



PARTHENOGENESIS IN HESIOD'S THEOGONY

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ABSTRACT

This article examines female asexual reproduction, or parthenogenesis, in Hesiod's Theogony and argues that it is a symptom of the unprecedented and unparalleled female presence Hesiod inserts into his cosmos. This presence in turn reflects Hesiod's incorporation of gender difference and conflict as indispensable both to the creation and, paradoxically, to the stability of the universe. Five of Hesiod's deities reproduce parthenogenetically: Chaos, Gaea, Night, Strife, and Hera, of whom all but the sexually indeterminate Chaos are female. Hesiod's male gods have no analogous reproductive ability. The parthenogenetic phases of the early goddesses form much of the fundamental shape and character of the universe, while in the case of Hera, parthenogenesis serves initially as an act of defiance against Zeus but ultimately enforces his reign. Parthenogenesis does not have these functions in either the Near Eastern or other Greek cosmogonic traditions, a difference that reflects Hesiod's greater emphasis on female participation in his succession myth. Yet Hesiod's cosmogonic narrative, like others, culminates in the lasting reign of a male god, Zeus. In this context parthenogenesis is a manifestation of female creation, which ultimately reinforces the stability of a male sovereign. The relative prominence of parthenogenesis in the Theogony reflects Hesiod's emphasis on gender difference and conflict as indispensable to a cosmos in which conflict and concord coexist as equal partners in creation and stability.

KEYWORDS

Hesiod; Theogony; parthenogenesis; asexual reproduction; cosmogony

When we think of ancient epic, our thoughts may go first to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, whose heroes and stories have survived and persisted in modern popular consciousness. But his younger contemporary Hesiod, although not a household name now, was just as venerable in antiquity and provides much of the basis for modern conceptions of the Greek gods. While Homer's poetry focuses on heroic material, Hesiod's *Theogony* is cosmogonic poetry, which

describes the origins of the universe. Hesiod invokes the Muses to “celebrate the sacred race of immortals who are eternal, those who were born from Gaea and starry Uranus and dark Night, and those whom salty Pontus raised” (105–7)¹ and to tell the story of the birth of the universe and gods and the origins of the established Olympian order (108–13). Accordingly, the universe starts with Chaos (“void” or “chasm”), followed quickly by the appearance of Gaea (the Earth), Tartarus (the Netherworld), and Eros (sexual love). As the poem continues, Gaea emerges as the key figure of these early deities, the ancestor to three successive generations of kings. She gives birth to Uranus (the Sky), who then begets children to her but confines them within her body. Uranus is castrated and overthrown by their son Cronus at Gaea’s instigation. Cronus then attempts a similar act of suppression with his children by his sister Rhea: he swallows all of them but Zeus, who in turn overthrows him and ultimately establishes himself as the eternal ruler of the cosmos.

This kingly succession has obvious and acknowledged Near Eastern roots as well as similarities to other Greek cosmogonic traditions, as I will discuss below. But Hesiod is unique in two important ways: increased female participation in his succession myth in general and, in particular, his deployment and relative privileging of parthenogenesis or female asexual reproduction. Both of these differences are symptomatic of a general female presence in Hesiod’s cosmogony that is unparalleled in other traditions and merits attention for the distinct depiction of the Greek gods and their origins that Hesiod presents. Hesiod’s *Theogony*, of course, is not “feminist” per se—an absurd proposition for a poem that gives us the well-known Pandora myth. But Hesiod gives his female deities a unique and unprecedented role in shaping the cosmos through parthenogenesis, which initially serves a fundamentally creative purpose that it does not have in the Near Eastern material. This process can come into conflict with other forms of female influence, as I will show with Hesiod’s depiction of Gaea. But these two aspects of female influence converge in Hera’s act of parthenogenesis, which is deployed in defiance of Zeus but ultimately reinforces his reign. Thus parthenogenesis is a symptom of the unprecedented gender difference and conflict Hesiod infuses into his cosmos, but paradoxically supports the stability of a male sovereign. Others have duly recognized the importance of gender and gender conflict to the creation of Hesiod’s cosmos,² but they have not fully explored the role of parthenogenesis as a further reflection of that creation-through-conflict. To give parthenogenesis the focus it deserves, I will briefly compare male and female instances of asexual reproduction in

Hesiod's *Theogony*, examine the Near Eastern cosmogonies that are most often compared to Hesiod's, and discuss how parthenogenesis in Hesiod reflects his female-oriented variations of the Near Eastern material. Hesiod's variations will become all the more apparent when I discuss other Greek cosmogonies that do not privilege female reproduction the way Hesiod's does.

