

## THE GENERATION OF MONSTERS IN HESIOD

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AT THE MUSES' command, Hesiod is to sing the γένος αἰὲν ἔόντων. He proceeds to recount the genesis not only of the gods of myth and cult, but also of natural phenomena and even of abstract forces like Strife and Deception, which, to our minds, belong to completely different ontological categories. Equally anomalous is Hesiod's inclusion of a catalogue of monstrous beings (*Th.* 270–336). His list of fantastic beasts is by no means exhaustive (the Centaurs, for instance, do not occur), but in a typical example of Hesiodic synthesis, creatures of diverse origins, drawn from diverse traditions, are united into a family. One could argue that these creatures were too well known from Greek art and legend to be omitted, so that Hesiod felt obliged to accommodate them somewhere in his poem.<sup>1</sup> Yet such a presumed obligation to include some mention of the monsters accounts neither for their treatment nor for their place within the genealogical scheme of the *Theogony* as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

The *Theogony* constitutes an attempt to understand the cosmos as the product of a genealogical evolution and a process of individuation which ultimately achieves its *telos* under the tutelage of Zeus. As Vernant puts it, this process of individuation is simultaneously teleological, leading to a stable cosmos,

whose parts and constituent elements gradually separate, delimit, and order themselves and where the divine Powers, at first absorbed in vague cosmic forces, take on their defined and definitive forms in the third generation as celestial gods, living in the constant light of the ether, with their particular personalities and forms, their functions articulated in relation to each other, their powers balanced and adjusted under the unshakable authority of Zeus. . . . At the end of this progress which has led to the

1. Cf. G. F. Schoemann, "De Phorcyne eiusque familia," *Opuscula academica*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1857), p. 179: "Non sane laudabimus tam obscuram stirpis expositionem; sed ignoscendum tamen fortasse poetae fatebimur, si parvi referre iudicavit, quid de horum monstrorum inter se cognatione statueretur, de quibus sine dubio ne ipsi quidem satis constabat, et quorum commemorationem non propter aliquam religionem aut propter reconditam quandam significationem carmini inseruit, sed ne praetermissa culparentur tot celebrata fabulis nomina, quae ab huiusmodi carmine theogonico, quo ad cognoscendum totum fabulis historiae orbem quasi aditus pararetur, abesse plane non poterat." See also Schoemann's *Die Hesiodische Theogonie* (Berlin, 1868), p. 152. It is worth noting that the proliferation of monsters in the art of the Orientalizing period may be contemporaneous with Hesiod.

2. M. L. West's statement (*Hesiod: "Theogony"* [Oxford, 1966], p. 244) that the monsters "are put among the descendants of Pontos not because they have any connexion with the sea, but because they could not be put among the descendants of Uranos" simply begs the question.

emergence of a stable, ordered, and harmonious cosmos, each divine figure henceforth possesses his clearly fixed individuality.<sup>3</sup>

By definition, the monstrous is the anomalous, that which does not fit into usual classifications or transgresses normal limits, and hence may be considered dangerous.<sup>4</sup> A detailed examination of Hesiod's catalogue of monsters will reveal that not only do its individual members violate the classificatory system of the *Theogony*, but that the catalogue as a whole subverts the process of individuation and articulation which underlies the Hesiodic project.

Generally speaking, Greek monsters are hybrid creatures that unite normally disparate elements, for example, the human and the bestial, or combine distinct species.<sup>5</sup> Frequently, too, they involve a multiplication of human or animal features or, conversely, a subtraction and isolation of features that usually occur in pairs. The monstrous creatures found outside the monster catalogue proper, the Hundred-handers, Typho, and the Cyclopes display these characteristics. The monsters all diverge from an implied canonical form that is simultaneously theo- and anthropomorphic. Thus the Cyclopes (142–43) are described as:

οἱ δ' ἦτοι τὰ μὲν ἄλλα θεοῖς ἐναλίγκιοι ἦσαν,  
μοῦνος δ' ὀφθαλμὸς μέσσω ἐνέκειτο μετώπῳ.

Similarly, Echidna (295–96):

οὐδὲν εἰκὸς  
θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὐδ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι.<sup>6</sup>

(Clearly, between the birth of the Cyclopes and that of Echidna, men have come into being.) Occasionally also, as we shall see, the monsters incorporate contradictory elements that violate fundamental categories, for instance, mortal/immortal, young/old, and male/female. Thus examining Hesiod's monsters can shed useful light on the underlying categories that inform the *Theogony*.

For the most part, scholars have neglected these issues. If they discuss the passage at all, they tend to focus narrowly on the admittedly difficult problem of the referents of the pronouns in lines 295, 319, and 326.<sup>7</sup> Yet I would argue that the catalogue as a whole represents an important phase

3. J.-P. Vernant, "Corps obscur, corps éclatant," in *Corps des dieux*, ed. C. Malamoud and J.-P. Vernant, *Le temps de la réflexion* 7 (Paris, 1986), pp. 42–43 (translation mine). Cf. P. Philippson, *Genealogie als mythische Form: Studien zur "Theogonie" des Hesiod*, Symbolae Osloenses, supp. 7 (Oslo, 1936), pp. 20–24.

