

APHRODITE AND THE PANDORA COMPLEX

I

What have the following in common: Epimetheus, Paris, Anchises, and the suitors of Penelope? The ready answer might be that it must have something to do with women, for it requires no great thought to see that the attractions of femininity proved the undoing of three of them, while for Anchises life was never to be the same again after his encounter with Aphrodite. But suppose we add to our first group such figures as Zeus, Priam, Polynices, and Eumaeus? The fates of all these characters as they appear at certain points in the poetry of Homer, Hesiod, and others give expression to a network of interrelated sexual and economic anxieties that seem to underlie a great deal of what the Archaic poets say about the female sex. In this article I propose to explore a particular part of that network, which I have called the 'Pandora complex', since it is Hesiod's version of the Pandora myth which provides the classic statement of the male dilemma over women, poised between the conflicting desires for sexual gratification and domestic stability.¹

This is, of course, well-trodden ground: in the last thirty years or so, as the study of the female dimension of classical antiquity has become a fully fledged sub-(inter-) discipline, analysis of the linkage between sexuality and economics in early Greek poetry has become something of a *topos* in its own right, and Pandora has been the subject of extensive and sometimes penetrating analysis.² It will be evident that my argument owes a huge debt to this important body of work, but it is worth stating at the outset where my approach differs from those of my predecessors. Although it will be convenient at certain points to generalize, I am not attempting to present an overall framework for looking at Greek discourse on marriage, sexuality, or any form of exchange; nor do I offer readings of the texts I discuss which are meant to be (in any sense) definitive. In fact, although I have some criticisms of the work of others, I do not suggest that there is anything substantially wrong with the general drift of current orthodoxy on this subject, but I do seek to show that our understanding of the relationship between erotics and economics in the Archaic Greek mind can be further enhanced by concentrating on two particular features of the Archaic texts which have not received as much attention as they deserve. The first is the symbolic importance of gold, the prime indicator of economic power, as the metal of Aphrodite, and hence the focus of sexual allure. The second is the extent to which the concerns embodied in Hesiod's descriptions of the making of Pandora, who appears at first sight merely to be the by-product of peasant misogyny, underly not only the presentation of women

¹ This article is based on part of my 1994 Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 'A Study of Gold in Early Greek Poetry'. For criticism and encouragement my thanks are due to Jasper Griffin, Robert Parker, the *CQ* referee, and above all my wife, Clare.

² The following will be referred to below by author's name only: M. B. Arthur, 'Early Greece: Origins of the Western Attitude Towards Women', *Arethusa* 6 (1973), 7–58; M. Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, tr. R. Hurley (Harmondsworth, 1988)—not about Pandora, but covering much of what she stands for; N. Loraux, 'Sur la race des femmes et quelques-uns de ses tribus', *Arethusa* 11 (1978), 43–87; L. R. Sussman, 'Workers and Drones, Labor, Idleness and Gender Definition in Hesiod's Beehive', *Arethusa* 11 (1978), 27–41; J.-P. Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, tr. J. Lloyd (London, 1980) pp. 168–85; F.I. Zeitlin, 'The Economics of Hesiod's Pandora', in E. D. Reeder, *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece* (Princeton, 1995), pp. 49–56.

in the iambic, comic, and other popular traditions, but also those to be found in much more exalted and ostensibly chivalrous literary contexts, including the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the Homeric Hymns.

II

Our starting point is Pandora, and for the sake of clarity, I begin with a rehearsal of some familiar arguments by way of background. We know that Hesiod did not invent either Pandora herself, or some parts of the story he tells about her;³ but he did take great care, both in the *Theogony* and in the *Works and Days*, to adapt this more or less traditional material to his own purposes. In both poems, it serves to illustrate the unshakeable supremacy of Zeus in the ordering of the world and the wretchedness of humanity's lot: it analyses and explains the descent from the bliss of their original carefree and near-divine existence to their present condition, in which they must work hard to survive at all, let alone be comfortable. Since it is Vernant who has best shown how the mythic narrative corresponds to the daily realities of human life, it will be useful at this stage to summarize the most important points in his argument.

Zeus and Prometheus both display the quality of *metis*, cunning intelligence, through the preparation and reciprocal offering of deceptive gifts they have prepared. 'When gods and men were coming to a settlement at Mekone' (*Th.* 535f), Prometheus set out the sacrificial portions in such a way that Zeus was tricked into choosing the inferior portion for the gods; when Zeus retaliated by taking fire away from men, Prometheus stole it back for them (in a slightly different form); but Zeus had the last laugh by bestowing on mankind, as the beneficiaries of Prometheus' tricks, a beautiful evil to match this good (*Th.* 585). This is Pandora, who in Vernant's scheme is compared first with the sacrificed ox, then with the fire Prometheus steals, and finally with the *bios*—food and livelihood—that the gods have concealed from mankind (*Op.* 42). She resembles the portion of the ox chosen by Zeus—in which the attractive shining layer of fat enclosed nothing more appetizing than bones—as a beguiling gift whose attractive exterior conceals unpleasant contents. Prometheus put the edible meat of the animal in its *gaster*, reflecting the fact that men's condition after the golden age is characterized by the incessant need to fill their bellies. But in so far as the appetites both for food and sex are a nuisance, they are projected on to the female, which begins with Pandora: hence the simile of the drones (*Th.* 594–602).⁴ Pandora is intended by Zeus as a direct counterpart to the fire Prometheus stole (*Th.* 570); and because, like the fire, she is a *dolos* (the fire is concealed inside a green plant, the great evil is disguised as a beautiful woman), women in general have a thieving and deceitful nature (as the poet warns at *Op.* 375, anyone who believes them, believes cheats).⁵ Finally, on Pandora and *bios*, Vernant observes, 'The belly of the woman, which man must plough if he wishes to have children, [and hence support in old age] is like the belly of the earth, which man must plough if he wishes to have wheat, since Zeus has hidden the *bios* in it.'⁶ This identification of reproductive sex with ploughing is

³ For cross-cultural parallels, see I. Trecsényi-Waldapfel, *Untersuchungen zur Religionsgeschichte* (London, 1966), pp. 49–75.

⁴ Cf. Semonides 7W (which can be seen as a sort of commentary on Hesiod: Loraux, p. 54), especially 21–6, 43–9, 83–93.

⁵ Again compare Semonides 7 (108–11).

⁶ Vernant, p. 180; the belly in the *Theogony* has been further explored by M. B. Arthur, 'The

familiar to us from many contexts, and seems to be used so casually that it is scarcely perceived as a metaphor, so deeply is it embedded in the Greek mind;⁷ though perhaps capable of being deployed in more positive ways, for Hesiod's purposes it serves simply to make the inevitability of women depressingly clear. The end result is to make Pandora into a much more negative figure than, say, Eve in Genesis, for, as Zeitlin has shown, the poet systematically downgrades any function which women might have in his world: having denied them any usefulness as workers, he also suppresses anything positive that might have been said about their reproductive function as well, thus reducing marriage to a sort of one-way, purely economic transaction.⁸

Various general lessons emerge: once certain good things (food and children) have been hidden (that is to say, essentially 'not given' to men) by the gods, they can only be reached by means of the evils in which they have been placed (i.e. hard work on the farm, and the troublesome business of managing a woman). Conversely, whatever the gods have given to men (women) turns out to be an evil camouflaged by its deceptively desirable appearance. More specifically, we are to understand, from the *Theogony* version, that, 'to the extent that men are differentiated from the gods', the human condition implies sacrifice, 'Promethean' (i.e. stolen and non-spontaneous) fire, and marriage, and from the *Works and Days*, that, 'human life is full of evils: some are invisible, hidden [like diseases]; others . . . are visible but conceal themselves beneath their misleading appearance, which suggests that they are good and desirable'.⁹

While I believe the line of interpretation advanced by Vernant to be fundamentally sound, it seems to me that it sometimes neglects the poetic form and colour of Hesiod's descriptions, and these, as we shall see, are of more than merely aesthetic significance, since scrutiny of them enables us both to extend and to go beyond the insights of structuralist analysis. Let us take the account in the *Theogony* first. We are told almost nothing about Pandora herself (not even her name): she is a gift, an evil made out of clay by Hermes to be 'like a modest virgin', dressed by Athene, and finally crowned by Hephaistos with a marvellous golden diadem, teeming with captivating and life-like designs of animals and sea-creatures (*Th.* 578–84).¹⁰ Epimetheus saw all the attractive packaging and was tricked into accepting the less desirable contents, just as Zeus was tricked by Prometheus' arrangement of the sacrificial portions. But Pandora is not any old gift: the way she is adorned and formally handed over ensures that we see her as a bride, and the scene as marking the first marriage.¹¹ Loraux comments, 'la première femme *est* sa parure, elle n'a pas de corps',¹² and the contrast between reticence over the woman herself and expansiveness over her clothing and jewellery is intentional: if we contrast the adornment section and the wonderstruck

Dream of a World without Women', *Arethusa* 16 (1983), 97–116, who regards it as 'the floating signifier for every kind of ambiguity' in the poem (p. 111).

⁷ See LSJ s.vv. ἀοτὶρ, ἄποτος, ἀποτον, ἀρουρα, ἀπόω. P. du Bois, *Sowing the Body* (Chicago, 1988) discusses field (pp. 39–64) and furrow (pp. 65–85) as Greek metaphors for the female body.

⁸ See Zeitlin (n. 2), and the longer version of the same argument (dealing at greater length with the *Theogony* context) in her *Playing the Other* (Chicago, 1996), pp. 53–86. This approach, founded on Hesiod's cosmogony, can in a sense be traced back to J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*² (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 276–85.

⁹ Vernant, pp. 172, 174.

¹⁰ West is clearly right in implicitly rejecting suggestions by earlier critics that 573–84 or 578–84 should be deleted.

¹¹ Cf. J. Redfield, 'Notes on the Greek Wedding', *Arethusa* 15 (1982), 181–201, pp. 194ff. For an iconographical view, see Reeder, *Pandora* (n. 2), pp. 126–93.