MALE AND FEMALE PARTHENOGENESIS

The ability for parthenogenesis is a fundamental difference between Hesiod's female gods and their male counterparts. Although both are seemingly capable of reproducing asexually, male deities are incapable of completely self-sufficient asexual reproduction requiring no participation from a second party. Some scholars consider Nereus's birth a parthenogenetic one from Pontus (233),³ but I follow M. L. West and Apollodorus in assuming that it results from the union of Pontus and Gaea,⁴ as there is no explicit reference to parthenogenesis in the text. Despite the frequency of unusual, even asexual births in the *Theogony*, true parthenogenesis is almost exclusively the realm of female deities, the neuter Chaos being the one exception. Even though Aphrodite seems to spring spontaneously from Uranus's genitals, and the Erinyes, Giants, and Ash-Tree Nymphs from his blood, their births are impossible without the intervention of Cronus, who catalyzes this generation by castrating Uranus. This is birth through schism rather than through pure generation.⁵ Uranus cannot spontaneously or willfully produce offspring without the participation of another deity. Furthermore, the genitals and blood must mix with other entities, the sea and the earth, before transforming into progeny.

Likewise, the birth of Athena from Zeus's head (886–99) or Chrysaor and Pegasus's emergence from the severed head of Medusa (278–86) are unusual, but they are not asexual or parthenogenetic as each of their conceptions involves both a male and female entity. Chrysaor and Pegasus are conceived through conventional sexual coupling: Medusa has intercourse with Poseidon before Perseus decapitates her and releases Chrysaor and Pegasus from within her (278–81).⁶ Athena, too, has been conceived by Metis before Zeus swallows her and produces the child himself.⁷ As Froma Zeitlin observes, "The mythic form [Zeus's] act of creation assumes completes the trend of the *Theogony* that began with Earth's natural parthenogenetic capacity and ends with the male's imitation of her. The seal is set on the finality of the transition from female

dominance to male dominance by conscious male usurpation of her procreative functions, the basic source of her mystery and power.”⁸ The imitative nature of male asexual reproduction that Zeitlin discusses here suggests that male deities can only approximate true parthenogenesis. When they mimic female reproductive functions, they do so contentiously or accidentally rather than progeneratively, and they cannot engage in reproduction without some participation from another party, whether male or female. When Cronus swallows his children by Rhea, their reemergence from his body resembles birth, but it is birth that occurs only at the instigation of another: Rhea must induce Cronus to vomit against his will. Put quite simply, Hesiod’s male deities cannot enact completely single-parented births the way the goddesses can.

HESIOD IN CONTEXT I: NEAR EASTERN SUCCESSION MYTHS

The singularities of reproduction in Hesiod’s *Theogony* come to light when we examine the Near Eastern succession myths, whose influence on the Greeks and especially Hesiod has long been recognized.⁹ Each of these traditions involves a succession of rulers before one finally establishes a firm and eternal sovereignty, thwarting successive would-be usurpers. In the Babylonian *Enuma Elis* the cosmos begins with the union of Apsu and Tiamat, fresh- and salt-water, who produce offspring born and kept within Tiamat’s body. They cause her pain, yet she rejects Apsu’s proposal to destroy them and warns the other gods of his plan. He is bound and killed by Ea, one of their grandchildren, who claims Apsu’s corpse as his own dwelling. Ea’s son Marduk torments Tiamat and the other gods who continue to dwell within her. They conspire to avenge Apsu’s death, and Mother Hubbur, a goddess of creation and possibly an alternative name for Tiamat,¹⁰ parthenogenetically produces a series of monsters to aid in this task. This generation of monstrosity by a primordial female deity reflects the fearsomeness of the archaic mother figure that psychoanalysis has rightly identified.¹¹ Tiamat battles Marduk, who eventually prevails over her, imprisons her allies, kills the monsters, and splits her corpse, thereby creating heaven and earth.¹²

