible.” Eventually “it comes to be the principle motif of all movement, both sexual and nonsexual, within the cosmos. Gaia's method of dealing with the constraint placed upon her introduces another recurrent motif.”

¹³⁴ Sussman 1978: 61-62 sees that “conflict decreases the entropy of the world and tends toward creation and new order.” I will show how this comes about through the offspring taking up their rightful places in the universe and how Zeus establishes a fixed order in the Succession myth section.

describe her vast extension in the world. For example, she is introduced with the epithet “broad-breasted” (*eurusternos*),¹³⁵ indicating both her maternal potential and the vast extension of her body.¹³⁶ As well, her other regular epithets indicate this great extension and her monstrosity: “monstrous” (*pelôrê*)¹³⁷ “the limitless earth” (*aperirona gaian*)¹³⁸ “great” (*megalê*).¹³⁹

Another aspect of Gaia’s feminine monstrosity is that her identity is constantly in flux, unlike her male counterparts, because she introduces the entities that define and structure her, establishing through parthenogenesis the fundamental definition of the universe.¹⁴⁰ For example, she first begets Ouranos (the sky, heaven) through a process of internal self-differentiation (126-127).¹⁴¹ Her stability and constant fertility make her “both cause and effect of herself” and yet she never possesses anything that she creates,

¹³⁵ See Cypr. 1.2. West 1966: 193 points out that *Eurysternos* or *Eurystern* was a cult title of the Earth at Delphi Mnaseas Pat. Ap. Sch. = fr. Müller, FHG iii. 157 and in Achaea Paus. 7.25.13. See Farnell, iii. 11. Hesiod characterizes first Earth, then Heaven, then Mountains as the seats of the gods 117, 128, 129.

¹³⁶ Hes. *Th.* 159. Pucci 2009: 45 disagrees that this epithet refers to Gaia’s maternal production, but gives no valid support for this assertion, other than mentioning the other epithets applied to Gaia, which indicate her extension.

¹³⁷ Pucci 2009: 45, note 22 points out that Homer never uses the epithet *pelôrê* to describe Gaia. Lamberton 1988: 73 emphasizes the pejorative nature of this epithet, arguing that in Hesiod *pelôrê* always connotes monstrosity as well as expansiveness, saying, “in her aspect as *Gaia pelore*, ‘monstrous Earth,’ she is specifically linked to the destructive forces represented by the Giants and Typhoeus.”

¹³⁸ Hes. *Th.* 87.

¹³⁹ See the epithets applied to her elsewhere as identified by Pucci 2009: 45: *megalê* Bacch. 5, 224, *megisté* Solon 30, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Hes. *Th.* 622. Her first children inherit her capacity to provide shelter for the Olympian gods. Sussman 1978: 61 argues that “she is the seat, the base, the foundation of all things, always secure.”

¹⁴¹ Pucci 2009: 46 argues that “it is vain to ask whether Ouranos is or is not part of Gaia: he is in some way both, a sort of “differed” Gaia.” I will comment on Gaia’s interaction with Ouranos below.

making her “constantly dispossessed, for she is in whatever she creates.”¹⁴² As well, Gaia acts continually in favour of the uncovering of her progenies and towards the protection of the youngest child, the newest creation, even when this contradicts her previous alliances.¹⁴³

Despite being the driving force in the coming-to-be of the universe, Gaia is nevertheless an essentially passive and dependent entity, whose allegiances are continually shifting to her latest creation, her youngest child. She is also partially dependant upon other beings to act out any violence in defense of her children because her nature as the principle of fertility is fundamentally at odds with destruction. For this reason, she seems, as Pucci writes, “to have no hands: she always needs ... a male to act in her place: even when she creates a weapon she does not handle it.”¹⁴⁴ Gaia uses cunning and co-operation to arrange indirect rather than direct force, such that her generative powers are consonant with her intellectual ability to deceive and conceive plots. This is not to say that Gaia is incapable of destructive actions. Indeed, Pucci has shown that she “can create weapons and even monsters in so far as it is fertility, but it cannot betray or contradict itself by using violence to destroy.”¹⁴⁵ On account of her generation of children, weapons, and plots, Gaia is characterized by her shrewdness and trickery,¹⁴⁶ for she “provides knowledge and sometimes foreknowledge which precipitate

¹⁴² See Heidegger *Holzwege* Trans. by Hofstadter 31: 42 “Earth is that whence the arising as such brings back and shelters everything without violation. In the things that arise, earth is present as the sheltering agent.”

¹⁴³ See below on the Typhomachy. Hes. *Th.* 820-880.

¹⁴⁴ Pucci 2009: 46.

¹⁴⁵ Pucci 2009: 46.

¹⁴⁶ See Hes. *Th.* 175, 626, etc. In the following section on the succession myth I will show how Gaia acts as the advising force behind the each stage of the conflict. Gaia is said to be the first occupant of the Delphic oracular seat. Gaia is honoured as the first

the actions that shape the cosmos.”¹⁴⁷ For these reasons Gaia is the fount of feminine *mêtis*.

Gaia’s first descendants introduce the primary stage of definition to the world, but this is definition at its most disordered, confused, and monstrous. Since these progenies are so closely related to Gaia, they reflect and illustrate her own disordered state of fertility. For example, through parthenogenesis Gaia first begets Ouranos, starry Heaven, who both is an equal to herself and performs the same function as a seat of the gods,¹⁴⁸ but his initially poorly defined state is reflected in the fact that although he is named the sky, at this stage he is nearly coextensive with Gaia. Then, in the same independent manner, she begets the graceful hills (*ourea makra*), where the Nymphs dwell proleptically, and Pontos, the sea.¹⁴⁹ Gaia and Pontos beget a flock of monsters: the Graiai, the Gorgons, Chrysaor, Pegasus, Geryoneus, Orthos, Echidina, Creberus, Hydra, the Chimaera, the Sphinx, the Nemean lion, and the snake who protects the fruit of the Hesperides. Describing this race as “a monstrous zoo,” Pucci argues that the “hybridism and gigantism that marks these beings could be ascribed to the mingling of the two opposite principles, the steadfastness of Gaia and the fluidity of the sea,” but notes that Gaia produces monstrous offspring without the aid of an opposite fluid principle, since she also begets the Hundred-Handers and the Titans.¹⁵⁰ The importance of this level of

prophet of Delphi in Aeschylus’ *Eumenides* (Aesch. Eum. 1-2). Lloyd-Jones *ad loc.* observes that the Delphic oracle had belonged to the Great Goddess who played an important part in Minoan and Mycenaean religions. Sommerstein 1989 *ad loc.* suggests “the first oracular deity at Delphi” rather than “the first prophesy anywhere.” Pausanias (Paus. 10.5.5) also writes that Earth was the first possessor of Delphi.

¹⁴⁷ Sussman 1978: 63.

¹⁴⁸ Hes. *Th.* 126-128.

¹⁴⁹ Pontos begets Nereus to be unerring and truthful. Hes. *Th.* 240-264.

¹⁵⁰ Pucci 2009: 59. See Costa 1969: 165.

creation lies in the fact that it shows the confusion, fertility, and duplicity in “the specific nature of [the] ontological being” of Gaia’s monsters.¹⁵¹ The world does not rest in this disordered and monstrous production for long, for Hesiod then introduces the progressive narrative of the succession myth.

3.5 The First Stage of the Succession Myth: Ouranos and Gaia

Gaia’s relationship with Ouranos forms the first level of the succession myth, which represents “the antithesis of the ideal of human society ruled by *dikê*.”¹⁵² It is a fundamental stage of the universe displaying an unstable tension between a male power and a female power wherein the male power desires to cover and suppress and thereby continue its dominion, whereas the female power desires to beget and birth children, who are themselves destined to threaten their father’s power in accomplishing their own ends. The tension is manifest in a contest between the force (*biê*) of the male unifying power and the feminine generative and cunning intellect (*mêtis*). As a manifestation of the male side of this conflict, Hesiod characterizes Ouranos with the epithet “vigorous” (*thaleros*)¹⁵³ and describes how Ouranos brings Night with him and spreads himself around Gaia as one “desirous of love-making” *himeirôn philtêtos*.¹⁵⁴ In this act, the tension between the drives of Ouranos and Gaia introduces a conflict, which Gaia resolves with the first act of vengeance: the castration of Ouranos. At this stage, the first and simplest level of justice destroys the sexual potency and changes the identity of Ouranos, whose castration results first in disordered fertility—the birth of monsters and

¹⁵¹ Pucci 2009: 57-58, following Clay 2003 and Costa 1969.

¹⁵² Lamberton 1988: 75.

¹⁵³ Hes. *Th.* 138.

¹⁵⁴ Hes. *Th.* 176-177. Pucci 2009: 48. On *philotes* see Pironti 2007: 38-69, who sees Ouranos’ covering as analogous to Zeus creating a golden cloud (*Il.* 14.343-345) and Poseidon’s covering with a mountainous wave (*Od.* 11.243-250).

of Aphrodite—and then in infertility, as expressed in the separation between earth and sky.¹⁵⁵

Hesiod relates how, in her union with Ouranos, Gaia begets the Titans, a brood of six females and six males,¹⁵⁶ whom Ouranos names “Titans” because they fight back against his rule.¹⁵⁷ Hesiod emphasizes the importance of this brood because they are the children of the Sky and the Earth, and as such they are set apart from Gaia’s other progeny, representing “an older generation of gods, ‘the former gods.’”¹⁵⁸ The very youngest (*hoplotatos*) of these children is Kronos,¹⁵⁹ whom Hesiod describes as the “crooked-minded and most terrible of the children” (ἀγκυλομήτης | δεινότατος παίδων).¹⁶⁰ He expresses this crooked wiliness and terrible cleverness in his hatred towards his father.¹⁶¹ At this pre-castration stage, Ouranos is in constant contact and

¹⁵⁵ Lamberton 1988: 75 reads this as “a world of comic-book horror, beyond good and evil, or, rather, before the introduction of justice and hence irredeemably monstrous.” Justice, however, is unnecessary before conflict; the first conflict introduces the first level of justice. As well, it is only after Ouranos’ castration that we can consider the Sky and Gaia the Earth as separate beings.

¹⁵⁶ Hes. *Th.* 133-136: Oceanus, Coeus, Crius, Hyperion, Iapetus, Theia, Rhea, Themis, Mnemosyne, Phoebe, Tethys, and Kronos. Bonnafé 1984: 185-86 argues that Hesiod downgrades Okeanos and Tethys, Homer’s primordial parents, to merely members of the generation of the Titans from Homer’s primal parents.

¹⁵⁷ Hes. *Th.* 207.

¹⁵⁸ West 1966: 200-201. Hes. *Th.* 424, 486. West 1966: 199-200 notes that “the marriage between Earth and sky is a very common mythological motif,” since “the rain that fertilizes the earth and make things grow is seen as the seed of heaven.” Earth and sky also give birth to the Hundred-handers.

¹⁵⁹ West 1966: 206 notes, “the final member of a list often receives special emphasis.” See West 1966: 204, 204-205 on the origin and meaning of Kronos’ name. Although he has this epithet, Kronos is not Gaia and Ouranos’ final child. Rather he is only the youngest of these six.

¹⁶⁰ Hes. *Th.* 137-138.

¹⁶¹ Hes. *Th.* 138. At this stage Gaia and Ouranos also produce the Cyclopes, and the three hundred-handers. These beings are monstrous and do not according to Clay 2003: 16-17 resemble the “theomorphic standards of appearance for Hesiod, human beings are anthropomorphic because they resemble the gods.” Although these beings suffer the same

intercourse with Gaia, continually generating offspring. Hating them and being hated by them, he does not allow the children to be born by forcing them to remain within the Earth, in other words, he keeps them hidden (*apokrupuptaske*) “and does not allow them to come to light” (καὶ ἐς φάος οὐκ ἀνίεσκε). Instead, he hides them (*keuthmōni*) in their mother, the Earth, and “rejoices at this evil deed” (κακῶ δ’ ἐπετέρπετο ἔργῳ).¹⁶² Ouranos secures the power of his reign and fulfills his desire to continue his unremitting embrace of Gaia by brute force, but his governance is self-contradictory since he denies himself others to exercise power over precisely in and through his attempt to protect his rule from the competition his progeny would pose.¹⁶³

The story goes that in response to Ouranos’ force, Gaia “devises a crafty and evil trick” (δολίην δὲ κακὴν τ’ ἐφράσσατο τέχνην),¹⁶⁴ which comes to fruition because without forethought Ouranos forces the children to stay within their mother, which allows Gaia to collaborate with her son Kronos. Gaia crafts “a sickle” (*drepanon*) and encourages her children to take heart. Hesiod emphasizes the difference between Gaia’s relationship with her children in contrast to Ouranos’ hatred of them by describing how she encourages her “dear children” (*philon tetiēmenē*) “to keep heart” (*tharsunousa*)

fate as the Titans, Kronos does not liberate them when he frees the Titans, but Zeus does liberate them at Hes. *Th.* 501-506, 617-626. Reconciling the narrative of the succession myth with the Titanomachy has caused scholars much difficulty. See West 1966: 206.

¹⁶² West 1966: 214 notes that most likely Hesiod implies here that the children are kept in the womb by Ouranos’ “unremitting embrace” and hence, “that is why [Gaia] is so distressed 159-60, and why castration solves the problem.”

¹⁶³ Yasmura 2011: 80 points out that Zeus and Kronos receive the same implication through explicit prophecies as is here implied in the earliest stage of the succession. Détienne and Vernant 1978: 61-2 and Yasumura 2011: 175 note 18 argue that Ouranos is not considered as a sovereign, but rather that Kronos introduces the theme of competition for kingship.

¹⁶⁴ Pucci 2009: 51 notes “with “evil”, the focalizer seems to be Hesiod.”

while she “sorrows” (*tetiêmenê*).¹⁶⁵ This caring feeling is also returned by her son Kronos, at least at this point in the narrative, as he calls her his “dear mother” (*mêtera kednên*).¹⁶⁶ Gaia displays her maternal concern and desire to bring to birth when she tells her children,

παῖδες ἐμοὶ καὶ πατρός ἀτασθάλου, αἶ κ' ἐθέλητε
 πείθεσθαι, πατρός κε κακὴν τισαίμεθα λώβην
 ὑμετέρου: πρότερος γὰρ ἀεικέα μήσατο ἔργα

my children, begotten of a wicked father, if you will
 believe me, then we should punish the vile outrage of your father;
 for he first devised shameful things.¹⁶⁷

In this speech, Gaia calls Ouranos “wicked” or “arrogant” (*atasthalou*) and calls for the children to aid in exacting revenge (*tisis*), punishing Ouranos’ “evil outrage” (*kakên lôbên*). In this episode Hesiod emphasizes the connection between the ability to persuade and the feminine generative principle, which is shown through the rhetorical structure of Gaia’s speech, for she tells her children that “if they will be persuaded,” ἐθέλητε / πείθεσθαι, then they can exact vengeance. The motivation she provides her children is that Ouranos first “devises” (*mêsato*) “shameful things” (*aeikea erga*)¹⁶⁸ and she is thereby successful in her goal of persuasion.

The revenge that Gaia plans for Ouranos exemplifies the simplest level of justice in the *Theogony*, eye-for-an-eye *poinë*; it matches the simplicity of Ouranos’ crime, for

¹⁶⁵ Hes. *Th.* 162-163. As Pucci 2009: 48 argues, “with few exceptions, the text underlines the focalization by Gaia herself as it emphasizes her pain, her “dear children” 163 and has her insisting on Ouranos’ prior guilt 166.” She takes responsibility for her deed, which is seen in the shift from “you” to the emphatic “we” (165-166), whereas Ouranos will curse only his children (207-210).

¹⁶⁶ Hes. *Th.* 169.

¹⁶⁷ Hes. *Th.* 164-166.

¹⁶⁸ Kronos repeats this line at 171. This introduces a motif of word play around the word *mêdomai*, which translates as ‘counsels,’ ‘plot,’ ‘contrive,’ and comes to fruition in the description of Aphrodite as the product of *mêdea*. See below.

she uses art (*technê*) and cunning (*mêtis*) to craft a harvesting tool and thereby reap Ouranos' full reproductive potential. By making him impotent, she exacts poetic justice for his crime of thwarting her reproductive powers, for keeping hidden what ought to come to light. She effectively empties Ouranos' fullness, which, in contrast, allows her own fullness to empty into the world. Gaia takes *poinê* in the most basic form: "harm returned for harm, violence for violence."¹⁶⁹ Notably, there is an ambiguity in the Greek idea of *poinê*, for "*poinê* could also mean 'symbolic retribution,' in the form of blood money or *wergild*, but in Greek there is no distinct terminology ... for 'equivalent injury' and 'compensation.'"¹⁷⁰ The succession myth of the *Theogony* portrays the development of *poinê*, from the simple form of the exchange of harm for harm, which has the flaw of eternal re-occurrence, to the symbolic retribution, a more developed notion of justice.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Arthur 1982: 66.

¹⁷⁰ Arthur 1982: 66.

¹⁷¹ Yasmura 2011: 179 note 26 sees no ethical development of justice in the *Theogony*, and places the claim for Zeus's just rule in the Works and Days 257, with the introduction of Dike. As evidence, he cites the story of Prometheus (*Th.* 535-69) as showing Prometheus rather than Zeus having a claim to justice and argues that Gaia's form of vengeance is the only justice in the *Theogony*. Lloyd-Jones 1983: 35 in contrast, suggests that "Cronus gave Zeus provocation, so Zeus overthrew Cronus; since then justice has sat behind his throne." Some scholars see Zeus differing from Kronos in moral virtue. See Neitzzel 1975: 108 ff. who argues that Zeus's *Herrschaft* is *die ordnende Macht of Vernunft* and Schmidt 1989: 17-37 who sees that the underlying means for the creation of Zeus's *Herrschaft* derives from his justice (*Gerechtigkeit*); Wismann 1966: argues that Hesiod grounds Zeus's order in his distribution of *timai*, the *dasmos*, which makes order stable and unchangeable, saying *L'ordre ou la différence joue au coeur même de l'identité, c'est celui de la justice de Zeus*. Blümer 2001: vol. II. 134 states that "the myth of Prometheus is the first ring in a chain of supporting evidence for Zeus: his conquering of the different adversaries sons of Japetus, Titans, Typhoeus is the premise *Voraussetzung* for the creation of a new, just order of the world." Pucci 2009: 39 argues that Zeus is "the principle of unity, harmony and identity winning conflicts and stopping uncontrolled disseminations and putting an end to the infinite energy and fertility of difference." However, he adds that Zeus creates a new order after his victories, since Kronos already distributes *timai* (*Th.* 392-393 and 423-425). Pucci 2009:53 argues that Zeus's justice is different only in his capture of the media, saying, "we realize that the

With eye-for-an-eye retributive justice, Gaia introduces cyclical violence that only ends with Zeus's introduction of distributive justice.

In comparison to Ouranos' clear inability to access *mêtis*, his progeny, Kronos, shows his ability to act out the clever plan that Gaia contrives. Ouranos' rule of pure force can only be countered by the co-operation of cunning and courage. Just as Ouranos rejoices at stuffing his children into Gaia, Gaia rejoices (*gêthêsen*) that Kronos agrees to help her in her revenge.¹⁷² To exact her plan, Gaia "hides Kronos in ambush" (μιν κρύψασα λόχῳ), turning the very form of Ouranos' crime into a plan for vengeance.¹⁷³ Gaia gives Kronos the jagged sickle (*hapên karcharodonta*) and "informs him completely of the plan" (δόλον δ' ὑπεθήκατο πάντα).¹⁷⁴ Hesiod describes the act itself:

ὁ δ' ἐκ λοχέοιο πάις ὠρέξατο χειρὶ
σκαίῃ, δεξιτερῇ δὲ πελώριον ἔλλαβεν ἄρπην
μακρὴν καρχαρόδοντα, φίλου δ' ἀπὸ μήδεα πατρὸς
ἔσσυμένως ἤμησε, πάλιν δ' ἔρριψε φέρεσθαι
ἔξοπίσω

Then from his hiding place the son stretched forth his left hand
and in his right took the great long sickle with jagged teeth,
and swiftly lopped off his own dear father's testicles
and cast them away to fall

real privilege of Zeus's characterization in comparison with Cronos' is the favourable picture that the song of the Muses, his daughters, presents of him. In accordance with their poetic principle in pursuing truth as identity with things as they are, they gesture towards the father as the sole sovereign of the world and forever the same." This does not account, however, for the progression of the succession myth and the variation between Kronos' suppression of his children and Zeus's pre-emptive swallowing of Mêtis.

¹⁷² Hes. *Th.* 173.

¹⁷³ Hes. *Th.* 174.

¹⁷⁴ Hes. *Th.* 175. ὑποτίθημι, the word Hesiod employs here plays into the motif of hiding and uncovering, since it translates as to "to hold out under, present" and in the middle voice means, "to suggest, hint a thing to one ... to suggest a speech, an action, to any one, advise or counsel him thereto" in Homer and Hesiod. See *LSJ s.v.* West 1966: 217-218 notes that the epithet 'καρχαρόδοντα' "shows that Hesiod thought of Kronos' weapon as a simple agricultural sickle." Which is "a normal weapon in Greek mythology for the amputation of monsters, and a very suitable one for the job."

behind him.¹⁷⁵

Kronos effectively reaps his father's genitals and this bloody harvesting results in yet more fertility.¹⁷⁶ From the bloody drops of semen which fall upon the ground, Gaia bears the Erinyes, the Giants and the Melian Nymphs, around which we get a short catalogue.¹⁷⁷

3.6 The Birth of Aphrodite

The birth of Aphrodite, the final child resulting from Ouranos' castration, also illustrates the difference between this first stage of the succession and the final stage which is characterized by the birth of Athena, Aphrodite's negative counterpart.¹⁷⁸ On the one hand, Aphrodite is the figuration of the feminine power to incite desire, on the other, Athena is the forever virginal and nearly sexless aid to her father. In other words, Aphrodite, as "the embodiment of the sexual attraction which overwhelms the male rather than of the authority and martial skill through which he asserts his prowess," is the antithesis to her father, rather than equal in character, as Athena is.¹⁷⁹ At this level of the

¹⁷⁵ Hes. *Th.* 178-182.