¹² Loraux, p. 49. Zeitlin (pp. 54ff.) rightly observes that this emphasizes woman's 'artificial' and therefore 'secondary' status.

reaction of the assembled gods and men (*Th.* 588f.) on the one hand with the simile of the drones in the hive¹³ and the so-called 'misogynist's dilemma' on the other,¹⁴ it is evident that the attractive ceremony of marriage to a well-dressed bride is no guarantee of a happy life—chiefly because, regardless of their personalities (which are in any case more often disagreeable than not), all women consume unproductively. You cannot tell what you are getting: the qualities for which a wife is most to be admired are the sort only revealed by long experience, not at all discernible at a glance—like all good things, they have been 'hidden' by the gods. All the show is, therefore, dangerously irrelevant, since the chances are that any visible charms are only skin- or even dress-deep.

The most remarkable feature of the *Theogony's* Pandora is her diadem: as we shall see, it is no accident that the material out of which it is made is gold, the metal of Aphrodite,¹⁵ but for the moment let us focus on its design. Both the diadem itself and its decoration owe something to the inspiration of contemporary gold relief-work (see below), but while the Euboean goldsmiths' patterns were quite simple friezes made up of deer, lions, and men, grazing, hunting, or fighting, Hephaestus' design is so vivid and comprehensive as to be comparable with such pieces of epic craftsmanship as the shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18.478ff.) or the remarkable baldric Odysseus sees the shade of Heracles wearing in the underworld (*Od.* 11.609ff.). Like the shield, it is a work of divine craftsmanship designed to facilitate a particular mission in the world of men; like the baldric of Heracles, its immediate appearance is attractive to the eye, but on closer inspection its contents are deeply disturbing. I think there is a contrast between the general gleam of gold that captivates Epimetheus, and the terrifying creatures visible on a closer inspection; the design then becomes an encoding of Pandora herself: the figures of the animals that seem to speak are like the crafted woman who is given 'a human voice' (*Op.* 61)—as on the diadem, so in the flesh, the divine power of art can make beauty out of what should seem terrifying. The craftsmanship on the diadem is the work of a god, but it portrays beasts, just as the woman herself can simultaneously look like a goddess and act like a beast—affinities which make her a fit mate for man, who is structurally 'between the beasts and the gods'.¹⁶ The gods' finished masterpiece produces amazement (*Th.* 581, 584, 588) among all who see it, ensuring that the gift will not be refused. With craftsmanship like this to call on, Zeus is indeed invincible: so it is that the moral drawn from the story in the *Theogony* is that there is no way to trick him and get away with it (*Th.* 613).

As his development of the concept of Eris in the prologue to the *Works and Days* shows, Hesiod went on thinking about some of the subjects he had treated in the *Theogony*, and Pandora was evidently one of these. In the second poem, her story has a double function: as before, it provides an explanation for the general and irreversible fall of man from a happier and easier existence, but it is also a cautionary tale with particular relevance to Perses. Epimetheus, by ignoring the advice of his wiser brother, and succumbing to something that appeared superficially attractive, brought ruin on himself and his posterity. Hesiod has in effect cast himself in the role of Prometheus to try to persuade his own brother not to make an analogous mistake, in attempting to 'get rich quick' by increasing his share of land through legal chicanery, rather than

¹³ *Th.* 594–602: like drones, women ἀλλότριον κάματον σφετέρην ἐς γαστέρ' ἀμῶνται.

¹⁴ *Th.* 603–12: marriage is either an uneasy mixture of good and bad, or an unmitigated disaster; but those who do not marry suffer the still worse misfortune of childlessness.

¹⁵ She is called 'golden' eleven times in Homer: for the significance of the epithet, see below.

¹⁶ Vernant, pp. 130–67, 181–5; cf. Zeitlin, p. 50.

honest toil, the source of god-given wealth that will be more lasting.¹⁷

There are certain obvious differences between the two versions of the story: in the second account, the being that is created has a character, and the making of the woman herself is described in as much detail as that of her adornments. Pandora has no diadem this time, and there is no comment in the immediate context about the non-productively consuming tendencies of woman. Instead there is her 'bitchy temperament', and she is armed with sexual attraction and deceitful eloquence, to enable her to ingratiate herself with men even when her misdeeds are discovered.¹⁸ Most famously of all, Pandora either came with, or found in the house of Epimetheus, a *pithos*, and by removing its lid she released into the world a great store of ills previously kept under control inside it. Her action is an explanatory doublet of her husband's, for the jar is to her what she is to Epimetheus—both husband and wife are prompted by an unwise impulse to involve themselves in something they falsely believe will be to their advantage. Hesiod sees his brother as activated by similar impulses, and almost every detail of the myth serves to reinforce his strategy of reproof and warning to Perses.¹⁹

This time, the poet attaches so much importance to describing the fabrication of Pandora, that he does it twice, first as instructions from Zeus to the other gods (*Op.* 60–8), and then showing them interpret those instructions (*Op.* 70–82).²⁰ This technique enables him to draw attention to the contrasts between the malicious intention behind the gift (made apparent when Zeus orders Aphrodite to make Pandora an object of painful, debilitating desire, and Hermes to give her a shameless and deceitful temper, 66–8), and the attractive façade behind which divine cunning succeeds in hiding it: the gods include all the required elements, good and bad, but in such a way that only what is (at least apparently) good is visible. Nowhere is this more striking than in the part of the process that involves Aphrodite,²¹ and this is significant, because here, much more clearly than in the *Theogony*, Hesiod bases his description around the epic *topos* of divine dressing, with which the goddess and her metal, gold, were particularly associated. It will therefore be convenient at this point to interrupt the discussion of Hesiod, in order to trace the development of a theme which is highly relevant to my wider argument.

III

The shorter of the two Homeric hymns to Aphrodite (*h.* 6), provides a useful starting point. Like all the hymns, it is an evocation of the particular power of the divinity concerned, and the poet focuses naturally enough in this case on the overwhelming

¹⁷ Cf. *Op.* 35–9, 274–85, 320; P. Walcot, 'Pandora's Jar, *Erga* 83–105', *Hermes* 89 (1961), 249–51.

¹⁸ Note the involvement in her adornment of Peitho (73), who provides an obvious link between her meretricious attractiveness and deceptive nature.

¹⁹ Zeitlin, p. 54, notes the parallels between Perses and Pandora herself, the difference between the two being that while Perses 'may be persuaded to resume his proper masculine role and to enter into the economy of labour . . . Pandora . . . remains ambiguous, excluded . . .'. For further reflections on Pandora as pot, see G. Sissa, *Greek Virginity*, tr. A. Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA, 1990), pp. 154ff.

²⁰ Some editors delete parts of *Op.* 59–82, but they are wrong: see West on 70–80.

²¹ The relationship between the order (65f.) and its execution (73–5) is not immediately obvious, but while West may have succeeded in refuting the over-precise connections suggested by K. Robert, 'Pandora', *Hermes* 49 (1914), 17–38, p. 28, I think his remarks leave room for the view of the lines I propose below.

physical desirability of the goddess (the climax is her reception on Olympus, where all the gods wanted her to be their wife, so amazed were they by her beauty). He conveys this quality not so much by direct reference to the divine body itself, but through an extended description of the goddess' adornment: her clothes, her golden diadem, her intricate ear-rings made of gold and orichalcum, her golden necklaces. It is as if feminine beauty were inconceivable without fine clothes and elaborate jewellery, and gold is the most prominent material of this decoration. This approach, as we shall see, is determined partly by the Near Eastern antecedents of Homeric epic, and partly by some more peculiarly Greek ways of thinking, for while such descriptions, like Aphrodite herself, are clearly of Oriental origin,²² both the goddess and the type-scene were substantially naturalized by the Greek tradition.

In a number of Mesopotamian texts, adornments, which draw attention to any parts of the female body which can be considered physically attractive, are put on, often by goddesses, as a prelude either to full-scale seduction or to the use of sexuality to manipulate individuals for some other end. So for instance when Aphrodite's prototype Inanna seduces Dumuzi, she prepares by picking 'ribbons of gold' that she puts 'in her hair of the head' and 'narrow gold ear-rings';²³ similar scenes precede the encounter between Shamhat and Enkidu and Ninsun's appeal to Shamash on behalf of her son in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.²⁴ Somewhat different, but still typologically connected, is the *Descent of Ishtar*, a whole poem structured around the gradual removal of the goddess' finery (crown, ear-rings, necklace, 'toggle-pins for her breast', 'girdle of birth stones around her waist', 'bangles for her wrists and ankles', 'garment of her body') as she passes through the seven gates of the Underworld.²⁵ While the types of item involved are often the same in both Greek and Mesopotamian texts, the latter, unlike the Greek texts, do not stress gold in the (un)dressing process—in fact, among the texts just mentioned, the only references to gold are the two quoted. The focus on this one metal as the primary material of ornament is part of the much greater degree of stylization that becomes apparent when the motif moves across into Greek poetry. This is partly, I think, because the move took place during a period²⁶ when gold exercised a particularly strong fascination as a still rare foreign import from the sophisticated East,²⁷ and gold jewellery was serving as the earliest and most

²² On Aphrodite's origins, cf. W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, tr. J. Raffan (Oxford, 1985), p. 152; C. Penglase, *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia* (London, 1994), pp. 160–5. There is a sharp contrast between the gold of Aphrodite and Ishtar, often associated with deception, and that of the Egyptian goddess of love, Hathor (the 'gold of the gods'). Just as Egyptian culture generally takes a much more unequivocally positive view of the metal than the Greeks did, so Hathor 'represented not only what was true, but what was good, and all that is best in woman as wife, mother and daughter' (E. A. W. Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* [London, 1904], vol. I, pp. 428–38): this is nothing like Aphrodite!

²³ *ANET*, p. 638, ll. 11–25: the full list includes a very wide range of precious substances (lapis lazuli, boxwood, alabaster and black willow).

²⁴ *Gilgamesh* I.iii–iv, tr. S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 55f.: cf. J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford, 1980), p. 200, n. 63; *Gilgamesh* III.ii, tr. Dalley, p. 65.

²⁵ Dalley (n. 24), pp. 155–60; they are put back on in reverse order as she leaves again. On the likely ritual context of the text, see Dalley, p. 161, n. 9; Penglase (n. 22) pp. 17–31 and 166f. For the use of gold in the ritual clothing of images of the gods in Mesopotamia, see A. L. Oppenheim, 'The Golden Garments of the Gods', *JNES* 58 (1949), 172–93.

²⁶ Penglase (n. 22), p. 239, concludes that the main period of Mesopotamian influence began 'several generations before Homer' (and ended at the start of the sixth century).