4. Cf. M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London, 1966), esp. pp. 122 and 160.

5. Cf. Pl. *Resp.* 9.12 588C, where Socrates describes the monstrous creatures of old legends as ξυμπεφυκυῖαι ἰδέαι πολλὰ εἰς ἓν γενέσθαι.

6. Cf. *Hymn Hom. Ap.* 351–52 of Typho: ἡ [Hera] δ' ἔτεκ' οὔτε θεοῖς ἐναλίγκιον οὔτε βροτοῖσι / δεινόν τ' ἀργαλέον τε τυφάονα πῆμα βροτοῖσι or, more correctly, πῆμα θεοῖσι. Cf. J. S. Clay, *The Politics of Olympus* (Princeton, 1989), p. 71, n. 167.

7. See, for instance, S. Abramowicz, "Quaestiuncula hesiodea (De monstrorum stemmate in *Theogonia*)," *Eos* 41 (1940–46): 166–72; D. Lemke, "Sprachliche und strukturelle Beobachtungen zum Ungeheuer Katalog in der *Theogonie* Hesiods," *Glotta* 46 (1968): 47–53; E. Siegmann, "χίμαιρα, Hesiod *Theog.* 319," *Hermes* 96 (1969): 755–57; and H. Schwabl, "Aufbau und Genealogie des hesiodischen Ungeheuerkatalogs," *Glotta* 47 (1970): 174–84; see also the recent discussion of R. Hamilton, *The Architecture*

in the evolution of the cosmos and that it can teach us a great deal about the articulation of Hesiod's cosmogonic thought. But first we must situate the catalogue of monsters within the overall architecture of the *Theogony*.

After the primordial principles (Gaia, Uranus, etc.), the cosmos takes on its recognizable configuration in the generation of the Titans; but only in the following generation, that of the Olympians, does it acquire its final organization under the rule of Zeus. This genealogical evolution can be seen as a process of successive separation, differentiation, and hierarchization. At the same time, however, this process is radically teleological. As a result, Hesiod frequently collapses chronology, most blatantly perhaps in the Prometheus story where Zeus plays a central role, although his birth has not yet taken place. Elsewhere, too, allusions to the final and permanent ordering of the cosmos under Zeus anachronistically intrude on descriptions of earlier phases of cosmic evolution, thus giving the *Theogony* as a whole a double perspective in which being and becoming are intertwined.<sup>8</sup>

Such a double vision likewise informs the catalogue of monsters. While their births occur at a relatively early phase of cosmic evolution (and hence toward the beginning of the poem), Hesiod also relates how six of them are dispatched by heroes, who belong to a much later stage of cosmic history, postdating Zeus' accession to power. Those monsters that survive are all given both a place and a function in Zeus' dispensation. This pattern again parallels the treatment of the monsters outside the catalogue proper, the Cyclopes, the Hundred-handers, and Typho. All are children of Gaia; πελώρια like their mother, their excessive power inspires fear, especially in those who rule. Zeus' thunderbolt neutralizes the would-be usurper Typho, but the king of the gods manages to harness the monstrous might of the other two and incorporates them into his new order; the Cyclopes produce the weapons that allow Zeus to win and maintain power, while the Hundred-handers keep guard over the defeated Titans.

The varied creatures that make up the monster catalogue belong to the family of Pontus, who himself is a primordial offspring of Gaia by parthenogenesis, much like Uranus. But unlike the latter who remains so to speak Gaia's consort, Pontus is explicitly produced ἄτερ φιλόττος ἐφ' ἡμέρου (132). The birth of the salt sea is immediately followed by the birth of Oceanus, the fresh water, through the sexual union of Gaia and Uranus (133).<sup>9</sup> Paradoxically, however, it is the barren sea that "nurtures"

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of *Hesiodic Poetry* (Baltimore, 1989), pp. 89–92. Both Hamilton, pp. 29–32, and A. Bonnafé, *Poésie, nature et sacré: Homère, Hésiode et le sentiment grec de la nature* (Lyon, 1984), pp. 205–7, attempt to situate the catalogue of monsters more broadly within the framework of the *Theogony* as a whole. Bonnafé emphasizes the chthonic character, inherited from their ancestral mother Gaia, of the whole family, while Hamilton underlines the importance of the heroes and mankind in the passage. Despite valuable observations, Hamilton's overall view of the *Theogony*'s architecture and the place of the monster catalogue within it raises more questions than it solves. For instance, he acknowledges (p. 24) that his insistence that the catalogue belongs to his category of narrative digressions is problematic, yet his schema demands such a classification.

8. Cf. Philippson, *Genealogie*, pp. 18–20.

9. The desire to contrast salt and fresh water may explain why Hesiod lists Oceanus first among the children of Gaia and Uranus.

