

Chapter 4

Signifying difference: the myth of Pandora*

From I. Zeitlin

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

The mythic imagination does not view matters this way. More often than not, woman is an afterthought, created as a secondary category following the prior emergence of man. Her ontological status is therefore not a self-evident or spontaneous fact. To account for her supplementary presence requires a motive, a reason, a purpose—in short, a myth. Two of the most well-known examples of this type are the story of Eve in the book of Genesis and the Greek myth of Pandora, as recounted by the archaic poet, Hesiod. Each, in its own way, conforms to this pattern: Eve is created from Adam's rib as a companion to ease his loneliness;¹ Pandora is fashioned at Zeus' orders in retaliation for the Titan Prometheus' theft of fire. Whether created by the supreme male deity out of compassion or anger, woman's entry onto the scene is only the beginning of the story; it provides the occasion for an aetiological narrative that tells how through her agency the world was transformed into its present state. Her secondary status operates as a signifier of difference and disruption that brings about the so-called 'human condition'. That is, she introduces death, woe, and evil into the world, along with the laborious toil of human existence.

Hesiod tells the myth of Pandora in two versions, the first in the *Theogony*, a cosmogonic poem, and the second in the *Works and Days*,

a didactic work of wisdom literature. The details differ, but in each case, she figures as the outcome of a game of wits between Prometheus and Zeus that resolves around a series of deceptions and counter-deceptions in connection with the exchange of gifts. Zeus wins, of course, and in return for the theft of fire, he has Hephaistos, the artisan god, fabricate the first woman as a molded creature, who astounds men by her god-given beauty and ruins them by her thievish gluttony. This 'beautiful evil' (*kalon kakon*), this 'dangerous trap' (*dolos aipus*), this 'great plague for mortals' (*mega pēma thnētoisi*) sits like a drone inside a man's house and, like a rapacious belly (*gastēr*), consumes his substance without giving anything in return (*Th.* 561–591). Man is faced with two equally unpleasant alternatives: either marry and expect the worst or avoid woman altogether, in which case there will be no one to tend him in his old age, and upon his death his distant heirs will divide his possessions. In the second version in the *Works and Days*, the newly created woman is sent to Epimetheus (Afterthought) along with her jar. Although warned by his brother Prometheus (Forethought) to accept no gifts from the gods, he foolishly disobeys and learns to regret it when Pandora opens the lid of the jar and releases the swarm of sorrows and diseases that now wander silent and invisible over all the earth. Only the uncertain quality of Hope (*Elpis*) is left within, a small and ambiguous recompense for the life of toil and woe that henceforth constitutes the lot of humankind (*WD* 56–104).²

It would be difficult to overstate the degree of negativity in the Greek version of woman's creation. The myth of Adam and Eve justifies both the social, even organic, dependency of wife upon husband and her subordination to his authority. In Hesiod, by contrast, woman remains a separate and alien being, whose presence in his household he both requires and resents. Even the good wife, one who most resembles him, may turn out to be a burden all the same. The biblical account stresses the union of male and female in joint sex and procreation, decreeing that husband and wife cleave together to become one flesh and assigning a parity of labor that balances man's agricultural toil with Eve's travail in child-birth. Hesiod's myth, on the other hand, insists on contrasting the extremes of man's patient industry with woman's useless idleness. It elides any mention of sexual contact and, except by veiled allusion, omits any reference to woman's reproductive functions. The image of Pandora's jar in the *Works and Days*, as I have argued elsewhere, is a substitute for, and analogy to, the woman's womb, according to which

Elpis is the child (or the hope of a child) and Pandora's acts of removing and replacing the lid of the jar represent the breaching of her virginity and the subsequent closure that is necessary for pregnancy to occur.³

This manufactured object called woman, accompanied by yet another artisanal product (the jar), is separated at the outset from the natural processes of generation by which the entire universe came into being. Yet if the myth undermines woman's maternal functions, we note that man in his turn has neither directly affirmed his paternal role nor his virile potency. As Boyarin comments,

If the opening of the jar represents the breaching of Pandora's virginity, then she is made wholly responsible, as it were, for this act as well. The text refuses to record the first sexual act between a man and a woman, because by doing so it would have to reveal that which it seems determined to suppress, the simple fact that men are also agents in the performance of sex and thus responsible, at least equally with women, for whatever baneful effects it is held to have.⁴

Adam and Eve both eat of the fruit of the tree; both become aware of their identity as genitalized beings; both cover their nakedness, and they leave together when expelled from the garden of Eden. Hesiod's reticence on the topic of human sexuality and reproduction is all the more noteworthy, considering the broader project of the *Theogony*, which is to recount the creation of the universe through the birth of the gods.

