

HESIOD'S AMBIGUOUS VIEW OF WOMAN

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AS HESIOD contemplates the nature of love and the sexual sphere, he is beset with anxiety. Ambivalence characterizes Hesiod's view of femininity, on both a divine and human level, as he explores the theme of love in all its complexity through his portrayal of Aphrodite and Pandora. From the first, deception (*ἐξαπάτη*) appears among Aphrodite's attributes (*Theog.* 203–6), adjoining her smiles (*μειδήματα*) and erotic delight (*τέρψις*). Aphrodite is the irresistibly attractive embodiment of the sexual urge, and even when she seems an obvious good she retains a destructive potential. Hesiod, in fact, associates the sexual act with pain and a certain loss of control; love and its cares are said to be “limb-gnawing” (*Op.* 66 *γυιοβόρος*) and “limb-unnerving” (*Theog.* 121, 911 *λυσιμελής*), physiological reactions which in Homer accompany sleep and death.¹

The irrational procreative urge is present from the beginning of creation in the vague figure of Eros (*Theog.* 120–22). In the feminine form of alluring Aphrodite, however, this fundamental urge is explicitly connected with notions of seduction and deception and becomes distinctly threatening. Although Hesiod names Eros among the first deities in the cosmos, he clearly prefers to treat of love in a feminine context, for Aphrodite, as a more striking symbol of love's ambivalence, virtually eclipses Eros in the *Theogony* and Eros is relegated to a position as one of her attendants (201).

The complexity of the sexual sphere is mirrored in Aphrodite's nature. From the first, she is physical love incarnate and, like Eros, she affects gods and men, but there is always a disturbing, sensual concreteness about her. In fact, her very name is synonymous with the sexual act (e.g. *Theog.* 822, 962, 1005). As in the longer *Hymn to Aphrodite* where the goddess herself is a victim of the sexual drive she embodies, Aphrodite also appears in the *Theogony* as an active participant in the sexual union, bearing offspring to Ares (933–34) and Anchises (1008–9).

The ambivalence of Aphrodite is further emphasized by her proximity to the goddess Night in the *Theogony*. The statement of Aphrodite's sexual domain (205–6) is followed closely by the enumeration of Night's offspring (211–25), figures such as Doom (*Μόρος*), Death (*Θάνατος*), Blame (*Μῶμος*),

1. E.g., *Il.* 5. 176, 6. 27, 7. 12, *Od.* 18. 189, 20. 57. For the traditional view of the bodily weakness caused by love, see R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*² (Cambridge, 1954), p. 187. The editions of Hesiod used in this paper are M. L. West's *Hesiod: "Theogony"* (Oxford, 1966) and *Hesiod: "Works and Days"* (Oxford, 1978). The text of the Hymns is that of T. W. Allen, *Homeri Opera V: Hymnos Cyclym Fragmenta* (Oxford, 1912).

Woe (Ὀϊζὺς), Old Age (Γῆρας), and Strife (Ἔρις), which plague the world of men. Night is also the mother of Deceit (Ἀπάτη) and Love (Φιλότης): Νύξ ὀλοή· μετὰ τήν δ' Ἀπάτην τέκε καὶ Φιλότητα / Γῆράς τ' οὐλόμενον, καὶ Ἔριν τέκε καρτερόθυμον (*Theog.* 224–25). Night's children, Ἀπάτη and Φιλότης, not only recall in nearly identical words Aphrodite's sphere, παρθενίους τ' ὄαρους μειδήματά τ' ἑξαπάτας τε / τέρψιν τε γλυκερὴν φιλότῃ τε μειλιχίῃ τε (*Theog.* 205–6), but they set it in an unmistakably negative context by associating it with the rest of Night's dark brood.

The section on Night complements the earlier description of Aphrodite by providing a harsh counterpoint to an established theme.² The mention of Deceit and Love in line 224 echoes Aphrodite's domain in lines 205–6, but then a striking antithesis is built in lines 206 and 225 between the goddess' "sweet delight" (τέρψιν γλυκερή) and Night's "deadly Old Age" (Γῆρας οὐλόμενον) and between Aphrodite's "gentleness" (μειλιχίῃ) and Night's "hard-hearted Strife" (Ἔρις καρτερόθυμος). By juxtaposing the offspring of Night with Aphrodite's bright surface charms, Hesiod seems to be suggesting that sexual delights, at best, are only temporary and must eventually give way to dread old age and that the potential for bitter strife is never far removed from the tenderness of love. Darkness and light, although incompatible, are inseparable (e.g., *Theog.* 748–54), and Hesiod's depiction of "golden" Aphrodite is incomplete without the sobering counterpart of "dark" Night. More than dramatically underscoring Aphrodite's ambivalence, however, the account of Night's brood is an illustration of Hesiod's tendency to view universal human ills, such as old age and death, in a feminine context. This tendency comes into sharper focus in the poet's treatment of Pandora.