¹⁷⁶ Hes. *Th.* 180-181. An apotropaic gesture according to West 1966: 219 or a gesture to escape contamination according to Vasta 2006.

West 1966: 219 points to a comparison between this line and Hes. *Th.* ἦλθε δ' ἄρα πρώτη Στὺξ ἄφθιτος Οὐλυμπόνδε / σὺν σφοῖσιν παίδεσσι φίλου διὰ μήδεα πατρός. Where μήδεα this has completely difference sense, pointing to the motif of word play between these two senses. See West 1966: 85-86 on the form of μήδεα.

¹⁷⁷ Hes. *Th.* 185-187, Pucci notes that "in line 185 the chiasmus connects and puts into tension the revengeful Erinyes and the warlike Giants. The births of the Eryines at this moment is not casual: they will in fact constitute Ouranos' rights of revenge 470-473 for his son's crime." The Melian Nymphs are in the trees from which in Hes. *Op.* 145 Zeus draws the bronze race. See West 1966: 186.

¹⁷⁸ On the birth of Athena in contrast to that of Athena, See Pironti 2007: 55 ff., Betegh 2004: 161. For an instructive essay and on the kinetic energy of the myth exploding from its words see Leclerc 1978, who writes on how the myth explodes kinetically from its words.

¹⁷⁹ Arthur 1989: 66.

succession myth, Gaia, as the personification of maternal fertility, represents the danger of fertility through the threat that paternal power faces in the cooperation between the mother and child, but Aphrodite represents the threat of desire devoid of fertility.¹⁸⁰

Both Athena and Aphrodite are born primarily from a father: Athena from the rational Zeus's head,¹⁸¹ as a result of his wily plans (*mêdea*) and Aphrodite from the vigorous (*thaleros*) and forceful father's severed genitals (*mêdea*). Hesiod plays on the "delightfully provocative etymological puns to explain the traditional epithet of Aphrodite (Ourania and *philommeidês*, "smile-loving" from the *mêdea*, the "genitals" of Ouranos (200))."¹⁸² In this way, due to her parentage and the manner of her birth, Aphrodite is the "primal daughter of the primal father," who, with her very presence, reminds her father of his castration, in contrast to Athena's status as everlasting reminder and enactor of Zeus's success, through her perpetual virginal support.

With Aphrodite's birth, Ouranos is literally cut off from the further action of the myth, but in his place Aphrodite becomes the Olympian representative for the first stage of primordial force, through her feminine powers of desire and deception. Aphrodite's character can be described as "built up through synecdochic condensations of Gaia, Eros,

¹⁸⁰ Hesiod shows how this threat shifts from the divine realm to the mortal realm in the progression of the succession myth and the establishment of Pandora.

¹⁸¹ Yasmura 2011: 180 note 33 and Pope 1960: 114 caution against interpreting Athena's birth original from Zeus's head as signalling a connection with intellect, since in antiquity the head is not the seat of cognition. Rather, Athena derives her wits from Mêtis, but, in comparison to the genitals, the head would certainly be considered closer to the seat of rationality.

¹⁸² Pucci 2009: 49. See West 1966: 212-213 on the complex aetiological myth. *mêdea*, as a neuter plural also formulaically refers to Zeus's immortal 'counsels.' See Nagy 1974: 265-278 and G. Pironti 2001:16-17. As well, Hesiod interprets the name Aphrodite from 'foam' (*aphrôs*) which refers to her gestation in the sea.

and the Muses of the proem, in such a way as to anticipate both Pandora and Athena,”¹⁸³ for she adopts the persuasive and deceptive powers of Gaia and the Muses. As proof of her power over desire, Hesiod describes how Eros and Himeros become her attendants.¹⁸⁴ Aphrodite is also distinct from the other female divinities because she represents only one side of the coin to the extent that she is the principle of sexual desire with its correlative deceit and artifice, rather than fecundity and fertility. As the chthonic force of desire who joins the Olympian ranks, she is adept at mastery over men through concealment and deceit, as well as through the charm of honey-sweet words. Hesiod describes how she governs women’s charms:

ταύτην δ’ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τιμὴν ἔχει ἠδὲ λέλογχε
μοῖραν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,
παρθενίους τ’ ὄαρους μειδήματά τ’ ἐξαπάτας τε
τέρψιν τε γλυκερὴν φιλότητά τε μιλίχην τε.

she has this honour from the beginning,
and this is the fate allotted to her amongst men and immortal gods:
maidens’ discourses and smiles and deceits
with sweet delight and love and graciousness.¹⁸⁵

The characterization of Aphrodite’s powers in this way is integral to understanding the way that women, both as precious objects, but also as potential agents in the gift economy, are viewed as deceptive. They appear to bear wealth but in fact bear hunger to men, all while making them powerless to resist temptation, as I show in the third chapter. Here we see how at the divine level there is a primacy given to the female forces of both desire and fecundity in the primordial stage of the succession myth.

3.7 Succession Myth Stage II: The Conflict Between Rhea, Kronos, and Zeus

¹⁸³ Arthur 1982: 67. For a comparison of Pandora and Aphrodite see Schwabl 1966: 80.

¹⁸⁴ Hes. *Th.* 201-202.

¹⁸⁵ Hes. *Th.* 203-206.

The second stage of the succession myth illustrates the middle stage in the progression towards a more complexly developed form of kingship, justice, and ontological existence, which is able to achieve a more stable and secure existence. This stage lies between the primitive relationship of Gaia, Ouranos, and their children and the final implementation of Zeus's rule. The difference between the first stage and the second is the introduction of kingship, the innovation of the male womb, and the analogous innovation of symbolic retribution. At this stage, Kronos has a more developed form of kingship in relation to Ouranos and is even described as a *basileus*,¹⁸⁶ but Gaia's oracle forewarns that Kronos' governance will be usurped, so in response Kronos adopts his father's technique of suppressing his progeny by hiding them, developing the previous method by both observing the children and swallowing them himself.¹⁸⁷ Hesiod now

¹⁸⁶ This is the first time that kingship is attributed to anyone within the chronological narrative, although it has been assigned to Zeus proleptically multiple times. His kingship is emphasized in relation to Zeus's when Gaia delivers the stone in place of the infant Zeus. Hes. *Th.* 485-486.

¹⁸⁷ In full Hes. *Th.* 459-465:

καὶ τοὺς μὲν κατέπινε μέγας Κρόνος, ὥς τις ἕκαστος
 νηδύος ἐξ ἱερῆς μητρὸς πρὸς γούναθ' ἵκοιτο,
 τὰ φρονέων, ἵνα μή τις ἀγαῶν Οὐρανίωνων
 ἄλλος ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἔχοι βασιληίδα τιμήν.
 πύθετο γὰρ Γαίης τε καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος,
 οὐνεκά οἱ πέπρωτο ἐφ' ὑπὸ παιδὶ δαμῆναι
 καὶ κρατερῶ περ ἔόντι, Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλάς

These great Kronos swallowed as each
 came forth from the womb to his mother's knees
 with this intent, that no other of the proud sons of Heaven
 should hold the kingly office amongst the deathless gods.
 For he learned from Earth and starry Heaven
 that he was destined to be overcome by his own son,
 strong though he was, through the contriving of great Zeus.

The formula: “keeping an eye on the children, he swallowed them” (δοκεύων / παῖδας ἔους κατέπινε) repeats at 459-460 and reoccurs again at 473, and 497. West 1966: 294

makes explicit both the threat of succession that was implicit in at the Ouranos-Gaia stage and Kronos' strategy to counter this threat. First, Hesiod relates how Rhea and Kronos beget the Olympians, a group of three daughters and three sons with Zeus as the youngest child.¹⁸⁸ Described proleptically at his birth as “wise Zeus, father of gods and men, by whose thunder the wide earth is shaken” (μητιόντα, θεῶν πατέρ’ ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν, | τοῦ καὶ ὑπὸ βροντῆς πελεμίζεται εὐρεῖα χθών),¹⁸⁹ he eventually counters his father Kronos with the aid of Gaia’s prophetic wisdom.¹⁹⁰

Kronos’ knowledge shows a development from Ouranos’ poor intellect in that he recognizes how the mother is as much of a threat as the child.¹⁹¹ We may read his defensive tactic of swallowing his children as his making his stomach (*gastêr*) into a reverse male womb (*nêdus*), wherein that which should be uncovered is hidden.¹⁹² This trick shows, however, that Kronos has only partial knowledge of the truth of succession, for he knows only that one of his children will overthrow him, but he does not know which one or how will come to pass.¹⁹³ As well, his attempt to assert control over his progeny by separating them from the maternal principle is only partially successful.

notes that “the imperfect is appropriate not only because the action was repeated, but because it was not completed: Zeus was never swallowed.”

¹⁸⁸ Rhea, born as one of the Titans along with her brother Kronos seems to usurp Gaia’s station as maternal figure without explanation. Hes. *Th.* 454-459. Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus. West 1966: 290 notes that Hesiod’s narration is a “conflation of two originally separate accounts of the birth of Zeus.” Zeus position as the youngest son points to his importance in relation to his siblings. In contrast, Poseidon (Hom. *Il.* 13.355, 15.166, 182) is said to be younger than Zeus.

¹⁸⁹ Hes. *Th.* 457-459. West 1966: notes that Homer uses *mêtioeis* only of drugs Od. 4. 227. θεῶν πατέρ’ ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν occurs at 47, and 468.

¹⁹⁰ I agree with Arthur 1982 that Ouranos’ presence in relating the oracle seems to be at odds with his previous characterization, and that Gaia is more so the source.

¹⁹¹ Caldwell 1989: 161 points out this development.

¹⁹² Hesiod *Th.* 487 describes how Kronos took the stone “in his hands and thrust it down into his womb/belly” (τόθ’ ἔλων χεῖρεσσιν ἐὴν ἐσκάτθετο νηδύν).

¹⁹³ He may or may not know which child will overthrow him.

Kronos' reproductive dependence upon a feminine source for the gestation and birth of his children mirrors his intellectual dependence upon Gaia for oracular wisdom.¹⁹⁴ Put simply, Kronos is unsuccessful because his innovation is not radical enough. He shifts the manner that force is used to counter cunning, by taking the children into himself, but he does not attempt to take the manifestation of cunning and generation itself into his dominion.

Rhea's maternal care and feminine desire to bring to birth is shown by the fact that she responds with a grief (*penthos alaston*) similar to Gaia's at the covering of her children.¹⁹⁵ Rather than attempting to stand alone in force as Kronos does, Rhea invokes the co-operation of both her parents, Gaia and Ouranos and her child, Zeus, to counter Kronos. Here again we see the feminine drive to protect and nurture the young come to fruition through co-operation and cunning, rather than direct force. Rhea accomplishes her goal by consulting Gaia and Ouranos and petitions them at Zeus's birth, that they may "come up with some plan together so that the birth of her dear child | might go unnoticed and she would make great and crookedly wiley Kronos | pay the Erinys of her father and children, whom he swallowed down" (μητιν συμφράσασθαι, ὅπως λελάθοιτο τεκοῦσα | παῖδα φίλον, τίσαιτο δ' ἔρινυς πατρός ἐοῖο | παίδων θ', οὓς κατέπινε μέγας Κρόνος ἀγκυλομήτης).¹⁹⁶ Rhea petitions Gaia for retribution, *tisis*, for his crime against her children.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Both Kronos and Zeus are faced with this oracular knowledge from a feminine source, and both have to overcome this threat through an act of cunning. The similarity in their situations is shown in Hesiod's use of formulaic expressions. I will show how Zeus becomes less dependent by consuming the feminine source in the next section.

¹⁹⁵ Hes. *Th.* 467.

¹⁹⁶ Hes. *Th.* 471-473. The co-operation and intellect involved is evoked by the use of *συμφράσασθαι* but it becomes clear that Gaia is more responsible for the deception.

The plan that the Earth contrives and aids Rhea in accomplishing is an appropriation and reversal of Kronos' crime, which involves making hidden the child within herself as a form of deception, rather than violence against a reproductive force. This is the first act of symbolic retribution, and can be interpreted as the mythical introduction of exchange and semantics generally, as I argue below. Gaia accomplishes this by concealing Rhea's birth through bringing her to Crete, replacing the new-born Zeus with a rock, while hiding the infant Zeus within a cave.¹⁹⁸ Gaia then delivers Kronos a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes,¹⁹⁹ which is both a duplicitous gift from a feminine source and the first act of symbolic exchange.

Despite his epithet 'crookedly wily minded' (*agkulomêtes*), Kronos does not have a suitably developed rational faculty to understand that he receives a stone instead of a son, for he represents only the middle stage between Ouranos and Zeus. Gaia's *mêtis*, on the other hand, is apparent in her transformation of a crime into a punishment. In a stroke of Hesiod's poetic genius, Gaia turns Kronos' crime of swallowing his children into a punishment for this deed, describing Kronos as a "wretch" (*schetlios*) because

οὐδ' ἐνόησε μετὰ φρεσίν, ὥς οἱ ὀπίσσω
 ἀντὶ λίθου ἐὸς υἱὸς ἀνίκητος καὶ ἀκηδῆς
 λείπεθ', ὃ μιν τάχ' ἔμελλε βίη καὶ χερσὶ δαμάσσας
 τιμῆς ἐξελάειν, ὃ δ' ἐν ἀθανάτοισι ἀνάξειν.

he knew not in his heart that in place
 of the stone his son unconquered and untroubled,
 was left behind, and that he was soon to overcome him by force and might

Ouranos and Gaia also offer a prophesy together at 892 ff., however, I agree with West 1966: 295 that Ouranos is merely "a complement of Gaia" here and at 892. He also has a revelation at 210, but this is "a threat rather than a revelation of destiny." See also Hes. *Th.* 626-628, for the prophetic help she gives to Zeus.

¹⁹⁷ She also invokes the crime against Ouranos.

¹⁹⁸ See West 1966: 297-298 on the geographical implications. Hes. *Th.* 482-484.

¹⁹⁹ Hes. *Th.* 485-486.

and drive him from his honours, himself to reign over the deathless gods.²⁰⁰ By swallowing the stone, Kronos unwittingly performs the act of vengeance on himself. Thus, with this punishment, Hesiod emphasizes Kronos' crucial lack of foreknowledge, comprehension, and *mêtis*, in comparison to his female foes, saying that he "knew not in his heart" (οὐδ' ἐνόησε μετὰ φρεσίν 488) either that his son is still undefeated (*anikêtos*) and without cares (*akêdês*),²⁰¹ or that he is about to be overcome by his own son's force.

In response to swallowing the stone, Kronos' stomach is mysteriously provoked to regurgitate each child, beginning with the stone. This act of spilling forth mirrors the fertile outpouring after Ouranos' castration.²⁰² Thus, the conversion of Kronos' male *gastêr* into a *nêdys* causes him to rebirth his children. As well, just as Gaia's *dolos* and use of *technê* leads to Ouranos' castration, Hesiod attributes the outcome of this trick to Gaia's guile saying that Kronos was "overcome by the very-wise Gaia's tricks" (Γαίης ἐννεσίησι πολυφραδέεσσι δολωθεις),²⁰³ but ultimately attributes the victory to the forceful arts (*technêisi biêphi*) of Kronos' son, Zeus.²⁰⁴

Gaia's deceptive gift of the stone can be interpreted as "the primary *mêtis*, the first imitation, one that seems to symbolize a suppositious child," since "only the female has the knowledge necessary to tell the true from the false heir, but it is this very knowledge that also makes her able to substitute for the truth a false thing that resemble

²⁰⁰ Hes. *Th.* 488-491.

²⁰¹ This is perhaps another clever pun, since in this word can also mean to be "unburied" which is both true in Zeus's case, since he has not been buried in Kronos' stomach, but also false, since he is birthed within the cave.

²⁰² Hesiod does not specify how the stone would have this result when the children themselves seem to cause no digestive troubles. Perhaps this is because a stone is in its nature a raw piece of Gaia, and Kronos' *nêdys* has not sufficiently appropriated the female receptive and nurturing power for this earthy seed.

²⁰³ Hes. *Th.* 494.

²⁰⁴ Hes. *Th.* 496.

it.²⁰⁵ Such co-operative deception on the part of Gaia, Rhea and Zeus alludes to a fundamental cause of the tension between the mother and father in patriarchal society, wherein the estate is passed down to a male heir, and thus the legitimacy of the heir is of the utmost importance, for there is always an uncertainty about the true paternity of the child on the part of the father.²⁰⁶ This act of deception illustrates the characteristic feature of feminine *mêtis*, which Hesiod first introduces with in the epiphany of the Muses, namely the ability to present false things as true, which I discuss in more detail in the following chapter.

3.8 Stone as *Sêma*: The Mythical Grounding for the Introduction of Symbolic Retribution, Exchange, Language, and Prophecy

Hesiod shifts the focus of the narrative here, from a story of how Gaia and Rhea deceive Kronos by presenting an illegitimate child as a true one, to Zeus's success. Although Zeus seems to have little agency in the trick that causes his safety and the coming forth of the Olympians, Hesiod concludes this section of the succession myth with the story of how Zeus set up this stone as a *sêma* in Delphi saying,

τὸν μὲν Ζεὺς στήριξε κατὰ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης
 Πυθοῖ ἐν ἡγαθέῃ γυάλοις ὑπο Παρνησοῖο
 σῆμ' ἔμεν ἐξοπίσω, θαῦμα θνητοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.

And Zeus set it fast in the wide-pathed earth
 at good Pytho under the glens of Parnassus,
 to be a sign thenceforth and a wonder to mortal human beings.²⁰⁷

This is to say that Zeus asserts his dominion over the chthonic forces by setting the stone in the earth (*kata chthonos*). Hesiod marks the effectiveness of this sign by signaling that hereafter (*exopisô*) it will be not only a sign (*sêma*) to mortals, but also a wonder

²⁰⁵ Bergren 2003: 18.

²⁰⁶ See the following chapter on Pandora and gift exchange.

²⁰⁷ Hes. *Th.* 498-500.

(*thauma*). This stone represents both the sublimated form of justice that characterizes Zeus's stable rule, and a shift in the dominion over oracular wisdom. This is shown through the way that Zeus transforms the stone again into another *sêma* after it is regurgitated, when he sets the stone at Parnassos, thereby indicating his oracular power, because Parnassos is the seat of oracular wisdom as the site of the Delphic oracle. The setting of the stone can also be interpreted as a concluding motif in the *gastêr/nêdys* series because it is considered to be a belly button like stone (*omphalos*), which marks the centre point of world.²⁰⁸ Thus, the stone represents not only communication in general, but especially the mediation between divine knowledge and mortal kingship and therefore the representative nature of the stone as a *sêma* in both the judicial and oracular capacities point to the *semantic*²⁰⁹ nature of language in general. This is also analogous to Zeus's control over ontology and linguistics, or semantics generally, which comes to fruition in the final stage of the succession myth, as I argue below.

The stone represents Zeus's governance over oracular insight, but it nevertheless indicates Gaia as the source of this oracular wisdom. Gaia provides the foreknowledge that functions as a warning for Kronos, as well as the plan to deceive Kronos and the material for the stone itself. It is only after Zeus ingests Mêtis that he appropriates this oracular ability into himself. Despite the fact that Zeus has not yet overcome Mêtis, the establishment of the stone can be interpreted as a "commemoration of his ascendancy through and over *mêtis*,"²¹⁰ since

²⁰⁸ West 1966: 303 suggests that the stone may have been a meteor.

²⁰⁹ Or *semantic*. Hesiod was clearly a prophetic pun-master, on which see e.g. Mazur 2004. [Mazur, Peter S. 2004. "Paronomasia in Hesiod *Works and Days* 80-85." *CP* 99.3, pp. 243-246.]

²¹⁰ Bergren 2008: 18.

he sets up the stone to be a sign of his control of signification, to be a sign to all who come to learn the mind of the father through the oracle of the son, [and] that Zeus's regime is built upon the knowledge necessary to disguise, to imitate, to substitute—a knowledge now securely embodied by the father of men and gods.²¹¹

This pre-emptively suggests that Zeus has already acquired dominion over the powers of fertility as well as deception, which comes about in the final stage of the succession myth.

Overall, then, the stone becomes a multifaceted and transformative *sêma*. First, it stands in for the infant Zeus as a deceptive and illegitimate replacement, though also as a sign that points to the legitimate son. Second, it introduces a more developed form of justice compared to the vengeance that Gaia and Kronos take on Ouranos. Rather than the vengeful act of *poinë*, which deals Ouranos a violent blow in return for the violence that he causes his children and Gaia, the stone is a fitting reward for Kronos' crimes, for it is given in place of the infant Zeus and thus functions as symbolic exchange or recompense. The symbolic nature of retributive justice characterizes "Zeus's rule as the reign of justice," which "has to do with the emergence of symbolic exchange and balanced reciprocity."²¹² The key difference between symbolic *poinë* and violent vengeful *poinë* is that the latter results in cyclical conflict and thus unstable governance, whereas the former terminates the conflict.