The Hurro-Hittite¹³ *Song of Kumarbi* similarly records an explanation for the present order. The first king Alalu is overthrown by his cupbearer Anu, the sky god. Kumarbi then conquers Anu by biting off and swallowing his genitals, which gestate and eventually become three gods—including the storm god

Tessub—who dwell within Kumarbi’s body and cause him pain. Eventually they emerge, and Kumarbi and Tessub engage in a struggle for the throne, which Tessub presumably wins.¹⁴

A possible third Near Eastern tradition is documented in the first–second century *Phoenician History* of Philon of Byblos, who claims a Phoenician source from the time of the Trojan War, although his source is probably much later.¹⁵ *The Phoenician History* provides an intriguing account blending Greek and Near Eastern cosmogonies in a way that yields insight into how Greek theogonies could have dovetailed with their Near Eastern parallels: the cosmos begins with dark air, which gives rise to Desire; they in turn produce Mot and a number of other first elements and inventors. Finally, Elioun/Hypsistos (the “Most High”) and Berouth are born, and later father Epigeios/Uranus and Ge (Gaea). The four children of Uranus and Ge include Elos/Cronus; Uranus goes on to father children with other wives, much to Ge’s chagrin, and she and Uranus separate as a result, although Uranus continues to force sexual relations with her periodically and tries to destroy their children. Demarous/Zeus is born from Uranus and his consort and adopted by Uranus’s son Dagon. After a series of wars between Uranus and Cronus, Uranus is defeated and castrated, and Zeus comes to power with Cronus’s permission.

IN THE BEGINNING: PARTHENOGENESIS AS FUNDAMENTAL CREATION

The parallels between these myths and the *Theogony* have been well documented,¹⁶ so I will target only a few here. The violent usurpers in the succession myths often secure victory through castration, which is sometimes combined with rebirth. Residence of gods within another’s body is also a shared theme, and reproduction is essential to the development of the cosmos, as progress occurs through birth and rebirth.¹⁷ In the *Enuma Elis* reproduction is accompanied by affection: Tiamat’s protectiveness toward her children¹⁸ resembles Gaea’s relationship to the Titans. Tiamat, too, in producing the monsters asexually, anticipates Gaea’s and the other Hesiodic goddesses’ ability for parthenogenesis.

But the motif of parthenogenesis takes on a creative aspect in Hesiod, thus departing significantly from these Near Eastern traditions, which contain no comparable precedent for the parthenogenetic abilities of Hesiod’s deities. Unlike the parthenogenesis of monstrosity by Tiamat, monsters in Hesiod are

born through sexual reproduction.¹⁹ Certainly, comparing Hesiodic and Near Eastern cosmogonies can present methodological challenges, as we cannot always know whether to treat the Near Eastern material as Hesiod's models or merely predecessors. Although the increased trade between Greece and the Near East during the Dark Ages naturally lent itself to cross-cultural influence, it is a fallacy to consider every parallel across myths an indication of this influence, especially when such parallels occur even in remote cultures.²⁰ But as G. S. Kirk argues, "When a rather complex and specific motif occurs in two distinct places and not elsewhere,"²¹ the parallels I have discussed above likely demonstrate Near Eastern sources for the Hesiodic material.

The differences in Hesiod, then, suggest divergence from his Near Eastern models. In contrast to Tiamat's parthenogenetic monsters, Hesiodic parthenogenesis is the foundational model for creation in his cosmos and largely results in children who represent the fundamental shape of the cosmos or its universal principles. In the *Theogony* Chaos, Gaea, Night, Strife, and Hera each engage in parthenogenesis, three of whom—Gaea, Night, and Hera—explicitly do so (132, 213, 927–28), while the others presumably do. Hesiod pointedly calls attention to the contrast between sexual and asexual reproduction, yet the phenomenon of parthenogenesis has received little scholarly attention.²² In the case of Chaos, Gaea, Night, and Strife, the children born parthenogenetically reflect the characteristics of their parent in what seems to be a mythical analogue to genetics and heredity.²³ Although parthenogenesis occurs in some other cosmogonic traditions, its comparative prevalence in Hesiod's *Theogony* is a symptom, I argue, of a general female presence in the poem reflecting a focus on gender difference as the primary metaphor for not only creation but also stability.