The creation of Pandora marks the definitive rupture between gods and mortals, forever separating them into different categories. Until now, we have focused on the import of this separation that determines the nature of relations between the sexes in the human realm, affecting men's lives for all time to come. But what of the other side? The creation of Pandora is only a single element in the larger creative project of the *Theogony* that constructs an extended evolutionary design in which gods play the central roles. Here the *Theogony* differs from Genesis in two striking respects: first, woman is created on her own without any parallel and preceding account of how the category of man came into existence; second, if Pandora is meant to stand for all humankind, as some critics have suggested, the text does not situate her creation as the final and culminating display of divine generative power. It occurs, rather, at a very different juncture during the unfolding of a cosmogonic drama in which, unlike

Genesis, there are a multitude of gods—gods, who themselves come into being by various means and at different moments of time. In these struggles at the divine level for differentiation, self-definition, and superior power, the place reserved in the text for Pandora's creation deserves detailed consideration in assessing her roles and functions.

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

Given the vast scope of this topic, I will focus on Zeus' rise to power in the frame of a succession myth that requires both the replacement of a father by a son (Ouranos by Kronos and Kronos by Zeus) and the eventual triumph of male over female, particularly with respect to rights over reproduction and in matters of engendering and parentage—even, we might say, over the creative principle itself. The struggle begins with the castration of Ouranos (Sky) by his youngest son, Kronos, at the instigation of Gaia (Earth), the first maternal principle. In the face of the primordial father's refusal to uncouple from Gaia, castration is the drastic means she devises to allow their children to emerge from the mother's depths and see the light of day. But in his defeat, Ouranos initiates the first challenge to female fecundity, since his castration results in the birth of Aphrodite from his semen and in the engendering of the female Erinyes from the drops of his blood that fell to the earth from his severed phallus (*Th.* 184–200). In the second stage, Kronos may be said to imitate pregnancy itself by swallowing his children once they are born, and, when forced to disgorge his progeny, by 'giving birth' to them through his mouth (*Th.* 453–500). In the last stage, Zeus absorbs the female into himself, swallowing the pregnant Metis, principle of resourceful intelligence, and producing a female offspring—his daughter, Athena—from his head (*Th.* 886–895). Only in this way can he ensure the permanence of his rule, putting an end to the generational evolution of the male gods and appropriating both the physical and mental creative capacities of the female in the interests of paternal—or, more accurately, patriarchal—power.⁵

Before the narrative reaches this momentous event (*Th.* 886–900,

924–996), Zeus has already accomplished his first creative act in producing the first mortal female, Pandora. In so doing, he ratifies the definitive split between gods and men. Two questions therefore arise: why is the story of Pandora placed where it is, and what dilemmas is the mode of her creation designed to resolve? Logically, Zeus ought to have instituted his sovereignty over the universe before turning his attention to the condition of mortals. But the text takes a curious turn and situates the quarrel with Prometheus and the subsequent division between gods and men just *after* the narrative of Zeus' own birth but *before* the narrative of the mighty battle against the Titans. One last challenge follows in Zeus' solo combat with Typhoeus, Gaia's last child, a monstrous offspring of her mating with the primal depths of Tartaros. Only after this victory are we told that the 'blessed gods finished their toil (*ponon*)' and in the wake of their struggle for honors (*timai*) with the Titans, 'urged Zeus to rule and be king over them, by the counsels of Gaia. And he divided their *timai* in turn among them' (*Th.* 881–885). The birth of Zeus and his rescue from his devouring father Kronos, is itself preceded by another apparent interlude, introducing a remarkable female goddess, Hekate, whose appearance constitutes another kind of *hysteron proteron*, in that she is especially honored by Zeus, even though Zeus has yet to be born and she presides over human activities in a world of men that is not yet constituted.⁶