The greater stability of this *poinë* is shown in Zeus's subsequent actions. After describing how Zeus sets up the stone, Hesiod relates that

λύσε δὲ πατροκασιγνήτους ὀλοῶν ὑπὸ δεσμῶν
Οὐρανίδας, οὓς δῆσε πατὴρ ἀσειφροσύνησιν:
οἱ οἱ ἀπεμνήσαντο χάριν ἔυεργεσιῶν,

²¹¹ Bergren 2008: 19.

²¹² Arthur 1983: 73.

δῶκαν δὲ βροντὴν ἠδ' αἰθαλόεντα κεραυνὸν
καὶ στεροπὴν: τὸ πρὶν δὲ πελώρη Γαῖα κεκεύθει:
τοῖς πίσυνοσ θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἀνάσσει.

he loosed from their deadly bonds the brothers of his father,
sons of Heaven whom his father in his foolishness had bound.
And they remembered to be grateful to him for his kindness,
and gave him thunder and the glowing thunderbolt
and lightning: for before that, huge Earth had hidden these.
In them he trusts and rules over mortals and immortals.²¹³

Zeus frees the Cyclopes, whom Ouranos had bound, and these chthonic forces recognize this favour by presenting Zeus with thunder and lightning, which lend force and divine support to his sovereignty, and which Earth had hidden prior to this.²¹⁴ Here too Zeus overtakes a power previously in the feminine domain. In Gaia's hands this power lies dormant, but Zeus brings it into action. The effect of introducing symbolic recompense is not only the end of the present conflict between Rhea and Kronos but also the introduction of support for Zeus's rule through his distribution of honour to the older chthonic forces, as well as the new Olympian order, as we see come to fruition in the Titanomachy and Typhanomachy.

3.9 Challengers to Zeus' Power: Titanomachy

After the birth of Zeus and the defeat of Kronos, Hesiod shifts to a Zeus-centred divine order, but, of course, his rule does not initially go unchallenged. In the narration of the Titanomachy, Hesiod establishes the political stability of Zeus's reign through his employment of distributive justice rather than of pure force, which displays a development in the stability of the political rule in relation both to Ouranos' embryonic political power and to Kronos' restrictive governance.

²¹³ Hes. *Th.* 501-506.

²¹⁴ See Titanomachy, Hes. *Th.* 687 ff. and Typhoeus 853 ff., Zeus's power still depends upon these forces 72, 506. See the episode with the Hundred-handers, 617 ff.

The story goes that, when Kronos is forced to spew forth his children, he and the other Titans fight against the new Olympian order.²¹⁵ Hesiod emphasizes how Zeus asks the Hundred-handers to remember his prior friendly kindness (*philotês*) and return that favour in good will, saying

μνησάμενοι φιλότητος ἐνῆεος, ὅσσα παθόντες
ἐς φάος ἄψ ἀφίκεσθε δυσηλεγέος ὑπὸ δεσμοῦ
ἡμετέρας διὰ βουλάς ὑπὸ ζόφου ἠερόεντος.

remember our friendly kindness, and from what sufferings
you are come back to the light from your cruel bondage
under misty gloom through our counsels.²¹⁶

To sweeten the deal, Zeus provides them with divine nectar and ambrosia to revive their proud spirits.²¹⁷ The cooperation with the Hundred-handers is significant because, instead of drawing upon a younger new power alone, Zeus reaches back to appropriate the powers of the past, present, and future in a way similar to Hesiod's frequent use of prolepsis.

Zeus does not accomplish this strategic plan alone, or only with the help of the Hundred-handers, for again Gaia aids him by giving him advice (*phradmosunêisin*). Hesiod emphasizes her power here by showing how she provides the plan which leads to Zeus's victory, saying, "she herself recounted all things to the gods fully, how with these they might gain victory and a glorious cause to vaunt themselves" (αὐτὴ γὰρ σφιν ἅπαντα

²¹⁵ Hes. *Th.* 624-626. "But the son of Kronos and the other deathless gods | whom rich-haired Rhea bore from union with Kronos, | brought them up again to the light at Earth's advising." (ἀλλά σφεας Κρονίδης τε καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι, | οὓς τέκεν ἠύκομος Ῥεΐη Κρόνου ἐν φιλότητι, | Γαίης φραδμοσύνησιν ἀνήγαγον ἐς φάος αὐτίς).

²¹⁶ Hes. *Th.* 651-652.

²¹⁷ Hes. *Th.* 640. There is no such thing as a free lunch.

διηνεκέως κατέλεξε / σὸν κείνοις νίκην τε καὶ ἀγλαὸν εὖχος ἀρέσθαι).²¹⁸ She is also responsible for advising Zeus to initially free the Hundred-handers.²¹⁹

Despite Gaia's help, Zeus is primarily given credit for bringing these progeny of the first race to light. In this way, Zeus brings to fruition the feminine will to nourish the existence of progeny in a way that is more successful than Gaia and Kronos' similar attempts, because he assigns them *timai*. He persuades the Hundred-handers to fight with him in order to end the ten-year battle of the gods and thereby derives his power not from his own force alone but from the co-operation of the other gods to whom he has given the honour they deserve. Through their support, Zeus avoids unnecessary challenges to his station and gains allies in his struggles. As a result, with the aid of Gaia and the Hundred-handers, Zeus overwhelms the Titans and consigns them to Tartarus.²²⁰

3.10 Challengers to Zeus' Power: Typhoeus

In an episode similar to the Titanomachy,²²¹ Typhoeus challenges Zeus's dominion and is overcome due to the support that Zeus receives from the other gods. He overcomes Typhoeus in single combat by blasting him with thunderbolts and throwing him into the sea, which means Zeus employs the weapons bestowed upon him by the Cyclopes to accomplish this feat, thereby showing how the power of his rule derives from his budgeting of *timai*. The key difference between the Typhanomachy and the

²¹⁸ Hes. *Th.* 627-628. Gaia also provides a similar prophetic insight during the Gigantomachy, that the gods would only be able to overcome the Giants with mortal aid. See West 1966: 339. sch. Pi. N. 101, Apld. 1. 6. 1. This plays on a familiar 'helper-motif,' according to West 1966: 337.

²¹⁹ Hes. *Th.* 624-626.

²²⁰ Hes. *Th.* 617-720.

²²¹ West 1966: 337, 381 sees that "The Typhoeus episode is a doublet of the Titanomachy." This point is used by scholars who argue that the Typhomachy is spurious as well as those who argue for its authenticity. See West 1966: 379-382 for arguments on the authorship of the passage.

Titanomachy is that, rather than advising Zeus, Gaia sides with her “youngest child Typhoeus” (ὀπλότατον ... παῖδα Τυφωέα) whom she conceived “through her love for Tartarus, by the aid of golden Aphrodite” (Ταρτάρου ἐν φιλότητι διὰ χρυσεῖην Ἀφροδίτην).²²² This is the only episode in the *Theogony* in which Zeus fights against Gaia’s forces, but, according to Hesiod’s scheme, order must eventually tame Gaia’s disorderly productive fertility if the universe is to become an ordered whole (*kosmos*). In light of this, Typhoeus represents the danger inherent in Gaia as the principle of unchecked fertility and multiplicity.

In his monstrous appearance, Typhoeus is the manifestation of excessive unordered multiplicity. To show this, Hesiod emphasizes Typhoeus’ super-divine strength, saying, “strength was with his hands in all that he did and the feet of the strong god were untiring” (οὗ χεῖρες μὲν ἕασιν ἐπ’ ἰσχύι, ἔργματ’ ἔχουσαι, / καὶ πόδες ἀκάματοι κρατεροῦ θεοῦ),²²³ and describing the monstrosity of his appearance as defined by the mixture, number and compilation of horrendous features:

ἐκ δέ οἱ ὤμων
ἦν ἑκατὸν κεφαλαὶ ὄφιος, δεινοῖο δράκοντος,
γλώσσησιν δνοφερῆσι λελιχμότες, ἐκ δέ οἱ ὄσσων
θεσπεσίης κεφαλήσιν ὑπ’ ὀφρύσι πῦρ ἀμάρυσσεν:
πασέων δ’ ἐκ κεφαλέων πῦρ καίετο δερκομένοιο.

from his shoulders
grew a hundred heads of a snake, a fearful dragon,
with dark, flickering tongues, and from under the brows of his eyes
in his marvellous heads flashed fire,
and fire burned from his heads as he glared.²²⁴

²²² Hes. *Th.* 821-822.

²²³ Hes. *Th.* 823-824.

²²⁴ Hes. *Th.* 825-829.

This description gives his audience a detailed picture of Typhoeus' disordered appearance, which underlines the multiplicity of his composition, the frightful elements that compose him, and especially how the element of fire seems to pervade his being. Over and above these visual elements, the poet emphasizes the auditory aspect of this monster to illustrate his ferocity:

φωναὶ δ' ἐν πάσῃσιν ἔσαν δεινῆς κεφαλῆσι
παντοίην ὅπ' ἰεῖσαι ἀθέσφατον: ἄλλοτε μὲν γὰρ
φθέγγονθ' ὥστε θεοῖσι συνιέμεν, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
ταύρου ἐριβρύχεω, μένος ἀσκέτου, ὄσσαν ἀγαύρου,
ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε λέοντος ἀναιδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντος,
ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ σκυλάκεσσιν ἐοικότα, θαύματ' ἀκοῦσαι,
ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ ροίζεσχ', ὑπὸ δ' ἤχεεν οὔρεα μακρά.

there were voices in all his terrible heads,
which uttered every kind of sound unspeakable; for at one time
they made sounds such that the gods understood, but at another,
the noise of a bull bellowing aloud in proud ungovernable fury;
and at another, the sound of a lion, relentless of heart;
and at another, sounds like whelps, wonderful to hear;
and again, at another, he would hiss, so that the high mountains re-echoed.²²⁵

Hesiod catalogues the sounds that Typhoeus makes, the all-inclusive range of which is “even beyond the gods’ power of expression” (*athesphaton*). On the one hand, he speaks so that the gods comprehend, but then as an ungovernable bellowing bull, a relentless lion, whelps who are “a wonder to hear” (*thaumat’ akousai*), and at another time with a strident hissing that echoes through the mountains. The repetition of ἄλλοτε five times in seven lines serves to underscore the monstrous multiplicity in these sounds.

The terrible variety of Typhoeus’ sounds does not function only as a way for the poet to show off in what must have been an entertaining section of dramatic poetry. Rather, Zeus’s destruction of Typhoeus represents an ordering and structuring of sound

²²⁵ Hes. *Th.* 829-835.

and language, which relates to his establishment of the *sêma* at Parnassos. Hesiod relates that when Zeus defeats Gaia's son "the huge earth groaned" (στενάχιζε δὲ γαῖα πελώρη),²²⁶ which points to this vocal victory over Typhoeus as well as over Gaia and all she represents. Hesiod uses the imagery of metallurgy to describe how the earth burns and melts due to the fire set upon it by Zeus's attack on Typhoeus. In this act Zeus civilizes Typhoeus' monstrosity by taking into his dominion the fire that had characterized the unwieldy danger of Typhoeus:

φλόξ δὲ κεραυνωθέντος ἀπέσσυτο τοῖο ἄνακτος
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσησιν ἀιδνῆς παιπαλοέσσης,
πληγέντος. πολλὴ δὲ πελώρη καίετο γαῖα
ἀτμῇ θεσπεσίῃ καὶ ἐτήκετο κασσίτερος ὡς
τέχνη ὑπ' αἰζηῶν ἐν ἐντρήτοις χοάνοισι
θαλφθεῖς, ἢ σίδηρος, ὃ περ κρατερώτατός ἐστιν.
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσησι δαμαζόμενος πυρὶ κηλέω
τήκεται ἐν χθονὶ δῖῃ ὑφ' Ἥφαιστου παλάμησιν.
ὡς ἄρα τήκετο γαῖα σέλαι πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο.

And flame shot forth from the thunder-stricken lord
in the dim rugged glens of the mount,
when he was smitten. A great part of huge earth
was scorched by the terrible vapour and melted as tin melts when heated
by men's art in channelled crucibles;
or as iron, which is hardest of all things,
is shortened by glowing fire in mountain glens and melts
in the divine earth through the strength of Hephaestus.²²⁷

The reference to the *technê* of metallurgy here cannot help but remind us of the first instance of *technê* in the *Theogony*, Gaia's creation of the sickle. But in this stage of cosmic ordering, instead of crafting the plan and weapon to defeat Ouranos, Gaia is now used as the raw materials necessary for cultivating practical tools.²²⁸

²²⁶ Hes. *Th.* 858.

²²⁷ Hes. *Th.* 859-867.

²²⁸ This points to the practice of *technê* as a human endeavour.

As a result of the conflict, Zeus casts Typhoeus into the sea. Rather than defeating another series of divine challengers and keeping his rule by a greater show of force, Zeus is now elected by the other immortals as king of the gods. Hesiod says,

δή ῥα τότε ὄτρυνον βασιλευέμεν ἠδὲ ἀνάσσειν
Γαίης φραδμοσύνησιν Ὀλύμπιον εὐρύοπα Ζῆν
ἀθανάτων: ὃ δὲ τοῖσιν ἐὰς διεδάσσατο τιμάς.

they pressed far-seeing Olympian Zeus to reign
and to rule over them, by Earth's prompting:
so he divided their dignities amongst them.²²⁹

It may seem strange that after her son Typhoeus' defeat Gaia again counsels in Zeus's favour. This could point to a new sublimated form of Gaia, or to an ambivalence in her support, or Hesiod may be making the point that, though Gaia's extreme disorder of unchecked fertility is contradictory to the establishment of order, it is necessary to harness and honour rather than suppress it for the ruling of a well-ordered world. In accordance with the reason why he is elected as king, Zeus shows his distributive justice by distributing honours (*diedassato timas*). This distribution of *timai* functions as the third stage of sophisticated justice in the *Theogony*. As opposed to the vengeful *poinë* enacted against Ouranos and the symbolic retribution that Kronos experiences, Zeus's distribution of honour pre-emptively settles conflicts before they arise.

3.11 Succession Myth Stage III: Zeus and Mêtis

Zeus's union with Mêtis, the personification of transformative intelligence,²³⁰ and the subsequent birth of Athena, which scholars term the *Mêtisgeschichte*, is the third and

²²⁹ Hes. *Th.* 883-885.

²³⁰ Bergren 2008: 15.

final stage of the succession myth.²³¹ After Zeus defeats the challenges to his power, he undertakes a series of symbolic marriages to establish order and security, the first and most symbolically important of which is his union with Mêtis. The priority given to this marriage illustrates how Zeus pre-emptively ends the threat that the fact of generation possesses, the threat of a stronger heir, and takes control of the truth-telling and deceptive powers of language by avoiding the production of an heir who will defeat his father in the way that Kronus has defeated Ouranos and Zeus has defeated Kronus. The result of Zeus's interaction with Mêtis (886-900) is the birth of the eternally virginal and faithfully supportive Athena (924-926) who, as the patron goddess not only of war but equally of weaving—a craft that becomes symbolic of both poetic production and political action—represents the feminine *technê par excellence*.²³² In relation to the previous generations

²³¹ Hes. *Th.* 886-900. There is a tradition of arguing that this section of the text is an interpolation. Solmsen: 1949: 67-68 rejects this passage because Pindar (Pindar Frg. 30) has Zeus wed Themis first and argues that Mêtis cannot be the mother of Athena if Zeus gives birth to Athena from his head, claiming that Zeus's marriage to Wisdom as a way of producing Athena appears to be an anachronistic innovation from later allegorical theology. Wilamowitz 1921: 957-958; Kruse 1409-1410. Brown 1952: 131, Rzach 1929: 1.1.281; Cook 1914-1940: 3.743-744; Otto 1947: 53 counter Solmsen's argument. Thalmann 1984: 198 note 22 persuasively refute Solmsen's argument, pointing out that it is dependent on the Pindar account, which Pindar may have changed to suit his own poetic aims. West 1966: 406 also argues against Solmsen, saying, "the argument is unconvincing. For one thing, we cannot be sure, without the context of the fragment, that Themis actually was said to be Zeus's first wife ever: for example, Pindar might have said '{So he swallowed Mêtis ; but he did not remain without wives.}' First the Fate brought Themis to Olympus', etc. For another thing, even if Pindar does make Themis the first wife, he does not follow Hesiod's account, for he makes the Moraia exist beforehand. It is just as reasonable to argue with Krauer 13, '*Es ist auffällig, wie Pindar betont, daß Zeus die Themis prôton also arxaian Gattin erhält, was ganz wie eine unbekanntem anderen Mythos ausseht.*'"

²³² She governs arts and skills generally, including weaving.

of gods, Zeus's consumption of Mêtis shows his divine intellect and his ability to appropriate another aspect of feminine intelligence into his governance.²³³

The word *mêtis* means both the act of advising and the advice itself, the act of cunning and the trick, as well as the ability to devise. *Mêtis* is translated as “transformative intelligence” because it is consonant with “the tricky ambivalence ascribed to the speech of women,” an ambivalence which is also seen in “the semiotic character of weaving and of graphic art in general.”²³⁴ Throughout Greek thought, *mêtis* denotes continuous transformation or the power to imitate the shape of the enemy and thus defeat them at their own game;²³⁵ the transformative character of *mêtis* is illustrated in the particularly feminine *technê* of weaving as well as the type of language which Hesiod genders as feminine on account of its power to play with deceptive ambivalence. Hesiod emphasizes the intelligence of the goddess Mêtis, the personification of *mêtis*, by describing her as “knowing the most among mortals and immortals” (πλεῖστα τε ἰδυῖαν ἰδὲ θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων).²³⁶

The act and concept of *mêtis* have already pervaded the *Theogony* prior to the *Metisgeschichte* itself, as Gaia proved to be an exemplar of feminine *mêtis* in her defeat of Ouranos and Kronos and likewise instrumental in Zeus's success.²³⁷ Just as Gaia forewarns Kronos that an heir will overcome him, she advises Zeus that Mêtis is destined

²³³ West 1966: 401 is not very impressed by Hesiod's poetic subtlety here, saying “the choice of Mêtis allowed the poet to use the myth as a crude aition for the fact that *mêtis* is a characteristic of Zeus—*mêtieta Zeus, Dia metioenta, Dii Meti atalantos.*”

²³⁴ Bergren 2008: 15.

²³⁵ Detienne and Vernant, 1974: 27-53.

²³⁶ Hes. *Th.* 887.

²³⁷ In contrast, from a lack of *mêtis*, Kronos has the epithet “crookedly-intelligent” (*agkulomêtês*), for he is unable to counter Gaia, Rhea, and Zeus's attacks. Hes. *Th.* 137-138.

to conceive first a daughter and then a son who is destined to take over his kingship of gods and men.²³⁸ She warns that Zeus will bear a “very intelligent child” (*periphrona tekna*) and specifies that a son will be born to Zeus who is “equal to him in force” (*epiphrona menos*) and “will” (*boulên*).²³⁹ Zeus is thus forced to outwit his future child before he is himself outwitted. To do this, Zeus must radically change the progression of succession. In response to the threat of deception, Zeus therefore deceives the deceiver. Through an unexplained trick (*dolos*),²⁴⁰ identified only as a wily speech (*haimulos logos*), Zeus cons the impregnated Mêtis and places her into his *nêdus*, a transformative act, which I discuss below.

However, Zeus does this not only in order to prevent the birth of a stronger heir but also in order to gain the intelligence required to prevent any challenge to his power, ingesting Mêtis “in order that she might devise for him both good and evil” (ὥς δὴ οἱ φράσσαιτο θεὰ ἀγαθόν τε κακόν τε).²⁴¹ This is to say that he takes up not only the feminine power of generation but also the consonant dominion over her power of

²³⁸ Ouranos joins her in the advising (Hes. *Th.* 891 ff.), however, I agree with West 1966: 295 that Ouranos is merely “a complement of Gaia,” who also has a revelation at 210, but this is “a threat rather than a revelation of destiny.” Hesiod *Th.* 892-893 explains that Gaia provides this counsel “so that no other should hold royal sway over the eternal gods in place of Zeus” (ἵνα μὴ βασιληίδα τιμῆν | ἄλλος ἔχοι Διὸς ἀντὶ θεῶν αἰειγενετῶν).

²³⁹ Hes. *Th.* 896.

²⁴⁰ He takes the advice of Gaia and Ouranos and “craftily deceived her | with cunning words and put her in his own belly” (δόλω φρένας ἐξαπατήσας | αἰμυλίοισι λόγοισιν ἔην ἐσκάτθετο νηδὺν) Hes. *Th.* 888-890. West 1966: 403 Notes that “according to sch. And Apld. 1. 3. 6, Mêtis had the ability to change into different shapes, a talent appropriate to her resourceful nature, and one which she shared with Thetis among others, the other bride dangerous to Zeus. Both nymphs’ versatility is connected with their relationship to water: Thetis is a Nereid, Mêtis an Oceanid.” He speculates that “possibly Mêtis turned into water, and Zeus drank her.” Ninck 1921 also connects Zeus’s speculative drink with the establishment of libation based oracles, *Wenn also Zeus das prophetische Wassernumen verschlingt, um vorahnendes Wissen zu erlangen, so liegt hier ganz offenbar die Vorstellung vom mantisch erregenden Wassertrunk vgl. S. 83 ff. zugrunde.*

²⁴¹ Hes. *Th.* 900.

devising good and evil. Some scholars argue that it is counter-intuitive that Zeus requires Mêtis for good counsel, if he is already able to deceive her and, therefore, already possesses the powers that he acquires from her, for he uses one of the very weapons that characterize Mêtis, namely wily speech (*haimulos logos*), to capture her, thereby showing that he is already *mêtietia*, as Hesiod declares at the opening of the poem.²⁴² These scholars argue that Zeus can only defeat Mêtis and acquire this sovereignty because “he has always already possessed it”²⁴³ and Hesiod can therefore emphasize how Zeus is more *mêtietia* than his paternal predecessors. It makes sense that this supposed inconsistency lies at the centre of qualifications for valid sovereignty, since how else could cunning be conquered except through an act of greater cunning?²⁴⁴

Other scholars argue that through his ingestion of Mêtis, Zeus becomes “more than simply a monarch: he becomes Sovereignty itself,” for, by “marrying, mastering and swallowing Mêtis,” he makes himself more *mêtietia*, “endowed with *mêtis*.”²⁴⁵ On this interpretation, Zeus requires the ingestion of Metis to become deceptive (*mêtietia*) an epithet that has already been applied to him. The “chronological or causal inconstancy” does not bother these scholars because this “is a typical feature of mythic expression, but here it also contributes to the goal of the text to validate Zeus’s rule.”²⁴⁶

I argue that Zeus already possesses some amount of cunning to circumvent Mêtis’ potential threat, but before he takes her up into himself he is dependant upon Gaia and

²⁴² Hes. *Th.* 56.