Aphrodite (191–92). Likewise, in what appears to be a unique instance of male parthenogenesis,<sup>10</sup> Pontus generates Nereus, whose gentleness and justice counterbalance the violent and grim brood of Eris, a single male offering a positive counterweight to a host of largely female negative forces. In turn, this son of the salt sea will, in union with a daughter of Oceanus, the fresh water, generate the Nereids who embody the benign nature of their father (240–63).<sup>11</sup> Both barren and fertile, Pontus and his family embrace unexpected combinations of opposing qualities, traits that will reemerge in his monstrous progeny. Now in an incestuous drama that belongs to the earliest phases of cosmogony, Pontus mates with his mother Gaia, the Earth herself, with all her luxuriant, if sometimes irresponsible, fecundity. Of their four offspring, two, Thaumás and Eurybie, form forward-looking exogamous marriages.<sup>12</sup> The two remaining children, Phorkys and Keto, join in an incestuous union, thus concentrating the elemental characteristics of their parents, to produce the monsters.

Among the descendants of Phorkys and Keto, the female, the chthonic, and the bestial predominate. In the first generation, only their last-born is male.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the family is characterized by a promiscuous conflation of the distinguishing features of the divine, the bestial, and the human. The Graiai, like their mother Keto καλλιπάρηοι (270; cf. 238), are nevertheless ἐκ γενετῆς πολιάς, grey like their father, the Sea, whence the name that gods and men assign to them. Curiously, Hesiod ignores their most notorious characteristic, their sharing of an eye and a tooth, but emphasizes rather their paradoxical combination of youth and age.<sup>14</sup> Living at the end of the world, in the nocturnal far west, the Gorgons encompass yet another fundamental dichotomy; for while two of the sisters are immortal, Medusa is singled out as mortal.<sup>15</sup> Her union with the Olympian Poseidon in a soft meadow amid spring flowers calls to mind the beginning of countless legendary genealogies, much like those contained in the *Catalogue of Women*. But here the conventional idyllic scene masks the incongruous and the grotesque. In fact, the monstrous maid will herself be dispatched by one of those heroic offspring of divine/human unions. It is

10. Most commentators assume that Pontus mates with Gaia to produce Nereus, but Bonnafé, *Poésie*, p. 196, recognizes his parthenogenic birth. Cf. K. Deichgräber, *Die Musen, Nereiden und Okeaniden in Hesiods "Theogonie"*, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz. Abhandl. der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Kl. 1965, n. 4 (Wiesbaden, 1965), p. 18; and I. Sellschopp, *Stilistische Untersuchungen zu Hesiod* (Hamburg, 1934), p. 93, n. 145. The case of the neuter Chaos is slightly different.

11. Note that the last of the Nereids (*Th.* 262) is named Nemertes, ἡ πατὴρ ἐχει νόον ἀθάνατοιο. Cf. line 235 and A. Bonnafé, *Eros et Eris: Mariages divins et mythe de succession chez Hésiode* (Lyon, 1985), p. 17; also Bonnafé, *Poésie*, p. 194.

12. While mother/son alliances of necessity dominate the first generation, and sister-brother unions are common in the second, exogamy increasingly becomes the norm. Cf. Bonnafé, *Eros*, p. 48. The most striking exception is Zeus himself with his pseudo-parthenogenesis of Athena and his various marriages to his sister Olympians.

13. This remains true no matter how one interprets the genealogical ambiguities in the text.

14. Cf. C. Goettling, *Hesiodi carmina* (Gotha, 1843) at 280: "Nam summae apud Graecos debilitatis atque sterilitatis notio est nasci cum canis capillis." Cf. Hes. *Op.* 181 and the description of the final decadence of the Iron Age.

15. For further contradictions in the figure of the Gorgon, see J.-P. Vernant, "Death in the Eyes," in *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, ed. F. Zeitlin (Princeton, 1991), esp. p. 113.

as if, with the mating of Medusa and Poseidon, a first attempt to create demi-gods had failed; her line will die out at the hands of the heroes.

As Perseus decapitates her, Chrysaor and Pegasus are produced from Medusa's severed neck. This mode of birth, violent and unnatural, resembles both Cronus' castration of Uranus and Zeus' birthing of Athena, yet significantly deviates from both. If Uranus' unmanning allowed the cosmos to come into being and the birth of Athena from Zeus' head guarantees its final ordering and permanent stability, Medusa's bizarre delivery has no such cosmic consequences. It is merely an unnatural sideshow. Then too, she herself dies at the moment of giving birth. Pegasus takes after his immortal equine father and is ultimately integrated into Zeus' realm, bringing the thunderbolts, emblems of his invincible power, to the king of the Olympians. Evidently mortal like his mother, Chrysaor's birth conforms more closely to that of a divinity in his "leaping forth," ἐξέθορε (281).<sup>16</sup> In turn, Chrysaor forms an exogamous union with the Oceanid, Kallirhoe, to produce the triple-headed Geryon who is slain by Zeus' son, Heracles.