It is not surprising to find deceit and love in the same category as fate, death, and revenge when one remembers that to Hesiod Aphrodite originated from an act of sexual violence, the castration of Uranus by Cronus (*Theog.* 188–92). The account of Aphrodite's birth from the severed genitals of Uranus seems to be Hesiod's own reworking of traditional mythical ideas, for Homer describes her only as the daughter of Zeus and Dione.³

2. For mortality, old age, and death as a counter-theme of love in another context, see H. N. Porter, "Repetitions in the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite," *AJP* 70 (1949): 249–72. Night's offspring are studied in detail by C. Ramnoux, *La nuit et les enfants de la nuit dans la tradition grecque* (Paris, 1959), pp. 64–76. The author demonstrates that the catalog of Night's children is not a random enumeration but is arranged in deliberate numerical groupings.

3. E.g., *Il.* 5. 370–72. The castration of Uranus has parallels in the Hurrian-Hittite myths of Kumarbi and Ullikummi: West, "Theogony," pp. 20–22, 28–31; P. Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East* (Cardiff, 1966), pp. 1–26. Whatever Hesiod's indebtedness to Near Eastern theogonic myths, he has freely interpreted the traditional motifs. Hesiod's account of Aphrodite's birth may have been influenced by a cult representation of Aphroditus, a bisexual deity associated with Cyprus, who is depicted on a seventh-century Corinthian plaque as a bearded female figure rising from a genital sac. The most convincing argument in support of this theory is that of W. Sale, "Aphrodite in the Theogony," *TAPA* 92 (1961): 508–21, who believes that Hesiod's Aphrodite embodies two distinct traditions, the Homeric (*Theog.* 201–6) and the non-Homeric (*Theog.* 188–200), arising from the Cyprian cult of Aphroditus. For this cult, see M. Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite*, trans. J. Nicholson (London, 1961), pp. 27–30. Aphrodite's Near Eastern origins have been argued by, among others, L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1896), pp. 618–69; and M. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*³, vol. 1 (Munich, 1967), pp. 519–20. Recent discussions of Aphrodite's origins are those of D. Boedeker, *Aphrodite's Entry into Greek Epic* (Leyden, 1974), pp. 1–17, who views Aphrodite as an Indo-European dawn-goddess, and P. Friedrich, *The Meaning of Aphrodite* (Chicago, 1978), pp. 9–54, who proposes at least four sources (including Semitic and Indo-European) for the Aphrodite of Greek epic.

It is significant that, although Dione is listed among the major deities in the proem to the *Theogony* (17), she reappears only as one of the numerous Oceanids (353) and is excluded from the catalog of Zeus' wives (886–923). Hesiod's subsequent silence about a deity important enough to be mentioned in the proem is strong evidence that he is suppressing the traditional account of Aphrodite's birth for one which illustrates vividly the destructive sexual violence present in the circumstances of her birth.

The ambivalence inherent in Aphrodite becomes pronounced in Pandora, her incarnation. The emphasis given in both of Hesiod's poems to Pandora's adornment and devastating beauty recalls her divine counterpart. In the *Works and Days*, Aphrodite's traditional companions, the Charites (Graces), Peitho (Persuasion), and Horae (Seasons), adorn Pandora with golden necklaces and a floral crown (*Op.* 73–75). The *Theogony* also emphasizes Pandora's dress (573–75). Similar accounts of Aphrodite's adornment and some precisely equivalent details of necklaces, crowns, and flowers are found in the *Odyssey* (8. 364–66) and in the *Hymns to Aphrodite* (5. 86–90, 6. 6–13) and have become literary convention (cf. *Cypria* frag. 4). Although Hesiod does not describe the adorning of Aphrodite in the *Theogony*, the presence of Eros and Himerus (Desire) at her emergence from the sea (201) suggests the same tradition. Further, Aphrodite's introduction into the assembly of the gods (201–2) is elaborated in the account of Pandora's reception by gods and men (586–88). As before, the substance of Hesiod's description of Pandora can readily apply to Aphrodite as well (cf. *H. Ven.* 6. 14–18).