²⁴³ Detienne and Vernant 1978: 67-8.

²⁴⁴ Detienne and Vernant 1978: 67-8 show that the need to appropriate *Mêtis* through prior possession of it is characteristic of multiple other myths describing conquering heroes Heracles, Menelaus, Peleus. Bergren 2003: 36 note 26 sees that on this reading Zeus displays how “the ruler takes what has always been inherently his own.”

²⁴⁵ Detienne and Vernant 1978: 67-8.

²⁴⁶ Bergren 2003: 36 note 26.

other female forces for his powers of generation and transformative intelligence. Zeus's success in conquering Mêtis is not merely an illustration of his inherent power, which adds nothing to his reign through this act, for, though he has the correct counsel, the strength of will, the ability to distribute *timai*, and his own *nêdus*, Zeus needs to swallow Mêtis to consume the reproductive power absent from the male and thus establish political stability by only producing an heir eternally loyal to himself. Despite Zeus's ability to trick Mêtis, this feminine power of generation cannot be fully governed unless he ingests her, thereby making her womb his own. Through this action, Zeus pre-emptively circumvents the production of a stronger male heir and instead begets Athena, an heir who straddles the sexes and is loyal only to her father while personifying the sublimated version of her mother. While internalizing the reproductive power external to himself, Zeus thus unifies the power that he originally shared with Metis.

In this episode, we see that the power of generation is consonant with the ability to conceive plots. Mêtis, as the “wisest among gods and mortal men” (πλεῖστα τε ἰδυῖαν ἰδὲ θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων), would be in possession of the prophetic wisdom that we have seen Gaia exhibit.²⁴⁷ Thus, Zeus's consumption of Metis also represents Zeus's overtaking of the feminine power of oracular advising. Zeus is only able to deceive her with Gaia's prophetic aid, and thus we can read his assimilation of Mêtis by putting her in his *nêdys* as the housing of a prophetic spirit in his belly.²⁴⁸ Without Metis, Zeus does

²⁴⁷ Hes. *Th.* 887. West 1966: 403 argues that “Hesiod's Mêtis represents simply knowledge and the practical wisdom that is based on knowledge,” referring to Hes. *Th.* 264 where Nerus' daughters are described as ἀμόμωνα ἔργα ἰδυῖαι. But this does not account for the context of this episode, nor the fact that Mêtis aides Zeus in counseling good and evil plans.

²⁴⁸ Onians 1951: 489, Eurycles makes this claim, See sch. Ar. V. 1014), sch. Pl. Soph. 252C, and Dodds, 1951: 71 ff.

not have the same governance over the characteristically feminine aspect of the reproductive power and the symbolically significant semiotic ability to deceive. Only through the ingestion of Metis, and his subsequent production of Athena from his head, can Zeus circumvent the potential deception that the mother poses, a feminine threat that the Muses first articulate as the ability to present false things as true, illegitimate children as legitimate.²⁴⁹

There is a second variant of the *Metisgeschichte*, attributed by some scholars to Hesiod, which occurs in Galen's quotation of Chrysippus in a discussion of the place of wisdom in *On the Opinions of Hippocrates and Plato*. This is the entirety of the fragment:

Ἥρη δὲ ζαμένησε καὶ ἤρισε ᾧ παρακοίτη.
 ἐκ ταύτης δ' ἔριδος ἢ μὲν τέκε φαίδιμον υἱὸν
 Ἥφαιστον, φιλότητος ἄτερ Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο,
 ἐκ πάντων παλάμησι κεκασμένον Οὐρανίωνων:
 αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' Ὠκεανοῦ καὶ Τηθύος ἠυκόμοιο
 κούρη νόσφ' Ἥρης παρελέξατο καλλιπαρήφω, ...
 ἐξαπαφὼν Μῆτιν καίπερ πολυδήνε' ἐοῦσαν.
 συμμάρψας δ' ὃ γε χερσὶν ἐὴν ἐγκάτθετο νηδὺν
 δεῖσας, μὴ τέξῃ κρατερώτερον ἄλλο κεραυνοῦ.
 τοῦνεκά μιν Κρονίδης ὑψίζυγος αἰθέρι ναίων
 κάμπιεν ἐξαπίνης: ἢ δ' αὐτίκα Παλλάδ' Ἀθήνην
 κύσατο: τὴν μὲν ἔτικτε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε
 πὰρ κορυφὴν Τρίτωνος ἐπ' ὄχθησιν ποταμοῖο.
 Μῆτις δ' αὐτε Ζηνὸς ὑπὸ σπλάγχνοις λελαθυῖα
 ἦστο, Ἀθηναίης μήτηρ, τέκταινα δικαίων
 πλεῖστα θεῶν τε ἰδυῖα καταθνητῶν τ' ἀνθρώπων,
 ἔνθα θεὰ παρέδεκτο ὅθεν παλάμαις περὶ πάντων
 ἀθανάτων ἐκέκασθ' οἱ Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσιν,
 αἰγίδα ποιήσασα φοβέστρατον ἔντος Ἀθήνης:
 σὺν τῇ ἐγείνατό μιν πολεμῖα τεύχε' ἔχουσιν.

Out of this strife she [Hera] bore a glorious son by her devices, without Zeus who holds the aegis, Hephaestus, who excelled all the sons of Heaven with his skilled hands. But he [Zeus] lay with the daughter of

²⁴⁹ This is a concern we see embodied in Pandora, as discussed in the following chapter.

Ocean and beautiful haired Tethys, apart from fair-cheeked Hera, deceiving Mêtis, shrewd though she was. But he seized her with his hands and put her down into his belly, fearing that she might bring forth something stronger than his thunderbolt: for this reason, the son of Kronos, who sits on high and dwells in the aether, swallowed her down suddenly. But she at once conceived Pallas Athena: and the father of men and gods gave her birth by way of his head on the banks of the river Triton. Then, Mêtis was sitting concealed in Zeus's entrails: she is Athena's mother, who builds up works of righteousness and knows the most among gods and men. The goddess [Athena] then received that [the aegis] by which she surpassed in her skilled hands all the immortals who dwell in Olympus. She [Mêtis] made the aegis, Athena's host-scaring equipment. Together with it [the aegis], he [Zeus] gave birth to her [Athena], who was wearing war-like armour.²⁵⁰

In this version Zeus also overcomes Mêtis, the personification of cunning, through an act of deception, but in this fragment Zeus is motivated by the strife with Hera (5) and the resulting birth of Hephaestus rather than by Gaia's prophecy alone. In both cases, the birth of Hephaestus, the bumbling craftsmen of the gods and the fatherless son, is juxtaposed with Athena's paternal birth. In the *Theogony* however, the juxtaposition occurs when the poet relates the birth of Athena at the end of the catalogue of Zeus's wives.²⁵¹ Both Athena and Hephaestus govern *technê* and both are born of a single parent, but Athena's birth is less parthenogenetic than Hephaestus' birth,²⁵² since Hera

²⁵⁰ 3.8.11-14 = Hes. fr. dub 194 Most [343 M-W] *Theogony* lines 929a-t in Evelyn-White's edition. Doherty 1995: 2 note 4 assumes Hesiod is the author of this fragment. However, Yasmura 2011: 88 note 40 claims that it is generally deemed inauthentic. Kauer 1959 attempts a close comparison between this fragment and the *Theogony* and she concludes that Crysippus' quotation is a fragment of a lost epic poem on the theme of Mêtis and the birth of Athena, and that, although there are parallels with Hesiod, it can be viewed as independent from the *Theogony*.

²⁵¹ Hes. *Th.* 927-929.

²⁵² Yasmura 2011: 88 follows Kauer 1959 in pointing out that the innovation in frag. 294 is the way that it juxtaposes to the births of Athena and Hephaestus. Both note the similar qualities of Hephaestus and Athena: "the former a son born from the mother without a father, the latter is a daughter born from the father without a mother" but neither considers the relation both gods have with *technê*.

begets Hephaestus by herself but Zeus is unable to beget without the aid of a female.²⁵³

The reversal of the temporal order in the fragment emphasizes Athena's relation to Hephaestus, whereas the *Theogony* emphasizes Athena's generation as the conclusion of the succession myth. From this fragment we see that Mêtis is again a personification of wisdom, as she who "knows the most among gods and men" (πλεῖστα θεῶν τε ἰδυῖα καταθνητῶν τ' ἀνθρώπων) (15). Zeus deceives her despite her shrewd nature and uses his hands to force her into his stomach, because he fears that she will produce an heir greater than Zeus's thunderbolt. This motivation appears to be more of an afterthought in the fragment, whereas Hesiod emphasizes Mêtis' potential danger.²⁵⁴ Overall, this variant makes similar points and does not contradict my reading of the *Theogony's Metisgeschichte*, showing how in the *Theogony* Hesiod emphasizes Zeus's motivation to ingest Mêtis as a means of taking the feminine generative and deceptive powers up into himself.

3.12 Catalogue of Zeus's Marriages

²⁵³ There are versions of the myth of Athena's birth wherein Zeus does autonomously create Athena from his head. For example, in some he is hit with an axe. It is impossible to tell which variant of the story is older, or whether they held sway simultaneously, but Yasumura 2011:88 argues that "the fragment seems to draw on an older tradition" wherein we find this narrative succession of events: a) the quarrel between Zeus and Hera, b) the birth of Hephaetus; c) the birth of Athena. Whereas in the *Theogony*, Hephaestus' birth results from Athena and Zeus's quarrel (927-8), the birth of Athena is a separate event (924-6). Doherty argues that Mêtis, as the "crafter of right" (14) is portrayed "as architect of what we would call normative ideology."

²⁵⁴ Kauer 1952: 42-3. Yasumura 2011: 89 also considers the Hymn to Apollo (326-8) and concludes that "comparison with these two stories ... demonstrates that the Hesiodic account is designed to focus – structurally and thematically – on the significance of the prophecy about Mêtis, to the exclusion of other mythic variants which might lessen the impact and centrality of his theme.

Zeus's marriage to Mêtis is only the first of the seven that serve to consolidate his rule (886-923): after Mêtis he marries Law (Themis) and begets the Seasons (Horai),²⁵⁵ Good Order (Eunomia), Justice (Dike), Peace (Eirene), and the Fates (Morai: Clotho, Laches, and Atropos).²⁵⁶ Clearly, by personifying the ordering forces of the universe as Zeus's wives and daughters, these symbolic marriages illustrate Zeus's ordered rule in the divine as well as the human realms. Hesiod illustrates the relation to mortals when he describes the Morai as the ones "who mind the works of mortal men" (αἱ ἔργ' ὠρεύουσι καταθνητοῖσι βροτοῖσι).²⁵⁷ Hesiod here purposefully contradicts himself in the relation of this genealogy which he previously attributes to dark night (217), because the Morai are now sublimated from chaotic disordered happenings, to "a principle of order and regularity."²⁵⁸ In other words, they are now subordinated to Zeus as his daughters, and by receiving their honour from him.²⁵⁹ In a similar way, Zeus's marriage with Demeter wherein he begets Persephone also relates to the introduction of Zeus's order to the world of mortals through the cycles of natural seasons (913-914).

Zeus's third marriage is symbolic of the relation between mortals and immortals that Zeus's rule establishes as well, since by uniting with Eurynome and Oceanid, he bears the Graces (Charites Aglaia, Euhrosyne, Thalia), from whose eyes limb-loosening

²⁵⁵ West 1966: 406, referencing *Op.* 225-47, *Od.* 19.109-14, argues that the Horai are the season "of life and growth" and "they are from the beginning goddesses who protect men's *erga*, their cultivated land. ... The poet, however, regards the prosperity of these *erga* as depending primarily on peace and just administration."

²⁵⁶ West 1966: 406 sees these as "the young goddesses representing civilization, prosperity and stability."

²⁵⁷ Hes. *Th.* 903. Interestingly this means that they receive the most honour from Zeus.

²⁵⁸ West 1966: 408.

²⁵⁹ Hes. *Th.* 217. The contradiction does not prove that the poet is departing from the substance of Hesiod's original text.

eros flows.²⁶⁰ As the personification of grace (*charites*), which is to say, both the attraction that results from physical beauty, the physical beauty itself, and that which bestows the gift of beauty upon mortals, the Graces mediate divine beauty to the realm of mortals, and are thus responsible for the resulting wonder (*thauma*). Indeed, wonder (*thauma*) “is used by the Greeks to express the way in which *charis* is seen and how it can be recognized.”²⁶¹ As the daughters of Zeus responsible for mediating the divine quality of beauty to mortals, they thereby bestow the power or punishment of *eros* to select human beings, a power which we see manifest in the gift of Pandora, as I explain in the following chapter. Zeus’s marriage with Mnemosyne and the production of the Muses also introduces a similar relation to the world of mortals. Through the Muses, as discussed in the first chapter, Zeus mediates poetic skill and knowledge for mortals, who would have no access otherwise.²⁶²

After Hesiod completes the catalogue of Zeus’s symbolic marriages, he circles back to report the birth of Athena, placing her at the end of the list as the most important of Zeus’s children. Hesiod relates how Zeus births a daughter who will remain his loyal sidekick:

αὐτὸς δ’ ἐκ κεφαλῆς γλαυκώπιδα Τριτογένειαν
 δεινὴν ἐγρεκύδοιμον ἀγέστρατον Ἀτρυτώνην
 πότνια, ἧ̃ κέλαδοί τε ἄδον πόλεμοί τε μάχαι τε

²⁶⁰ Hes. *Th.* 910-911. “From whose eyes as they glanced flowed love that unnerves the limbs: and beautiful is their glance beneath their brows” (τῶν καὶ ἀπὸ βλεφάρων ἔρος εἴβετο δερκομενάων / λυσιμελής: καλὸν δέ θ’ ὑπ’ ὀφρύσι δερκίωονται).

²⁶¹ Saintillan, 337. More on this point and how it relates to the danger of attractive appearance in the Pandora section.

²⁶² The following marriages are less significant for my argument: Zeus unites with Leto and produces Apollo and Artemis, which Hesiod may have arranged in this way due to Apollo’s close mythological relation to the Muses. See West 1966: 410. Finally, he marries Hera and begets Hebe, Ares, and Eileithyia.

From his head he birthed the grey-eyed Tritogeneia
the terrible, the strife-stirring, the host-leader, the unwearying,
the queen, who delights in tumults and wars and battles.²⁶³

Athena's importance is shown through her stacked epithets, which are applied to none of Zeus's other progeny. She is the "grey-eyed daughter of Triton" (*glaukôpida Tritogeneian*), "terrible" (*deinên*), "strife-stirring" (*egrekudoimon*), "host-leader" (*agestraton*), "unwearyed" (*Atrutônên*), "queen" (*potnian*), all descriptors that emphasize Athena's prowess in war.²⁶⁴ The birth of Athena is clearly the *telos* and completion of the succession myth. Born of Zeus's head, she is the equal and opposite force in comparison to Kronos' daughter, Aphrodite, for Athena appears nearly devoid of gender and utterly untouched by Aphrodite's erotic powers, as argued above. Indeed, she is the most virginal of Zeus's children and this perpetual virginity means her support of her father never ceases. Rather than birthing a male heir who will challenge his throne and continue a cyclical succession, Athena supports Zeus's never-ending regime through use of her physical strength and her skill at weaving plots.

²⁶³ Hes. *Th.* 924-926.

²⁶⁴ Stesichorus Fr. 56 elaborates on this description by adding that Athena was born fully armed.

Chapter 4: Hesiod's Pandora: Womb and Wonder

4.1 Introduction: Hesiod's Pandora as Womb and Wonder

Hesiod presents the ability to bring to birth and to mediate poetic potency, as well as the ability to deceive, as feminine traits. In the second chapter, I showed that Hesiod attributes the legitimacy of his poetry to a divine source, the Muses, who have the power to act as mediators and deliver the unchanging truth of the divine realm to the mortal realm but can also present false things in the likeness of true things. They are masters of deception. In the third chapter, I argued that the narrative of the succession myth displays the process whereby the male unifying principle overtakes the generative feminine principle to establish order and end cyclical succession where the son overtakes his father's governance. Zeus ingests Mêtis and births Athena from his head at the *telos* of the narrative, thereby taking into himself the governance over reproduction and deception. The succession myth follows a struggle over control of the divine *gastêr/nêdys*, which results in a subsuming and sublimating of the female *nêdys* into the male *gastêr*. As a parallel to this development, the enacting of justice in the succession myth progresses from the retributive vengeance and violent rule of Kronos to Zeus' distributive justice and secure order. The order that Hesiod attributes to the divine realm, however, does not exist on the human level in the same way. On the one hand, privileged lords and poets have limited access to the divine source of order and truth, but, on the other hand, the most apparent truth for mortals is their own mortality. As opposed to the undying gods, humans suffer and die. For human beings there can be no end to the cycle of succession. In this chapter I show how in both the *Theogony* (570- 612) and Hesiod's

agricultural work, the *Works and Days* (54-105),²⁶⁵ he uses the myth of Pandora as an aetiology for mortality, marriage exchange, the gendering of deception as feminine, thereby transferring the inverse of the serene divine order onto the turbulent mortal level. Hesiod's Pandora is at once a recompense for fire (*anti puros*), a beautiful evil (*kalon kakon*), a sheer deception (*dolon aipun*), and a source of woe for humankind, who introduces poverty to the household when she appears to bear wealth. These negative features associated with Pandora derive from the fact that her presentation is concurrent with the introduction of decay and mortality to mortal men. The fact of death and the perpetual physical needs of the body that follow upon the introduction of mortality mean that Pandora connects human beings with the natural world of plants and animals who require the same cyclical sustenance. Altogether, she is, therefore, the incarnation of potential danger to the *oikos*. Nonetheless, without Pandora there is no first woman nor a first wife, which denies the possibility of both the establishment of the *oikos* as well as the ability for the human race to perpetuate itself through reproduction. Pandora enters the world of mortals concurrent not only with decay but also with fire, which introduces both *techne* and sacrifice to mortals; in these ways Pandora introduces creation and the mediation between mortals and gods and is therefore described as a wonder to behold

²⁶⁵ While recognizing the important differing details in Hesiod's relation of the two myths, I will consider both as complementary to one another. As Froma Zeitlin 1995: 54 writes, "despite the important differences in detail and purposed, the two versions have been read together as two halves of a single extended narrative and mutually illuminate the double-sided question of the origin of woman and woman as origin." When they are not specifically comparing the two texts, scholars seem content to read them side by side as arguing for the same points. See Lyons 2003: 37-51, Arthur 1982, Marder 2014. Dora and Erwin Panofsky show Hesiod's two versions of the myth have no ancient rivals. For more on the later depictions of Pandora see Panofsky and Panofsky, *Pandora's Box*, 3-13. A 2002.

(*thauma idethai*). Through this characterization of Pandora as a paradoxical danger and wonder Hesiod attributes her creation to Zeus' genius as a means of illustrating his *mêtis*-infused intellect while securing his kingship over the mortal realm.

4.2 The Goddess Hekate as the Inverse of Pandora in Hesiod's *Theogony*: All Nurture, No Nature

Through the myth of Pandora as an aetiology for the introduction of the *oikos* and mortality to human beings, Hesiod illustrates the tension inherent in the construction of the *oikos* in patriarchal society. In the overall scheme of the *Theogony*, this myth functions as the inverse of the succession myth whereby the male principle sublimates and overtakes the feminine generative force, thereby establishing a stable end to succession in the divine realm. The fact of succession is displaced downwards to mortals through the advent of reproduction. Hesiod does, however, recognize the positive and necessary force of nurture, which is also gendered as feminine, but he abstracts the principle of nurture from the messy reality of human reproduction and sublimates it to the divine realm through his characterization of the goddess Hekate.²⁶⁶ In this manner Hekate is the inverse of Pandora. As well, as an abstract incarnation of the force of universalized nurture, which Zeus sanctions, Hekate acts in concert with Zeus and points forward to his consumption and governance over feminine principles. Hekate is both a prelude and a proof of Zeus' universal dominion. Hesiod emphasizes that Zeus' dominion over mortals is based on his ability to control the feminine principles of fertility and deception while unleashing their destructive powers on his potential challengers. This is shown in the ordering of the sections of the *Theogony*, for the hymn to Hekate (*Th.*404-

²⁶⁶ For seminal interpretations of the 'Hymn to Hekate' see Arthur 1982, Boedekker 1983, Clay 1984, and Zeitlin 1996: 83-84.