²⁷ The etymology of the word χρυσός (Mycenaean *ku-ru-so*) indicates that the Greeks first acquired the metal from speakers of a Semitic language: cf. H. Quiring, *Geschichte des Goldes* (Stuttgart, 1948), p. 24. Geology and archaeology strongly suggest that Near Eastern traders provided the Greeks with almost all their gold from at least the period of the Mycenaean Shaft

extensive channel of Oriental artistic influence.²⁸

So it is that in *Il.* 14, which is probably our earliest example of the *topos* in Greek, the various items with which Hera adorns herself still have a pronounced exotic flavour. From the start, there is an element of mystery in what Hera does, as she shuts herself in her bedroom with a secret bolt that no other god can open (*Il.* 14.166–8), puts on a wonderful dress made by Athene, fastened with golden pins, and generally ‘dresses to kill’ (180ff.), with, as the finishing touch, a charm from Aphrodite in which were love, desire, and the deceptive power of seductive conversation (214ff.).²⁹ The search for archaeological traces of items that might have inspired some of the finery described here has been unusually helpful from a literary point of view: although some points of detail are disputed,³⁰ a fairly clear pattern of Near Eastern influence emerges, possibly mediated through Cyprus.³¹ This corresponds with what Burkert has identified as a network of possible echoes of Oriental literature in the whole Zeus–Poseidon–Hera episode that begins with Book 13 and ends some two hundred lines into Book 15.³²

The erotic is central to every aspect of Hera’s enterprise—not just to her own appearance before Zeus, but to her bargaining with Hypnos as well, for not content with her initial offer of a golden throne by way of reward, he requires further

Graves until the middle of the seventh century (when the area around Thasos and Mount Pangaeus began to be exploited by the Greeks). On the Near East as a source of luxury objects, see the Homeric voyages of Odysseus, Menelaus and Paris; J. D. Muhly, ‘Homer and the Phoenicians’, *Berytus* 19 (1970), 19–64; E. L. Smithson, ‘The Tomb of a Rich Athenian Lady’, *Hesperia* 37 (1968), 77–116; N. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece* (London, 1977), pp. 41f., 64f., 358.

²⁸ On the early history of Greek gold jewellery, see in general G. Becatti, *Oreficerie Antiche* (Rome, 1955), pp. 1–40; E. Bielefeld, *Schmuck* (Göttingen, 1968, = *Archaeologia Homerica*, ed. H.-G. Buchholz and F. Matz, Teil C: hereafter cited by author’s name and Teil letter only); R. J. Higgins, *Greek and Roman Jewellery*² (London, 1980), pp. 7–120; D. Musti, *L’Oro dei Greci* (Novara, 1993), pp. 17–31 and 232–51; D. Williams and J. Ogden, *Greek Gold* (London, 1994), pp. 10–46.

²⁹ For the relation of this last item to Near Eastern and later Greek magical practices, see C. A. Farafone, ‘Aphrodite’s Kestos and Apples for Atalanta’, *Phoenix* 44 (1990), 219–43.

³⁰ On the ear-rings, see Bielefeld, *AH C*, 4; Higgins in M. R. Popham *et al.*, *Lefkandi I* (London, 1980, = BSA Suppl. 11), 219ff.; Janko *ad loc.*

³¹ For Cypriot versions of the ear-rings and charm, see C. Bonner, ‘*Κεστός ἱμάς* and the Saltire of Aphrodite’, *AJP* 70 (1949), 1–6; J. L. Myres, ‘Homeric Art’, *ABSA* 45 (1950), 229–60, p. 237. Golden monumental parallels for Hera’s tasselled girdle have been found in both Mycenaean and contemporary Near Eastern contexts: cf. A. W. Persson, *The Royal Tombs at Dendra* (Lund, 1931), p. 14; Bielefeld, *AH C*, pp. 35f., 58; Marinatos, *AH A*, pp. 12 and 28.

³² W. Burkert, ‘Oriental Myth and Literature in the *Iliad*’, in R. Hägg (ed.), *The Greek Renaissance of the Eighth Century B.C.* (Stockholm, 1983), pp. 51–6; on a possible Near Eastern prototype for the Zeus–Hera episode, see L. A. Stella, *Tradizione micenea e poesia dell’Iliade* (Rome, 1978), pp. 96f. Others (C. H. Whitman, ‘Hera’s Anvils’, *HSCP* 74 [1970], 37–42; C. Kerényi, *Zeus und Hera* [Leiden 1972], p. 84) have noticed a number of ‘cosmogonic’ motifs in these books, and it is worth mentioning here that the *Διὸς Ἀπάτη* contains one of Archaic poetry’s relatively few references to the *hieros gamos* (*Il.* 14.343–51). Homer uses gold here to express the fecundatory effect of divine intercourse, and he is followed in this by Pindar (cf. *P.5*–9, 55–59, 67–70, with A. Köhnken, *Die Funktion des Mythos bei Pindar* [Berlin 1971], pp. 87ff; *Pa.* 6.130–41 with Radt *ad loc.*). However, this appearance of the metal in the context of divine sexuality is to be distinguished sharply from the gold of Aphrodite, with which we are chiefly concerned: it is a metaphor of male potency and divinely engendered fertility, rather than an image of artificially enhanced female allure, and its origins are not Mesopotamian. See A. B. Cook, *Zeus III* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 473ff.; Trencsényi-Waldapfel (n. 3), pp. 192–231; F. Daumas, ‘La valeur de l’or dans la pensée égyptienne’, *RHR* 149 (1956), 1–17; W. Burkert, ‘Oriental and Greek Mythology: The Meeting of Parallels’, in J. Bremmer (ed.), *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (London, 1987), pp. 10–40, n. 83; G. Costa, ‘Il dio d’oro in Grecia e in India’, *AGI* 69 (1984), 26–52, pp. 34f.

inducements before he will agree to take part, insisting that she swear to give him one of the Graces, whom he has always longed for (*Il.* 14.275f.). As a character, Aphrodite is very much a lightweight in this episode, easily fooled into unconsciously betraying the Trojan cause by Hera (14.190–213), yet Hera's need to procure her charm reminds us that in the forces of sexual attraction, embodied in various items of adornment and clothing, Aphrodite is shown to control powers which can turn the mind of Zeus himself from its purpose. But this episode is not just about sex: it shows us how sexuality can be exploited to attain other ends: by seducing Zeus, Hera is able to circumvent his ban on direct intervention at Troy (thus allowing Poseidon much more time to rally the hard-pressed Greeks), and she seduces him because of the way she presents herself. This element of ulterior motivation on the part of the female is a common feature of the dressing topos. In Mesopotamia, the scenes lead to events of much wider significance, such as the momentous meeting of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, or (in the *Descent of Ishtar*) disruption and restoration of all sexual life on earth. A further example from Greek poetry may be provided by the *Cypria* (frs. 4 and 5), where Aphrodite prepares herself for the Judgement of Paris, the direct consequence of which action is, of course, the Trojan War.³³

But if the Homeric poems acknowledge the power of the goddess (as they must, being mostly based on a story that begins with Paris and Helen), they do their best to emphasize its limitation to a narrow sphere, and avoid portraying her in any way positively: although she compels obedience from Helen in *Il.* 3, it is against the woman's better nature, and two books later only Dione has any sympathy for her when she is wounded by Diomedes.³⁴ Meanwhile, if Hera's trickery in *Il.* 14, and the exploits of Ares and Aphrodite in *Od.* 8 are amusing, and even owe something to the stock-in-trade of human domestic comedy, it is only because the participants are all divine that the epic allows us to laugh; otherwise—in the encounters between men and goddesses, for instance—what we see is a more or less direct expression of the most acute male sexual anxieties. The *Odyssey* provides a very clear example of this: seven years with Calypso bring, it would seem, no real happiness for Odysseus, because sex needs the right context if it is not to be intolerably destructive. Whatever purely sensual pleasures the hero may enjoy on Ogygia, he remains incomplete and unfulfilled so long as he is separated from his proper domestic, economic, and political environment. Like other places Odysseus visits, Calypso's island offers him a facet of the life of the gods, and he can no more fulfil himself there than among the Phaeacians or the Lotus-Eaters. But the most revealing treatment of goddess–mortal unions is to be found in the fifth Homeric hymn, and it is a consideration of that text which will now bring us back to Pandora.

At the start of the hymn, the poet asks the Muse to tell of the *ἔργα πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης*, and in the course of his narrative, we are given a masterclass in seduction, in which the epithet of the first line is amply justified.³⁵ Once smitten with desire for

³³ In fact the *Cypria* poet was not content to present the Trojan War as resulting simply from the rivalry of the three goddesses, and so (fr. 1) seems in a rather inorganic way to have subordinated the traditional story to another Near Eastern motif: cf. Burkert (n. 32), p. 55. On Helen, Aphrodite, and the war, cf. Ibycus 282 (a) 8f., Alcaeus 42 and 283, and (more sympathetic to Helen) Sappho 16.

³⁴ *Il.* 3.64–6, 369–420; 5.318–51, 416–30.

³⁵ Chapman renders: 'The force, O Muse, and functions now unfold/Of Cyprian Venus, grac'd with mines of gold'. *πομύχρυσος* here is an emphatic variant on the more usual *χρύσειος*, shedding the economic sense it has in Homer (e.g. *Il.* 7.180) to assume a purely visual force. Cf. Hes. fr. 185.17, *Scutum* 47f.; D. Boedeker, *Aphrodite's Entry into Greek Epic* (Leiden, 1974, = *Mnem.* Suppl. 32), p. 26.