Despite their fundamental similarity, Pandora, the woman, is viewed in a more negative light than Aphrodite, the goddess. In the shape of a modest maiden with the face of a goddess (*Theog.* 572, *Op.* 62–63), Pandora is irresistibly attractive; but, while Aphrodite's seductive beauty is associated with deception, Pandora's alluring charms are viewed as an actual evil. She is described as the *καλὸν κακόν* (*Theog.* 585) and the object in which men “joyfully embrace their own undoing” (*Op.* 58). Pandora's character suffers from more than association with Aphrodite's ambivalent sphere, for onto her is projected a certain apprehension about women in general and perhaps even a deeper anxiety about the world in which Hesiod finds himself.⁴

At first glance, Hesiod's portrayal of Pandora as a deceptive woman seems inconsistent with her ostensible role as earth-goddess, to which several vase paintings attest. A red-figure crater, dated around 450 B.C., depicts a crowned and veiled Pandora rising from the earth. Next to her stands Epimetheus, holding a hammer of the sort used to break up clods of dirt. Also in the scene are Zeus and Hermes and, since the figures are clearly labelled, there can be no doubt that Pandora is here a Gaia-Kore figure, “the giver of all gifts.”⁵ Hesiod's version of Pandora's creation is

4. Hesiod may not have intended Pandora to be in reality the “first” woman: F. Brenk, “Hesiod: How Much a Male Chauvinist?” *CB* 49 (1973): 73–76. As the incarnation of Aphrodite, however, Pandora is the prototype of the alluring and seductive woman whose presence among men is seen as distinctly threatening.

5. Oxford, Ashmolean Mus. no. 525; J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*², 2 vols. (Oxford, 1963), 2:1562, no. 4. A number of vase paintings illustrate the popularity of the theme of the emerging

depicted on a kylix of approximately the same date: Pandora, half-statue and half-woman, has just been modelled by Hephaestus, and Athena is adorning her. Although the depiction alone identifies the figure as Pandora, next to her is written Α]ΝΕΣΙΑΔΟΡΑ ("She Who Sends Up Gifts"), a title befitting an earth-goddess.⁶

A few literary references also testify to Pandora's original role. In Aristophanes' *Birds* there appears an instruction about sacrificing a white-fleeced lamb to Pandora (971). The scholiast interprets this line as "to Pandora, the earth, because she bestows all things necessary to life." In a passage in Athenaeus (9. 370B), Pandora is specifically associated with the Thargelia, the festival of the first fruits of the earth. In Hesiod, Pandora also owes her origin to the earth, for from this element she is formed by Hephaestus at the bidding of Zeus (*Theog.* 571–72, *Op.* 60–63, 70–71). Pandora's status is reduced from a goddess of the earth to a beautiful woman made of earth, who owes her very existence to Zeus' vengeful design. Pandora thus seems to be similar to other older generation deities, such as Styx and the Fates, who are taken into the Olympian hierarchy, but there is a striking difference. Styx (*Theog.* 385–86, 793–804) and the Fates (*Theog.* 217, 904) are brought under Zeus' sway with their powers controlled but essentially unaltered. The nature of Pandora, however, is adapted to fulfill a new purpose.

That Pandora is being remolded to accommodate her to the Olympian system becomes transparent in the description of her intricately carved golden crown on which the many beasts (κνώδαλα) of land and sea appear (*Theog.* 581–84). The crown is the last piece of Pandora's adornment

earth-goddess. These are listed in Beazley, 1:612, no. 1, 2:1053, no. 40, 1056, no. 95, 1076, no. 1, and 1341. Frequently the precise identity of the emerging figure is uncertain.