Why should this be so? Why should the 'hymn' to Hekate *precede* the birth of Zeus, the centerpiece of the entire *Theogony*, and why should the story of Pandora *follow* directly after?⁷ What is the logic that insists on framing the birth of Zeus with the accounts of two female personages, who, taken together, form a complementary pair sharply divided into positive and negative poles? Situated as two points on a continuum of feminine characters that leads from Gaia to Athena, including especially Aphrodite and Styx, the figures of Hekate and Pandora are distinguished from all the others, not least because each is defined in a significant relation both to mortals and to gods, particularly to Zeus.⁸

On the principle that the sequence of the narrative is itself a determining factor in the production of meaning, I propose in advance that Zeus' own ontological status is indeed predicated on this intersection between immortal and mortal realms, as he evolves from the first instantiation of a divine child to the figure of sovereign ruler under the title of 'father of gods and men'. Thus, while Hekate and Pandora have been rightly interpreted as important factors in

defining the ambiguities of the 'human condition', they are also essential in constructing the definition of Zeus himself. Let us therefore take a closer look, starting with the often discussed passage about the goddess Hekate (long a puzzle to critics, both for its unusual length and content),⁹ before turning to review the question of Pandora herself.

THE GODDESS HEKATE

Hekate crosses the generational line that divides Titan from Olympian divinity. Zeus honors her above all the gods and she is honored in turn by both men and gods alike. She retains all the powers allotted as her share 'at the first time, from the beginning', and she retains these privileges on earth, in the heavens, and in the sea, wielding her influence over all domains. The prestige of these prerogatives is underlined by her receiving them twice, once at the outset and then again from Zeus (411–412, 421–427). Moreover, these are formidable powers, far less restricted than those of other divinities to whom Zeus apportions their respective *timai* after the consolidation of his rule.¹⁰ In her allotted role as intercessor between men and gods, Hekate is highly responsive to petition, bestowing her favor as she wills.¹¹ She is called upon by all men in all their diversified pursuits. These include war, athletics, horsemanship, navigation, law courts, assemblies, as well as the work of tending herds and flocks. Her most important epithet is fittingly reserved for last; it is hers through the offices of Zeus, but it was so, it seems, from the beginning (450–452). This is her function as *kourotrophos*, nurse of the young, a role that assures the continuation and well-being of life from its inception. Hekate is dedicated to fosterage but creates no new genealogical line of her own, for she remains forever a virgin.

What is more, she is called a *mounogenês*, a single-born child. She has no other siblings, and, oddly enough, her father bears the name of Perses, which in the *Works and Days* is also the name of Hesiod's rival brother, whose lazy and thievish conduct occasions the admonitory tale of Pandora's creation.¹² Unlike that brother, she is a daughter, and unlike him, of course, she has no one with whom she must share. Quite the contrary. She gets more than her share; she gets it all—not once but twice.¹³ Her social position in Zeus' family circle is unclear. As a *mounogenês* from her mother, Hekate seems to remain inside the maternal sphere. As a daughter without brothers, she is also like an *epiklêros* or heiress to her father's line, and hence

under the special paternal protection of Zeus.¹⁴ But however we understand her status, she is unique, both because of the archaic plenitude of her power in a world to be defined by the distribution of *timai*, and because Zeus reconfirms her power, thus in a sense, recreating her. Pandora, as Zeus' own invention, represents a new mode of creation through which a singular being can be made, not born, and needs no generational antecedents. Hekate's status, too, is the result of another kind of innovative act. This time, Zeus' creativity consists in redoubling the nature of an already existing entity under a second dispensation. If his renewal of her privileges does not exactly count as a 'second birth', it does award her a twofold status and thereby combines the categories of the old and the new, the first and the last.

As an intermediary in human affairs between gods and men, honored by all alike, Hekate may be said to neutralize or at least mitigate in advance the negative effects for mortals of Prometheus' guileful mediation that will motivate the anger of Zeus and the creation of Pandora. Hekate also compensates in advance for the negative presence of Pandora herself, who henceforth will become an integral dimension of human existence and remain its perennial burden. These two female figures may be viewed as an antithetical pair: the first represents an economy of abundance, the second of scarcity and both are drawn into the essential game of reciprocity and exchange. Pandora is a baneful gift, who takes and does not give, herself given in exchange for something else that was taken away. Hekate, by contrast, is one from whom nothing is taken away, one who in fact receives even *more* privileges than she had before. She receives these honors as gifts from Zeus and continues his beneficence by bestowing honors on mortals in turn, if she so wishes.