452) and the narration of Prometheus' hubris along with the resulting creation of Pandora (*Th.* 507-616) frame the birth of Zeus and the second stage of the succession myth (*Th.* 453-506) in order to show how the threatening principle of feminine fertility is dealt with in two complementary ways. First the generative principle is sublimated into a disinterested nurturing principle in the figure of Hekate and second it becomes a weapon to control the race of mortal men. Through this mythical treatment, Hesiod gives femininity "a primary role in the domain of the gods and a secondary, devalued role in the world of human affairs."²⁶⁷

Both Pandora and Hekate are defined in relation to Zeus and to mortals but in opposite ways to one another. Whereas Pandora is given the potentially dangerous characteristics of the other female gods in the *Theogony*, in that she is given Gaia's generative power and Aphrodite's seductive power, as "a sign ... of the positive pole of feminine potency" Hekate anticipates Athena and the Muses' support of Zeus.²⁶⁸ Hekate's support of Zeus is motivated by his support of her. As an intergenerational goddess who seems to exist between the Olympians and the Titans, not only is she honoured by Zeus above all other gods, but the other gods and men honour her as well. Indeed, Hesiod repeats how she receives these honours from Zeus twice.²⁶⁹ These honours are a *hysteron proteron*, since Hekate is honoured by Zeus, but yet Zeus has not

²⁶⁷ Zeitlin 1996: 62.

²⁶⁸For more on these potentially dangerous gifts see later. Arthur 1982: 67 citing Hes. *Th.* 612 describes Hekate as "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.'" *C.f.* Hes. *Th.* 588.

²⁶⁹ Hes. *Th.* 411-12, 421-27. On the role of Hekate in the *Theogony* generally, see Kraus 1960, Marquardt 1981; Griffith 1983: 51-55.

yet been born, and she presides over human activities when human beings, as we know them, have yet to appear.

Hekate seems to have the most general governance, and the universality of her influence anticipates the scope of Zeus' power. She wields influence from the beginning without relinquishing it, over the earth, sea and heavens, though at times she works in concert with other gods. Human beings beseech her in matters of war, athletics, horsemanship, navigation, law courts, and assemblies, as well as the work of tending herds and flocks. Finally and most notably, she is the supreme *kourotrophos* "nurse of the young" (450-52), an epithet which Hesiod emphasizes by its placement at the conclusion of the list. She assists "men in all their undertakings and sustains generational continuity among mortals by sponsoring the growth of children apart from actual maternity."²⁷⁰ However, this quality is expressed exclusively in the abstract. As a nurse but not a mother she is removed from maternity and the implications thereof, thus she is pure nurture "in its most disinterested form."²⁷¹ As a proof of her abstract quality of nurture, Hekate remains eternally a virgin, despite her nutritive role and is also "a single born child" (*mounogenēs*), and thus does not fulfill the role of the sister.²⁷² This also ties her to Zeus, because it makes her an heiress (*epiklēros*), which puts her under Zeus' special protection.

²⁷⁰ Zeitlin 1996: 84.

²⁷¹ As Zeitlin 1996: 84 puts it, Hekate is "a virgin and not a wife, a virgin and not a mother, a goddess and not a woman, only distantly related to Zeus but of an older generation. Hekate attests to Zeus' patronage of a femininity among both mortals and gods just before he is about to negotiate his own birth, nurture, and subsequent validation of paternal procreative powers."

²⁷² Zeitlin 1996: 75, following Walcot 1958: 13-14 and Nagy 1982: 65 notices that "oddly enough her father bears the name Perses, which in the *WD* is also the name of Hesiod's rival brother, whose lazy and thievish conduct occasions the admonitory tale of Pandora's creation."

Honouring Hekate allows Hesiod to honour the definitely feminine principle of nurture, while sublimating it into the divine realm. In this way Hesiod allows for the deification of the feminine attribute of nurture in the realm of the gods, but denies the positive feminine attributes on the human level. In opposition to the principle of nurture incarnate in Hekate, Zeus introduces Pandora into the world of men as a new category of woman, who brings the burdens of reproduction, decay, and mortality to human beings, thereby preventing human being from ever successfully challenging the rule of Zeus.

4.3 The Myth of Prometheus as the Context for the Introduction of Pandora

Pandora is not only the inverse of the abstract principle of nurture as incarnate in the figure of the goddess Hekate, but also, the gift of Pandora is the final stage of the series of deceptive gift exchanges between Prometheus and Zeus. Zeus orders the artisan god Hephaestus to create Pandora as the final decisive move in his contest of wits with the Titan Prometheus.²⁷³ This episode displays both the stabilization of Zeus' power over the older gods—Prometheus is the son of Iapetos,²⁷⁴ the youngest son in the Titan

²⁷³ As West 1966: 307 notes, “a great deal has been written on Hesiod’s Prometheus, much of it of little or no importance.” For his “ruthlessly select” bibliography see West 1966: 308. For more recent bibliographies, see Vernant 1964, 1979, 1996: 381-392; Judet de la Combe 1996: 263-300; Saintillan 1996: 315-348; Zeitlin 1996: 349-380; Blümer 2001; Strauss Clay 2003: 100-128; and Pucci 2005, 2009. Pucci 2009: 59 notes that in the *Theogony*, the account of Prometheus focuses on Prometheus’ rivalry with Zeus rather than on the result of his theft for human beings, which is more developed in the *Works and Days*. My analysis of this scene is limited to the way that it functions as the context for the Pandora myth.

²⁷⁴ Iapetos fathers four sons, three of whom rebel against Zeus and one of whom is a Epithemeus, Afterthought, who is ἀμαρτίβοόν, a culpable fool. Epithemeus is an opposite to Prometheus Forethought. He is “treated just as if he were mortal.” West 1966: 309. Hesiod relates each son’s fate 512 ff. concluding with Prometheus’ fate 521-34 before detailing Prometheus’ offence and repeating his punishment, as well as how Zeus’ son Herakles eventually releases Prometheus from his punishment at the conclusion of this section at 535-616. On Prometheus’ punishment and deliverance see West 1966: 314-315.

genealogy—as well as his power over mortals. The myth of Pandora functions as the mythical introduction of both woman and mortality to the world of man, but there is no myth that introduces an aetiology for man, or another non-gendered version of the human race, despite Hesiod’s express project of presenting a theogony that is also a cosmogony. However, the introduction of Pandora is concurrent with the introduction of fire, hunger, death, and sacrifice, defining features of human life that make humans what they are. Before the invention of Pandora, men seem to exist happily in a golden age state, where they are unencumbered by food security, reproduction, and death, but with the advent of Pandora, mortals must deal with the fact of decay and death as well as succession through reproduction to human beings. Overall, Zeus’ gift of Pandora as a means of overpowering Prometheus, whose name can be translated as Forethought²⁷⁵ and whom Hesiod introduces with the epithet ‘full of multifaceted wiles’ (*poikilon aiolomêtin*)²⁷⁶ is another testament to Zeus’ intellect. Pandora is therefore a proof of Zeus’ claim to the ultimate possession of *mêtis*.²⁷⁷

Prometheus and Zeus exchange a series of deceptions and counter deceptions which function as an aetiology to explain the ritual of sacrifice.²⁷⁸ After Zeus comments on the fact that Prometheus has presented what appears to be an unfairly poor portion (*moira*) to himself, a portion of meat concealed in an unappetizing casing of an animal’s *gastêr*,²⁷⁹ while giving men an inedible portion of bones hidden under gleaming fat,

²⁷⁵ C.f. West 1966: 308 who denies the ancient commentators who argue that Prometheus derives from *mêdea*, *mêtis*, *manthanô*.

²⁷⁶ Hes. *Th.* 511.

²⁷⁷ Scholars recognize that this presupposes Zeus’ possession of the Cyclopes thunderbolts as well as his full reign. See Solmsen 1949: 50 ff.; Mondi 1984: 335-344.

²⁷⁸ Hes. *Th.* 558-560, makes this point explicit.

²⁷⁹ Hesiod provides a proleptic *aition* for haggis. cf. West 1966: 319.

Prometheus offers Zeus the choice of the portion he desires. He chooses the hidden bones, and human beings have “enjoyed Zeus’ helping ever since.”²⁸⁰ Hesiod leaves Prometheus’ motivations unclear, but the detail that human beings are given meat at a time when they still banqueted with the gods points ahead to their punishment for this interaction, the need to continually consume sustenance in order to remain alive. The aetiological aspect of the story answers the question why human beings offer a lesser portion to the gods and take the meat for themselves. The gift of the portion, or fate (*moira*), is effectively the inverse of the gift of Pandora, an ugly external stomach disguising a satiating interior. Human beings are given the *gastêr*, the hunger accompanying it, and at the same time the meat.

The gift-exchange narrative is composed of a series of homologies, conversions and inversions.²⁸¹ In the *Theogony*, both the *gastêr* and the meat are hidden, stolen, then hidden again, while the process of ingestion adds another level to the theme of hiding. In the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* fire is also hidden, stolen, and hidden again and in the *Works and Days* seeds of grain must now be hidden in the soil, and then stored in jars. The jar (*pithos*) which conceals all evils and the first woman who conceals a belly beneath a beautiful exterior also participates in this series. Zeitlin observes that taken together this series of concealments “define the new and permanent quality of human life, its ambiguity and deceitfulness—a mixture of evils concealed under beautiful exteriors

²⁸⁰ West 1966: 305. Prometheus sets out the portions in order to deceive Zeus, Διὸς νόον ἐξαπαφίσκων. Hes. *Th.* 537. There are apparently only two portions and Hesiod does not explain why Prometheus favours mortals with the preferable portion.

²⁸¹ Vernant 1980 ; 1979: 21-86 and 224-37, Loraux 1981; 1982; 1983, Pucci 1977, Zeitlin 1996: 55. Cf. Vernant [1974] 1980: 183-201. Other scholars have also focused on the theme of exchange in this episode: Pucci 1977; Arthur [Katz] 1982; Saintillan 1996; Zeitlin 1996b; Nagy 1981.

and virtues under ugly ones.”²⁸² To be human is to participate in a series of cyclical hidings and uncoverings, both literally and metaphorically, from birth to death. As we have seen above in the third chapter, Hesiod nests this motif within the context of the series of deceptive suppressions and uncovering in the larger narrative of the succession myth. This episode is tied to the succession myth because the text strongly emphasizes Prometheus’ *δολίη ἐπὶ τέχνη*,²⁸³ which places Prometheus’ trick in line with Gaia’s deceptive *dolos*²⁸⁴ and Zeus’ own use of *technê* and force against Kronos.²⁸⁵ Scholars disagree as to whether Zeus is initially baffled by Prometheus or whether he is completely in control for the whole episode. Pucci argues that “the most persuasive reading presents Zeus as surprised by Prometheus’ deception and consciously deciding to punish the human race.”²⁸⁶ He bases this argument on the way that Hesiod emphasizes Zeus’ wrath, saying, “*kholos* (wrath) and its verb appear only in this specific context, five times (533, 554, 562, 568, 615), always to characterize Zeus’ response to Prometheus. One should add the presence of *khôomai* (561) and one realizes the fury of the supreme authority as it feels challenged by supplanting, displacing, imitating strategies.”²⁸⁷ It is clear that Zeus is angered, but this argument does not clarify the motivation for his anger:

²⁸² Zeitlin 1996: 55.

²⁸³ Hesiod accomplishes the emphasis by insistent repetition in lines 540, 547, 555, and 560 four of the nine occurrences of *technê* within the *Theogony*. Pucci 2009: 60 note 67. Hom. *Od.* 4.529; Hes. *Th.* 770.

²⁸⁴ Where she produces the *adamas* at Hes. *Th.* 160.

²⁸⁵ Hes. *Th.* 496.

²⁸⁶ Pucci 2009: 59. This functions as part of his suggestion that Prometheus is a “supplement” in the Derridian sense, saying, “the fact that *dolos*, *technê* and crooked *mêtis* are deployed against immortal counsels, paternal authority and the wrath of Zeus may suggest that Prometheus acts as a “figure” of that which tries to supplement nature, its immortal identity and aims at taking its place, by mere tricks, re-compositions, redistributions but no power of creation. Prometheus could represent the otherness of that identity and divine authority in the figure of “humanity”.

²⁸⁷ Pucci 2009: 59.

Pucci does not prove that this wrath comes about because Prometheus successfully deceives Zeus. Rather, it seems more plausible that Zeus' wrath stems from Prometheus' intent to trick, as opposed to from his success, due to the way in which Hesiod emphasizes Zeus' intellect in this section as well as throughout the *Theogony*. In this episode Prometheus not only steals from Zeus, he insults his intelligence. Indeed, the whole passage shows Zeus' intellectual mastery. He decides to choose the bones and sees "in his mind evils for human beings" (550-557).²⁸⁸ Hesiod refers to Zeus as the "exceedingly mighty son of Kronos" *hupermenei Kroniōni* (534), "the father of men and Gods" (πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε) (542, cp. 580), and "Zeus who knows the immortal counsels" (Ζεὺς ἄφθιτα μῆδεα εἰδώς) (545, 550, 555, and 561), an epithet formula that occurs only in this section of the *Theogony*.²⁸⁹ In opposition, Prometheus' trickery is placed at the same level as defeated Kronos' by exclusively sharing the epithet, 'crookedly wily minded' *agkulomêtês* (546).²⁹⁰ Prometheus is still a strong opponent,²⁹¹ which means that Zeus' success proves his power all the more.

In retaliation for Prometheus' attempted *dolos*, Zeus refuses to give the celestial fire to men, effectively hiding it from mortals. Prometheus continues this game of "cosmic hide and seek"²⁹² by stealing the fire, hiding it in a hollow fennel stalk and bringing it to men unseen by the gods. Why Zeus is unable to perceive this, or why he allows it is unclear. For human beings fire is necessary for nutrition, sacrifice, and the

²⁸⁸ Some versions of the myth have Zeus deciding to destroy the human race. See Strauss Clay 2003: 108, Pucci 2009: 60.

²⁸⁹ Lines 550-551 also emphasize Zeus' power.

²⁹⁰ See the section on Kronos in Chapter 2.

²⁹¹ Consider Hes. *Th.* 558-560 when Zeus says to Prometheus, Ἰαπετιονίδη, πάντων πέρι μῆδεα εἰδώς, / ὃ πέπον, οὐκ ἄρα πω δολίης ἐπιλήθεο τέχνης. 'So, sir, you have not yet forgotten your cunning arts!' So spake Zeus in anger, whose wisdom is everlasting."

²⁹² Pucci 2009: 61.

technê of metallurgy. This gift allows human beings to feed themselves, to communicate their prayers to the gods, and to forge *agalma* as well as weapons. This gift is fundamentally the introduction of power of technology, which results in both economic currency as well as developed war tactics. The fact that fire is necessary for sacrifice could be a motivation for Zeus to turn a blind eye to Prometheus' trick, while the firepower as well as the potential *hubris* that it provides a greater motivation for Zeus to create an *anti puros* for mortals.

There is both a cyclical and a progressive aspect to this series of deceptive gift exchanges. On the one hand, in a similar way to the conclusion of the succession myth, the creation and gift of Pandora establishes the stability of Zeus' rule by putting a stop to the retributive cycle of deceptive exchanges with Prometheus. On the other hand, she introduces the cyclical nature of the exchange to human beings forever, which prevents them from retaliating against Zeus. Prometheus can deceive by arranging with *technê*, that which already exists so it appears to be the opposite of what it is, but Zeus orders the creation of a new being who manifests the principle of deception in her very essence. Prometheus can steal and conceal the gift given to Zeus in recognition of and exchange for *timai*, but he cannot create a living, speaking, and deceiving being from this fire.

4.4 Pandora as *Anti Puros*: *Technê* and Technology

Hesiod describes Pandora as a *kakon anti puros*,²⁹³ an evil recompense for fire, which effectively weakens the human race to the same degree that fire empowers them through the introduction of decay and the necessity of reproduction. Zeus' power is

²⁹³ In this section of the *Theogony* Hesiod leaves the first woman unnamed, but identifies her name as Pandora in the same mythic sequence as part of the *Works and Days*. Hes. *Th.* 570: ἀντί πυρός τεύξεν κακὸν ἀνθρώποισιν.

closely associated with his ability to wield the celestial fire, lightning and fire, bestowed upon him by the Cyclopes.²⁹⁴ He is motivated to create an *anti puros* when he sees the “fire-gleam sighted from afar” (πυρὸς τηλέσκοπον ἀύγην)²⁹⁵ and he strikes back against men because he recognizes the power that comes concurrent with the introduction of fire by ordering Hephaestus to create the first woman.²⁹⁶ In the succession myth Zeus’ power is made manifest with fire, specifically with the Cyclopes’ thunderbolts, as we have seen above. The gift of the thunderbolts also represents the fact that the other immortals support Zeus’ governance, which adds exponentially to his force.

Fire is connected to Pandora in two more ways. First, Hephaestus employs fire when he crafts Pandora, which means that she is, in a sense, both an artisanal work of *technê* and also the first woman, the first womb, the first mother. She is the “technological counterpart to divine fire: she is made with fire, she burns like fire, and she consumes the fire of men.”²⁹⁷ Second, she is not only an object of fire, but her ability to deceive and consume makes her, so to speak, a fiery agent. As an *agalma*, Pandora is

²⁹⁴ Hes. *Th.* 687 ff.

²⁹⁵ Hes. *Th.* 569.

²⁹⁶ As well, he punishes Prometheus by fastening him to a rock for eternal atonement. Lyons 2012: 37 compares Pandora as “created by an artisan god Hephaestus” to Harmonia’s necklace, and Achilles’ armour, but notes that unlike these divine gifts, Pandora is created to be a bane to mortals.

²⁹⁷ Marder 2014: 388. Marder 2014: 397 makes a lovely, though rather anachronistic comparison at the conclusion of her article, saying that since “Pandora is herself technically a work of fire, forged by Hephaestus, it is perhaps best to imagine the spectacle she makes as a pyrotechnic display, what we call “fireworks” in English but that, in French, tellingly goes by the name “*feu d’artifice*” artificial and/or imitation fire. This association of Pandora with fireworks is supported on many levels as *thauma* [...], which is also the name of the father of Iris the rainbow: fireworks produce wonder by creating rainbow-like colored effects through combustion.” In a similar vein, Zeitlin 1996: 56, referencing Hes. *Op.* 704-6, sees that as “indirect 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.”

not only the first product of *technê* introduced to the world, but also introduces the means of human beings' productions and the motivation to produce craft products both for sustenance and exchange, along with the need and desire to consume. Pandora marks not only the division between mortals and immortals by introducing death and birth into the reality of human existence, but also marks and makes ambiguous the line between the natural and the refined, where the refined is that created through an act of art. Zeus orders an evil to be made for mankind (τεῦξεν κακὸν ἀνθρώποισιν, 570) and this evil thing is formed from the earth.²⁹⁸ Other than the spontaneous appearance of the primordial figures, this is the first act of creation in the *Theogony* that does not occur through an act of reproduction traceable to the mating of Gaia and Ouranos. Pandora is therefore the first woman and, so to speak, the first android, who thereby introduces “disquieting differences and disruptive discontinuities” in a way that “renders the concept of the human unfamiliar and unnatural.”²⁹⁹ This unnatural quality is paradoxically one of the most natural characteristic of human beings, the need to cultivate and innovate.

Pandora introduces something “extrahuman” as opposed to “nonhuman” to humanity.³⁰⁰ Both Prometheus and Pandora are “absolutely essential to the becoming human of man,” but neither is human.³⁰¹ This extrahuman quality is the ability that human beings have to refine the natural world and themselves through technology, which is what distinguishes human beings from beasts, shepherds from their sheep. Pandora

²⁹⁸ Hes. *Th.* 570-573. Hesiod describes how “he made an evil thing for men as the price of fire; for the very famous Limping God formed of earth the likeness of a shy maiden as the son of Kronos willed.” (γαίης γὰρ σύμπλασσε περικλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις | αρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ ἴκελον Κρονίδεω διὰ βουλάς.)

²⁹⁹ Marder 2014: 387.

³⁰⁰ Marder 2014: 387.

³⁰¹ Marder 2014: 387 argues that Pandora is something more than human, something “extrahuman” as opposed to “nonhuman.”

thus represents the separation of animals from human beings, as well as the separation of gods and human beings, for she is not only a divinely produced object, who introduces the human drive to natural reproduction, but at the same time, as the concomitant with fire, she is consequent of the introduction of technology.³⁰²

As a created being and a weapon crafted from the Earth, Pandora is similar to both Gaia's sickle and the stone given to Kronos, which Zeus establishes at Delphi. The sickle, the stone and Pandora are all gifts that seem to offer advantage, but instead result in the destruction of the recipient.³⁰³ Both the stone and Pandora are described as signs (*sema*) and as wonders (*thauma*) because "both are symbols of the intersection between natural and artificial creation, and between the divine and human realms."³⁰⁴ The myth of Prometheus and Pandora identifies that the act of cultivation is definitive of the humans race, for even in the most basic human society refinement of the natural is necessary for continued existence. Only through the use of *technê* can human beings make food, clothing, shelter, and entertainment. Fire is instrumental in our ability to communicate with one another as well as with the gods.

³⁰² In Hesiod's accounts the gift of technology is only implicit, but Plato makes it explicit in the mythic section of the *Protagoras* (321c-e *Trans. by Guthrie*, in Hamilton and Cairns 1961) where he writes, "already the appointed day had come, when man too was to emerge from the earth into the daylight. Prometheus, being at a loss to provide any means of salvation for man, stole from Hephaestus and Athena the gift of skill in the arts, together with fire." See Lyons 2012: 124 note 106. Lyons 2012: 44-45 argues that "what Pandora takes with one hand she gives back with the other. Man loses his freedom from toil, but gains thereby access to a new world not only of social interaction but also of creativity and invention. Made of clay and decorated with gold, Pandora is composed of the very raw materials on which that creativity is to be expended. Without the gift of women and the gifts of women, man cannot go forward, cannot fully experience what it is to be human."