6. British Nat. Mus. no. D4; Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*², 2:869, no. 55. There are a number of instances of -δαρος used to describe the earth's bounty, e.g., ζείδαρος at *Op.* 117 and 173. For other titles of earth built on the same suffix, see O. Lendle, *Die "Pandorasage" bei Hesiod: Textkritische und motivgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Würzburg, 1957), pp. 63–64. There is no scholarly consensus over Pandora's role as an earth-goddess in Hesiod. See, e.g., C. Robert, "Pandora," *Hermes* 49 (1914): 17–38; L. Séchan, "Pandora, l'Eve grecque," *BAGB* (1929): 3–36; G. Fink, *Pandora und Epimetheus* (Erlangen, 1958), p. 14, n. 2; and the opposing views of J.-P. Vernant, "Le mythe prométhéen," *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs*², vol. 1 (Paris, 1971), pp. 189–90; and C. Bérard, *Anodoi: Essai sur l'imagerie des passages chthoniens* (Neuchâtel, 1974), pp. 28–29. West, "Works and Days," pp. 164–66, cites the evidence for Pandora as earth-goddess, but denies that she has chthonic characteristics in Hesiod. He points to Hesiod's depiction of Pandora and Prometheus as parents of Deucalion in the fragments and suggests that Hesiod modified the original story along mythological lines to make Pandora a plague to men. That Hesiod's account of Pandora is in keeping with the tradition that holds a woman responsible for man's misery (e.g., *Genesis* 2. 4–25 and 3. 1–22) is undeniable. His choice of the cult-title Pandora, however, which was so closely associated with the earth-goddess that the Greeks themselves identified her with the Woman of the *Works and Days*, was surely more than etymological fancy on the poet's part to make his creation "all-gifted," as even West admits ("Works and Days," p. 164). In fact, Hesiod seems at pains to justify the new use of a familiar name (*Op.* 80–82). Pandora fits the pattern of other older generation deities, such as the Fates, Styx, and Hecate, who are incorporated into the Olympian system. Further, there are important elements in Hesiod's portrayal of Pandora (e.g., the crown of animals and pithos) which become clear when one understands that Pandora, although outwardly the incarnation of Aphrodite, still retains, whether consciously or unconsciously on Hesiod's part, much of her original identity as earth-goddess. These points will be discussed in full below. The symbolism and ambiguity of Pandora's name are explored by P. Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry* (Baltimore, 1977), pp. 97–100.

mentioned in the *Theogony* and the only one which Hesiod describes in detail. The crown of living creatures is not a conventional part of Aphrodite's erotic adornment, although it might have been suggested by her association with crowns and golden jewelry in general. The association with animals more properly belongs to the goddess of wild nature, the *πότνια θηρῶν*. Aphrodite's presence in the Phrygian mountain setting of the Homeric Hymn and her entourage of animals point to such a goddess (*H. Ven.* 5. 68–74), but there is no evidence that Aphrodite regularly played the role of the *πότνια θηρῶν* in Greece. In the *Theogony*, her activity is viewed solely in terms of human life and does not include the animal world.⁷

Hesiod's apparent fascination with the crown of animals suggests that he is describing an actual crown, perhaps a familiar cult representation. The crown might well have been Pandora's own, as a goddess of nature, which Hesiod subjects to the same remolding at Olympian hands which Pandora herself suffered. It is also possible that the crown of animals belonged to some other, more universal goddess, such as Hecate, since the creatures engraved on it are from land and sea and Hecate is the only goddess in the *Theogony* who is specifically accorded such wide powers throughout the natural world (411–15, 425–27). Hesiod might have included the crown among Pandora's adornment because he was captivated by its beauty and because Pandora was meant to be irresistibly beautiful, although the true significance of the crown is lost when worn by mortal woman whose proper domain is human nature. Hesiod's association of such a crown with Pandora is an acknowledgment of the fostering and destructive power of the old goddess of nature who lies behind the Olympian creation.⁸

Although Pandora bears the responsibility in both poems for mankind's misery, the inclusion of the story of her creation serves different purposes. In the *Theogony*, Pandora is created because Zeus' majesty has been

7. Aphrodite did have some connection with the earth's fertility, however. See especially Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, 2: 642–53. For Aphrodite's connection with gardens and flowers in Greece, see E. Langlotz, "Aphrodite in den Gärten," *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften* 38 (1954): 7–52. Depictions of Aphrodite's emergence from the sea are often indistinguishable from the *anodos* of the earth-goddess (e.g., Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*², 2: 1034, no. 4). A number of these vases are described by J. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*³ (New York, 1955), pp. 638–40.