Convincing parallels have been noted between Zeus and Hekate. In the range and extent of her powers, she looks like a 'small-scale reflection' of Zeus himself and, given his sponsorship, she prefigures the beneficent nature of his own rule, albeit in feminine form.¹⁵ This is an important observation. Yet in highlighting her role as *kourotrophos*, Zeus also inaugurates a new form of feminine activity that shifts the emphasis from nature to culture—from fecundity and generative power to a maternal nurturance that is independent of the act of childbirth, placed now under the auspices of the major male deity.¹⁶ *Kourotrophia*, it is true, was mentioned once before in passing as an attribute (and etymology) of the *Kourai* (daughters of Tethys and Okeanos), 'who with Apollo and the Rivers, nurture

(*kourizousi*) men on earth, a portion they received from Zeus'. But Hekate's function extends to both gods and mortals, and its import is further underlined by its placement in the text as the last named of her attributes—enunciated not once but twice in the space of three lines (*WD* 450–452). Naming is a creative act that brings a figure, epithet, or concept into existence. It founds a reality that until then is not available for use in the world. The new role of *kourotrophos* anticipates the innovations of Zeus' birth story and also those of Pandora's creation, which leads to several significant consequences in both human and divine realms. The nurturant function is transferred from the mother of human offspring to a kindly feminine deity (sponsored by Zeus) in advance of the creation of women, to whom, as we have seen, no such role is ever assigned. But the general principle of detaching nurse from mother may equally apply to the realm of the gods and especially to Zeus himself, whose emergence into the world is beset with unusual difficulties. Let us examine this matter more closely.

If progress and evolution are to end in the establishment of a permanent world system, then the first imperative is to put an end to the inevitable replacement of father by son in the sequence of generations (which Zeus does by swallowing Metis and giving birth to a daughter, Athena). Before this outcome is concluded, Zeus' birth story introduces two new elements into the system of generation that also come into play. The first is the father's threat to reabsorb his young once they are born; the second is the postponement of Zeus' retaliation upon his father until he himself has grown to adulthood. Two potential difficulties attend this new dispensation. Zeus is the first instance of an infant god. This means that, like any child, he requires nurture until he comes of age. It means too that he must likewise undergo a maturational process that brings him perilously close to the realities of the mortal condition and the exigencies of human development.¹⁷ Second, although the last-born child enjoys a symbolic advantage in that he closes a genealogical series and embodies the concept of progress, there is also an undeniable value in being first, already present 'from the beginning'. Zeus' claim to hegemony over the cosmos resides in his status as the last and most developed of the Olympian gods. Yet he must somehow attain the prestige of origins that will connect him to the first foundations of the world¹⁸—that is, to Gaia, from whom Zeus is genealogically twice removed.

By reason of her special status and her functions, the figure of

Hekate is indispensable for resolving both predicaments. Having received her honors twice, both from the beginning and now again from Zeus, she exemplifies in advance a solution to the ontological paradox of being both first and last. But in her role as *kourotrophos*, she offers yet another service to Zeus, since, as an infant separated at birth from his mother, he also requires nurturance from a surrogate female. This personage is none other than Gaia herself, to whose care he is entrusted in order to save him from his father's greedy appetite. The order of the narrative is revealing. The naming of Hekate as *kourotrophos* ends the 'hymn' to the goddess (452). It also furnishes the point of transition to the account of how Rhea, in sexual conjunction with Kronos, 'gave birth to glorious children' (453), the last named of whom is Zeus. No sooner is the category of *kourotrophos* 'invented' for general use¹⁹ than it is immediately represented in the divine sphere by Gaia's role as nurse to Zeus.²⁰

The goddess's initial association with the infant Zeus is an essential step in the process that leads to his eventual triumph. Gaia is the primordial principle of earth, the locus of origin for the entire cosmos. The nurture she gives him in her function as foster mother thus establishes a primary and enduring bond between the first and the last. The fact of her dual identity as active agent (divinity) and receptive element (earth) has still further import: *Gaia* takes the child from Rhea to nurse and rear (τρέφμεν ἀπιταλλόμεναι τε: 480); *gaia* is the place she puts him, 'taking him in her arms and hiding him in a remote cave beneath the secret places of the holy *earth*' (ζαθέης ὑπὸ κεύθευ γαίης: 482–484). When Zeus emerges from her care, we might say that he too undergoes a 'second birth', this time as a kind of autochthon, a child of earth in his own right. In this way, he too, like mortal men, can circumvent or pass beyond the natural facts of maternity to claim the kind of engendering Greek males like best-born (or reborn) from the female principle of earth and not from the womb of a mother.²¹