While Geryon is a well-established figure in Greek myth, Chrysaor remains a shadowy presence. Yet Hesiod mentions him again at the end of the *Theogony* (979) in the catalogue of goddesses who united with mortals.<sup>17</sup> In fact, he appears largely to be a linking figure, Medusa's child and Geryon's father, yet he himself does not seem particularly monstrous. His one distinctive feature, according to Hesiod's etymologizing of his name, is his golden sword with which, apparently, he is born.<sup>18</sup> This armed birth again reminds us of Athena, but perhaps it is likewise evocative of the Giants who were engendered, along with the Erinyes and the Melian nymphs, from the bloody drops of Uranus' castrated member (183–87). I have argued elsewhere that these Giants in union with the Meliai are the ancestors of the human race.<sup>19</sup> If this is so, one could suggest that Chrysaor, mighty and armed like the Giants, and who also unites with a nymph, the Oceanid Kallirhoe, represents an alternative progenitor to an alternative race of mortals. That race, however, is short-lived. At *Theogony* 981 Geryon is described as βροτῶν κάρτιστον πάντων. In this context, one may recall the newly-found fragments of Stesichorus' *Geryoneis* where before facing Heracles in combat, Geryon muses at length over the question of his mortality:<sup>20</sup> does he take after his goddess mother or his mortal father? His encounter with Heracles will reveal his destiny. Geryon's dilemma is that of every offspring of a divine/human union. Of course, we know he will die at the hands of Heracles, another product of such a union, but one sanctioned by Zeus himself. What I am suggesting is that the hybrid Geryon along with his hybrid ancestry parallels the

16. Cf. *Hymn Hom. Ap.* 119 ἐκ δ' ἔθορε πρὸ φῶος δέ [Apollo]; and *Hymn Hom. Hermes* 20 ὅς καί ἐπεὶ δὴ ἀπ' ἀθανάτων μητρὸς ἀθανάτων θόρε γυίων [Hermes].

17. Doubts have been raised concerning the genuineness of lines 979–83. Cf. West, "Theogony," ad loc.

18. Note that χρυσάορος is an epithet of divinity, usually Apollo (*Hom. Il.* 5.509, 15.256, *Hes. Op.* 771, *Hymn Hom. Ap.* 123, 392, 395; *Hymn Hom.* 27.3), but also of Demeter (*Hymn Hom. Dem.* 4).

19. Cf. J. S. Clay, "What the Muses Sang: *Theogony* 1–115," *GRBS* (1988): 329–30.

20. *Frgs.* S 10 and 11 (M. Davies, *Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* 1 [Oxford, 1991], pp. 155–56).

mixed breed of heroes. But while Geryon and his kin are doomed to destruction, the similarly mixed race of heroes not only thrives, but becomes the instrument of the annihilation of the monstrous brood.

Next in the catalogue comes Echidna who, while emphatically divine (θείην, 297; ἀθάνατος . . . καὶ ἀγήραος ἥματα πάντα, 305), resembles “neither mortal men nor the immortal gods” (295–96). Half lovely maiden and half huge snake, she unites the anthropomorphic and the bestial. Moreover, although apparently female, she nevertheless incorporates both male and female elements.<sup>21</sup> Like her mother Keto, Echidna is καλλιπάρης (298, cf. 238), but she also takes after her grandmother πελώρη Gaia (cf. πέλωρον, 299). That the crucial events in Echidna’s biography all occur in subterranean settings may be due to Hesiod’s etymologizing of her mother Keto’s name from “hollow” or “cavern.”<sup>22</sup> Born in a cave, she mates under the earth with Typho, and finally, by divine dispensation, she is assigned a cavernous abode “far from gods and men.”<sup>23</sup> Her reported<sup>24</sup> union with Typho occurs ἐν φιλότῃ, and in fact he seems an altogether suitable consort, sprung as he is from the mating of Tartarus and πελώρη Gaia, likewise ἐν φιλότῃ (822).<sup>25</sup> For his hundred snake heads appropriately complement Echidna’s snakey half, while his multiple voices unite the divine and the bestial (825–35). Not surprisingly, their children embody features of both parents and share their epithets: κρατερόφρον’ Echidna produces κρατερόφρονα τέκνα (*Th.* 297; cf. 308); Cerberus is ἀμήχανος and ὠμηστής like his mother (*Th.* 310–11; cf. 295, 300); Hydra λύγρ’ εἰδυῖαν takes after λυγρή Echidna (*Th.* 313; cf. 304). But the doggish traits of Orthos and Cerberus as well as the polycephaly of the latter and his sister Hydra seem to be inherited from their father.<sup>26</sup> Cerberus will later receive a place and function in the organization of Tartarus, ensuring that the dead cannot escape from the underworld (769–73) and thus enforcing the clear distinction between gods and mortals. The other two siblings are dispatched by Heracles, Orthos, along with his master (293), and the Lernean Hydra.

The Hydra introduces something new into the catalogue. Hitherto, the monsters had been confined either under the earth or located at its extreme boundaries.<sup>27</sup> To destroy Medusa and Geryon (and his dog), the heroes Perseus and Heracles were required to journey thither. But with the Hydra, the

21. The gender of ὄφις is, of course, masculine, but Hesiod could have used the feminine δράκαινα. Cf. *Hymn Hom. Ap.* 300.

22. For a possible (false) etymological play on \*κήτος, cavern (cf. epic κητώεσσα), see P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1968), p. 528.

23. *Th.* 304–5 have wrongly been athetized or condemned as variants. Cf. West, “*Theogony*,” ad loc. West’s proposal, to take οἱ in line 301 to refer to Keto, does not solve the problem. But if one recognizes that the tense of ἔρωτ’ in line 304 is imperfect, it becomes clear that Echidna mated with Typho εἰν Ἀρίμοισιν, but then returned to her birth place as her permanent home by the gods’ (presumably, the Olympians’) dispensation.