Anchises, Aphrodite first goes to Cyprus, where the Graces wash, oil, and perfume her; then, 'adorned with gold' (65), she sets off for Troy, and presents herself to Anchises in the likeness of a mortal virgin. He is amazed at her 'form and stature', a reaction which is then explained by reference to her sparkling finery (*h. Aph.* 86–91).³⁶ As in *h.* 6 and *Il.* 14, the jewellery is crucial to the overwhelming overall effect: not only does it serve to highlight the underlying beauty of the goddess' body, but it exerts an almost mesmeric fascination of its own; like Zeus on Ida and the gods in *h.* 6, Anchises is captivated by this sight, and this alone. Indeed its effect on him is so strong that he both allows himself to be taken in by the fiction that his visitor is not a goddess, but a young princess freshly snatched from the chorus of Artemis by Hermes to be his bride, and dispenses with the conventional proprieties of the supposed situation by insisting that the proposed marriage be consummated instantly. Although we may suppose that he is never quite fooled by the disguise, but is simply driven to satisfy his desire at whatever cost (153f.), it is perhaps not surprising that Anchises reacts thus even if we suppose him to be taking the cover-story at face value.³⁷ Aphrodite's self-presentation makes him perceive their encounter as being the exact opposite of what it really is: rather than being the helpless object of a goddess' unmanly lusts, he sees himself miles from anywhere and in a position of power over a sexually desirable and available young girl who comes to him from the god of lucky finds. He is thus effectively put in the position of one of those gods given to surprising virgins in just such secluded locations as this;³⁸ for whereas encounters between mortal men and goddesses embody the sexual anxieties of Archaic men,³⁹ the sexual exploits of male gods among mortal women and nymphs⁴⁰ reflect their sexual aspirations.⁴¹

At this point, the jewellery and the clothes are there to be removed, in a disrobing that both echoes her earlier dressing and suggests to Trojan and reader alike the pleasures in store for Anchises (*h. Aph.* 162–77). The deception is complete; how necessary it was can be seen from Anchises' horrified reaction on waking to discover the truth—he fears that after such an encounter he will not live long, or will be

³⁶ Chapman: 'For, for a veil, she shin'd in an attire/That cast a radiance past the ray of fire . . . Her soft white neck rich carquoets embraced,/Bright, and with gold in all variety graced,/That to her breasts let down lay there and shone,/As at her joyful full, the rising Moon./Her sight show'd miracles.'

³⁷ Anchises is confronted by something that looks too good to be true, but the strength of his passion compels him to believe in it. For the psychology, cf. A. T. L. Bergren, 'The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite: Tradition and Rhetoric, Praise and Blame', *CA* 8 (1989), 1–41, pp. 14–22.

³⁸ See e.g. *Il.* 16.180–3, or, in more moralizing vein, the story of Tyro at Hes. fr. 30.24ff., where Poseidon's attentions seem to constitute a reward for moral and physical excellence. In rather the same way, Pindar can refer to the assignment of Thetis to Peleus (*N.* 5.35f.; cf. also *Il.* 7f.) and Hebe to Heracles (*I.* 4.55–60; *N.* 1.69ff.) as rewards for their ἀρετή. Cf. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p. 150 and F. Lissarague in P. Schmitt Pantel (ed.), *A History of Women in the West I*, tr. A. Godhammer (Cambridge, MA, 1992), p. 214.

³⁹ Even in the cases of Peleus and Cadmus, whose marriages to immortal brides (which have no hint of feminine seduction or control about them) serve both to crown their achievements as young heroes, and to introduce the disappointments of old age (*P.* 3.89ff.). The only such pairing to be trouble-free is that of Heracles and Hebe, which simply gives expression to Heracles' apotheosis (*Od.* 11.602–4; Hes. *Th.* 950–5; fr. 25.26–33; 229; *I.* 4.55–60, *N.* 1.69ff.).

⁴⁰ Nymphs are of course also mortal (*h. Aph.* 257–72).

⁴¹ This, I think, is one reason why in early Greek poetry, the consequences of sex initiated by a male god with a mortal woman or nymph are generally unproblematic for both parties (contrast the cases of Cassandra and Creousa: *E. Tro.* 253ff.; *E. Ion* 881ff.). However, the female concerned is seldom the focus of interest on these occasions, simply serving as a link between a hero and his divine father: cf. Hes. fr. 253, and the examples cited in n. 45 below.

enfeebled (*h. Aph.* 188–90),⁴² fears that are reasonable enough in a cousin of Tithonus, whom χρυσόθρονος Eos abducted (218).⁴³ As it is, he suffers less than Tithonus, but is still something of a victim: he has slept with Aphrodite, but must never say so if he is to continue enjoying his health and strength; he will eventually get a son, but for a partner, he will never have even the mortal wife he was promised.

If Anchises must pay a price for his great distinction, it would seem that Aphrodite's triumph is also not without qualification. This is evident in one sense even within the impressive opening of the poem, for as soon as he has made clear the importance of the sphere in which the goddess operates, the poet goes on to name the three virgin goddesses who are immune to her power, and to list the areas over which their authority extends: between them, Athene, Artemis, and Hestia control war, craftsmanship,⁴⁴ hunting, civic life, and domestic prosperity—a large territory indeed, and covering almost all the activities in which characteristically human (i.e. male) excellence is typically displayed. If Aphrodite is indispensable in the process of creating human life,⁴⁵ these three are behind the defining institutions and primary benefits of human society; furthermore, it follows that if these goddesses are opposed to Aphrodite, then on the human plane she must be an impediment to the worthy carrying-out of the important activities they patronize.⁴⁶ In fact, the whole hymn is characterized by an ambivalence towards its subject that runs deep: even her successful seduction of Anchises is presented as a kind of punishment for her, a terrible lapse which will ever afterwards prevent her from taunting the other gods with the mortal liaisons she has inflicted on them in the past (*h. Aph.* 247–55). Not that this last point should be taken too seriously;⁴⁷ perhaps the real—and more transient—humiliation lies in having to give such a virtuoso display of the techniques of seduction in order to attain such a comparatively lowly object as Anchises, since gods

⁴² See Sikes and Allen *ad loc.* for other examples of the dangers of sleeping with goddesses. Perhaps Anchises also voices the deeper Greek anxiety identified by Foucault, surrounding the 'cost' of the sexual act and 'the death to which it was linked' (p. 125).

⁴³ The question whether the epithet χρυσόθρονος ultimately derives from θρόνα (and thus originally meant 'of the golden robe') or θρόνος (i.e. 'of the golden throne') is irresolvable: for etymological bibliography, see Càssola *ad loc.* The former derivation might be thought particularly appropriate to Eos' amorous behaviour (cf. *h. Aph.* 226, and *Od.* 15.250, where she abducts Cleitos), but I find it hard to believe that the latter would not much more readily have suggested itself to a contemporary audience. χρυσόθρονος is, of course, also used of Hera in contexts where sex, or at least sexual jealousy, is involved, but we also find the epithet used of Artemis (*Il.* 6.205; *Od.* 5.123), and Hera's power is always at least as relevant as her sensuality in the passages concerned (*Il.* 1.611, 14.153, 15.5; *h.* 12.1; *h. Ap.* 305; *N.* 1.37f.; cf. χρυσόπεπλος at *B.* 19.22: the two qualities are of course linked—*Il.* 14.212f.).

⁴⁴ Including weaving, the occupation of virtuous women like Penelope: for the disruptive impact of love on this steady pursuit, cf. Sappho 102.

⁴⁵ Cf. the formulaic repetitions of such phrases as ὑποδμηθεῖσα διὰ χρυσῆν Ἀφροδίτην (Hes. fr. 23a.315; 185.17; 221.3; 253) in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogues*, in which sex and marriage are indispensable instruments for the propagation of the aristocracy whose mythical forebears they celebrate.

⁴⁶ Cf. J. Rudhardt, 'L'Hymne homérique à Aphrodite', *MH* 48 (1991), 8–20, pp. 17f.

⁴⁷ Pace J. S. Clay, *The Politics of Olympus* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 166ff., 200f., there is nothing in the poem itself to suggest that she has lost her power to unite mortals and immortals ἐν φιλότῃτι. Rudhardt (n. 46) pp. 14f. puts things a little more persuasively. Note also how the post-Hesiodic final section of the *Theogony* formulaically emphasises the responsibility of 'golden Aphrodite' for a number of such mixed unions which produce undesirable or unfortunate children. So *Th.* 975ff. (Cadmus' daughters); 1004f. (Phocus); 1014 (Telegonus)—cf. similar phrasing in the cases of Typhoeus (821f.) and Medea (958ff.).

generally find immediate gratification of any desires they have for mortals.⁴⁸ There is a paradox in all this: the poem seems to set out to show Aphrodite subordinated to the will of Zeus within the Olympian hierarchy (45ff.), and to show that however formidable her powers may be, they can still be turned against her.⁴⁹ Yet this can only be done by giving her a chance to demonstrate those same powers to devastating effect. Clay aptly defines the art of seduction as 'the erotic conquest of the stronger by the weaker' and observes that 'its tools are deception and persuasion': the hymn may prove that the goddess, though infinitely capable of conquest, is essentially weak, but the only comfort it really allows 'the stronger' (i.e. men) to take is the knowledge that the fight in which they lose is not a fair one. In the end, Aphrodite triumphs notwithstanding her embarrassment: it is with some reason, then, that the poem has been read as an *aition* of female sexuality, representing the impossibility for a man of ever truly knowing what lies behind a woman's attractive appearance, even after he has physically 'possessed' her.⁵⁰

Before we leave the hymn, it is worth summarizing what it and the other examples of the *topos* of divine dressing have taught us about the goldenness of Aphrodite. In these erotic contexts, gold helps to represent, largely from a male viewpoint, an ambivalent appreciation of feminine sexuality.⁵¹ It is used to convey a sense of attractions so strong, and pleasures so intense, that they can only be expressed by reference to divinity, but which are at the same time inseparable from dangers and fears which are no less considerable. We can now proceed to examine in more detail the impact of the 'golden enchantress of mortals' (B.5.174f.⁵²), on the internal workings of human society by returning to Pandora in the *Works and Days*.

Op. 60–75 contains many of the characteristic features of the dressing *topos*: elements which were present, but less marked, in the *Theogony*.⁵³ Perhaps most tellingly, instead of a diadem, which might have been regarded as the formal ornament of marriage, gold on this occasion comes in the form of necklaces, which seem to represent the jewellery of seduction.⁵⁴ As the text makes clear, Aphrodite's ministers

⁴⁸ Cf. *P.* 9.67ff., and the rapid abduction of Ganymede (*h. Aph.* 202–8); admittedly, the examples that spring to mind involve male rather than female gods.

⁴⁹ Theologically, this can be viewed in a positive light: 'Dire la puissance de la divinité et rappeler du même coup les règles qui s'imposaient à son activité, c'est l'inciter à intervenir parmi les hommes sans nuire à l'équilibre de leurs sociétés.' (Rudhardt [n. 46], p. 20).

⁵⁰ So Bergren (n. 37); cf. M. B. Arthur, 'Cultural Strategies in Hesiod's *Theogony*: Law, Family, Society', *Arethusa* 15 (1982), 63–82, pp. 66f., on the birth of Aphrodite in the *Theogony*. Again a Foucauldian terror looms, for what Greek male ideology appears most to have abhorred in sexual matters was passivity (Foucault, p. 46f.), and even if in a heterosexual act the male is likely to be mechanically 'active', awareness of the seductive power of the female undermines his psychological dominance.