If the question of maternal affiliation is settled in Zeus' separation from his true mother and his secondary status as a nursling of earth, he still remains in the circle of women, whose protection is needed to safeguard his right to exist despite his father's hostility. But what about the paternal principle? Is it thereby also put into question? Kronos presents a curious case. His actions, as we have seen, imitate feminine functions in respect to pregnancy and birth. Yet he also remains a male and a father, who strives to suppress the future generation in order to ensure the permanence of his kingship. When

Zeus compels Kronos to disgorge his progeny, he in effect ‘forces him to yield up his *timē*’, since ‘the right to rule is identified with control over procreation’.²² But there is more. Born once from their mother, the other Olympians are replaced in their father’s belly only to undergo a ‘second birth’, this time from the paternal source. Thus, if Zeus’ triumph over Kronos represents the victory of the son over the father, it also signifies the triumph of the father over the mother as a higher form of reproduction. Whether on the female side (autochthony) or on the male side (disgorgement), both are strategies that promote the idea of a second birth as a way of eliding the obvious and natural fact that man is from woman born.²³

A further consequence of Kronos’ obstetrical adventure provides another way of establishing the requisite connection between first and last. For, as the text is careful to note, the stone representing Zeus that Kronos had ingested *last* is necessarily brought up *first* (πρωτον δ’ ἐξήμησε λίθον. *πύματον καταπίνων*: v. 497).²⁴ On the maternal side, the last generation was aligned with the first through the nurturing function of Gaia, who substitutes for the real mother. On the paternal side, another kind of substitution also plays a role in joining first to last, starting from Rhea’s original substitution of the stone for the child and ending with the reversal of the birth order when Kronos disgorges his progeny.²⁵ Masculine and feminine tactics combine in the final disposition of the stone. Sign (*sēma*) of its birth from the father, it is fixed in place by Zeus himself ‘in the broadwayed *earth* in holy Pytho, under the hollows of Parnassus’,²⁶ a prodigy from heaven (*sēma*) destined to be a *thauma* (marvel) for mortals (*Th.* 498–500).²⁷ Sky and earth, male and female, father and mother: Zeus’ action of setting up the *sēma* in the world founds his sovereignty. It converts his birth story into a visible emblem and also ratifies the principle of substitution in the form of a material sign that will stand at Delphi alongside another *sēma* of birth, namely, the *omphalos* stone which marks the site as the navel or center of the earth.

THE WOMAN PANDORA

Once the stone has fulfilled its function in the divine realm, it is destined for mortals, both a sign and a wonder. The stone also links human and divine realms, this time through verbal echoes and in the matter of procreation. The stone, disguised as a baby, was a substitute for Zeus, and he was left behind ‘in place of the stone’

(*anti lithou*: *Th.* 489). Now in power, Zeus introduces another substitute, Pandora (*anti puros*: *Th.* 570), ‘in place of the stolen fire’, and like the stone, she too is a *thauma* to behold (*Th.* 500). The two have been justly taken as evidence of a higher level of social relations in a context of exchange and reciprocity.²⁸ Both were duplicitous gifts, given in response to a prior offense of unlawful appropriation. In semiotic terms, both *sēmata* function as second-order signifiers. The first prepares for the second.

Zeus 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 his son, that Zeus’s regime is built upon the knowledge necessary to disguise, imitate, substitute—knowledge now securely embodied by the father of men and gods.

This capacity is put to immediate use, first in the contest of wits with Prometheus, and then in the fashioning of the first woman, by his plan and his own devising.²⁹ Zeus also redeploys another element from the story of Kronos in the transfer of the belly from its value as a sign of his father’s voracious appetite into the permanent and defining attribute of woman (her *gastēr-belly*) via the *gastēr-paunch* of the fraudulent division of the sacrificial ox that led to her creation.³⁰

At one level, Pandora is only a byproduct of a contest between males. She is a secondary, even tertiary effect, in that she comes in the third stage of that contest, as a return for Prometheus’ theft of the celestial fire that Zeus had just received from the Cyclopes. Zeus’ control over this cosmic fire, in fact, will later determine his decisive victories in the cosmos, first over the Titans, and then over the fire-breathing Typhoeus, the last of Gaia’s progeny. But following just after the narrative of Zeus’ birth and his subsequent triumph over his father, the creation of the first mortal woman mediates between past and present by renewing the question of male control over procreation (to be finally resolved in Zeus’ mating with Metis) and also by reflecting upon Zeus’ own status in the cycle of divine generations.