24. This use of the indeterminate φασί (306) is unique in the *Theogony*. It may indicate that the monstrous union cannot even be vouched for by the Muses. Cf. U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Euripides “Herakles,”* vol. 3 (Darmstadt, 1959), p. 359. It may also be the first hint of the increasing indeterminacy to come.

25. Cf. Apollodorus 2.1.2, where Echidna too is a daughter of Tartarus and Gaia.

26. Apollodorus 2.5.10 assigns two heads to Orthos.

27. See A. Ballabriga, *Le Soleil et le Tartare* (Paris, 1986), pp. 114–16, for the geographical distribution of the monster clan.

monstrous erupts into the inhabited world, posing a threat to human beings. Iolaos, Heracles' nephew and sidekick, may perhaps be considered a representative of the human race here.<sup>28</sup> The collocation of Διὸς υἱὸς and Amphitryoniades to describe the Hydra's destroyer Heracles renders explicit the paradoxical nature of the heroes, themselves mixed creatures, in some sense as anomalous as the beasts they slay. Moreover, the creature from the Lernean lagoon unleashes a larger divine drama embracing Hera, Zeus, his daughter Athena, as well as his son Heracles. Hesiod alludes to a conflict within the Olympian order and a challenge to Zeus' domination posed by his wife Hera, who nurtures monsters to counter Zeus' heroic line. Toward the end of the *Theogony*, where these incidents belong chronologically, they are more or less suppressed. Once Typho is dispatched, Zeus appears to have no further serious opponents. Intrafamilial Olympian tensions are, as it were, deflected onto conflicts between the heroes and the monsters.<sup>29</sup>

The next creature to be described in the catalogue is the Chimaera.<sup>30</sup> (I will defer until later the notoriously difficult problem of the identity of her mother.) This fantastical fire-breathing monster not only has three heads, but those heads derive from three different species, lion, she-goat, and snake; yet the middle female element seems to dominate and gives the creature her name, a name that is nothing but the common noun to designate a year-old she-goat. There is an almost comic incongruity in the combination of a fierce lion and huge serpent with a young female goat, hardly a terrifying beast and more appropriate as a sacrificial victim.<sup>31</sup> It is, then, perhaps no accident that the appellation comes to designate "an unreal creature of the imagination, a mere wild fancy; an unfounded conception."<sup>32</sup> Here, in a grand confrontation of *Mischwesen*, the offspring of Medusa and Poseidon, Pegasus, the only "good" monster, teams up with the hero Bellerophon, whose father is likewise reputed to be Poseidon, to annihilate the Chimaera.

Now a she-monster, whose identity is likewise subject to dispute, unites endogamously with the dreadful hound Orthos to produce the Phix, a.k.a. the Sphinx, and the Nemean lion. As the Sphinx is generally imagined as a combination of woman and lion, these offspring share leonine

28. He is, of course, the son of Iphicles, Heracles' mortal brother by Amphitryo and is the first fully human being named in the *Theogony*.

29. For the parallels between Zeus/Typho and Heracles/Hydra, see Hamilton, *Architecture*, pp. 29–30 and his conclusion, p. 32: "The close connection between Keto's monstrous brood and Typhoeus suggests the diminution of both the gods' enemies and of Zeus' role in the conflict. Zeus's power is still absolute but he works through agents, his children Athena and Heracles, and the results are much more satisfactory for mankind." Cf. Bonnafé, *Poésie*, p. 209.

30. W. Marg, *Hesiod: Sämtliche Gedichte* (Darmstadt, 1984), p. 165, cites Wilamowitz' judgment ("Hesiods schlechterster Hexameter") but suggests that the verse is intentionally as monstrous as the creature it describes. Cf. I. Solomon, "In Defense of Hesiod's 'schlechtesten Hexameter,'" *Hermes* 113 (1985): 21–30. Lines 323–24 are usually thought to be interpolated from the *Iliad*. Cf. West, "*Theogony*," p. 256. Marg, *Hesiod*, p. 166, believes the lines are conscious citations of the *Iliad*. They may, however, simply be traditional.

31. Cf., for example, Aesch. Ag. 232, where Iphigeneia is likened to a sacrificial she-goat; Xen. *Hell.* 4.2.20, An. 3.2.12, and Plut. *Lyc.* 22.2.7. West, "*Theogony*," p. 255, calls the Chimaera "the oddest and least satisfying of the mythical monsters." Marg, *Hesiod*, p. 166, comments: "Es ist etwas gespielt mit dem Verhältnis des Ziege genannten Untiers insgesamt und des Ziegenteils."