Hesiod's universe begins with the spontaneous appearance of the four entities Chaos, Gaea, Tartarus, and Eros: first a sexually indeterminate figure, then a female and a male,²⁴ followed by the embodiment of sex and reproduction, Eros himself:

ἦτοι μὲν πρότιστα Χάος γένετ'· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
 Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ
 ἀθανάτων οἳ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόντος Ὀλύμπου,
 Τάρταρά τ' ἠερόντα μυχῶ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης,
 ἦδ' Ἔρος. (*Theogony* 116–20)

First came Chaos, and then broad-breasted Gaea, an eternally secure seat for all the immortals who occupy the summit of snowy Olympus, and misty Tartarus in a fold of the broad-pathed earth, and Eros.

The birth of Eros after Gaea and Tartarus signals the introduction of reproduction and gender difference, but he does not merely signify the union of sexual opposites: as J.-P. Vernant and J. Rudhardt have pointed out, Eros represents any type of reproductive activity, asexual or sexual. Thus Eros works in two ways: to enable reproduction from within one body and to unite two entities in sexual union.²⁵ Indeed, the first entities after Eros are born through asexual reproduction and demonstrate the similarity that results from parthenogenetic birth: “From Chaos Darkness and black Night were born” (ἐκ Χάεος δ’ Ἐρεβός τε μέλαινά τε Νύξ ἐγένοντο [123]). Chaos is not only a chasm or void; rather, the word *chaos*, as Richard Caldwell notes, has the more forceful connotation of “impenetrable darkness and unmeasurable totality, of an immense opacity in which order is nonexistent or at least unperceived.”²⁶ The early female goddesses will imitate this model of parthenogenesis as they establish the fundamental nature of the cosmos by producing offspring in their likeness.

But first an instance of sexual reproduction occurs. Night and Darkness couple to produce Bright Air and Day (124–25), who are, as West observes, “the antitheses of their parents, [Day] corresponding to [Night] and [Bright Air] to [Darkness].”²⁷ These births suggest that sexual reproduction results in difference rather than similarity. Jenny Strauss Clay notes that this generation is more “progressive” than the previous one in that the birth of this opposite pair marks “the beginning of time, which can be measured by [Night and Day’s] alternation”;²⁸ thus, Hesiod presents these births as necessary for the continuation of the cosmos, but they prove to be aberrations in that respect. Although sexual reproduction does show up early in the narrative, further examples will illustrate that parthenogenesis is what gives the cosmos its underlying form and establishes its eternal principles.

For example, Night’s next generation of offspring is parthenogenetic and comprises Fate, Doom, Death, Sleep, Dreams, Blame, Misery, the Hesperides, the Fates, the Dooms, the Spinners, Resentment, Deceit, Intimacy, Old Age, and Strife (211–25). These children, of course, are not generally creative or constructive in nature, but they do demonstrate the early function of parthenogenesis in establishing the timeless truths of existence, albeit the negative side of it. Furthermore, unlike her previous children by Darkness, Night’s parthenogenetic children reflect her own essential darkness, gloom, strife, unknowability, and pessimism. As Fritz Graf observes, they are the “destructive and eerie powers that lurk in the depths of all being.”²⁹ Even the Hesperides, the singing maidens who live in a garden beyond the sunset, are the natural daughters of Night as they dwell in the west where she does.³⁰ Intimacy (Philotes) as well is closely associated with Night: the first occurrence of the word *philotes* in the

Theogony is at line 125, where it characterizes Night's relationship with Darkness. By engendering Intimacy, Night appropriates an experience she once shared with Darkness and reifies an abstraction that had previously appeared only in the context of sex between a male and a female. Furthermore, Night becomes the origin of a phenomenon necessary for sexual reproduction. By attributing the origin of Intimacy and other universal phenomena to Night alone, Hesiod imparts an essential creative function to parthenogenesis that it does not have in the Near Eastern cosmogonies.