³⁰³ Lyons 2012: 44 analyzes this double gift, saying, "apparently mortals cannot have production without reproduction, cannot have technology without also having sexual dimorphism and the division of labor."

³⁰⁴ Arthur 1982: 72.

4.5 Pandora as Paradox: A *kalon kakon* and a *thauma*

With the divine production of Pandora, human beings are given two imperfect and dangerously seductive methods of creation: human reproduction and technology. On a metapoetic level, there is a third means or production that the divine introduces to human beings, the act of poetic mimesis. Pandora's beautiful exterior makes her a beautiful and dangerous object who is created and given a voice. On the one hand, these characteristics make her a wonder (*thauma*) and make her analogous to the ideal poetry which is mediated from a divine source and given voice through its readings. On the other hand, Pandora is the manifestation of the false discourse that appears to be true, which the Muses introduce in the proem, on account of her deceptive appearance.

In characterizing Pandora as a *kalon kakon*, Hesiod not only describes her on an aesthetic level as a beautiful ugliness but also places her on a moral level as a noble evil. Her evilness is due to her falseness, in other words, to her characteristically deceptive quality. The following description of Pandora's appearance Hesiod emphasizes how much artistry goes into the crafting Pandora's exterior in both her physical appearance as well as the adornments lavished upon her. Since this exterior hides nothing but desire, Pandora *is* only her superficial appearance; her identity is continuous with the beautiful things that adorn her, which makes her, on the one hand *kalon*, but on the other hand, *kakon*. Her quality as *kakon* is inextricable from her beauty.

Scholars have noted the way that the intricacy and technical prowess of the objects which the gods make to adorn Pandora is matched by Hesiod's poetic artistry in the twelve lines he uses to describe her clothing, head coverings and jewellery.³⁰⁵ Pucci

³⁰⁵ Pucci 2009: 59 writes, "Hesiod's text rivals the gods in artistry."

notes that the intricacy of the text points to Hesiod's skill while celebrating Zeus' mastery:

the text exhibits all its skill in producing the emotion of surprise and wonder at Zeus' new idea and creation: in fact, with this creation, Zeus shows his abysmal distance from Prometheus who can only devise different distributions of things, change their composition, uncover what is there and hidden; but Zeus can bring into light a new being, and with this he restructures a whole system.³⁰⁶

Hesiod's poetic skill brings to light the difference between Prometheus' deceptions, as a mere bait and switch and hide and seek, and Zeus' ability to create something analogous to poetry itself.

The emphasis on Pandora's extraordinary beauty is shown through the repetition of the evocation of wonder (*thauma*), which occurs four times in this episode.³⁰⁷ In the *Iliad* the formula *thauma idesthai* is used only for divinely wrought objects, which makes Pandora, the first woman, a divinely artistic object. This is the only time where Hesiod employs the words *daidalos* (artistic) and *daidala* (artistic designs). As well, Hesiod not only places the hypocoristic epithets, which describe the enhanced beauty, and the pricelessness of what adorns Pandora, in an emphasized position, enjambed at the beginning of the verse³⁰⁸ but also uses rhyme to emphasize the objects.³⁰⁹

It is clear that the wonder Pandora causes is due to her beauty, but this wonder also derives from the danger she poses. Her external beauty hides something worse than emptiness: it conceals a continual desire within her to consume, and the ability to perpetuate this desire in her victims. According to Zeus' will, Hephaestus creates

³⁰⁶ Pucci 2009: 61.

³⁰⁷ Hes. *Th.* 575, 581, 584 and *thauasia* which is a hapax in Hesiod at 588.

³⁰⁸ Hes. *Th.* 574, 575, 577, and the relative clause 579-580. See Pucci 2009: 59.

³⁰⁹ Hes. *Th.* 579-580. See Pucci 2009: 59.

Pandora to resemble a maiden who acts modestly, “she appears to be a modest maiden” (παρθένω αἰδοίη ἵκελον). This modest virginal appearance, however, is another facet of Pandora’s seductive appearance, which hides an unquenchable well of sexual desire within herself and stirs this desire up in human beings. The duplicitous nature of Pandora lies in how she appears to bear wealth to men, with all her finery and adornments, but in fact acts as a beautified vacuum. She is merely well-disguised *gastêr*. Her truth, therefore, lies in her ability to stun, amaze, and inflict wonder. On account of both Pandora’s appearance and the trouble her attractiveness spells for men, she is “a wonder to behold” (*thauma idesthai*).

Pandora’s adornments signify her beauty, wealth and fertility but hide her appetitive nature. Hesiod describes how Athena adds her technical prowess to Pandora’s production by arranging (*kosmêse*) Pandora and “girding her in silvery clothes” (ζῶσε ἀργυφῆ ἐσθῆτι).³¹⁰ The verb here, *zônnumi*, is often used in reference to battle preparations and foreshadows the danger that Pandora and her adornments bring. Athena uses her hands to cover Pandora in an intricately woven or embroidered veil (*kaluptrên daidaleên*).³¹¹ Hesiod alludes here to Athena’s cleverness as exhibited in her handiwork, since the definitively feminine garment of the veil is described as a “wonder to behold” (*thauma idesthai*).³¹² Veils can (and often do) express modesty, and this veil seems to add

³¹⁰ Hes. *Th.* 573-574. ζῶσε δὲ καὶ κόσμησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη / ἀργυφῆ ἐσθῆτι.

³¹¹ Lyons 2012: 26, Notes that “the symbolism of textiles becomes part of the marriage ritual, when the new bride lifts her veil in the presence of her husband’s family for the first time, in the gesture known as *anakalyteria*.” See *Il.* 466-70, where Andromache tears off her veil when she learns of Hektor’s death (*Kaluptê*).

³¹² Kardulias 2001: 23-51 discusses feminine headdresses and specifically Ino’s veil in Homer’s *Odyssey*. See Yasmura 2001: 94 who argues that Athena is not a patron of craftsmanship in Hesiod. For another interesting variation on a cosmology see Carson 1999: 160 who discusses Pherekydes’ relation of the cosmology in which Zeus throws a

to Pandora’s appearance of *aidos*.³¹³ Athena’s silvery clothing and gift of the veil, is only the first of her finery: she is also “crowned with new-budding blossoms of herbs” (ἄμφι δέ οἱ στεφάνουζ, νεοθηλέος ἄνθεα ποίηζ)³¹⁴ which point to the promise of fertility, the potential to bloom that Pandora introduces to mankind, but also her own age as a newly formed being (*neothêleos*). Finally, Hephaestus crafts a golden crown (*stephanên xruseên*) and places it upon her head.³¹⁵ These adornments are integral to Pandora’s nature.

The golden crown is Pandora’s final adornment in the list and Hesiod constructs a short *ekphrasis* around it, which characterizes Pandora herself as a speaking creation, both of which are analogous to divinely inspired poetry. Aphrodite herself also sports a “golden crown” (*stephanên xruseên*).³¹⁶ Lyons argues that this headdress “suggests,

veil, embroidered with images of the earth and ocean, over the head of the goddess of the Underworld, thus transforming her into Gē, whom he takes as his wife. frag. 54 VS.

³¹³ In her article discussing the implications the scene where Odysseus briefly wears Ino’s head-scarf, Dianna Kardulias 2001: 34 argues that in Ancient Greek society, the veil is “a powerful instrument of boundary magic” that functions in a similar way contemporary Turkish headscarves. To support her point she cites Carol Delaney 1995: 64 who says, “the headscarf is a sign that everyone can read, and it says, ‘I am a proper woman, I am under the protective mantle of my father.’ He is guarantor of her sexuality until he transfers it to her husband upon marriage. By means of the headcovering a woman indicates that her fertile field is not free for the planting; it has boundaries and belongs to some man. These boundaries, like those of a field, cannot be transgressed without dire consequences.”

³¹⁴ Hes. *Th.* 576.

³¹⁵ Hes. *Th.* 578-580. In *Works and Days*, Persuasion and the Graces gift Pandora golden necklaces 73-4. I will discuss this in later.

³¹⁶ West 1966: 328 points to *h. vi* I and 7, and West states that a *stephanên* cannot be distinguished from an *ampux*, the Horai *ib* 5 and 12 and the Muses 916 also wear golden headgear. Marquardt 1982: 287 notes this similarity. See *Potnia* 34, LIMC suppl. For a bronze *potnia* with animals sprouting from her head See Brown 1997 for similarities with Aphrodite. du Bois 1988 compares this crown Homer’s *ekphrastic* description of Achilles’ shield, both of which are made by Hephaestus. *Il.* 18.541-42, 548-549.

without replicating, known representation of the *potnia thērōn*.³¹⁷ Hesiod describes how Hephaestus constructs this wonderful crown:

ἀμφὶ δὲ οἱ στεφάνην χρυσέην κεφαλῆφιν ἔθηκε,
τὴν αὐτὸς ποίησε περικλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις
ἀσκήσας παλάμησι, χαριζόμενος Διὶ πατρί.
τῇ δ' ἐνὶ δαίδαλα πολλὰ τετεύχαστο, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.
κνώδαλ', ὅσ' ἤπειρος πολλὰ τρέφει ἠδὲ θάλασσα,
τῶν ὅ γε πόλλ' ἐνέθηκε, — χάρις δ' ἀπελάμπετο πολλή, —
θαυμάσια, ζῴοισιν ἐοικότα φωνήεσσιν.

Also she put upon her head a crown of gold which the very famous Limping God made himself and worked with his own hands as a favor to Zeus his father. On it was much curious work, wonderful to see; for of the many creatures which the land and sea rear up, he put most upon it, wonderful things, like living beings with voices: and great beauty shone out from it.³¹⁸

As the Noah's ark of head ornaments, the crown is the second wonder to behold (*thauma idesthai*). What makes it so amazing is that it is teeming with wild animals, sea creatures and other beasts, who are so well crafted that they seem to speak. Since Hesiod uses the verb '*phônêeis*' to describe the golden animals' speech, it can be argued that they do not only make animal noises, but have an articulate voice.³¹⁹ The *thauma* here is thus a divinely produced object given a voice, just like Pandora, which points to her intermediate nature between both gods and mortals and between animals and human beings, as well as her status as analogous to poetry.³²⁰

³¹⁷ Lyons 2012: 123, note 82.

³¹⁸ Hes. *Th.* 578-584.

³¹⁹ West 1966: 329 points to *Od.* 9. 456 where *potiphônêis* means speaking articulately as opposed to making animal noises.

³²⁰ In another context, Raymond Prier 1989: 95 has observed that “an object described as a *thauma idesthai* is balanced between gods and men and “clearly ‘other’ in origin.” In Lyons' 2012: 39. words, “the woman is thus sent forth like a radiant mistress of animals, and a figure of reproductive fertility.”

This speaking *thauma* recalls Hesiod’s description of the monstrous Typhoeus,³²¹ adding another layer to Pandora’s monstrosity. Both Pandora and this diadem are pieces of art given a divine voice. Here again we see crafted things, which appear to be alive, as suggested through their power of speech.³²² Pucci argues that in this artistic production “the divine artistic creation therefore represents the living world in a way that makes it appear as if it were alive, speaking (583-584). This is just what the Muses declare in line 28, when they oppose their song of truth to imitative discourse”³²³: Hesiod thereby points to the power of poetry in its highest form, which animates the inanimate by giving it a voice.

The description of Pandora’s beauty and finery functions as the first section of the Pandora myth, in the second section we see the evil repercussions mankind experiences from accepting this gift. Hesiod’s poetry mirrors the mortal reaction to Pandora by presenting a description of her external delights first, and following this with the evils that the race of women bring to man. Hesiod describes the reaction of mortals and immortals to the dazzling creation:

... νέπει δὴ τεῦξε καλὸν κακὸν ἀντ’ ἀγαθοῖο.
 ἐξάγαγ’, ἔνθα περ ἄλλοι ἔσαν θεοὶ ἢδ’ ἄνθρωποι,
 κόσμῳ ἀγαλλομένην γλαυκώπιδος ὀβριμοπάτρης.
 θαῦμα δ’ ἔχ’ ἀθανάτους τε θεοὺς θνητοὺς τ’ ἀνθρώπους,
 ὡς εἶδον δόλον αἰπύν, ἀμήχανον ἀνθρώποισιν

when he had made the beautiful evil to be the price for the blessing, he brought her out, delighting in the finery which the bright-eyed daughter of a mighty father had given her, to the place where the other gods and men were. And wonder took

³²¹ Hes. *Th.* 834. See Kenaan 2008: 42-44.

³²² Vernant sees that the creation of Pandora’s headdress, and Pandora herself illustrates the ideal product.

³²³ Pucci 2009: 61.

hold of the deathless gods and mortal men when they saw that which was sheer guile, not to be withstood by men.³²⁴

The wonder of Pandora's adornments cumulates in the introduction of Pandora to men and gods. Zeus accomplishes the destruction he wishes to unleash through the use of Pandora as a *αἰπὺν δόλον* because her appearance is stunning. Both mortal human beings and immortal gods are powerless (*ἀμήχανον*) when they see her. The wonder she evokes is not without its claws. Her beautiful exterior "hides the pernicious effect of being the hinge-figure on which the whole golden age of mankind turns into the present miserable life: this beautiful evil, in place of what is good (585, 602) is a living paradox, 'supplement.'"³²⁵ As the manifestation of the false discourse that imitates real things which the Muses introduce, Hesiod points to the dangerous power that poetry carries, but also to his own mastery thereof. He implies that he is presenting a true and beautiful thing without an evil interior, rather than a *kalon kakon*.

4.6 Pandora as First Woman, First Wife, and First Mother: *Oikos* in the *Theogony*

Another aspect to Pandora's ambiguous status as a desired evil is her incarnation of the tensions inherent in the concept of the patriarchal *oikos*. She introduces the 'misogynist's paradox': a wife is troublesome, but a man lacks children. Without children a man lacks support in his old-age and an heir to inherit his property, as well as perpetuate his honour and memory. Therefore, mortal men cannot live happily neither without a wife, nor with one. Woman is both the potential source of destruction and the source of life.

³²⁴ Hes. *Th.* 586-590. West 1966: 329 notes the various parallels between these lines and *Op.* 57-83.

³²⁵ Pucci 2009: 61-62.

Hesiod explains how the introduction of Pandora is the introduction of the race of woman along with mortality and all the troubles this entails to mortals:

ἐκ τῆς γὰρ γένος ἐστὶ γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων,
τῆς γὰρ ὀλώϊόν ἐστι γένος καὶ φῦλα γυναικῶν,
πῆμα μέγ' αἰ θνητοῖσι μετ' ἀνδράσι ναιετάουσιν
οὐλομένης πενίης οὐ σύμφοροι, ἀλλὰ κόροιο.

For from her is the race of women and female kind: of her is the deadly race and tribe of women who live amongst mortal men to their great trouble, no helpmeets in hateful poverty, but only in wealth.³²⁶

The race of women is deadly because they introduce decay and appetite to mortals. With women comes the need to eat in order to avoid death as well as the need to reproduce and the consequent, or not-so-consequent, sexual desire. As the primordial woman she serves to explain the emergence of family and work in human life.³²⁷ She is therefore, “the sign of human beings’ decay.”³²⁸ She appears to bring the wealth of her appearance to men, but introduces the *gunaikōn genos* which is “perpetually idle,”³²⁹ neither a companion nor a helpmate for man. This is why Hesiod describes her as a “a great infestation” (*pêma mega*).³³⁰ She is “no friend in hateful poverty, but only in wealth” (οὐλομένης πενίης οὐ σύμφοροι, ἀλλὰ κόροιο)³³¹ not only because bringing a wife into the *oikos* means there will be another mouth to feed, but also the children she produces will also require food.

³²⁶ Hes. *Th.* 590-593.

³²⁷ Lyons 2012: 123, note 75 points out that “the gods already practice marriage of a sort, but it is not for the most part the enduring institution known to mortals.”

³²⁸ Pucci 2009: 62 note 70 writes, “although Hesiod’s representation of this fall through a process of imitation questions that very notion of this fall.”

³²⁹ Zeitlin 1996: 59 she contrasts this with the Biblical account of the fall of man in Genesis, where women are give much more credit for child birth. For a survey of the socioeconomic interpretations of this section see Zeitlin 1996: 61.

³³⁰ Hes. *Th.* 592.

³³¹ Hes. *Th.* 593.

Hesiod explains the idleness of women in an extended simile, a rarity in his corpus, which also points to another ambiguous aspect.³³² Hesiod argues that

ὥς δ' ὅπῳτ' ἐν σμήνεσσι κατηρέφεςσι μέλισσαι
κηφῆνας βόσκωσι, κακῶν ξυνήονας ἔργων—
αἱ μὲν τε πρόπαν ἡμαρ ἐς ἠέλιον καταδύοντα
ἡμάτια σπεύδουσι τιθεῖσί τε κηρία λευκά,
οἱ δ' ἔντοσθε μένοντες ἐπηρεφῆας κατὰ σίμβλους
ἀλλότριον κάματον σφετέρην ἐς γαστέρ' ἀμῶνται—
ὥς δ' αὐτῶς ἄνδρεςσι κακὸν θνητοῖσι γυναῖκας
Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης θῆκεν ξυνήονας ἔργων
ἀργαλέων.³³³

On this scheme, the lazy male drones stay in the home, just as the women are confined to the *oikos*, while the female bees (*melissai*)³³⁴ go forth to gather pollen and produce honey, which feeds the males who stay at home. They put others' work in their own bellies. Hesiod compares the race of female human beings to male bees, drones (*képhnas*), whose nature is to do evil (κακῶν ξυνήονας ἔργων). The sex roles are strikingly reversed in this simile.³³⁵ Adding to the ambiguity of this section, women would be traditionally responsible for the preparation of food, though not the acquisition or trade of goods. As well, we find a contrasting later view in Semonides' image of the industrious bee-wife, the single and only positive depiction of a virtuous wife in his catalogue.³³⁶ Why Hesiod would choose to compare the race of women to a species in

³³² He has other extended similes at 702 ff. and 862 ff. and a drone simile in *Op.* 303 ff.

³³³ Hes. *Th.* 594-602. On Beekeeping in Homer and Hesiod see Körner:1929.

³³⁴ Hesiod could be somehow playing with his virtuosic pun mastery here, as the word could also refer to the verb μερίζω, which translates as “modulate, sing.”

³³⁵ For an interesting account of sex reversals in Homeric similes see Foley 1984. The reversal in this simile is especially anachronistically striking due to our current biological knowledge.

³³⁶ Zeitlin 1996: 69. See following comparison with Perses, 84-98, also Lyons 2012: 46. Semonides describes the bee-wife saying:

Another type is from a bee. Good luck
in finding such a woman! Only she

which the male is considered a lazy freeloader unless he wished to highlight the ambiguity present in his misogynistic view is unclear.

The primordial woman introduces a second evil along with the first, that she is as necessary as she is problematic. Hesiod explains that the man who avoids marriage (*gamon*)³³⁷ and the “treacherous deeds of women” (μέρμερα ἔργα γυναικῶν) escapes the sorrows (*oloon*) that women cause, but is left with no one to care for him in his old age, as well as no heir to inherit his wealth and name.³³⁸ Hesiod explains that this man suffers, when he

.... ὀλοὸν δ' ἐπὶ γῆρας ἵκοιτο
χίτηϊ γηροκόμοιο: ὃ γ' οὐ βιότου ἐπιδευῆς
ζῶει, ἀποφθιμένου δὲ διὰ κτῆσιν δατέονται
χηρωσταί

reaches deadly old age without anyone to tend his years, 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.³³⁹

deserves to be exempt from stinging blame.
The household that she manages will thrive;
a loving wife beside her loving man,
she'll grow old, having borne illustrious
and handsome children; she herself shines bright
among all women. Grace envelops her.
She doesn't like to sit with other women
discussing sex. Zeus gratifies mankind
with these most excellent and thoughtful wives.
But by the grim contrivances of Zeus
all these other types are here to stay
side by side with man forever. Yes,
Zeus made this the greatest pain of all:
Woman.

³³⁷ Hesiod emphasizes that it is not only women, but the marriage with them that causes such troubles as he repeats this man μὴ γῆμαι ἐθέλη Hes. *Th.* 604.

³³⁸ Hes. *Th.* 603

³³⁹ Hes. *Th.* 604-607.

Although this man can avoid having his household wealth consumed from within, or given away by a treacherous wife, he is unable to avoid the fact of death. As a consequence, after this man dies, his distant family members would divide his possessions (*ktésin*). Without an heir, this man dies more completely.³⁴⁰

This does not stop Hesiod from remarking that even with a good wife, the man is not free from trouble:

ὅς δ' αὖτε γάμου μετὰ μοῖρα γένηται,
κεδνὴν δ' ἔσχευ ἄκοιτιν ἀρηρυῖαν πραπίδεςσι,
τῷ δέ τ' ἀπ' αἰῶνος κακὸν ἐσθλῷ ἀντιφερίζει
ἐμμενές: ὃς δέ κε τέτμη ἀταρτηροῖο γενέθλης,
ζῶει ἐνὶ στήθεσσι ἔχων ἀλίαςτον ἀνίην
θυμῷ καὶ κραδίῃ, καὶ ἀνήκεστον κακὸν ἔστιν.

as for the man who chooses the lot of marriage and takes a good wife suited to his mind, evil continually contends with good; for whoever happens to have mischievous children, lives always with unceasing grief in his spirit and heart within him; and this evil cannot be healed.³⁴¹

Even with a shrewd and trustworthy wife who is ἀρηρυῖαν πραπίδεςσι,³⁴² this man experiences a mixture of good and evil. For he may have difficult γενέθλης, which would lead to an unhappy life. The 'γενέθλης' could refer to the race (of women) or to the progeny (children). Either Hesiod is contrasting two kinds of wives, a good one and a bad one, as above, or he is arguing that even in the best situation children cause difficulty.³⁴³ Both cases are plausible and both display the same difficulty: happiness is unavailable to mortals because they cannot live securely with a wife, nor can they do without one.