32. The *OED* s.v. cites the first English occurrence of this usage from 1587.

features, and like the Hydra, they are situated within the world of men, Thebes in the one case, and Nemea in the other. About the Sphinx and her destiny we learn little, but Hesiod gives a fuller account of the beast of Nemea. Explicitly identified here as the wife of Zeus, Hera nursed the lion (as she did the Hydra) and κατένασσε, “settled, established,” him on the slopes of Nemea. Elsewhere in Hesiod, only Zeus and Cronos are subjects of καταναίω,<sup>33</sup> and the verb appears to designate the ruler of the gods in his capacity as organizer of the cosmos. Here, on the other hand, Hera usurps and perverts her husband’s role by establishing the lion at Nemea to be a bane for mankind (330–31):

ἐνθ’ ἄρ’ ὃ γ’ οἰκείων ἐλεφαίρετο φῦλ’ ἀνθρώπων,  
κοιρανέων Τρητοῖο Νεμείης ἥδ’ Ἀπέσσαντος.

In an inversion of the natural hierarchy of men and beasts, the lion rules over his surroundings<sup>34</sup> and ἐλεφαίρετο the tribes of men who inhabit them. According to LSJ, this rare verb of unknown etymology means “to destroy” in this passage, whereas it means “to deceive” in its two Homeric occurrences.<sup>35</sup> These differing definitions clearly arise from the fact that, while gods and dreams may deceive men, animals normally do not. But this may be precisely the point of Hesiod’s usage or, rather, misuse, and it may give us a clue to the word’s meaning. For if the Nemean lion’s behavior presents an inversion of the proper relations between men and beasts through his “ruling over” men, so too may the ascription of ἐλεφαίρετο to him. I suggest that ἐλεφαίρομαι means “to trap” and that it may be drawn from the terminology of the hunt. Such an interpretation would be appropriate to all three occurrences of the term and simultaneously emphasize the monstrousness of the lion who, under Hera’s tutelage, both coopts and inverts a properly human activity. In overcoming the lion, whose pelt becomes his iconographic emblem, Heracles restores the appropriate hierarchical order whereby men rule over beasts.

While Medusa and the Chimaera perish at the hands of the heroes Perseus and Bellerophon, Heracles remains the monster-slayer par excellence. In fact, each sequence of monstrous births culminates in an exploit of Heracles: *Theogony* 270–94 (Geryon and Orthos), 295–318 (the Hydra), and 319–32 (the Nemean lion).<sup>36</sup> Six of the monsters, then, perish at the

33. At *Th.* 620, Cronos “settles” the Hundred-handers under the earth, while at *Op.* 168, Zeus “settles” the heroes on the blessed isles.

34. For the meaning of κοιρανέω, see É. Benveniste, *Le Vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1969), pp. 113–14. His conclusion: “*koiraneîn* est le fait du potentat local, exerçant son autorité sur les gens de sa maisonnée plutôt que sur une armée entière.” To take οἰκείων as a present participle as West, “*Theogony*,” p. 257, does rather than as a genitive plural strengthens the case, since wild beasts do not normally live in houses.

35. *Il.* 23.388 and *Od.* 19.565. Cf. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire*, s.v., and E.-M. Voigt, ed., *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*, fasc. 11 (Göttingen, 1984), s.v. J. Russo, *Omero: “Odissea,” Libri XVII–XX* (Milan, 1985) at *Od.* 19.565, suggests the definition “potrà causare del male.” Similarly, A. Amory, “The Gates of Horn and Ivory,” *YCS* 20 (1966): 22–24, proposes “to damage.” The Hesiodic scholia at 330 (p. 64 Di Gregorio) gloss ἐλεφαίρετο as ἐβλαπτεν in Hesiod but as παρελογίζετο in the *Iliad*.

36. Cf. W. G. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry* (Baltimore, 1984), p. 25; and Hamilton, *Architecture*, p. 92.



hands of the heroes. Why is one breed of *Mischwesen* honored and exalted while the other is either consigned to the depths or ends of the earth or else annihilated by the heroes? The heroes of course arrive on the cosmic scene much later than the monsters. But more than mere chronology seems to be operative here. Or, rather, chronology cannot simply be regarded as temporal in the *Theogony*. Both monsters and heroes belong to the past, but to different phases of the past. The unions of gods and mortals that give rise to the race of heroes occur during the reign of Zeus and are sanctioned by him. The existence of the heroes thus presupposes a clear distinction and separation of gods and men as opposed to the promiscuous unions of Keto's brood. This means, in turn, that the heroes can only arise after the duel of wits between Zeus and Prometheus, a confrontation whose consequence is precisely that separation ("At Mecone . . ."). The monsters, on the other hand, arise at an earlier phase of cosmic evolution, before those boundaries demarcating gods, men, and beasts are clearly defined and enforced.