⁵¹ In the female-centred world of Sappho we find a presentation of gold and jewellery significantly different from this pattern. The exception proves the rule: among women, golden jewellery and other items of luxury clothing can be valued in a way analogous to the male appreciation of fine arms and armour seen in Homer or Alcaeus (with Sappho 39, 44.8ff., 98a, cf. Alcaeus 140).

⁵² Meleager's shade tells Heracles that he has left at home a sister, with no experience of the beguiling goddess. It is tempting to see here a hint of the unhappy consequences passion was to have for the marriage that followed.

⁵³ Cf. Hera's use of gold jewellery for seductive purposes in *Il.* 14, and the integral part it plays in the charms of Aphrodite herself (*Hymns* 5 and 6). Like Pandora, Hera combines conventional ornament with less tangible, but even more potently Aphrodisiac qualities (*Il.* 14.214–21).

⁵⁴ Pandora may be 'like a modest maiden', but then so was Aphrodite when she entered the hut of Anchises (*h. Aph.* 82): cf. Redfield (n. 11), p. 196 on the sexually charged nature of wifely modesty.

decorate Pandora with her metal, and the double description is so structured that the significance of these necklaces is clear: they represent not only the entirety of the woman's quasi-divine physical attractiveness (62, 65), but also the painful and dangerous emotions (66) this arouses. In both poems, the focus on jewellery enables Hesiod to suggest very strongly the notion that at one level always underlies the *topos*, that to a large extent female beauty is not a matter of inherent qualities of features or physique, but a product of artifice—an illusion created by external decoration.⁵⁵ Where sexual passion (*πρόθος*) is concerned, externals are bound to be important, but the reason their artificiality is so much stressed is that by taking this view, the Greek male is able to admit his inability to resist the promptings of desire without admitting that the qualities which move him are truly inherent in women's persons: he thus arrives at a formula that acknowledges the fact of their power but gives himself the reassurance that it is all a trick.⁵⁶ But even if he believes that, the reflection is far from being completely comforting, since it implies that women can put on and take off sexual irresistibility at will, and thus manipulate men as they please. As we have seen, while the overtones of gold may be positive in as much as it represents the physical pleasure of sex, that is something dangerous so long as it is the female who is in control of it. And gold is not just the metal of sensual allurements: as the substance to which the highest economic value is attached, it has an allure of its own, independent of any sexual connotation. We may therefore reconstruct the reaction of Epimetheus: his eye—which stays on the golden necklaces, and sees only the outwardly desirable form of the breast beneath them, not the shameless mind within—is covetous, as well as lustful.⁵⁷ Sex apart, this is an opulent gift from Zeus, clearly not to be refused. All gifts entail some obligations on the recipient, it is true, but naturally he cannot realize that he is embracing something fashioned expressly to be his ruin, or that the price of his fleeting pleasure is the misery and impoverishment of his posterity.⁵⁸

As we have noted already, Epimetheus did not stand a chance, and his descendants must live with the consequences of his acceptance: a life in which everything is dependent on the goodwill of the gods, and in which there is an overriding need to work in order to live. Nobody is offering Perses a woman decked out like Pandora, but the impulse that prompts Epimetheus to seize an attractive and valuable gift when it is offered him, in spite of his brother's warnings, seems—as I mentioned earlier—to be the same instinct which Hesiod castigates in his own brother, Perses, tempted as he is to take what looks like an easy way to wealth through the manipulation of what passes for a legal system in eighth- or seventh-century Boeotia. He may think that he can get himself a larger share of land without earning it (37–9) and he may succeed, but—apart from the inherent unrighteousness of his action, which will sooner or later incur divine anger (213–24, 238–47)—unless he puts in the hard work necessary to tend and manage his farm properly, his immediate gain will be of no lasting benefit, and he and his family will still end up as beggars (298–326, 391–404).

⁵⁵ Note that elsewhere (*Op.* 373f.) he does not warn against the dangers of being led astray by a *beautiful* woman, but by one who dresses in an obviously erotic way. In the *Theogony*, Pandora's beauty is only admitted in the same breath as she is said to be an evil (*Th.* 585).

⁵⁶ Lissarague (n. 38), p. 204 points out that the perception of male attractiveness was quite different: '[t]he ephebe's beauty was entirely in his body'.

⁵⁷ Vase-paintings and other evidence show that necklaces generally contained much more gold than ear-rings or the Geometric-Archaic type of diadems: see the works cited in n. 28 above.

⁵⁸ J. Rudhardt, 'Hésiode et les Femmes', *MH* 46 (1986), 231–46, makes the point that Epimetheus' folly in effect ends what had been a brief period in which men were completely independent from the gods.

What Hesiod's paralleling of Perses' and Epimetheus' situations suggests is a basic linking of material greed and sexual desire. That association was later to find its most familiar expression in the standard literary figure of the tyrant (which since it first becomes properly visible to us in the pages of Herodotus⁵⁹ is beyond the scope of the present discussion), but the basic pattern is already there in Hesiod's myth, since—as Sissa observes—'woman aroused in man the appetite of desire, thus spelling an end to contentment and self-sufficiency'.⁶⁰ The point about the obsessive sexual desires (*Op.* 66) which Pandora brings is precisely that, like the need to eat, they can only be satisfied for the time being;⁶¹ so too on a more general economic level, the appetitive instinct can never be permanently appeased once it has been aroused, whether one is a spendthrift or a miser, an honest farmer or a crook.

Prejudiced with regard to women Hesiod may be, but his attitude towards them is not without sophistication and complexity, and the symbolic use of gold in his accounts of Pandora is a vital part of that sophistication. The dressing *topos* acquires even more resonance in the context of mortal marriage than it had in that of divine seduction. In the *Theogony*, the wonder felt by those who look on the workmanship of Hephaestus is part of their reaction to the brilliance of Zeus' plan, which in turn fully reflects the mastery of the father of gods and men—the golden adornments are part of that plan, and to that extent recall other golden instruments of divine power.⁶² In the *Works and Days*, the whole process of the woman's fabrication is an expression of the more-than-human force of feminine sexual attraction as well as its allegedly 'artificial' character. Epimetheus' acceptance of Pandora marks the beginning of human life as the poet saw it—full of difficulties, many of which seem to him to be related either to the desire men have to acquire wealth more quickly than is proper, or to the necessary existence of women. Besides enhancing the beauty of the woman (or rather, highlighting her superficial merits while distracting from her inner defects), the gold Pandora wears is attractive to Epimetheus in itself: the linkage of such treasure to the deceptive gift of the woman reinforces the moralizing message that one should beware of gifts or opportunities to acquire great wealth which one has done nothing to earn or deserve. Men have little choice but to marry, and like everything else marriage is full of risks (such as making the wrong choice in the first place, when many factors conspire to mislead) and can only be successful with a great deal of effort; failure is disastrous.⁶³ The foolishness of Epimetheus stands as an example to the audience: they must operate within the constraints of the system he was instrumental in bringing upon them, working hard to build up their stock of *biotos* in food and land, which is the only sure way to prosperity and contentment. If there is any place for 'golden Aphrodite' in this process, it consists mainly in keeping her 'works' rigorously under control, within the inevitable institution of marriage through which children must be procured; the Hesiodic ideal has no place for the easy attractions and illusory gratifications which her metal suggests to the unwary.

⁵⁹ See Foucault, pp. 81f., and T. Harrison, 'Herodotus and the Ancient Greek Idea of Rape', in S. Deacy and K. Pearce (edd.), *Violence and Power* (London, 1996).

⁶⁰ In Schmitt Pantel (n. 38), p. 61.

⁶¹ Cf. Arthur (n. 6), p. 104.

⁶² A good sequence of examples comes at the start of *Il.* 8 (18–27, 41–6, 68–72); on a smaller scale note the group of divine epithets of the form *χρυσο-* + characteristic attribute (e.g. *Ἑρμης χρυσόρραπις*; *Ἰρις χρυσόπτερος*).

⁶³ Hesiod's rather limited and unencouraging summary of positive advice on marriage (*Op.* 695–705) sets the topic apart from others he handles: he does not usually have so much more to say about the pitfalls in a given area than about how to avoid them.

IV

The dominant voice of the *Works and Days* is that of peasant wisdom, and we can most readily imagine the poem being performed to peasant audiences.⁶⁴ However, it seems very likely that the *Theogony* was performed at the funeral games of Amphidamas at Chalcis,⁶⁵ a very much more aristocratic occasion; and furthermore, archaeology suggests that some members of that original audience could easily have recognized in the poem's description of Pandora in all her finery the picture of their own brides, who probably wore the very gold diadems that have been excavated from eighth- and seventh-century sites in Euboea, and which Hesiod makes Hephaestus allude to on a much higher plane of craftsmanship.⁶⁶ Yet if Pandora is a princess, what do we make of the simile of the drones (*Th.* 594–602)? Surely the Euboean *basileus* would not see himself as a worker bee?⁶⁷ The picture is complex: on the one hand, the niggardly misogyny of those lines—like that of Semonides fr. 7—seems to come from, and be directed at, a fairly low point on the socio-economic scale; on the other hand, both poets rely to some extent on the idea that women live a life of cosseted luxury. It may be doubted whether there was much room for real idleness among the wives of the poor, any more than among their husbands, but it is highly plausible to assume that the audience for both poets was all male, taking advantage of the traditional licence of men among men to belittle the importance of any work that women do (it is not 'real work' like ploughing or reaping): what counts in these circumstances is not the fact of female work, but the dominant (i.e. male) cultural perception of it.⁶⁸ Then again, even a comparatively well-off farmer might regard the purchase of feminine luxury items as an imposition—unlike the procurement of such important commodities as, say, Biblian wine (*Op.* 589). The fact is that we do not know nearly enough to be able to reconstruct in full the response of a contemporary audience to this episode, and as Zeitlin has pointed out, a purely 'historical' explanation cannot fully account for the 'enduring prestige' of the Hesiodic texts.⁶⁹ Even if we knew exactly who listened to each poem, it remains true that it is not just aristocrats who like 'aristocratic' poetry, or peasants who enjoy 'peasant' morality; it is best to conclude that however divided and unequal early Archaic society may have been, Hesiod could, through the figure of Pandora in the *Theogony*, confidently assert that in so far as they are victims of Zeus' great trick, all men were equal. Where women were concerned, male gender solidarity was stronger than any class tensions.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ P. Millett, 'Hesiod and his World', *PCPS* n.s. 29 (1984), 84–115 correctly refutes those who have tried to present Hesiod as an aspiring or impoverished aristocrat.