Night's child Strife similarly produces a long line of descendants who represent life's enduring (harsh) realities: Toil, Neglect, Starvation, Pain, Battles, Combats, Bloodshed, Slaughter, Quarrels, Lies, Pretenses, Arguments, Disorder, Disaster, and Oath (226–32). These children are born presumably through parthenogenesis and are further embodiments of the discord, violent dispute, deception, and other negative qualities normally associated with their mother. Even Oath is said to “harm earthly men the most, when anyone should willingly swear a false oath” (ὅς δὴ πλεῖστον ἐπιχθονίους ἀνθρώπους | πημαίνει, ὅτε κέν τις ἐκὼν ἐπίορκον ὁμόσση [231–32]), while *Logoi* (Λόγοι) is rendered “Pretenses,” as “the context shows that it is to be understood in a bad sense.”³¹ The progeny of Chaos and its descendants are primarily born parthenogenetically and thus demonstrate a Hesiodic privileging of parthenogenesis in early creation.

In this vein Gaea engages in parthenogenesis to establish the fundamental shape and definition of the cosmos. Her own birth yields structure from abstraction, as she, the embodiment of the earth, provides a home for the immortal gods (πάντων ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ | ἀθανάτων, “eternally secure seat of all immortals” [117–18]). When she reproduces, her children inherit this function:³²

Γαῖα δέ τοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐγείνατο ἴσον ἑωυτῇ
 Οὐρανὸν ἀστερόενθ', ἵνα μιν περὶ πᾶσαν ἔεργοι,
 ὄφρ' εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ.
 γείνατο δ' Οὐρεα μακρά, θεᾶν χαρίεντας ἐναύλους
 Νυμφέων, αἶ ναίουσιν ἀν' οὐρεα βησσήεντα.
 ἦ δὲ καὶ ἀτρύγετον πέλαγος τέκεν, οἴδματι θυῖον,
 Πόντον, ἄτερ φιλότητος ἐφιμέρου. (126–32)

Gaea first bore an equal to herself, starry Uranus, to enclose her all around, and to be an eternally secure seat for the blessed gods. She bore

the high Hills as the pleasant homes of the divine Nymphs, who dwell in the valed mountains. She also bore the barren sea, raging with its swell, Pontus, without delightful love.

Gaea has the unprecedented and unique role of providing concrete shape to the cosmos with her own body and with her children. Like Chaos and Night, she produces children who are natural extensions of herself: Uranus is her counterpart and equal (ἴσον ἔωστυῆ, “equal to her” [126]), while the Hills and Pontus, as features of the natural landscape, provide variation in her surface. The affinity of Gaea’s children to their mother is reflected in their permanent physical proximity to her—she is enveloped entirely by Uranus, and the Hills and Pontus (the sea) reside on her surface. As Clay observes, “Earth produces [Uranus], the Heaven, to cover or enclose her in all directions, as if she somehow required such delimitation in order to possess the localization and solidity that characterize her.”³³ This generation establishes the primacy of parthenogenesis in forging the shape of the universe, as the earth, hills, sea, and sky are the basic building blocks of the Greek cosmos, the canvas on which the rest of creation is spread.³⁴

Two of these children complement Gaea’s function as a dwelling place: the Hills provide a home for the Nymphs, while Uranus is described as the seat of the gods (μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ, “eternally secure seat for the blessed gods” [128]) in language that explicitly echoes Gaea’s attributes (πάντων ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ | ἀθανάτων, “eternally secure seat of all immortals” [117–18]). Furthermore, the qualities that Uranus possesses are his by Gaea’s design, as indicated by the two purpose clauses in the text (ἵνα μιν περὶ πᾶσαν ἔεργοι, | ὄφρ’ εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ, “to enclose her all around, and to be an eternally secure seat for the blessed gods” [127–28]). The phrase ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ, as I have noted, echoes Gaea’s function and occupies the same metrical position, but the key difference is that here it occurs within a purpose clause expressing Gaea’s intention for her son, whereas in Gaea’s case it appears in apposition to her name. This difference reflects Gaea’s agency in her creative activity: she, somewhat like Tiamat and her monstrous offspring in the *Enuma Elis*, uses parthenogenesis to produce children who will carry out the role she assigns to them. Hesiod’s Gaea uniquely possesses this agency, as the Near Eastern cosmogonies have no parallel for the formative role Gaea plays in the cosmos. But as I will discuss below, this agency is limited, as Uranus becomes oppositional, and Gaea must turn to other means of exercising influence.