At this point, we can no longer put off confronting, if not heroically, at least bravely, the thorny question of the referents of the pronouns at *Theogony* 319 and 326.<sup>37</sup> Who is the mother of the Chimaera? Does she have a father? And, finally, who mates with Orthos to produce the Sphinx and the lion of Nemea? The literature both ancient and modern offers almost every possible solution to these questions, and consensus remains as chimerical as the creature herself.<sup>38</sup> Various critics have nominated Keto, Echidna, and the Hydra for the position of Chimaera's mother (319), while in line 326 the Chimaera herself is added to the list of possible candidates to be the mother of the Phix and the lion of Nemea.<sup>39</sup> Paradoxically, what is striking about all the proposed solutions is their reasonableness: in each case they depend on reasonable assumptions and normative rules. For instance, it is argued that Echidna cannot be the mother of the Sphinx and the Nemean lion because mother-son incest no

37. There is a similar difficulty at 295 where ἡ designates the mother of Echidna. Here, however, the modern scholarly consensus (West, "*Theogony*," p. 249; Abramowicz, "*Quaestiunculae*," p. 171; Lemke, "*Beobachtungen*," pp. 48–49; Siegmann, "*χίμαιρα*," p. 756; Wilamowitz, "*Herakles*," 3:259; Hamilton, *Architecture*, p. 89) assigns the role to Keto, with the exception of Schwabl, "*Aufbau*," pp. 174–76, who insists that the reference must be to Kallirhoe. Cf. F. G. Welcker, *Die Hesiodische "Theogonie"* (Elberfeld, 1865), p. 125.

38. The lack of genealogical clarity within this brief passage has no parallel in the *Theogony*, although F. Jacoby, *Hesiodi "Theogonia"* (Berlin, 1930), p. 9, suggested a similar ambiguity at *Th.* 411 concerning the mother of Hecate, but the parallel is unconvincing. Inevitably, some scholars have taken refuge in the explanation of interpolations or successive expansions of an original Hesiodic catalogue. Cf. Jacoby, pp. 8–19; and A. Meyer, *De Compositione Theogoniae hesiodeae* (Berlin, 1887), pp. 16–20. Yet it is difficult to understand why an interpolator would fail to integrate his additions into the existing genealogies and thereby introduce not one but two significant obscurities within seven lines. Amputating the text merely sidesteps the problem.

39. At *Th.* 319, the mother of the Chimaera is identified as Echidna by Wilamowitz, "*Herakles*," 3:260; Marg, *Hesiod*, p. 165; Schwabl, "*Aufbau*," pp. 177–78; cf. Apollodorus 2.3.1 (citing Hesiod as his authority); Hydra, by West, "*Theogony*," pp. 254–55; Abramowicz, "*Quaestiunculae*," p. 167; and Keto, by Siegmann, "*χίμαιρα*," p. 756; Lemke, "*Beobachtungen*," p. 52; and Hamilton, *Architecture*, pp. 91–92. At *Th.* 326, the mother of the Phix and the Nemean lion is identified as Echidna by Wilamowitz, "*Herakles*," 3:260; Marg, *Hesiod*, p. 167; and Schwabl, "*Aufbau*," p. 183; cf. Apollodorus 3.5.8; Chimaera: Abramowicz, "*Quaestiunculae*," p. 167; Siegmann, "*χίμαιρα*," p. 756; West, "*Theogony*," p. 256; Hamilton, *Architecture*, p. 91; cf. scholia at 326 (p. 62 Di Gregorio). Only Lemke, "*Beobachtungen*," p. 53, nominates Keto. For a summary of earlier opinions, see Abramowicz, "*Quaestiunculae*," p. 167.

longer occurs in the *Theogony*.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, the Hydra cannot be the sole parent of the Chimaera, because parthenogenesis only characterizes the earliest phases of cosmogony.<sup>41</sup> But all these conclusions rest on the unspoken assumption that the generation of monsters follows the patterns and norms laid out in the *Theogony* and presupposed by its whole genealogical schema: that is, that the evolution of the cosmos progresses from a relative lack of definition and differentiation to a successively higher level of differentiation and definition. It is, however, by no means clear whether, in the case of monsters, such an assumption is warranted or whether the catalogue as a whole in fact presents such a progression.

A significant indication to the contrary occurs at the very end of the catalogue. The last-mentioned member of the clan, the last-born and only son of Phorkys and Keto, the snake who guards the golden apples, is no better defined than his brethren. In fact, even less so, for the "mark of the serpent" generically characterizes the entire monster brood.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, in striking contrast to the first-born of Keto and Phorkys, the Graiai and the Gorgons, who are assigned not only generic but individual names, in the Hesiodic text the apple-guarding serpent does not even possess a name.<sup>43</sup> Nor, for that matter, does the lion of Nemea. By sandwiching the catalogue of monsters between two catalogues that are almost exclusively composed of names, that of the Nereids (*Th.* 243–63) and of the Oceanids (349–61),<sup>44</sup> and commenting on the difficulty of knowing the names of all the rivers (τῶν ὄνομα ἄργαλέον πάντων βροτῶν ἄνδρα ἐνισπεῖν / οἱ δὲ ἕκαστοι ἴσασι, ὅσοι περὶ ναιετάουσι, 369–70), Hesiod draws attention to the importance of naming for his theogonic enterprise.

To name a thing is to assign it an individual identity. As Vernant has noted:

For the Greeks, the world of the gods is organized as an other-worldly society, with its hierarchies of rank, its levels of grades and functions, its distribution of abilities and special powers. It therefore unites a multitude of individual divine figures, each possessing his place, role, privileges, marks of honor, particular mode of action, and sphere of intervention: in short, an individual identity. Now an individual identity has two components: a name and a body. A proper name is a particular social stamp which is attributed to a subject to mark his singularity within the species to which he belongs. . . . Likewise a body is what gives a subject his identity in distinguishing him through his appearance, his physiognomy, his clothing, and attributes from all who resemble him.<sup>45</sup>

40. E.g. Welcker, "*Theogonie*," p. 159, and Abramowicz, "*Quaestiunculae*," pp. 169–70. But cf. Wilamowitz, "*Herakles*," 3:260, n. 1, and West, "*Theogony*," p. 256.