As a creation of the ruling masculine god, Pandora can be linked to the figure of Aphrodite and even to that of Athena.³¹ Yet she also stands as a unique product, not only in reference to man and his estate but also with regard to the biological principles of creation that regulate the *Theogony*, whether through parthenogenesis or sexual reproduction, she has no family line. She also does not participate, except in a secondary and self-conscious way, in the basic genealogical scheme by which the *Theogony* suggests the natural unity

of the world as it evolves from the moment that Chaos comes into being and Gaia, or Earth, emerges immediately afterwards. Genealogy is an effective means by which myth can posit a coherent scheme of relations and affinities. By tracing out family ties through successive generations, the generational scheme may sort out like from unlike, modify and distinguish categories and concepts, and establish temporal priorities and hierarchies of value.³² Zeus is Pandora's author, not her natural sire, and she has no mother. By contrast, Athena's birth follows a heterosexual union (with the goddess Metis) and, in a sense, follows the laws of organic procreation, despite the inversion of head for loins and father for mother. Pandora's nature, on the other hand, is determined by the gods' seemingly arbitrary bestowal of gifts, which makes her only an imitation of the 'real thing', and, detached from natural modes of reproduction, she has no family line from which she is descended.

The result is that the introduction of the female sex as a *genos gunaikôn*, a race of women apart, does not coincide with the creation of gender as it does in the parallel myth in Genesis. Once Gaia emerges independently after the neuter Chaos, the female principle is established once and for all, and indeed is the source of the male principle (Ouranos) derived from it. From that time on, the idea of biological (genealogical) reproduction had coincided with the grammatical distinctions between male and female, so that all the various entities that came into being were automatically endowed with a gendered identity, enhanced, of course, by a polytheistic system of gods, who follow anthropomorphic lines in their relations with one another and in their modes of begetting. Zeus' invention of Pandora and her subsequent status as a gift indicate, therefore, that she is far removed from femininity as an original category. This is a strategic move, with two important implications for the separation of gods and mortals.

First comes the rupture of continuity with the principles of both genealogical relationship and natural procreation. However these categories have been manipulated in the divine realm, the actual workings of nature remain the same. With the manufacture of Pandora, on the other hand, mortals and immortals are henceforth divided between nature and culture, or perhaps between the natural and the 'non-natural'.

The second implication pertains specifically to the split between woman and goddess. This strategy displaces the undeniable powers of the female upward to the gods, allows for the 'deification' of the

female and feminine attributes, while repressing any validating alternatives to the mortal woman.³³ Zeus adopts and empowers femininity in the person of the goddess Hekate, who assists men in all their undertakings, and who supports generational survival among mortals by sponsoring the growth of children apart from actual maternity.

Thus, in the complex interplay between immortal and human realms in which the dilemma remains how to separate the two categories while retaining their underlying kinship, the role of Hekate works in two directions. Maternal concern has been continuously present in the *Theogony*, not only in the proliferation of children in the divine realm, but in the mother's insistence on securing her offsprings' right to exist and in her alliance with them against a hostile father, as in the case of Gaia (vs Ouranos) and Rhea (vs Kronos). But Hekate, above all, represents this principle in its most disinterested form. 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. In the creation of Pandora (and later, when she puts the lid back on the jar at his command), Zeus exercises this paternal power in a new dimension. Yet in so doing, he contributes a new and supplemental category, which is that of woman.

This woman is hardly represented as a 'bringer of fertility' and the 'principle of reproduction',³⁴ as most interpreters like to insist—or, put another way, to the extent that she does, the text suppresses these functions as much as possible. It avoids any direct mention of sexual congress and only grudgingly acknowledges the need for a child, who is never mentioned as such but must be deduced from the context. In this sense, woman is deprived of those feminine powers that only goddesses and nature possess. But by her unwelcome presence and the necessities she imposes upon man's existence, she is empowered in another way. Her creation implies, as we know, that man can never be independent of woman because he requires progeny to remedy the facts of both aging and mortality. But since he is burdened by these limitations, it also means that man, through woman, can never successfully challenge the rule of Zeus, who under the sign of an elevated masculinity and paternal hegemony, has now earned his title of 'father of gods and men'.