8. The textual difficulties with these lines (Solmsen, following earlier commentators, brackets 578–84 in the OCT) stem from the apparent excess of Pandora's adornment. The "talking" animals (*Theog.* 582–84 *κνώδαλ' . . . ζωίσιν ἐοικότα φωνήεσσιν*) on Pandora's crown are recalled by an eighth-century Boeotian amphora which depicts a goddess of the *πότνια-θηρῶν* type flanked by lions with open mouths and protruding tongues. The waterfowl above her outstretched arms and the fish on her skirt illustrate her power throughout the whole of nature. Hesiod may have had in mind such a cult representation of the "universal" goddess as he describes Pandora's appearance since her nominal association, if nothing else, with the earth-goddess would have permitted the general association. Cf. *H. Terr.* 2–4, which describes Gaia's nurturing role throughout the three realms of nature assigned by Hesiod to Hecate. An illustration and discussion of the Boeotian vase, now in the National Museum of Athens (no. 5839), can be found in O. Kern, "Elfenbeinrelief aus Kleinasien," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 50 (1925): 160–62. A fragmentary headband, similar to the one described by Hesiod and dated to seventh-century Boeotia, is discussed by K. DeVries, "Oral Poets and Fibula Incisers," *Teiresias*, Supp. 2 (1979): 68. For the crown of animals as a symbol of Pandora's destructive nature, see N. Loraux, "Sur la race des femmes et quelques-unes de ses tribus," *Arethusa* 11 (1978): 50–51.

threatened by Prometheus in the matter of sacrifices (535–52) and in the theft of fire (565–70). On the principle that one evil man can blight a whole city (*Op.* 240–41), Zeus asserts his supremacy by punishing all men with the creation of woman. Pandora's creation and Prometheus' collection of bones covered with fat represent the same moral lesson: the folly of basing a judgment upon external appearances for something may look attractive but in reality be bad. The creation of woman with her deceptive beauty is fitting revenge for the attempted deception of Zeus (*Theog.* 550–52). The story of Pandora, then, is really a statement about Zeus, an illustration of the successful, if unfortunate, manner in which he handled a major threat to his sovereignty.

Although the account of Pandora's creation in the *Works and Days* arises from the same mythological context (47–53), its inclusion in the poem serves a different, twofold purpose. It is well suited to Hesiod's self-appointed role as his brother Perses' adviser since it illustrates the disastrous consequences of rejecting sound advice. If Epimetheus had listened to his brother Prometheus, he would never have accepted Pandora from Zeus (84–87). More important, however, the story of Pandora explains the necessity of suffering and hard work, the major theme of the poem (e.g., *Op.* 90–92). It is in the agricultural context of the *Works and Days* that the Woman, unnamed in the *Theogony*, is specifically given the name of the earth-goddess Pandora, which Hesiod explains as "all-gifted" and which he attempts to justify by involving more deities in her creation (70–82) than the two (Athena and Hephaestus) mentioned in the *Theogony*.

Since the creation of Pandora guaranteed man's never-ending struggle with the earth to obtain a meager living, it is appropriate that Hesiod should envision the agricultural pithos as the source of the evils which Pandora set upon men. In the *Theogony*, Pandora is made to be an evil (*κακόν*) for men (600). From her come women who are "conspirators in evil works" (601–2 *ξυνήνοας ἔργων ἀργαλέων*) and utterly "unprofitable" (593 *οὐ σύμφοροι*) for poor men. The same conviction, although tempered with a certain lyricism, lies behind the description in the *Works and Days* of the "soft-skinned" (519 *ἀπαλόχροος*) young woman who, in contrast to the shivering animals and weather-beaten old man, has leisure to spend the cruel winter indoors with her mother and to pamper herself (518–24). Hesiod's gentler tone in this passage may be due to the youth of the girl who, although an economic liability, is as yet innocent of the deceptive "works" of love (521 *ἔργων . . . Ἀφροδίτης*). It is obvious that even in the *Theogony* much of the "evil" of woman is seen in economic terms, for Hesiod compares women with lazy drones (594–99) and complains of the equally bleak economic realities of not marrying.⁹ Assuming a man might

9. Semonides (frag. 7) reveals a similar attitude as he compares women with various animals; Pandora's *κύνειος νόος* (*Op.* 67) is recalled by Semonides' "dog-woman" (frag. 7. 12–20), who is remarkable for her inquisitive nature. Unlike Hesiod, however, Semonides associates the bee with the good woman (frag. 7. 84–87, 90–91), as does Phocylides (frag. 2. 6–8); E. Diehl, *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca* (Leipzig, 1925). In general, Hesiod's negative depiction of women is in the mainstream of archaic poetry. The complexity of his view of woman and the particular expression of his ambivalence, however, go beyond literary topos and would seem to be rather a function of his own psychology. The working of the *persona* of the archaic poet (esp. Archilochus) is discussed by G. Nagy, "Iambos: Typologies of Invective and Praise," *Arethusa* 9 (1976): 191–99.

find a worthy and compatible wife, even then his blessings are mixed because the offspring of such a union may turn out to be disappointing (608–12).