41. See Lemke, "Beobachtungen," p. 50, and Siegmann, "χίμαιρα," p. 756. But compare Abramowicz, "*Quaestiunculae*," p. 170.

42. Cf. Bonnafé, *Poésie*, pp. 206–7, who notes that the serpentine form may be derived from their ancestral chthonic mother, Gaia.

43. In later sources, the serpent is named Ladon. On the lack of a name, cf. W. J. K. Muetzell, *De emendatione Theogoniae hesiodae* (Leipzig, 1833), p. 463: "Etenim unum hoc est ex perpaucis exemplum, ubi commemoratur sine nomine soboles: id quod et ab consilio genealogici carminis et ab Theogoniae tenore sane quam multum discedit." Marg, *Hesiod*, p. 169 aptly notes: "Hesiod hätte ihr gut einen Namen geben können, wenn sie wirklich noch keinen hatte, aber er wollte es nicht." Note also, by contrast, the explicit etymologizing of Chrysaor and Pegasus earlier in the catalogue.

44. For an attempt to interpret the names in both catalogues, see Deichgräber, *Musen*, pp. 17–30.

45. Vernant, *Corps obscur*, pp. 43–44 (translation mine).

Similarly, Philippon enumerates Hesiod's three modes of defining an individual divinity in the *Theogony*: by name, by identifying epithet or description, and, above all, in genealogical terms, as the product of a certain parentage and, in turn, as the generator of certain offspring.<sup>46</sup>

The nameless serpent with whom the catalogue of monsters culminates, as well as the impossibility of ascertaining the precise parentage of some of its members, suggests that the cosmic process of individuation does not fully operate within this tribe. As we have seen, the entire brood is characterized by promiscuous combinations of features and qualities that are subsequently distinguished and kept apart. Multiple limbs, conflation of different animal species, hybrids of snakes and maidens, and beasts who behave like human beings no longer arise in the world we know. If, then, the monstrous creatures blur or defy the evolving categories of the ordered universe, their very existence undermines those categories and calls into question the progressive evolution and definition of a hierarchical cosmos. In a sense, the catalogue of monsters represents an anti-cosmos that explodes the whole conception of the *Theogony*.

In the Proem (45–46), the Muses entertain Zeus on Olympus with accounts of those gods

... οὓς Γαῖα καὶ Οὐρανὸς εὐρὺς ἔτικτεν,  
οἳ τ' ἐκ τῶν ἐγένοντο, θεοὶ δωτῆρες ἑάων.

For his own program, Hesiod insists that the Muses enlarge the scope of their song to include not only the descendants of dusky Night, but also οὓς θ' ἄλμυρὸς ἔτρεφε Πόντος (107).<sup>47</sup> The θεοὶ δωτῆρες ἑάων, who distribute and choose wealth and honors and as Olympians are ultimately responsible for the cosmos (111–13), are the offspring of Ouranos and Gaia, the Ouraniones, as Hesiod calls them.<sup>48</sup> The Pontides, on the other hand, descendants of Gaia and Pontos, can be considered anti-gods who, if left to themselves, would generate an anti-cosmos. Of course, this does not happen: through intermarriage, the Pontides are rapidly integrated into the Ouranid clan. The most important representative of this assimilation is the goddess Hecate who receives “a portion of honor” from all the Ouranids (421–22) and whom Zeus honors *περὶ πάντων* (411) by assigning to her a critical mediating function in his cosmos.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, with the incestuous, interbred, and ultimately sterile tribe of monsters, Hesiod gives us a glimpse of what such an anti-cosmos might be.

Hesiod seems well aware of the destructive power of the model of his counter-cosmos represented by his monsters. By hedging in the family through endogamous unions and thus cutting it off from the theogonic mainstream, he limits and encloses the contagion of their chaotic promiscuity. Moreover, by situating the monsters early in the *Theogony*, he

46. Philippon, *Genealogie*, pp. 9–10.

47. Cf. Clay, “Muses,” p. 332.

48. Cf. *Th.* 461, 919, 929. Οὐρανίδες is used only in line 502 of the Cyclopes.

49. Cf. J. S. Clay, “The Hecate of the *Theogony*,” *GRBS* 25 (1984): 27–38.

suggests that they belong to a primitive but passing, although perhaps necessary, phase of cosmic evolution. All the surviving members of the clan are integrated into Zeus' regime or rendered harmless at the ends of the earth, literally marginalized. Finally, in setting the hybrid heroes against the other hybrid monsters, Hesiod calls attention to the different kinds of  $\mu\acute{\iota}\xi\iota\varsigma$ , the one positive and controlled, the other, destructive and disordered. As a necessary aberration, the catalogue of monsters constitutes, by way of counter-example, the most compelling argument for an ordered cosmos under Zeus' hegemony.<sup>50</sup>

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