Yet a serious paradox remains. Whether in the divine or human

realms, whether by nature or by artifice, whether man or god is the subject, whether an abstract opposition can be maintained between a principle of unlimited growth (female) vs the limits of order (male), an underlying theme of the entire *Theogony* concerns the anxiety of the male confronted with fear of a 'natural' female superiority, best expressed in the deployment of a series of reproductive strategies. These run the gamut from the realistic norm in the natural union of male and female to parthenogenesis, autochthony, fictions of nurture, second birth, and, in the case of mortals, the alienation of woman from the species of man.

If the world of the gods aims to establish the paternal principle through inventive (and mimetic) tactics that harness the forces of nature and kinship in both sex and procreation, the case of Pandora addresses the same problem from the other side by transmitting to man a negative force of sexuality in the fabricated figure of a woman, whose reproductive capacities are at best a necessary encroachment on the integrity and self-sufficiency of the male self. We call it mortality. Yet, if Pandora is made to signify the difference between mortal and immortal realms of existence, she also continues to blur the lines between them. Fashioned by the gods to resemble them in the beauty of her allure, she is both an imitation and an original production, both a copy and a model. How to tell the difference? Once she is invented, the story has just begun.

NOTES

* This is a partial and readapted version of a longer essay, 'Hesiodic Economies', in F.I. Zeitlin, *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature* (Chicago 1995).

- 1 I acknowledge, but do not discuss here, the problem of the two accounts in *Genesis* of human creation, the first of which suggests, that male and female came into being at virtually the same time: And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them' (1.27).
- 2 For the most influential treatment of these two versions, see Vernant 1980:168–85; 1979:37–132. For important refinements and correctives, see Loraux 1978:75–117; Arthur 1982a, 1983. See too Pucci 1977. See also Vernant 1989.
- 3 See Zeitlin (1995). I base this argument on gynecological and other evidence that equates the woman's uterus with a jar or container.
- 4 Boyarin 1993:85, commenting on an earlier draft of this essay.
- 5 See Zeitlin 1978 for a preliminary outline of this progression, and for full discussion, Arthur (1982a). Bergren 1983 follows the same scheme.
- 6 Zeus' victory is, of course, forecast already in the poem, and is alluded

- to at strategic intervals, including in the narrative of his birth, where it is mentioned just after Kronos swallows the stone (*Th.* 488–491).
- 7 Arthur 1982a emphasizes this triadic structure. See also Boedeker 1983 and Clay 1984.
 - 8 See Arthur 1982a: 69.
 - 9 On the role of Hekate in the *Theogony*, see Kraus 1960. More recently, see Marquardt 1981; Arthur 1982a; Boedeker 1983; Clay 1984; and Griffith 1983:51–55.
 - 10 Clay 1984 observes that Hekate acts in concert with other gods (such as Poseidon and Hermes), but the text stresses the universality, not the limitation, of her powers in all domains.
 - 11 Note that Hekate's assistance is reserved exclusively for men, in marked contrast to her later cultic and mythic associations with the world of women.
 - 12 Walcot 1958:13–14 and Nagy 1982:65 note this connection.
 - 13 Others have speculated on this curious fact. See, for example, Marquardt 1981:245 and Nagy 1982:65.
 - 14 See Arthur 1982a: 69. Arthur further equates Hekate's 'social isolation' with 'the universality of her powers', arguing that 'Zeus' overvaluation of this goddess' is 'a compensation for her undervaluation in the patriarchal social order, and as an indication that the beneficence as well as the honor of the female are conceived in inverse proportion to female autonomy'.
 - 15 On these parallels, see Boedeker 1983:90–91 who interprets them to suggest Hekate's Indo-European heritage as a transfunctional goddess.
 - 16 As Arthur 1982a: 70, puts it: 'The...redefinition of Hekate includes a revaluation of female generative potency to mean, in a more abstract and generalized way, the willing sponsorship of activities of human life. Life-giving has become life-sustaining' (i.e., *kourotrophos*). She further argues that 'Hekate...is the first female whose pre-eminence derives from the patriarchal father. And she embodies female fecundity in a transmuted form...*in abstracto*—as nurturance, tendance, fosterage, and not as the direct expression of the child from her womb.'
 - 17 His maturation is swift, of course, as befits a god, taking the space of only one year (*Th.* 492–493), but the principle remains.
 - 18 For the general concept, see Eliade 1958.
 - 19 The category of *kourotrophos* was not needed until this moment. All the previous recitations of divine genealogies and births stopped short with parturition and only incidentally mentioned the rearing or *trophê* of offspring (*Th.* 313, 323).
 - 20 On a frieze of a late Hellenistic temple in Lagina, Hekate is depicted as presenting the stone to Kronos, in imitation of Gaia's role. Hekate's role of *kourotrophos* is the only Hesiodic trait that remains in actual cult. See Marquardt 1981:244 n. 2; and Boedeker 1983:83–84 n. 21–22. On the rupture of the relationship between mother and son (Zeus and Rhea) and the role of Gaia as *kourotrophos*, see Arthur 1982a: 71.
 - 21 Gaia also takes a leading role (along with Ouranos) in the entire affair. Together, they both inform Kronos that his son is destined to overcome him (*Th.* 463–465), and also suggest the ruse to Rhea (*Th.* 467–473),