GAEA: INFLUENCE THROUGH CONFLICT

Gaea's parthenogenetic phase reflects her vital role in shaping the cosmos, but after this shape has been established, the focus becomes the succession myth, in which Gaea exercises a different type of influence. Parallel to the presence and use of parthenogenesis is the relative prominence of Hesiod's female deities and their likeliness to engage—and prevail—in gender conflict, which itself is more intertwined with creation and reproduction than in the Near Eastern traditions. There is no female presence whatsoever in the Hurro-Hittite and Phoenician cosmogonic traditions,³⁵ in which castration, as in the *Theogony*, is a means of deposing a previous ruler and occurs by a male with no female counsel; even the subsequent gestation in the *Song of Kumarbi* occurs within the body of a male. Philon's account depicts ongoing conflict between Ge and Uranus, but this conflict seems largely antagonistic without any creative side effect. In the *Enuma Elis* Tiamat loses against her main opponent Marduk, who kills her. Her unhappy demise contrasts with Gaea, who eventually prevails over her oppressor and plays a pivotal role as “kingmaker among the gods and orchestrator of succession.”³⁶ It is at Gaea's instigation that Cronus takes the sickle to Uranus, thus separating sky from earth and marking the end of the Uranian era as the Cronian one begins; Gaea protects Zeus from being swallowed by Cronus; Gaea instructs Zeus to recruit the Hundred-Handers against the Titans; Gaea prompts the promotion of Zeus to king of the gods; and Gaea and Uranus counsel Zeus to swallow Metis, mother of Athena, thus ending the line of descendants who might challenge Zeus's supremacy.

The primacy of Gaea has no parallel in the Near Eastern theogonies. Furthermore, her various reproductive phases require closer examination before we can fully understand the nature of Hesiod's gendered innovation. Gaea's sexually reproductive phase clashes with her parthenogenetic one by initiating the succession conflicts culminating with the reign of Zeus. Immediately after her parthenogenetic generation she and Uranus produce the Cyclopes, Hundred-Handers, and the Titans Oceanus, Coeus, Creius, Hyperion, Iapetus, Thea, Rhea, Themis, Mnemosyne, Phoebe, Tethys, and Cronus. Unlike Gaea's earlier offspring, whose purpose has been determined by their mother's intent, these children embody the animosity inherent to Hesiod's succession myth. Once Uranus partakes in procreation he immediately hates his children (154–56) and crams each of them back into its mother as it is born (156–59) while continuing to have intercourse with her (176–78). Now that reproduction involves sexual

activity, the resultant children are merely by-products of Uranus's sexual desire (177). Gaea does not model the physical characteristics or functions of these children as she did with her parthenogenetic children. Instead, her relationship to them reflects her persuasive mode:

παῖδες ἔμοι καὶ πατρός ἀτασθάλου, αἴ κ' ἐθέλητε
 πείθεσθαι, πατρός γε κακὴν τεισαίμεθα λώβην
 ὑμετέρου· πρότερος γὰρ ἀεικέα μήσατο ἔργα. (164–66)

Children to me and of a wicked father, if you are willing to obey, we could get redress for your father's evil outrage, for he first contrived unseemly deeds.

Her youngest son, Cronus, agrees to castrate Uranus with a sickle, thus relieving her from pain and preventing Uranus from further sexual activity. The emasculation of Uranus is key to progress: it ends his sexual relationship with Gaea and explains in symbolic terms the separation between earth and sky.

This act, too, produces more children who demonstrate the accidental nature of double-parented offspring and show the limits of Gaea's creative ability, as she determines neither their characteristics nor their behavior. The genitals themselves fall into the sea and reemerge as Aphrodite (188–206), while the blood of Uranus's severed genitals mixes with the soil of the earth and begets the Furies, Giants, and Ash-Tree Nymphs (183–87). These processes resemble sexual reproduction: children are conceived by a female after she has taken in generative fluid from a male. Like the other children of Gaea and Uranus, these children by and large take on their own characteristics and not their mother's, but the Furies represent the double-edged reciprocity of revenge as expressions of either parent's experience equally (or ambiguously): they embody both Gaea's vengeance³⁷ and Uranus's victimhood. None of these offspring is analogous to Gaea's parthenogenetic children as they are not physical delineations or extensions of Gaea herself; thus they suggest that Gaea's ability to introduce shape and definition through creation are limited to her parthenogenetic ability.