Zeitlin prefers to interpret γενέθλης as 'children' and uses this as part of her argument

³⁴⁰ Zeitlin 1996. On the inevitability of Pandora see Lyons 2012: 44.

³⁴¹ Hes. *Th.* 607- 612

³⁴² Cf. Hom. *Od.* 10. 553.

³⁴³ See Zeitlin 1996: 63, note 17 prefers children, but West 1966: 335, prefers 'wife' as well as Loraux 1981 a: 95 note 103.

that Hesiod has is ambivalent view of the value of children. They have “potential value as bearers of the family line” but they are also “potential sources of disappointment and sorrow.”³⁴⁴ Indeed, Hesiod seems to give all the responsibility and none of the credit to women for reproduction and childbearing.³⁴⁵ Hesiod treats sex “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.”³⁴⁶

Hesiod concludes this section of the *Theogony* by explaining that the introduction of women into the mortal realm shows Zeus’ control over the realm of mortals, saying,

ὥς οὐκ ἔστι Διὸς κλέψαι νόον οὐδὲ παρελθεῖν.
οὐδὲ γὰρ Ἰαπετιονίδης ἀκάκητα Προμηθεὺς
τοῖο γ’ ὑπεξήλυξε βαρὺν χόλον, ἀλλ’ ὑπ’ ἀνάγκης
καὶ πολὺιδρὺν ἔοντα μέγας κατὰ δεσμὸς ἐρύκει.

So it is not possible to deceive or go beyond the will of Zeus: for not even the son of Iapetus, kindly Prometheus, escaped his heavy anger, but of necessity strong bands confined him, although he knew many a wile.³⁴⁷

The mind of Zeus is as impossible to combat as the dazzling attraction to Pandora. The *mêtis* of Zeus’ *nous* is incarnate in the production of Pandora, which helps explain why women are viewed as the source of *mêtis* in the human realm. Although it precedes the *Metisgeschichte* in the narrative order of the *Theogony*, the gift of Pandora is a clear example of Zeus’ *Mêtis*-infused intellect acting in the world, since it displays how he orders the transformation of material, in the act of creation, and preemptively subverts his potential opponents ability to retaliate, thereby subduing the race of mortals.

³⁴⁴ Zeitlin 1996: 62.

³⁴⁵ Zeitlin 1996: 59.

³⁴⁶ Hes. *Op.* 705-759. See also 586-589 where Hesiod argues that women’s desire consumes and robs man of his own desire because they experience desire during incompatible seasons.

³⁴⁷ Hes. *Th.* 613-616.

4.7 Pandora in the *Works And Days*

Composed of 282 hexameter verses, Hesiod's *Works and Days* is a didactic poem which provides agricultural and moral instructions on how to live well. Above all, in this text, Hesiod seeks to explain how to achieve the ideal of *autarkê*, productive independence, and to prove that living in accordance with this ideal is the best way of life. Hesiod seems to have a personal motivation for this argument, for he addresses the poem to his brother Perses, who he claims has taken an unfairly large portion of the inheritance from their father. The aim of the poem is to persuade Perses that he has acted unjustly, which will ultimately be detrimental to his wealth. Hesiod uses the myth of Pandora to show the detrimental effects of accepting a 'gift' which too easily appears to bear wealth, while actually introducing every-growing desire. Throughout the *Works and Days* he honours agricultural work above trade and gift-exchange, as a means of growing prosperity.

To this end Hesiod begins the *Works and Days* by invoking the Muses in order to celebrate Zeus in a short proem, which focuses on Zeus' power to easily humble the proud and raise the obscure,³⁴⁸ and then Hesiod calls Zeus to act as a judge, saying, "attend with your eye and ear, and make judgments straight with justice" (κλῦθι ἰδὼν αἰὼν τε, δίκη δ' ἴθυνε θέμιστας / τύνη).³⁴⁹ Finally, he addresses Perses directly, claiming that he will sing authentic things (*etetuma*), saying, "Perses, I would tell of true things" (ἐγὼ δέ κε, Πέρση, ἐτήτυμα μυθησαίμην) which recalls the Muses' claim to sing true or

³⁴⁸ Hes. *Op.* 5-7.

ῥέα μὲν γὰρ βριάει, ῥέα δὲ βριάοντα χάλεπτει, | ῥεῖα δ' ἀρίζηλον μινύθει καὶ ἄδηλον ἀέξει, | ῥεῖα δέ τ' ἰθύνει σκολιὸν καὶ ἀγήνορα κάρφει. "For easily he makes strong, and easily he brings the strong man low; easily he humbles the proud and raises the obscure, and easily he straightens the crooked and blasts the proud."

³⁴⁹ Hes. *Op.* 9-10.

unforgettable things (*alethea*) in the proem of the *Theogony*.³⁵⁰ This parallel but distinct choice is all the more striking because ‘*alethea*’ and ‘*etetuma*’ are metrically equivalent, so there is reason to believe that Hesiod chooses *etetuma* in this context for more than a formulaic reason.

Before employing the myth of Prometheus and Pandora to explain why human beings have to toil, Hesiod first introduces his concept of two distinct types of *eris* (11-49), which is another means of valorizing work over taking things unjustly. One kind of *eris* causes war, and is wholly reprehensible; the other, however, incites competition and causes men to work towards collecting wealth, which means that it is ultimately a good force for men.³⁵¹ Prometheus’ deception and the myth of the five ages explains how human beings used to have more than enough natural resources without effort, however, Prometheus’ deception results in the fact that “the gods keep hidden from men the means of life.”³⁵² In this version of the Prometheus myth, Hesiod omits the narrative around the banquet and instead describes how first Zeus hides fire, then Prometheus in turn hides it in a hollow fennel stalk and brings it to men, as they exist in a pre-Pandora asexual and undifferentiated state.³⁵³ After this Zeus tells Prometheus that he will send woeful sufferings (*kêdea lugra*) to mankind and explains that he will give an evil recompense for fire, (*kakon anti puros*). In addition to this punishment, not only will man suffer but he

³⁵⁰ Hes. *Op.* 10.

³⁵¹ Hes. *Op.* 17-27.

³⁵² Hes. *Op.* 42. κρύψαντες γὰρ ἔχουσι θεοὶ βίον ἀνθρώποισιν

³⁵³ In using the generalized ‘man’ and ‘mankind’ here, I refer to human beings generally as they exist before the introduction of the first woman, which could be construed as a more gender neutral state, but with Hesiod’s general tendencies, humans before women are men. See esp. *Op.* 47-52.

will desire and embrace the cause of his destruction.³⁵⁴ This plague and *anti pueros* is Pandora, the first woman, the first mother, and the introduction of the *oikos* to the world of men. In this scene Hesiod shows that men will desire the gift of Pandora, unwittingly welcoming the destruction she brings to their lives. As they will embrace her with open arms, Zeus laughs aloud (*egelasse*), delighted with his mastery.³⁵⁵

The ambiguous and paradoxical nature of Pandora can be seen in the *Works and Days* in the way that she is decorated and ordered with gifts from the gods, but introduces disorder to the world of men, just as she does in the *Theogony*. She is given the gifts of all the gods, and then presented as a divine gift³⁵⁶ for mortals, but these gifts do not add wealth to mortals, rather they take it away. Perhaps her greatest gift is the voice that she is given, and her ability to use it to deceive. She is a crafted being with a voice, the power of speech, and the capacity to produce lies.

In this version, Hesiod first describes what Zeus asks Hephaestus and the other gods to craft Pandora, and then relates how this is accomplished, which results in a repetition of Pandora's attributes:³⁵⁷ Zeus bids Hephaestus to quickly "mix together earth

³⁵⁴ Hes. *Op.* 57-58 As Hesiod writes, Pandora is an evil recompense "in which all | may all be glad of heart while they embrace their own destruction." (ὅ κεν ἅπαντες / ἐρπῶνται κατὰ θυμὸν ἐὸν κακὸν ἀμφαγαπῶντες.)

³⁵⁵ Hes. *Op.* 59. West 1978: 158 defines this as "the cackle of triumph." Marder 2014:397 points to this moment to describe Zeus' supremacy and remove from other gods and human beings, saying, "when Zeus first conceives of the idea of Pandora, he laughs out loud. In the god's solitary laughter, a laugh that emerges from his alienation from himself and the world of men, the invention of the human opens up onto a figure of life that takes even the god by surprise."

³⁵⁶ Incidentally, Hesiod is perhaps making a proleptic translanguistic pun with the German word, '*Gift*' which translates to 'poison.'

³⁵⁷ This repetition is twofold, both internal to the *Works and Days* account and also the catalogue of her attributes is in keeping with her portrait in the *Theogony*.

and water” (γαῖαν ὕδει φύρειν)³⁵⁸ and not only place a human voice and strength within her (ἐν δ’ ἀνθρώπου θέμεν αὐδὴν / καὶ σθένος)³⁵⁹ but also to “fashion a sweet, lovely maiden-shape, similar to the immortal goddesses in face” (ἀθανάτης δὲ θεῆς εἰς ὅπα εἴσκειν / παρθενικῆς καλὸν εἶδος ἐπήρατον).³⁶⁰ Pandora has a human voice (*audên*) but an immortal countenance, which is both *kalon* and virginal. Zeus orders Athena to teach her needlework and the art of weaving intricate webs (ἔργα διδασκῆσαι, πολυδαίδαλον ἰστὸν ὑφαίνειν).³⁶¹ In doing so, he devalues what could be seen as a contribution to household wealth, for “even the *erga*, the paradigmatic work of women at the loom, are raveled, transformed into a sexual threat.”³⁶² These *erga* connote a sexual threat because they are delivered along with Aphrodite’s gifts: the ability to spread grace (*charin*) and to incite cruel longing (*pothon argaleon*) and “cares that weary the limbs” (*guioborous meledônas*) in the men who look at her.³⁶³ As well, the trickster and messenger god Hermes gives Pandora a bitchy mind (*kuneon noön*) and a deceitful nature (*epiklopon*

³⁵⁸ Hes. *Op.* 61.

³⁵⁹ Hes. *Op.* 61-62.

³⁶⁰ Hes. *Op.* 62-63.

³⁶¹ Hes. *Op.* 63-64. Following her analysis of the gendered division of labour wherein men work on hard lasting materials, such as tools, and weapons and woman work on soft fungible items such as food, clothing and baskets, which carry less economic value, Lyons 2012: 18 notes that Hesiod demonstrates that “the division of labour among the gods follows the lines of gender roles among mortals. Hephaestus, the smithy-god, uses ceramics and metalworking to create the female object, and the goddesses adorn her. Most notably, Athena teaches her the art of weaving or adorns her with cloth. Later (2012: 40) she notes that “Hesiodic tradition discounts even those feminine skills such as weaving that are culturally valued elsewhere in Greek culture.” We see the valuation of weaving in the *Odyssey*, where Athena teaches the Phaeacian women to weave, *Od.* 7.109-11. In Pandora’s case, as Lyons 2012: 40 writes, “textiles are part of the deceitful but attractive outer form that makes of Pandora a gift that is both treacherous and irresistible.”

³⁶² Lyons 2012: 44 sees that Patterson 1998: 63 takes an opposing track and argues that “Hesiod’s ‘misogyny’ is a strong indication of the wife’s significant economic role in a household in which she had a vested interest.”

³⁶³ Hes. *Op.* 65-66.

êthos).³⁶⁴ Pandora is “clothed in deceits but denuded of traditional female virtues, a figure for the mystification of women’s economic contribution.”³⁶⁵ Most often, ‘women’s work’ refers either to fabric craft or the work of nurturing, but here, Hesiod makes it ambivalent with acts of seduction and deception. Each god obeys Zeus’ orders and helps to fashion and equip Pandora, in a section nearly identical to the account in the *Theogony*:

αὐτίκα δ’ ἐκ γαίης πλάσσειν κλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις
παρθένῳ αἰδοίῃ ἴκελον Κρονίδεω διὰ βουλάς:
ζῶσε δὲ καὶ κόσμησε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη.

Forthwith the famous Lame God moulded clay in the likeness of a modest maid, as the son of Cronos purposed. And the goddess brighteyed Athena girded and clothed her.³⁶⁶

Along with Athena’s gift of clothing, she fashions all manner of finery for Pandora, (πάντα δέ οἱ χροῖ κόσμον ἐφήρμοσε Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη)³⁶⁷; she also receives necklaces from the Graces (*Charites*) and queenly Persuasion (*potnia Peithō*), and the lovely-haired Hours (*Hōrai kallikomoi*) crown her head with spring flowers (*anthesin eiarnoisin*). Hermes’ gift is described as “lies and crafty words and a deceitful nature” (ψεύδεά θ’ αἰμυλίους τε λόγους καὶ ἐπικλοπον ἦθος).³⁶⁸ Finally, Hesiod concludes the catalogue of Pandora’s gifts by repeating that the herald of the gods presents her with a voice (*phonen*) and names her Pandora.³⁶⁹

The name given to Pandora expresses the paradox she personifies in that it means both ‘all-giving’ and ‘all-receiving.’ In his explanation of Pandora’s name, Hesiod inverts

³⁶⁴ Hes. *Op.* 67. With the exception of Hephaestus, Hermes is the only male god to add to Pandora’s adornments. It is significant that he is the also a trickster god.

³⁶⁵ Lyons 2012: 44.

³⁶⁶ Hes. *Op.* 70-72.

³⁶⁷ Hes. *Op.* 76.

³⁶⁸ Hes. *Op.* 78.

³⁶⁹ Hes. *Op.* 79-80.

the usual etymology of its construction from active to a passive, for he explains she is named so “because all they who dwelt on Olympus gave each a gift” (πάντες Ὀλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχοντες / δῶρον ἐδώρησαν.)³⁷⁰ West discusses the mythological history of Pandora as “a chthonic goddess, sometimes identified with Ge,” i.e. Gaia, the Earth, based primarily on the fact that both Gaia and Demeter are at times named “Anêsidôra.”³⁷¹ Both female figures represent a generative principle in different ways. By shifting the etymology from ‘all-giving’ to ‘all-taking’, however, some scholars argue that he “explicitly separates woman from the bountiful earth.”³⁷² However, rather than severing Pandora’s association with Gaia, Hesiod describes how Hephaestus forms her from the earth (*Op.* 61), thereby connecting her to the earth as her source and thereby showing the danger inherent in apparent bounty as well as the danger in desiring, giving, and receiving gifts. Within the context of the narrative of the *Works and Days*, Hesiod identifies a fundamental anxiety inherent in exchange and specifically in marriage exchange. For this reason he closes this catalogue with her epithet: “a plague to men who eat bread” (*pema andrasin alphstêsin*) ‘πῆμ’ ἀνδράσιν ἀλφηστῆσιν³⁷³: she is not only a plague for men, but specifically for men who must work for their livings, (*alphstêsin*).³⁷⁴

³⁷⁰ Hes. *Op.* 81-82.

³⁷¹ West 1978 164-166.

³⁷² Lyons 2012: 42, 123, note 86, Zeitlin 1996: 89, Lyons 2012: 60 makes a similar case, as does Loraux 1981a: 89 note 73, who sees this as a “deliberate “counterstatement” to the standard meaning.” See Loraux 1981a : 88-89; Vernant [1974] 1980: 190; Marquardt 1982: 286. On the pictorial record pointing to a close association between Gaia and Pandora see Arthur 1982: 75; contra. Loraux [1981] 1993: 84. Cf. Zeitlin 1996: 82 note 62. On the iconography of Pandora, see Hurwit 1995: 176-177.

³⁷³ Hes. *Op.* 82.

³⁷⁴ At Hes. *Th.* 512, Hesiod refers to Epithemus as he “who from the first was a mischief to men who eat bread” (ὄς κακὸν ἐξ ἀρχῆς γένετ’ ἀνδράσιν ἀλφηστῆσιν). See also Hom. *Od.* 9. 191.

4.8 Pandora as *Pithos*: Introduction of the Evils of the *Oikos* and Economic Exchange

In the section of the *Works and Days* that follows, Hesiod describes how Pandora is introduced to the world as the first wife and the first mother. This section displays the danger inherent in desire as connected to marriage and economic exchange. Pandora famously comes into the world with a jar (*pithos*) and fatefully opens the jar, which releases evils into the world, though it retains hope (*Elpis*) under its lip. Hesiod describes how Zeus gives Pandora to Prometheus' brother Epithemus and again emphasizes how the gift (*dōron*) of Pandora is a “sheer hopeless snare” (*dolon aipun amêxanon*).³⁷⁵

Hesiod explains why Pandora causes such troubles:

Πρὶν μὲν γὰρ ζώεσκον ἐπὶ χθονὶ φύλ' ἀνθρώπων
νόσφιν ἄτερ τε κακῶν καὶ ἄτερ χαλεποῖο πόνοιο
νούσων τ' ἀργαλέων, αἱ τ' ἀνδράσι Κῆρας ἔδωκαν.
αἴψα γὰρ ἐν κακότητι βροτοὶ καταγηράσκουσιν.
ἀλλὰ γυνὴ χεῖρεςσι πίθου μέγα πῶμ' ἀφελούσα
ἔσκέδασ': ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἐμήσατο κήδεα λυγρὰ.
μόυνη δ' αὐτόθι Ἐλπίς ἐν ἀρρήκτοισι δόμοισιν
ἔνδον ἔμιμνε πίθου ὑπὸ χεῖλεσιν, οὐδὲ θύραζε
ἔξέπτῃ: πρόσθεν γὰρ ἐπέλλαβε πῶμα πίθιοιο
αἰγιόχου βουλήσιν Διὸς νεφεληγερέταο.
ἄλλα δὲ μυρία λυγρὰ κατ' ἀνθρώπους ἀλάληται:
πλείη μὲν γὰρ γαῖα κακῶν, πλείη δὲ θάλασσα:
νοῦσοι δ' ἀνθρώποισιν ἐφ' ἡμέρη, αἱ δ' ἐπὶ νυκτὶ
αὐτόματοι φοιτῶσι κακὰ θνητοῖσι φέρουσαι
σιγῇ, ἐπεὶ φωνὴν ἐξείλετο μητίετα Ζεὺς.
οὕτως οὐτι πη ἔστι Διὸς νόον ἐξαλέασθαι.

For ere this the tribes of men lived on earth remote and free from ills and hard toil and heavy sicknesses which bring the Fates upon men; for in misery men grow old quickly. But the woman took off the great lid of the jar with her hands and scattered, all these and her thought caused sorrow and mischief to men. Only Hope remained there in an unbreakable home within under the rim of the great jar, and did not fly out at the door; for ere that, the lid of the jar stopped her, by the will of Aegis-holding Zeus who gathers the clouds. But the rest, countless plagues, wander amongst men; for earth is full of evils, and the sea is

³⁷⁵ Hes. *Op.* 83-89. Hes. *Th.* 589, repeated.

full. Of themselves diseases come upon men continually by day and by night, bringing mischief to mortals silently; for wise Zeus took away speech from them. So is there no way to escape the will of Zeus.³⁷⁶

Before Pandora the tribes of men lived without toil or sickness, nor the misery that old age brings. These consequences of decay entered the mortal world when a woman, presumably Pandora, opened the lid of a jar (*pithos*) and scattered these evils into the world.³⁷⁷ Hesiod makes this woman responsible for these evils, saying “for human beings she contrived baneful sorrows” (ἀνθρώποισι δ’ ἐμήσατο κήδεα λυγρά).³⁷⁸ Ultimately, however, Pandora is a symbol of the introduction of gift exchange, and especially marriage exchange, as well as for the introduction of heterosexual reproduction. For these reasons she is responsible not only for what is *kakon* in the mortal experience, but also what makes it *kalon*. Hesiod leaves ambiguous the jar’s origins, exact contents, and Pandora’s motivation in opening it,³⁷⁹ the mysteriousness of Pandora’s *pithos* calls to mind Achilles’ jar from which mortals derive their mixed fates.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ Hes. *Op.* 90-105.

³⁷⁷ West 1978: 168 defines a *pithos* as “a large storage jar, sometimes as tall as a man.” The notion that what Pandora opened was a ‘box’, sc. *pyxis*, derives from a lapse by Erasmus.

³⁷⁸ Hes. *Op.* 91-92.

³⁷⁹ Lyons 2012: 39, notes that “later versions attribute her act to stereotypical female curiosity, but Hesiod does not provide a motivation.”

³⁸⁰ Hom. *Il.* 24. 527 ff.:

δοιοὶ γάρ τε πίθοι κατακείαται ἐν Διὸς οὔδει
δώρων οἷα δίδωσι κακῶν, ἕτερος δὲ ἑάων:
ᾧ μὲν κ’ ἀμμίξας δῶη Ζεὺς τερπικέρανος,
ἄλλοτε μὲν τε κακῶ ὅ γε κύρεται, ἄλλοτε δ’ ἐσθλῶ:
ᾧ δὲ κε τῶν λυγρῶν δῶη, λωβητὸν ἔθηκε,
καὶ ἑ κακῆ βούβρωστις ἐπὶ χθόνα δῖαν ἐλαύνει,
φοιτᾷ δ’ οὔτε θεοῖσι τετιμένος οὔτε βροτοῖσιν.