⁶⁵ Cf. pp. 40–5 of West's edition of the poem.

⁶⁶ D. Ohly, *Griechische Goldbleche des 8. Jahrhunderts vor Chr.* (Berlin, 1953), suggested that these diadems were only ever used in funerary contexts, but others have not been convinced: see the review by R. M. Cook, *Gnomon* 26 (1954), 107–10, and related comments by Higgins (n. 28), pp. 96f.

⁶⁷ But cf. the language of Orestes to his mother at A. *Cho.* 919: μή ἐλεγχέ τὸν ποιοῦντ' ἔσω καθημένη.

⁶⁸ This is well brought out by Sussman.

⁶⁹ Zeitlin, p. 52, with Sussman and Arthur (n. 2) in mind: but although Sussman relies too heavily on debatable hypotheses about post-Mycenaean agriculture, and Arthur reads back into Hesiod too much from fourth- and fifth-century sources, their view that contemporary social change is one root of Hesiodic misogyny is attractive. Can it be a coincidence that this period witnessed the growing dominance of the male-centred structure of the *polis* over that of the *oikos*, in which the interrelationship of genders was less imbalanced?

⁷⁰ M. Wyke has observed a similar spanning of social class-types in Roman rhetoric against feminine adornment (mostly in the form of cosmetics, not jewellery), but this is related to a general negativity about *luxus* which has no consistent parallel in Archaic Greek texts ('Woman

These final observations on the *Theogony* version of the Pandora story serve to introduce a discussion of how the same elements of related sexual and economic anxieties we have observed in Hesiod—the ‘Pandora complex’—can be found in more obviously aristocratic texts as well. It is often said, for instance, that Homer is particularly generous in portraying his female characters (especially Helen, who can so easily be presented in an unfavourable light); but for all that, their frailties have significant parallels with those identified by Hesiod.

To begin with what seems to me the most obvious example, there is a clear parallel between Epimetheus/Perses and Paris, whose crimes and subsequent fate illustrate perfectly some of Hesiod’s most emphatic moral precepts: whoever forgets Shame, and takes wealth by force or ‘plunders’ by deceiving speech does not hold it securely, for soon the gods will bring about the fall of his house (*Op.* 321–6). Not only does Paris manage more or less to combine all three of the offences mentioned here, but more than that, in doing so he also resembles Epimetheus, for by taking a desirable woman into his house he brings ruin not just on himself but on many others as well.⁷¹ Like Pandora (*Op.* 62), Helen has a beauty which is disturbingly divine (*Il.* 3.158); like Epimetheus, Paris receives gifts about which he comes to have very mixed feelings. When Hector criticizes his devotion to unwarlike pursuits and the ‘gifts of Aphrodite’, his brother defends himself on two grounds: firstly, no gift of the gods should be despised, and secondly, they are not gifts a man would choose for himself (*Il.* 3.64–6).⁷² As Kirk, commenting on the passage, points out, the second part of this defence is specious, for Paris did indeed choose Aphrodite and her gifts when he judged the three goddesses. I think Paris speaks here with the benefit of hindsight, and in terms of conventional wisdom. At one level, he obliquely acknowledges his mistake, yet whatever regrets he may have, and although the cost of his obstinacy is brought home to him every day, nothing will induce him to relinquish his prize,⁷³ and even the Trojan elders regard Helen as a not unworthy cause of the war (*Il.* 3.156f.). Nor is Helen the only woman whose desirability results in suffering and death, since Briseis, Penelope, and Cassandra are all said to be ‘like golden Aphrodite’,⁷⁴ thus receiving half of the highest accolade available to women in epic.⁷⁵ On the large scale, the

in the Mirror: The Rhetoric of Adornment in the Roman World’, in *Women in Ancient Societies*, ed. L. J. Archer et al. (London, 1994), 134–51, p. 136).

⁷¹ Both Pandora and Helen can be seen as ‘Trojan Horse’ figures: cf. W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley, 1979), pp. 73f.; C. A. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 100f.

⁷² Mimnermus (fr. 1 W.1–5) appears to echo these lines when voicing a much more positive attitude towards the gifts of Aphrodite; cf. A. W. H. Adkins, *Poetic Craft in the Early Greek Elegists* (Chicago, 1985), p. 99. It is in elegy, and even more in lyric, that the erotic as an end in itself first appears as the focus of positive poetic interest, for poets concerned not with the disruptive effect of (fulfilled) passion upon society, but with the emotional turmoil of the (often frustrated) individual: cf. Theognis 1381–5; Sappho fr. 130. This in turn leads to a more positive and ‘user-friendly’ portrayal of Aphrodite herself (Sappho fr. 1—cf. E. S. Stigers, ‘Sappho’s Private World’, in H. P. Foley (ed.), *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* [New York, 1981], pp. 45–61).

⁷³ It may be objected that Paris is motivated simply by a desire to maintain his *τιμή*, but Paris is no Achilles: rather, because Helen is a gift of the gods, she is—like Pandora—inescapable and so cannot be given away (for that matter, Helen would gladly be rid of Paris, but she is trapped too).

⁷⁴ References: *Il.* 19.282, 24.699; *Od.* 17.37, 19.54 (cf. [Hes.] *Sc.* 7f., on Alcmena). The sufferings unwittingly caused by the beauty of Briseis or Penelope occupy large parts of the two epics. In the *Iliad*, Cassandra occasions more limited misfortune (*Il.* 13.363–9), since the poem contains no hint of her part in the downfalls of Agamemnon and the lesser Ajax.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Il.* 9.389f.: the only other woman likened to Aphrodite is Hermione (*Od.* 4.14), whose

destructive force of sexual passion is made very clear.

To return to the purely human level. While an extremely acute recent study has noted that the women of Homeric epic are not as directly associated with a cycle of exchange as are their counterparts in many other gift-exchange systems,⁷⁶ it is beyond dispute that women play an important part in what we may call the economy of Homer's aristocrats; there is no question of either their work or their fecundity being undervalued in the manner typical of Hesiod. Female slaves, often acquired by war or raiding, perform most domestic tasks, and are as essential to the maintenance of a heroic household as herds of sheep and cattle: in the households of Odysseus and Alcinous, there is work for fifty of them, making bread for the feasts and textiles for decorating the halls, for guests to sleep on, and to be given away as gifts.⁷⁷ Even in this context, women were highly valued, being reckoned to be worth anything from four to twenty oxen's-worth, depending on their looks and accomplishments:⁷⁸ one individual could be an adequate campaign trophy for the greatest of heroes.⁷⁹ Marriage is also an important part of the honorific system of Homeric gift-exchange: suitors compete to give gifts to the father of a princess, who bestows her on whichever of them honours him with the most splendid gifts, and in turn demonstrates his esteem for his new son-in-law by giving a generous dowry with his daughter.⁸⁰ A good example of this process, and one entirely in keeping with the picture we glimpse less fully in the Homeric poems,⁸¹ is the wooing of Helen in the Hesiodic catalogues. Naturally for one who 'looked like golden Aphrodite' (fr. 196.5), she was the object of fierce competition among suitors. Gold features among the gifts of Menestheus, and Podarces and Protesilaus (frr. 200.5 and 199.11 respectively), but it is listed as unworked metal, along with tripods and cauldrons, in run-of-the-mill collections of gifts. These are happily enough accepted by the Tyndaridae, no doubt, but contain nothing that really stands out—unlike the offering of the Atreidae, who gave a collection of trained serving women, 'all holding golden dishes in their hands': this prompted the Dioscuri

beauty was not without unfortunate consequences, though these are not recounted by Homer. This sort of personal comparison with Aphrodite seems virtually to disappear in lyric, but instead we find a variety of more or less direct comparisons between human beauty and gold itself. In place of awe-inspiring and potentially threatening comparisons with divinity, lyric substitutes a more human scale of values, just as if gold had never been applied to Aphrodite, but was simply the pre-eminent material of the most beautifully crafted objects. Cf. Alcman 1.51–4; 3.64–8; 5. fr. 2, col.ii; Sappho frr. 132 and 156. Although there is often a general undercurrent of eroticism in Alcman and Sappho, it seems to me that in none of these passages does the gold owe anything, as it were, to Aphrodite. The same can be said of Ibycus' description of the beauty of Troilus (Ibycus 282(a) 41–5): Theognidean elegy had made the process of refining gold, and testing it by means of the *basanos*, into a symbol for the qualities most desirable in a fellow symposiast (*Thgn.* 415–18 ≈ 1164e–h, 447–52, 1105f.; cf. more generally *Thgn.* 77f., 499–502; Simonides PMG 541.1–5, 592; Chilon ap. D.L.1.71; Men. Mon. 385), but Ibycus elaborates the detail of the image while simplifying the thought behind it, to create a purely aesthetic comparison. These rather different erotic manifestations of gold all appear in contexts which are unrelated to the particular vulnerability exposed by seduction or the economic problems that can overshadow marriage.

⁷⁶ S. von Reden, *Exchange in Ancient Greece* (London, 1995), pp. 54f.

⁷⁷ *Od.* 22.421–3; 7.103–7; *Il.* 24.230f.; *Od.* 5.38 and 24.276–9.

⁷⁸ *Il.* 23.704f.; *Od.* 1.429–31.

⁷⁹ Briseis and Chryseis are the obvious examples; cf. also Nestor's Hecamede (*Il.* 11.624–7). Chryseis' name—which, like that of her home, Chryse, is common in myth—may suggest a particular affinity with treasure, or at least beauty, but its etymological relationship to χρυσός is uncertain: cf. H. von Kamptz, *Homerische Personennamen* (Göttingen, 1982); more generally, *RE* III, 2486–94.

⁸⁰ The bride-price-or-dowry controversy is a false dichotomy in most Homeric cases: see I. Morris, 'The Use and Abuse of Homer', *CA* 5 (1986), 81–138 (pp. 105ff., with full bibliography).