The threat posed by women, however, is psychological as well as economic, for Pandora's deceptive beauty inspires "cruel longing" (*Op.* 66 πόθος ἀργαλέος) and in the *Works and Days* Hermes gives her another weapon of deception, the power of speech with which to fashion lies and "flattering" (αἰμύλιος) words (78–80). Hesiod's admonition against trusting a seductive woman is an obvious blend of economic and psychological elements. Such a woman is a "cheat" (φιλήτης) who thoroughly deceives (ἐξαπατᾷ) a man with her beguiling flattery (αἰμύλα κωτίλλουσα), all the while her sights are set on his property (*Op.* 373–75). The "seductive" (πυγοστόλος) woman may also represent a sexual threat.¹⁰ Later in the poem, Hesiod complains about the wantonness of women in the summer when men are at their feeblest (*Op.* 586–88). The words for "feeble" (ἀφαιρός) and "knees" (γούνατα) carry definite sexual connotations and are reminiscent of Anchises' use of ἀμειννός when he fears that he may have become "powerless" after unknowingly sleeping with Aphrodite.¹¹ Although Hesiod blames the male's seasonal impotence upon the weather, he clearly views the sexual insatiability of the female as troublesome, if not actually threatening.

Pandora, through association with Aphrodite, has become for Hesiod the symbol of seductive and deceptive woman, but the account of the pithos highlights another dimension of her nature. After she was received on earth by Epimetheus, she opened the lid of a pithos and released into the world sickness and toil and all the ills that trouble mankind. Only hope was left in the pithos (*Op.* 94–105). Since Hesiod in the *Works and Days* is concerned primarily with the farmer's lot, it is understandable that he should blame Pandora, the earth-goddess, for the difficulty of man's life. There is no account given by Hesiod of the source of the pithos nor any explanation as to why Pandora has it in her possession. Perhaps the poet is being elliptical in his narrative, but we might rather suppose that Hesiod associated the pithos with Pandora naturally. The pithos, in a general way, may even be viewed as a symbol of the earth itself, since, as a large earthenware jar for the storage of grain and other provisions, it frequently rested in the ground and was used, at least in early times, as a receptacle for the dead.¹²

10. Πυγοστόλος ("hip-swaying") refers to the style of female dress which emphasizes the buttocks. The erotic significance of this part of the female anatomy is discussed by S. B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York, 1975), pp. 47–49. On the economic implications of Pandora, see most recently L. Sussman, "Workers and Drones: Labor, Idleness and Gender Definition in Hesiod's Beehive," *Arethusa* 11 (1978): 27–37.

11. *H. Ven.* 5. 188. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*², pp. 174–86, points out that the words for "knee" and "generation" are cognate and sometimes interchangeable in Indo-European languages because the knee was believed in some way to be the seat of paternity or generative power. Cf. *Il.* 4. 313–14, 19. 354, and *Eur. El.* 1209, where the knees are called γόμια μέλεα. Onians suggests that this identification may have originated in the similar appearance of the knee fluid and semen.

12. Homeric parallels include the evil and good *pithoi* of Zeus (*Il.* 24. 527–28) and the bronze jar in which Ares was imprisoned for thirteen months (*Il.* 5. 385–91). Hesiod, in fact, has depicted Tartarus as a kind of bronze jar with a narrow neck (*Theog.* 726–28). For the pithos as a burial container, see E. Neumann, *The Great Mother*, trans. R. Manheim (New York, 1955), pp 162–64; J. Harrison, "Pandora's