For two urns are set upon the floor of Zeus of gifts that he giveth, the one of ills, the other of blessings. To whomsoever Zeus, that hurleth the thunderbolt, giveth a mingled lot, that man meeteth now with evil, now with good; but to whomsoever

One thing remains stuck under the jar's lid: *Elpis*, hope. The ambivalent nature of this *elpis* mirrors Hesiod's initial description of *eris*, along with Hesiod's consequent valorization of work as discussed above, for hope can be either a positive force, if it inspires human beings to work and save in order to assure their livelihood, in other words, to supply their *pithos* with grain, to speak Hesiodically, or it is a negative force if it induces idle men to illusory expectations for the future.³⁸¹ I follow Vernant's reading that "*Elpis* is an ambiguous quality with both negative and positive aspects (like *Eris*, *Zēlos*, *Aidōs*, and *Nemesis*)."³⁸² The fact that it remains in the *pithos*, stuck under the lid can also be interpreted as a positive or a negative, depending on what the *pithos* symbolizes.

Historically, the *pithoi* were ubiquitous storage containers that came in all shapes and sizes. A *pithos*, or *aggros*, was "a storage container for grain, oil, and wine, carefully sealed up with its contents and broached at the appropriate time and with the appropriate pre-cautions for the prudent use of what it holds."³⁸³ Zeitlin extrapolated from later sources to argue that it was traditionally the woman's role to take care of the provisions, which included "protecting from pilferage and untimely opening, even as she safeguards her own *pithos*," in other less metaphorical words, protects her own virginity.³⁸⁴

he giveth but of the baneful, him he maketh to be reviled of man, and direful madness driveth him over the face of the sacred earth, and he wandereth honoured neither of gods nor mortals.

³⁸¹ Zeitlin 1996: 64, note 19. For a summary of the scholarly controversy see Verdenius 1985: 66-71; Saïd 1985: 123-30; for an extensive bibliography, Noica 1984. In Vernant's 1979b: 121-32 he writes "*Elpis* is an ambiguous quality with both negative and positive aspects like *Eris*, *Zēlos*, *Aidōs*, and *Nemesis*."

³⁸² Vernant 1979b: 121-32.

³⁸³ Zeitlin 1996: 66 referencing Hes. *Op.* 368, 815, 819; also 475, 600, 613. On the full versus empty jar, see Vernant 1979b: 115-21.

³⁸⁴ Zeitlin 1996: 66.

Although some *pithoi* were kept in the back room of two room houses because they were cool, dark, and good for storing food stuffs, others were decorative and on display, in order to show off the wealth of the household.

Hesiod's *pithos* can thus represent the *oikos*. On this reading, the *elpis*, which remains stuck within the jar, symbolizes the woman restricted to remain in the private realm of the *oikos*.³⁸⁵ On the other hand, the *pithos* can be interpreted as an image for Pandora, and woman's bodies generally. In a similar way to the germ of technological fire, which is hidden in the fennel stalk, the seed farmers sow in the ground "must be engendered and stored in a hollow container," while the farmer sows the seed for his children in his wife's belly.³⁸⁶ On this interpretation the woman is the jar and the *elpis* is the potential child within.

In a more specific version of the jar-as-woman interpretation, Zeitlin sees the *pithos* as a representation of a uterus where the child, or hope of a child, is the *elpis* under the jar's lid.³⁸⁷ Her argument includes reference to medical texts in which the terminology for the female reproductive anatomy overlaps with the terminology for both facial features and the parts of a *pithos*.³⁸⁸ She points to the fact that ancient medical texts saw a symmetry between woman's oral and sexual appetites, wherein the role of the stomach overlapped with that of the womb.³⁸⁹ The idea of a lid or stopper, used to prevent entry also corresponds to a of a seal or stopper used to preserve virginity or retain

³⁸⁵ Vernant 1979b: 121-32.

³⁸⁶ Zeitlin 1996: 56.

³⁸⁷ Zeitlin 1996: 64-66. Lyons 2012: 39 also sees that "the theme of the retention or release of the jar's ambiguous contents also points to a related anxiety about reproduction."

³⁸⁸ Zeitlin 1996: 65. In Aristotle *Historia Animalium* 7.3.583a16 the womb is "lipped."

³⁸⁹ Zeitlin 1996: 65. This is "reflected in prescriptions for gynecological therapy" to treat certain diseases.

the seed.³⁹⁰ Daniel Boyarin argues that this interpretation makes woman wholly responsible for the act of reproduction, for

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 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.³⁹¹

Children, like women, are both necessary and potentially dangerous to the *oikos*, mirroring the ambivalence of *elpis*.

As discussed above, Pandora, as the paradigmatic wife, threatens the economic security of the household not only because she is a stranger who becomes an insider, but also because “the potential proliferation of children poses a significant threat.”³⁹²

Although without a woman there can be no *oikos*, the woman nevertheless “an economic liability” to the *oikos*.³⁹³ This recalls how in the *Theogony*, the danger of the first woman is that she is a beautifully disguised stomach, a friend of Need (*Penia*) but never Satiety (*Koros*). Pucci recognizes that here Hesiod points to a dual association with both excess and lack, saying, “she is an excess because she introduces toil as a way of producing what the earth once provided spontaneously, and a loss because toil does not fully restore the goodness of the preceding life.”³⁹⁴ The worst aspect of the exchange that Pandora

³⁹⁰ Zeitlin 1996: 65 note 21.

³⁹¹ Boyarin 1993: 85.

³⁹² Zeitlin 1996: 68.

³⁹³ Zeitlin 1996: 68.

³⁹⁴ Pucci 1977: 86 argues that she thusly corresponds to the Derridean “supplement” which is both an addition and a replacement.

introduces is that it is not optional. She is both “the very incarnation of bad exchange,”³⁹⁵ and “a bad bargain, not least because men cannot do without her.”³⁹⁶

4.9 Pandora as Hesiod’s Brother, Perses

Reading the myth of Pandora in the *Works and Days* as a cautionary commentary on the paradoxical nature of women as necessary and dangerous to the structure of the *oikos* points to Hesiod’s overall argument about the dangers of unjust exchange generally, with specific reference to dispute with his own brother Perses. Scholars have interpreted Hesiod’s anxiousness about women and children as a reflection of the narrative circumstances. The entire poem is “framed as a protreptic exhortation to his good-for-nothing brother Perses.”³⁹⁷ His brother has taken a larger-than-justified portion of the inheritance owed to them both, by stirring up quarrels and bribing judges, and therefore Hesiod advises that it is better to produce only one son.³⁹⁸ Hesiod’s brotherly strife frames the narrative of the unharmonious Prometheus and the foolish Epimetheus, who receives the gift of Pandora, even when he has been advised against accepting such divine gifts.

Other scholars argue that Pandora represents Perses,³⁹⁹ since both are deceitful and thievish idlers who acquire what others have worked hard to earn. Due to these qualities, Hesiod insinuates that Perses is as lazy as a drone, whom the gods hate, just as

³⁹⁵ Ferrari 1988: 52.

³⁹⁶ Lyons 2012: 44.

³⁹⁷ Zeitlin 1996: 68-69.

³⁹⁸ Hes. *Op.* 376, cf. 271.

³⁹⁹ Zeitlin 1996: 70 argues, “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.”

he compares the race of women to drones in the *Theogony*.⁴⁰⁰ Hesiod’s brotherly quarrel displays how the problem with the overproduction of progeny is not only that they will eat the wealth of the house while the man of the house is alive, as discussed above, but also that “bearing more than one child introduces the risk of fraternal rivalry that is exemplified in the *eris* between Hesiod and Perses.” In this manner, we see the anxieties about reproduction that Hesiod articulates through the myth of Pandora, echoed in Hesiod’s own *oikos*.

4.10 Pandora as Death

We have seen above that the *pithos* can represent the *oikos*, the woman within the *oikos*, and the uterus within the woman. In each case, it represents the promise of new life and the cycle of succession and reproduction. The jar can also evoke the nurturing and continuation of life, since the *pithos* is a storage container for the food and drink necessary to sustain mortal human beings. Equally, however, the *pithos* “may even be viewed as a symbol for the earth itself, since, as a large earthenware jar for storage of grain and other provisions, it frequently rested on the ground and was used, at least in early times, as a receptacle for the dead.”⁴⁰¹ The *pithos*, and Pandora as *pithos*, evokes

⁴⁰⁰ Hes. *Op.* 303-306

τῶ δὲ θεοὶ νεμεσῶσι καὶ ἀνέρες, ὅς κεν ἀεργὸς
ζῶη, κηφήνεσσι κοθούροις εἵκελος ὀργήν,
οἳ τε μελισσάων κάματον τρύχουσιν ἀεργοὶ
ἔσθοντες,

Both gods and men are angry
with a man who lives idle, for in nature he is like the stingless drones
who waste the labor of the bees,
eating without working; 322.

See Zeitlin 1996: 69 for a survey of interpretations.

⁴⁰¹ Marquardt 1982: 298 points to Homer’s story of Ares being imprisoned within a *pithos* for 13 months (*Il.* 5.385-91) and notes that Hesiod depicts Tartarus as a kind of bronze jug with a narrow neck. Hes. *Th.* 726-28.

death, not only because an empty *pithos* would mean hunger and suffering but also because the *pithos* is also used as a funerary casket. We have evidence for several *pithoi* burials, although the majority of visible burials do not include *pithoi* as caskets. In funerary contexts fine decorated *pithoi* were used as funerary markers. Often children were buried in small less fancy urns, when we have record of their burials.⁴⁰² This allows Pandora to be a mythological representation for the uncertainty in life as “embodied in femininity.”⁴⁰³

The anxiety linked to reproduction is, at its root, the fear of death. There is sense within the *Works and Days* that progeny allow a man to live longer because they care for him in his old age but they also further his existence after he dies as his creations and through their honouring of his memory. In this way the desire to control reproduction is directly related to the desire to control time. And the sense of time is itself a sense of the finality of human existence. As Bal writes, “reproduction is a way to overcome the tragic feeling of contingency, which is the result of mortality.”⁴⁰⁴ But this fear of the end is countered in myth with an obsession with origin stories and the desire to create something lasting. Hesiod blames the race of women for tying men to the insistent

⁴⁰² See du Bois 1988: 47, Ault 2007: 259-265.

⁴⁰³ Marquardt 1982: 291. In full, Marquardt concludes that “the complexity of Hesiod’s view of feminine nature serves as a focus for his anxiety about life in general. Aphrodite, as we have seen, is the procreative urge essential to the human race, as well as deception and seduction. Pandora carries with her the inevitability of hardship and misery, but she is also sexual beauty, which is intrinsically good. There is a direct correlations between the chthonic, unpredictable nature in Pandora as earth-goddess and the economically “evil,” deceptive nature of Pandora as woman. As earth-goddess, Pandora means life and death to those who depend on her; as woman, she means happiness and sorrow. This shows how for Hesiod the basic fact of uncertainty in life is seen embodied in femininity. The great and necessary gifts granted by women, especially food and sexual pleasure, are negative as often as positive. There is nothing to which man can completely give himself.”

⁴⁰⁴ Bal 1983: 118-119. See Zeitlin 1996: 86.

demands of the stomach and the womb. It is through the cultural actions of the Muse and the bard that humans can approach something closer to divine immortality and, as Arthur argues, “have the possibility of constructing a fiction of a world without women, a world freed from corporeality, a fiction of transcendence.”⁴⁰⁵ Hesiod’s poetic creation is analogous to Pandora as a speaking creation, which derives its essence from a divine source. But in comparison to Pandora, as the first woman, poetry is a sublimated form of continuance that, at very least, resembles the truth.

4.11 Conclusion: Pandora as Desired Gift, Necessary Curse, and Poetic Wonder

Zeus orders Pandora to be crafted as a punishment for men. She introduces both mortality and reproduction into the realm of mortals. Conceptually, Pandora introduces alterity into the world of mortals, by introducing gender distinctions. Paradoxically, while introducing death she brings new life with her as the first mortal mother. Without Pandora there is no disease, no toil, and no death, but there is also no *oikos*. Equally, without Pandora there is no introduction of exchange and commerce, and thus no motivation for interaction between one *oikos* and another. Indeed, Pandora is a manifestation of paradox on a variety of levels. She is a beautiful evil, *kalos kakon* and both the first woman and a copy of a woman. She is a gift which appears to introduce wealth into a household but in fact only introduces more hunger. On the surface she is greatly desired as a precious treasure of great aesthetic and economic value, but she introduces unquenchable appetite into the world of man. Superficially she is the gift that keeps giving, but in fact, she is the gift that keeps taking. Due to both the grace of her attractive appearance and the horror of her nature, Pandora is a *thauma*. By introducing

⁴⁰⁵ Arthur 1982: 78-79.

her to mortals, Zeus shifts the drama of succession from the immortals to human beings, which stabilizes his immortal rule through neutralizing human beings' potential to revolt. In a similar way to the Muses, but without their power to mediate divine wisdom to mortals, Pandora also functions as an intermediary between the human and divine realm. Zeus' gift of Pandora to mortals is a reaction to Prometheus' thefts and gifts, whereby economic exchange is introduced to mortals. On the mortal-to-mortal level this economy primarily takes the form of marriage exchange, whereas on the human-to-divine level it takes the form of sacrifice. Pandora represents both the intersection between the divine and human realms and the intersection between animals and human beings. She represents both the opposite of humanity and introduces the 'other' into the human world, while being the source of the regeneration of the human race. On account of her ambiguous and paradoxical nature, Pandora incarnates the anxiety that Hesiod expresses about feminine deception on the human scale as the manifestation of a false thing presented as true and shows that the unalterable fact of mortality lies at the heart of this anxiety.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In the present study I argue that throughout the core text of Greek mythological thinking, the *Theogony*, Hesiod attributes the power of generation and deception to feminine sources and shows how on both the mortal and immortal levels the male power must take up and sublimate this feminine power into himself in order to overcome the threat of deception and mortality. This movement is expressed throughout the *Theogony* in the transformation of the male stomach (*gastêr*) into the female womb (*nêdys*) and the introduction of the mortality and appetitive desire as consequent with the invention of the first woman and first wife, Pandora. Overall this mythological structure allows Hesiod to position himself liminally between immortals and mortals, and between animals and human beings, while raising himself to a godlike status through a claim to poetic immortality.

In the second chapter, I argued that through Hesiod's invocatory hymn to the Muses he simultaneously praises the Muses' powers of song and dance and their ability to mediate these musical abilities for mortals and proves that he is the recipient of such powers. He accomplishes this through his description of the Muses' attributes and parentage, for they are the divinely beautiful and perpetually virginal daughters of Zeus and Memory, who support Zeus' rule by bestowing their musical ability on mortals and allowing mortals to sing the praises of the divine. From their divine and symbolic lineage the Muses are able to inspire eloquence in lords and to curate memory. This ability can render even the greatest human beings happy, which places poetry over and above governance. And thus the Muses and those poets who receive their gifts overcome the constraints of temporal existence for mortal beings, a way of recalling the past, which can

be sung and re-sung.⁴⁰⁶ In this way they mediate not only the ability to recall and honour the ancients through song but also a way to live beyond death through poetic progeny and Hesiod's own poem is thus both a way of honouring the gods and honouring himself.

In the *Dichterweihe* episode Hesiod presents the hierarchical structure of the cosmos, through the character of the shepherd by describing how the gods exist in the realm above human beings, who are themselves situated above animals, as well as the hierarchical structure in the human realm whereby lords and those connected to the gods outclass others. As a shepherd, however, Hesiod is able to transgress geographical, alimentary, and ethical boundaries on account of the gifts of the Muses; he introduces the motif of the *gastêr* as a characteristic trait that represents the necessarily physical appetitive natures from which all mortals suffer, but also the space where prophetic inspiration can be received from the divine. In the Muses' interaction with the shepherd,

⁴⁰⁶ Poetic immortality is a common theme in poetry generally. The 21st century Canadian poet, Alden Nowlan employs this theme exceptionally well in his short poem "Exchange of Gifts":

As long as you read this poem
I will be writing it.
I am writing it here and now
before your eyes,
although you can't see me.
Perhaps you'll dismiss this
as a verbal trick,
the joke is you're wrong;
the real trick,
is your pretending
this is something
fixed and solid,
external to us both.
I tell you better:
I will keep on
writing this poem for you
even after I'm dead.

they claim to speak truth similar to lies, or, when they wish, true things, a claim which illustrates the characteristically feminine power to deceive. Therefore, Hesiod shows how Zeus' ability to overcome the threat of succession is analogous to Hesiod's ability to produce poetry – or so he claims. Thanks to the Muses' gifts of a *skeptron* and a divine voice, images that symbolizes his newly bestowed power of composition and disposition, Hesiod thus attains to a limited immortality.

In the third chapter, I argued that through the succession myth, Hesiod details the way in which the unifying male principle overcomes and takes up into its governance the generative and duplicitous feminine principle to stabilize the divine realm. He tells the story of how the world transforms from chaos, an absence of order, into a *kosmos*, an ordered whole through the transformation of the male stomach (*gastêr*) into the female womb (*nêdys*); through the course of the succession myth the male gods suppress their children by making their stomachs into wombs to an ever-greater extent. Since the ultimate goal of the succession myth is to overcome the greatest potential threat to power, the threat of an heir, the divine succession implicitly presents the tension present in the structure of the human *oikos*.

Before the succession myth begins, Hesiod describes the unordered beginning of the world through the figure of Chaos and the introduction of embryonic definition in the three other primordial figures: Gaia, Tartarus and Eros. In the first stage of the succession myth Gaia and Ouranos represent the primary level of conflict between the male force, who desires to suppress the succession of progeny, and the female force who desires to bring to birth. At this first level, Ouranos attempts to suppress his children by forcing them to remain within the female *nêdys*, within their mother, the Earth. The conflict

results in Gaia's first *dolos*, the castration of Ouranos, and the birth of Athena, which is a figuration of inversion of the result of the final stage of the succession myth, the birth of Athena.

In the second stage of the succession myth the conflict between Kronos and Rhea represents the development of male *mêtis* and the introduction of retributive punishment. At this stage, Kronos attempts to secure his rule by swallowing his children, the Olympian gods, after they are born, and in this way making his male stomach into a second womb. As a result of this conflict, when Zeus is born, Rhea presents a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes in place of the child and when Kronos swallows it he is forced to regurgitate the stone and the other children as well. This is the first act of symbolic exchange and when this stone is established at Parnassos as a sign (*sema*) and a wonder (*thauma*) it represents the introduction of prophecy and Hesiod gives Zeus the credit for both of these acts.

In the third stage of the succession myth Zeus takes control over the power of generation itself through the ingestion of his pregnant wife, Mêtis, and birthing Athena from his head. Through this act, Zeus takes up Mêtis' power, as the personification of cunning, to bring to birth plots as well as progeny and thus to anticipate any plans that threaten his rule. The following catalogue of Zeus' marriages shows how he symbolically introduces order into the cosmos. Finally, the birth of Athena is a proof of the stabilization of his kingship because he overcomes the threat of a stronger male heir the security of his rule is strengthened by Athena's consistent and ever-lasting assistance.

In the fourth chapter, I argue that the myth of Pandora illustrates Hesiod's categorization of deception and generation as feminine on the mortal realm and shows

how he blames the race of women for the fact of death and appetite as definitive traits of human beings. Pandora is characterized as a paradox, a beautiful ugliness, a noble evil (*kalon kakon*), since she exists only as her beautiful appearance, which seems to bear wealth to man when actually introducing ever-greater desire. Another aspect to the paradox of Pandora is that as the first wife, she introduces the fact of birth and family along with death. She is the first wife, first mother, and the first gift exchanged in the human realm but she also introduces decay and mortality to mortals. As such Pandora is an illustration of the anxieties present in the structure of the *oikos*. Thus, on account of her beauty as well as the fact of her dangerous potential, she is a wondrous creation (*thauma*).

In the *Works and Days* Pandora plays a similar role. In this work Hesiod describes how she opens a jar, which releases all the evils into the world, except for hope, which remains stuck under the lid of the jar. Various interpretations see this myth as a figuration of the ambivalent view of women and children as necessary evils. In this work Pandora is a figuration for the anxieties present in all mortals about the necessities of mortality. Through this characterization, Hesiod shifts the blame of mortality unto women, but he introduces poetry and mythology as a way to transgress the boundaries imposed by mortality.

Overall, I have argued that Hesiod's account of the birth of the gods illustrates a progression towards an ordered structure in the cosmos, which permeates the human as well as divine realms and Hesiod uses this myth to raise himself from the station of a shepherd, in which he clothes himself at the outset of the poem, to above even human kings. He claims that through his poem he can overcome the fundamental problem

attached with his status as a mortal man, the difficulty that he will not live forever. Through his characterization of the Muses, as well as his description of Zeus' accomplishments in the succession myth, Hesiod claims to achieve a divine inspiration, the result of which is his own ability to transgress geographical, temporal and metaphysical boundaries, to become immortal and like to the gods. (And who am I to say that Hesiod has not achieved so lofty a goal, since I am sitting here musing on his poem and laughing at his jokes?)

Through his characterization of generation as a feminine principle, Hesiod also characterizes the fact of mortality as consequent with the introduction of the first woman. The womb and the tomb are two sides of the same coin, according to the archaic poet; and this allows him to ground a patriarchal and patrilineal order in the human realm, one noticeably in keeping with the patriarchal and patrilineal order that dominated many regions of Greece in historical times, in the mythological authority of a Zeus-centric cosmos. I have shown how a fundamental tension in the human patriarchy of the Hesiodic *oikos* serves to structure Hesiod's seminal text of Greek mythology and how he plays on these cultural characteristics to raise himself from the station of a lowly shepherd to that of a divine bard, through honouring Zeus' majesty and praising the Muses first and last.

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