⁸¹ As at *Il.* 11.241–5 or *Od.* 2.194–7.

to try to force Agamemnon to marry Helen himself, had he not been their brother-in-law already and simply representing his brother Menelaus (fr. 197). The same treasures that are found among the 'bride-prices' also make up dowries: the disguised Aphrodite of the Fifth Hymn tells Anchises that he will receive an abundance of gold and fine textiles from her 'parents' (*h. Aph.* 137–40).

Gold, then, can both win a wife,⁸² and be given with one; but, although it might come as small consolation to those disappointed suitors who have depleted their flocks and treasuries without getting any return,⁸³ even the winner can still see all his gains disappear. For if no property can be seen as being completely secure in the Homeric world, and the sort that is in the form of precious *keimelia* can represent most acutely the vulnerability of wealth,⁸⁴ so women, who share with the treasures the inner recesses of the *oikos*, its *θάλαμοι* and *μυχοί*,⁸⁵ can be economic liabilities, as well as assets or animate treasures.⁸⁶ As things work out, it is on the behaviour of the women in the household that the security of all the rest of its domestic wealth, and sometimes its very existence, depend;⁸⁷ either a wife or a female servant can constitute an especially dangerous sort of weak point in a household. The myths follow a clear pattern: either by having sex with a woman, or just by winning her over with a suitable gift, or both, an outsider can gain access to her husband's or master's wealth, or induce her to betray his interests at some even more fundamental level.⁸⁸ The prime example of seduction accompanied by theft is Paris at Sparta, at any rate as portrayed by the *Iliad*. Other accounts, such as that of the *Cypria*, suggest that Helen was more captivated by the gifts he offered than by his personal charms⁸⁹ (this is also how the episode is sometimes represented in vase-paintings⁹⁰)—in other words, the adulterer may prevail by exactly the same means as the (legitimate) suitor. On the other hand, the most celebrated gift-receiving wife was, as the *Odyssey* reminds us, 'hateful Eriphyle, who took precious gold in exchange for her husband' (*Od.* 11.326f.); although not guilty of adultery, she accepted Polynices' gift of a gold necklace in return for betraying her husband to certain death.⁹¹ A similar story was told in the *Little Iliad*, of how Astyoche, the wife of the Mysian king Telephus, sent her son

⁸² Even the slightly unusual process of selection by which Atalanta's husband was chosen ended up revolving around the determined virgin's inability to resist the attraction of Aphrodite's metal: see Hes. fr. 76.6–14, and also Theog. 1287–94, with H. Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, tr. M. Hadas (Oxford, 1975), p. 443, n. 4.

⁸³ An eventuality avoided by Odysseus in the case of Helen (Hes. fr. 198.2–8): rather than waste his resources in fruitless competition with the Atreidae, he sends a respectful embassy, but no gift.

⁸⁴ So e.g. in the case of Troy (*Il.* 18.288–92; 24.380–4, 543–8).

⁸⁵ Most restrictively so in the case of Danae. The comment of Ovid is worth bearing in mind: 'si numquam Danaen habuisset aenea turris/non esset Danae de Iove facta parens' (*Am.* 2.19.27f.). For the iconography of Danae and the golden shower, see *LIMC* III.1, 327ff.; III.2, 243ff.; Reeder (n. 2), pp. 267–76.

⁸⁶ 'L'argent, c'est comme les femmes: pour le garder, il faut s'en occuper un peu, ou alors . . . il va faire le bonheur de quelqu'un d'autre' (Ed. Bourdet, *Les Temps difficiles*).

⁸⁷ See in general T. E. V. Pearce, 'The Role of the Wife as Custos', *Eranos* 72 (1974), 16–33.

⁸⁸ Daughters too can present a problem: Scylla, Medea, Ariadne, Danae.

⁸⁹ *Cypria*, Argumentum Procli. Euripides (*Tro.* 991–7) makes much of this aspect.

⁹⁰ *LIMC* IV.1, 515ff., 556ff.; IV.2, 303. Iconographically akin to these vases are the so-called 'purse' vases, sometimes said to depict men giving money to prostitutes—but cf. Lissarague (n. 38), p. 212f.

⁹¹ Cf. *S.El.* 837 and *A. Cho.* 615ff. (Scylla). Vase depictions (*LIMC* III.1, pp. 843ff.; III.2, pp. 606ff.) show Eriphyle's necklace not as an elaborate work of craftsmanship, but as a long string of large pieces of gold, suggesting that the transaction was regarded more as a bullion bribe than as an essentially symbolic token-gift which happened to bind the recipient to oblige the giver (*contra* L. Gernet, *The Anthropology of Ancient Greece*, tr. J. Hamilton et al. [Baltimore, 1981], pp. 83ff.).

Eurypylos off to his death at Troy when Priam gave her the Golden Vine.⁹² Another Odyssean example is provided by the childhood of Eumaeus (*Od.* 15.403–84), who was born the son of the king of the happy island of Syrie, but a visiting Phoenician trader seduced one of his father's female slaves,⁹³ and in due course the woman ran away with the Phoenicians, taking the young Eumaeus and 'whatever gold came to hand' as well (448, 466–70). Her behaviour was, of course, natural enough: she was, apparently, the daughter of a wealthy Sidonian family, who owed her servile state to being kidnapped by Taphians (425–9), and Eumaeus observes that sex leads astray the wits of women, even those who are good workers (421f.). In a world where piracy is apparently commonplace, one might well expect the loyalties of servants to be fragile; but apart from showing the potential for subverting those loyalties, Eumaeus' story also illustrates the way in which even a queen can easily be distracted from her responsibilities by golden jewellery, for the reason the nurse is able to make off with the loot and the baby is that all the other women, Eumaeus' mother included, are intent on the purchase of a gold and amber necklace from the trader's collection (457–65).⁹⁴

While in all these stories we see women falling victim to the same weakness at the sight of gold that characterized the male victims of seduction, attention is not drawn to any misfortune that they may suffer as a result of their weakness: the emphasis falls rather on the damage done to the male interest—husbands, sons, and so on. Foucault has noted that, in a later period, rape was less severely punished than premeditated seduction, because 'the rapist violated only the woman's body, while the seducer violated the husband's [or father's] authority': to the extent that the woman is seen as property, that distinction is weakened, of course, but it is certainly true that with seduction there is a suggestion of a female's complicity and untrustworthiness which leads the husband or father to regard her as that much more 'corrupted' where it has taken place.⁹⁵

So far, the outlook is unremittingly negative. But if the Trojan War—and hence much of the action of the *Iliad*—has its first cause in female weakness, the plot of the *Odyssey* depends on Penelope's ability to resist a whole host of would-be Parises, to any one of whom she could give herself, and that (for all anyone on Ithaca knows) more or less legitimately. Great beauty though she still is, it is of course the wealth and power attached to her that make her the object of such competition among suitors whose ambition is to become 'richer in gold and fine textiles' (*Od.* 1.165). It looks as though the successful man would also assume Odysseus' wealth and kingly authority, as Aegisthus did Agamemnon's. Meanwhile, in a perversion of conventional hospitality, they have established themselves in Odysseus' house like an army of occupation and set themselves to eat and drink their way through its resources: if Penelope will not choose an outright winner to take all, they will at least each take an equal share in consuming as much of the prize as they can. Nobody can stop these depredations, but as yet they involve only the wealth which is outside the house: in this

⁹² See *Σ Od.* 11.520 and *Σ E. Tro.* 822 (Schwarz). Euripides builds on this pattern of fatally attractive presents when his Medea, once again assuming a male role, pre-emptively destroys Jason's new *oikos* by means of the golden napalmed finery she sends to Glauce (*Med.* 946–75, 1144–1230).

⁹³ *Od.* 15. 417–22: the circumstances are reminiscent of *Hdt.* 1.1–5.

⁹⁴ This necklace is very like that of the vase-painters' Eriphyle (n. 91), and also like the one with which Eileithyia's co-operation at the birth of Apollo is secured (*h. Ap.* 92–114)—a gift which promotes the male order (Apollo, Zeus' son, is born) over the obstructive feminine jealousies of Hera, showing that Olympus can reverse human patterns, as well as following them.

⁹⁵ Foucault, pp. 146f.

area a few quick raids can make a lot of difference, and so once the hero returns to Ithaca he is confident of being able to restore the numbers of livestock fairly quickly (*Od.* 23.356ff.). Inside the house, the picture is more complex: on the one hand, the suitors are sleeping with most of the female servants (20.6ff.)—a clear sign of domestic disorder, and an appropriation that goes even beyond their uninvited consumption of food;⁹⁶ on the other hand, there is Eurycleia, whose great achievement it is to maintain intact Odysseus' treasure, in a storeroom which remains as inviolate as her master's bedchamber.⁹⁷ In this same room the bow is kept (21.42–62) which will furnish the means of destruction for the suitors, and here the weapons are hidden (19.16f.) with which they would otherwise have been able to fight back when Odysseus attacked. Eurycleia herself is introduced at the end of the first book (*Od.* 1.428–33), where we are told the names of her father and grandfather, the very high price Laertes paid for her,⁹⁸ and that he did not sleep with her, ostensibly so as not to annoy his wife, but presumably also with the view that if he kept his hands off her, others would too. Although she is only once (*Od.* 2.345) given the official title of *ταμίη*,⁹⁹ she fits exactly Xenophon's description of the ideal housekeeper.¹⁰⁰

But no amount of loyalty on the part of Eurycleia would protect Odysseus' domestic reserves if Penelope were not also a model wife, who by remaining faithful to the memory of her husband ensured that the treasures of his *thalamos* remained intact.¹⁰¹ Foucault observes that 'the man's faithfulness [corresponds] not so much to the good sexual conduct of the wife, which is always presupposed, but to the way in which she conducts the household'.¹⁰² Penelope's actions therefore parallel and justify Odysseus' rejection of younger and more glamorous alternatives in favour of a return to Ithaca. It is often and rightly said that the cunning she demonstrates in keeping the suitors at bay is what principally marks her out as the perfect match for Odysseus, and one particular stratagem demands our attention in the context of the present discussion, because it is an outstanding example of *sophrosyne* which plays very cleverly on the motif of wooing (legitimately or otherwise) by gift. I refer to the central episode of Book 18, in which Athene puts it into Penelope's mind to appear before the suitors with the dual purpose of exciting them and winning respect from her son and husband (*Od.* 18.160–2). Beautified by the goddess,¹⁰³ she appears before the suitors to devastatingly alluring effect and reproaches them with their failure to produce gifts

⁹⁶ Melantho, who is sleeping with one of the ringleaders, Eurymachus, is the most glaring example, and she correspondingly behaves worst to the disguised Odysseus (18.321ff., 19.65ff.). With her and those like her there is no more question of mercy than there is with the suitors themselves (22.465ff.).