As an earth-goddess, Pandora would naturally be involved in the "opening" of the earth without any of the malice (*Op.* 95) or feminine curiosity which has become part of her literary tradition.¹³ As a chthonic deity, however, Pandora is both fostering and destructive. Since to Hesiod she is also the embodiment of "evil," deceptive woman, it is not surprising that her bountiful act of "opening" the earth and releasing its power is seen in the most negative sense as an act which caused irreparable hardship and misery for men. Hope, which Pandora trapped in the pithos "under the rim" (*Op.* 97 ὑπὸ χεῖλεσι), is not denied to men, as many have interpreted.¹⁴ Hesiod's meaning becomes clear when we think of the pithos as a metaphor for the earth. Man's "hope" of recovering the livelihood (*βίος*) hidden from him (*Op.* 42) rests in the earth despite the toil and misery he must endure to realize it. The paradox is that man's hope for respite from troubles lies in the very earth which makes his tasks necessary and that Pandora, the earth-goddess, who is "responsible" for man's hardship and failure, also provides the sure, although difficult, way out.

Pandora's paradoxical nature is underscored by comparing her with Eris, who as a daughter of Night in the *Theogony* bears offspring, such as Toil (Πόνος), Famine (Λιμός), Sorrows (Ἄλγεα), Falsehoods (Ψεύδεα), and Quarrels (Ἀμφιλλογίαι), which directly affect men's lives (*Theog.* 226–32). The immediacy of these evils invites a comparison with Pandora, who as the incarnation of Aphrodite dwelt among men and set upon them many of the same woes as sprang from Eris (e.g., *Op.* 91–92, 102). Pandora, moreover, embodies the falsehoods engendered by Eris (*Op.* 78, *Theog.* 229). In the *Works and Days*, however, Eris turns out to have a kindly twin whom Zeus placed in the earth for men as a positive incentive to the kind of toil and honest competition which leads to success (*Op.* 11–26). Hope, which remained in Pandora's pithos after all the destructive forces escaped, recalls the good Eris abiding in the earth while her evil sister travels among men working her mischief (14–16). If Pandora's pithos

Box," *JHS* 20 (1900): 99–114, who compares Pandora's opening of the pithos with the opening of the funeral *pithoi* during the festival of the Pithoigia. Problems which critics have found with Harrison's theory (e.g., West, "*Works and Days*," p. 165) largely disappear when one regards the pithos, in a more general way, as a symbol for the earth, containing a mixture of "evil and good." Although the motif of the release of evils into the world from a broken or opened container is traditional (e.g., *Od.* 10. 47–49 and *Apul. Met.* 6. 20–21), this does not diminish the significance of Hesiod's choice of the pithos, in particular, as Pandora's container.

13. For the myth of Pandora through the ages, see D. and E. Panofsky, *Pandora's Box: The Changing Aspects of a Mythical Symbol*² (New York, 1962).

14. West's rejection ("*Works and Days*," ad 98) of the intransitive ἐπέλλαβε for the reading ἐπέμβαλε, which makes Pandora the agent who is personally responsible for trapping hope in the pithos after she releases the evils, and his philological argument for a positive meaning for ἐλπίς are consistent with the ambivalence at the heart of Hesiod's Pandora. A recent study by H. Neitzel, "Pandora und das Faß," *Hermes* 104 (1976): 387–419, rejects the traditional interpretation of Pandora's "scattering of evils" (*Op.* 95) for one which underscores the ambivalence of her actions. On the numerous interpretations of the meaning of hope trapped in the pithos, see, e.g., K. von Fritz, "Das Hesiodische in den Werken Hesiods," *Hésiode et son influence* (Geneva 1962), pp. 34–37; W. J. Verdenius, "A 'Hopeless' Line in Hesiod: *Works and Days* 96," *Mnemosyne* 24 (1971): 225–31. P. Walcot, "Pandora's Jar, *Erga* 83–105," *Hermes* 89 (1961): 249–51, comes close to Hesiod's meaning, I believe, when he suggests that hope, which is neither good nor bad, is left for men to do what they will with it.

is a metaphor for the earth, as I have argued, it carries essentially the same meaning as the good Eris hidden in the earth. The relationship between Aphrodite and Night, as cosmic forces, and between Pandora and Eris, as more immediate forces in the life of men, derives from Hesiod's basic conception of deceptive feminine figures, whether goddess or woman, at the root of human misery. Although Night and Eris themselves are unattractive and vague figures, they give birth to deception, sexual love, and lies which Aphrodite and Pandora embody in the particularly seductive form of erotic beauty.

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 correlation between the chthonic, unpredictable nature of 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 upon 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.

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