- although Gaia acts alone in tricking Kronos to give up his offspring (*Th.* 494–495). Arthur 1982a: 70–71 argues that Rhea’s ‘diminished potency’ is a further sign of ‘the weakening of female primacy’ in favor of ‘the elevation of the male (Kronos and Zeus) into the role of *genitor*’.
- 22 Arthur 1982a: 72.
- 23 In the last stage of the succession myth, Zeus will finally complete the inversion of gender roles and ratify the primacy of the father, first by absorbing the mother (Metis) into himself and then giving the first, original birth to the daughter (Athena).
- 24 West 1966 *ad Th.* 454 mentions this point, adding that Zeus would have been the first to attain maturity, since the other offspring remained in their father’s belly.
- 25 Bergren 1983:74, offers a compelling interpretation of the stone from another viewpoint:
- Here is the primary *mêtis*, the first imitation, one that seems to symbolize a supposititious child. For Kronos is baffled by the disguise, as any man would be, when his wife presents him with what she says is his child, for who except his wife can vouch for his true child, the legitimate heir to his property and his proper name? 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 resembles it. Her knowledge gives her the power of falsification in the domain of sexual re-production, just as on the level of language the knowledge of the Muses makes it possible for them to utter either *alêtheia* or *pseudea hmoia etumoisin*.
- 26 See also Mezzadri’s analysis (1987), who adds that Hestia, the oldest of Kronos’ children and hence the last to be born, also combines the principle that applies to the stone-Zeus (but in reverse). His further remarks on the correlation between temporal and spatial structures at Delphi (with respect to the stone and the *omphalos*) are also pertinent.
- 27 *Sêma* has the two meanings of ‘sign’ and ‘distinctive mark’ or ‘prodigy’ (cf. e.g. *Odyssey* 23. 110, 188, 205 on the *sêma* of the bed as both a special object and a sign of recognition).
- 28 Arthur 1982a: 72–73, sees the fixing of the stone as ‘the symbolic resolution of the father/son struggle in the form of the *sêma*, and the introduction of a cycle of reciprocity in the form of gift exchange’. As phrased, the latter seems to me less clear.
- 29 Bergren 1983:75.
- 30 In this division, Prometheus offered Zeus the choice between a portion consisting of a shining layer of fat that contained only bones within and an unappetizing *gastêr-paunch* filled with edible meat.
- 31 Schwabl 1966:80, notes the parallels with Aphrodite. For fuller exposition, see Arthur 1982a: 75, although I cannot follow her conclusion that Pandora is also a kind of Gaia reborn.
- 32 See Philippson 1936.
- 33 Rudhardt 1986 also notes that femininity arises at the beginning with Gaia but does not observe the distinction between the two levels. For the value of a two-tiered system of goddesses and women, see Zeitlin

on the *Oresteia* (1978), where the problem of woman (Clytemnestra) is displaced upward to the level of the Erinyes. The resolution in the *Eumenides* is also organized according to a theogonic model of a struggle between chthonic and Olympian forces and the dilemma is solved by a new distribution of *timai*.

- 34 Loraux 1978:88–89; ‘Nothing indicates that the woman is expected to “imitate the earth” as the standard Greek representations of fertility suggest.’