⁹⁷ This is made clear at an early stage in the poem: *Od.* 2.337–47.

⁹⁸ 'The worth of twenty oxen': the woman mentioned at *Il.* 23.704f. is highly skilled, yet only worth four oxen. The difference in value is an index of the importance attached to the housekeeper's trustworthiness.

⁹⁹ The woman more frequently called *ταμίη* is Eurynome, an unimportant figure who has been called a double of Eurycleia (e.g. *Od.* 17.495ff., 20.4).

¹⁰⁰ Xen. *Oec.* 9.1.11: 'one who showed most restraint in the matters of eating, drinking, sleeping and relations with men'.

¹⁰¹ The wife's duties of preserving her own chastity and the contents of her husband's house are neatly (and disingenuously) combined by Clytemnestra at *A.Ag.* 606–10. Cf. Pearce (n. 87), pp. 30–2.

¹⁰² Foucault, pp. 163ff.

¹⁰³ This manipulation by a goddess of intangible qualities of attractiveness (*Od.* 18.188–96), parallel to Athene's beautifications of Odysseus (*Od.* 6.229ff.; 23.156ff.) recalls some of the divine dressing scenes discussed above, particularly Hera's preparations in *Il.* 14: cf. N. Forsyth, 'The Allurement Scene in Greek Oral Epic', *CSCA* 12 (1979), 107–20.

in keeping with their intentions.¹⁰⁴ They respond with alacrity, and gold is prominent among the treasures they produce, with Antinous and Eurymachus giving respectively a dress with gold fastenings and a gold and amber necklace (*Od.* 18.292–6).

The scene has troubled critics, and even a casual reader may pause to ask, for instance, how it is that Odysseus knows that Penelope is only playing a trick on the suitors, given that, as the text stands, there is no evidence that she knows he has returned.¹⁰⁵ Such apparent inconsistencies—which have long been attacked by analysts, and held up as evidence that there was more than one poet at work here, or that the last composer had not succeeded in suppressing traces of material inherited from earlier versions of the story in which the plot followed a different line—are now the focus of efforts by those who follow more ‘modern’ critical approaches to weave the divergent strands into a richer appreciation of Penelope’s character and the poem as a unified whole.¹⁰⁶ So Felson-Rubin states that ‘puzzlement over Penelope’s motivation is central to the singer’s interaction with his audience’, but that by having gifts given to her, Penelope ‘moves the plot onward toward a bride-contest resolution’, emphasizing ‘the dominant plot: a husband’s recovery of his wife as bride’.¹⁰⁷ Odysseus is the true suitor, then, as it were, while the false suitors provide the gifts; or one might say that with Odyssean resourcefulness, Penelope provides her own dowry for her (re-)marriage. Zeitlin, meanwhile, calls the scene ‘a classic instance of . . . “mimetic” desire . . . whereby subjects [i.e. here, Odysseus] are led to desire the same woman precisely because she is the object of others’ [the suitors]’ desire’.¹⁰⁸ Murnaghan stresses the heavy-handedness of Athene’s intervention in the scene: the goddess is directing Penelope to a significant extent against her own inclinations to follow a course of action which suits the divine plan and makes for additional narrative excitement.¹⁰⁹ Foley points out that since Odysseus seems to have left instructions with Penelope that in the event of his non-return, she should marry when Telemachus reaches manhood, it can be said that ‘both to remarry and not to remarry are potentially acts of moral fidelity to Odysseus’.¹¹⁰

There is certainly a lot going on in this episode, and I would like to identify an additional element that is at work in the text. If Penelope really wanted to marry one of the suitors, gifts should be given to her male relatives, who would then bestow her on the most generous giver. By giving directly to her, on the other hand, Antinous and his fellows accept an invitation to behave not as legitimate suitors, but as would-be adulterers. For, looking back over the examples we have mentioned, it is clear that the former invariably present their gifts to the fathers or brothers of their putative brides, whereas only the latter approach women themselves with their presents. In *Od.* 18, Penelope is given items that would turn the head of a lesser woman—observe in

¹⁰⁴ It may be hard to believe that so many years have passed without even suitors as boorish as these producing a single gift, but the absurdity is no greater than Priam’s apparent failure to recognize Agamemnon at *Il.* 3.166–70.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. S. L. Schein, ‘Female Representations and Interpreting the *Odyssey*’, in Cohen (n. 106), pp. 17–27, p. 24: ‘Why . . . should we accept Odysseus’ reading of the situation, which obviously is self-serving?’

¹⁰⁶ References to the older approach can be found in Russo’s commentary. Examples of the current boom in Penelope studies include: M. A. Katz, *Penelope’s Renown* (Princeton, 1991); N. Felson-Rubin, *Regarding Penelope* (Princeton, 1994); and many of the papers in B. Cohen (ed.), *The Distaff Side* (Oxford, 1995). For an overview, see in particular Katz, pp. 78–93.

¹⁰⁷ Felson-Rubin (n. 106), p. 29.

¹⁰⁸ F. I. Zeitlin, ‘Figuring Fidelity in Homer’s *Odyssey*’, in Cohen (n. 106), pp. 117–52, 141.

¹⁰⁹ S. Murnaghan, ‘The Plan of Athena’, in Cohen (n. 106), pp. 61–80.

¹¹⁰ H. P. Foley, ‘Penelope as Moral Agent’, in Cohen (n. 106), pp. 93–115, 102.

particular the resemblance between Eurymachus' gift and the necklace which Eriphyle is conventionally portrayed as receiving from Polynices. As befits both the anomalous character of the proceedings and the undeserving nature of the suitors, Penelope accepts all the gifts but none of the givers: the treasure simply goes to enrich her husband's house—much to his delight—in a neat reversal of the suitors' habitual depletion of its material resources. The effect of what happens here is the exact opposite of the conventional patterns: Athene has found the perfect way of showing Odysseus (and the audience) not only that his wife has been faithful to him (and that, twenty years on, she is still exceptionally attractive), but that the intentions of the suitors are completely dishonourable.

The attributes which enable Penelope to do all this are of course precisely the deceitful qualities with which Hermes endowed Pandora: for with women—as even Hesiod admits—although most of the time what appears to be good turns out bad, there are a few occasions on which apparently undesirable qualities can be turned to beneficial ends. So it is that Penelope's cunning, deceitfulness, and even flirtatiousness can preserve her honour and her husband's household. Hers is a distinctively feminine virtue, and such a combination of trickery and self-control is the natural (and usually the only) way for women to attain the heights of heroism, which for them must be a matter of guile rather than strength. The problem is that such excellence can all too easily, even more naturally, serve undesirable ends, and is always in itself regarded as slightly suspect. In other words, although the flirtatious behaviour of Penelope is particularly appropriate in the highly unusual circumstances of the later books of the *Odyssey*, it is only in such a carefully contrived (indeed, basically implausible) situation that such conduct can be prevented from causing harm. Under normal conditions, only complete chastity is admirable, and golden gifts from a man to a woman invariably lead to disaster.¹¹¹

V

In recent years, a good deal of scholarly energy has been put into positioning Pandora within the world-view of Hesiod, usually by demonstrating the congruence between gender structures in the poet's cosmogony and his socio-economy. I hope to have shown that there is another context in which Pandora and the ideas that Hesiod surrounds her with may usefully be viewed, for not only is she well integrated into each of the Hesiodic poems, but, *mutatis mutandis*, there is a good deal of common ground—more than might have been thought at first sight—between the Hesiodic and the Homeric view of women. The most persistent feature throughout has been the linkage of sexual with economic concerns: woman as an economic object; woman as a means of acquiring wealth; woman as an economic liability, or necessity. Sex can be used to analyse the problems of economic desire, and vice versa: at all the points of intersection between the two fields we find gold, the formulaic metal of Aphrodite, and the perfect material for expressing anxious ambivalence about both. For while in a metaphorical way it can be associated with the pleasures and benefits of sexual gratification, in the tangible form of jewellery in which it is more prominent, gold embodies the power of seduction, which is perceived as a process whereby male weakness falls victim to elaborate female deceit. This divine force plays its part both among gods and men, and both within and outside of marriage and the *oikos*. Within the domestic context, the potential for women to be either economic

¹¹¹ Cf. R. G. A. Buxton, *Imaginary Greece* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 127f.

assets or liabilities is also highlighted by the poets' deployment of gold at a number of levels (ranging from occasional epithets to concrete mythic objects like Eriphyle's necklace).

The close parallels between human and divine situations that the poets sometimes reveal also point up significant differences between men and gods. For instance, we have seen that the techniques used by Hera to deceive Zeus are essentially the same ones with which, through Pandora, every mortal woman is endowed—but mortal husbands feel they lack Zeus' power always to regain control.¹¹² The stakes are simply much higher in sexual matters where mortals are concerned: Helen and others show the devastating consequences of human adultery, whereas for Ares and Aphrodite, the same activity is—withstanding the vexation of Hephaestus, and their own temporary embarrassment—essentially unproblematic. The very condition of immortality makes this inevitable, since for the gods marriage, as both Homeric and Hesiodic man understand it, can have little or no meaning. Those who do not grow old or die have no need of legitimate children. Those for whom there is no question of being in want of food or any other material thing need not be troubled by the presence of a partner as unproductive as themselves. Those for whom property lacks the meaning it has for men are not threatened in the same way by the behaviour of wives who in any case enjoy a largely independent status and prestige, and who cannot be 'stolen' from them because they were never quite 'possessed' by them in the same way to begin with.

So while the effects of Aphrodite may be equally strong on both gods and men, the latter are infinitely less well equipped to deal with them. Her gold can, at worst, only inflict temporary discomfort on gods, but it can completely destroy the lives of men—no matter how much they may admire it. The outlook of the poets is thus for the most part warily pessimistic: even in themselves, the pursuit of either economic or sexual satisfaction would not be straightforward; but in fact men must pursue both together, and there is a constant (potential) tension between their requirements. When the two point in the same direction, things are going as well as they can, but the suspicion is that neither heroes nor peasants can achieve this harmony with any great degree of consistency.

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¹¹² Cf. Zeitlin, p. 55.