Similarly, Gaea later couples with Tartarus and gives birth to Typhoeus (820–22), who becomes one of several challengers to Zeus (835–68). Typhoeus battles Zeus, loses, and is expelled to Tartarus. This particular episode has given commentators pause, for Gaea, who has elsewhere in the *Theogony* been fully supportive of Zeus's reign (479–84, 494, 626, 884, 890–93), now produces a

son who undermines this support. Modern scholars generally deem Typhoeus a reflection of Gaea's intentional challenge to Zeus' authority, citing Homeric scholion B on *Iliad* 2.783 and Apollodorus's claim that Typhoeus's birth occurs in retaliation for the defeat of the Giants.³⁸ This inconsistency has been partially responsible for doubts about the passage's authenticity,³⁹ while those who accept it as authentic must then explain Gaea's behavior by citing parallels with Near Eastern sources,⁴⁰ arguing that Gaea's allegiance to Zeus is secured only after the Titanomachy and Typhonomachy,⁴¹ or viewing the passage independently of these episodes.⁴² Most recently, Owen Goslin has redirected the discussion to the connection between the Typhonomachy episode and the proem to the Muses, arguing that the Typhonomachy functions as the necessary event leading to their birth.⁴³

The confusing relationship between Gaea and Typhoeus—do his actions represent or contravene Gaea's will?—reflects what Julia Kristeva has identified as the inherent paradox of motherhood: in fostering new life, maternity produces yet obscures the distinct identities of mother and child both.⁴⁴ The supposed inconsistency of Gaea's behavior can also be explained more simply: nowhere in Hesiod's text is Gaea said to have given birth to Typhoeus intentionally. Furthermore, there is no reason to apply a Homeric scholion to Hesiod's text, nor to adopt Apollodorus's interpretation when the *Theogony* does not include the Gigantomachy narrative. Arguments that Gaea undermines Zeus by birthing Typhoeus presume her complete control over her children, but the torment she suffers from Uranus demonstrates the fallacy of this position. We can therefore view Typhoeus's actions as reflections of his own will more so than Gaea's.

Zeus's victory over Typhoeus does unquestionably cement his supremacy, so any lingering uncertainty about Gaea's intention in the Typhoeus episode disappears in light of the role of nearly all conflict in the *Theogony*, which is to reinforce Zeus's claim to sovereignty. Gaea is a somewhat puzzling figure in Hesiod's cosmos: her parthenogenetic function parallels that of Chaos, Night, and Strife in establishing the eternal shape and principles of the cosmos and reflecting the enlarged female presence Hesiod inserts into it; yet she suffers torment from Uranus, one of her parthenogenetic children, then regains her power in her eventual triumph over him. Ultimately, all these events culminate in the kingship of Zeus, an end that should inform our understanding of parthenogenesis, gender, and gender conflict in Hesiod's cosmos.

HERA: THE LAST OF THE PARTHENOGENETIC GODDESSES

By the time the narrative reaches Hera, the relatively heightened female presence in Hesiod's cosmos has been expressed in the creative power of parthenogenesis, in female victory over male tormenters, and in Gaea's crucial function in strengthening the reign of Zeus. Hera's asexual reproduction is where these various expressions converge. Thus far, parthenogenesis has functioned primarily to establish the eternal principles of the cosmos and to bring concrete definition to the abstraction and void of Chaos. As the cosmos evolves, so does parthenogenesis. When the Olympians assume control, the shape of the universe has already been determined, and the various conflicts of the *Theogony* lose their creative aspects and become simply struggles for power. In this context Hera's parthenogenetic stage is not as monumentally constructive as Gaea's, nor does she produce nearly as many children as either Gaea or Night, whose line of children encompasses perhaps the greatest share of human experience. Rather, parthenogenesis becomes a means of defying a male god, namely, Zeus. Hera's act of parthenogenesis expresses her anger at Zeus for fathering Athena (924–26), but as I will argue here, even this act ultimately reinforces Zeus's power. She first bears Hebe, Ares, and Eileithyia to Zeus (922–23) before producing Hephaestus parthenogenetically:

“Ἡρῆ δ’ Ἡφαιστον κλυτὸν οὐ φιλότῃτι μιγεῖσα
γείνατο, καὶ ζαμένησε καὶ ἤρισεν ᾧ παρακοίτῃ,
ἐκ πάντων παλάμησι κεκασμένον Οὐρανιῶνων. (927–29)

But Hera was both angry and at odds with her husband, and without mingling in love bore famous Hephaestus, surpassing all of Uranus's descendants with his craftsmanship.⁴⁵

The contrast between the two generations of Hera's children is considerable: her children by Zeus are given little description and are indeed mentioned almost in passing, but Hephaestus receives high praise as the god of crafts and smithing, praise that echoes Homer's characterization in *Iliad* 18. The Hephaestus of the *Iliad*, however, is the son of both Hera and Zeus. Furthermore,

Hesiod's Hephaestus shows no signs of being a source of shame for Hera as he is in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (316–21), which similarly associates Hephaestus's parthenogenetic birth with Hera's anger about Athena but has Hera casting her deformed son into the sea, only to have him rescued, to her dismay, by Thetis. Hephaestus himself recounts Hera's violent disgust at his disability in *Iliad* 18.394–99 in an account that otherwise focuses on his artistic talents. The Homeric ambiguity of Hephaestus—handicapped yet able, divine yet of low status—appears in the iconographic tradition as well and has provided fodder for scholarly interrogation.⁴⁶

Hesiod's Hephaestus may reflect the ambiguity of Homer's, but at the very least his negative qualities are downplayed or suppressed. Even his monstrosity is in question. The epithet *amphiguceis* (ἀμφιγυήεις [571, 579, 945]) is one of the few aspersions in Hesiod's depiction of Hephaestus, but the meaning of the word is uncertain. Although usually translated “bandy-legged” as a reference to Hephaestus' handicap, *amphiguceis* always appears alongside a word for “famed” (περικλυτός or ἀγακλυτός). Its consistent proximity to fame challenges the usual understanding of its reference to deformity, as H. Humbach has pointed out. Humbach further argues that the epithet must be understood as a close relative of *amphiguos* (ἀμφίγυος, “double-pointed”) and thus denotes Hephaestus's association with double-edged weaponry or tools rather than his curved limbs.⁴⁷ Hesiod's Hephaestus, then, is possibly unique in embodying his mother's anger at Zeus without incurring any of it himself for his deformity, which may not even exist in Hesiod's version. Hera has the added ability of producing such a child defiantly, in a parallel to Tiamat's parthenogenetic production of monsters to combat Marduk, but again, from Hesiod's version emerge two differences: Hephaestus is arguably not monstrous and neither he nor his mother suffers the same unhappy fate of Tiamat and her monstrous offspring.

Rather, Hesiod incorporates even this act of defiance into reinforcement of Zeus's reign. In engendering this laudable, able child, Hera introduces craftsmanship, which Zeus employs for his own purposes. Hephaestus becomes an ally of Zeus, who enlists him to create Pandora (571) and the crown she wears (578–84). As with Gaea, gender conflict, here expressed in the very act of parthenogenesis itself, ultimately and oddly converges with support for Zeus, bolstering him and his agenda in the end.⁴⁸

HESIOD IN CONTEXT 2: OTHER GREEK COSMOGONIES

The singularity of Hesiod's “parthenogenic” adaptation of the Near Eastern material is even more pronounced when we examine other Greek cosmogonic

traditions. While Hesiod's *Theogony* is the oldest and sole example of a complete Greek cosmogonic poem, fragmentary evidence for other Greek cosmogonies does exist. In the Homeric poems a full cosmogonic tradition is impossible to identify since cosmogony is not their purpose,⁴⁹ but certain references indicate the self-conscious situation of these texts in reference to a previous cosmogony. Homer refers to Ocean and Tethys as primordial male and female beings (Ὠκεανόν τε θεῶν γένεσιν καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν, "Oceanus, the origin of the gods, and mother Tethys" [*Iliad* 14.201=14.302]), thus acknowledging that the birth of the gods falls along some chronological frame of creation.⁵⁰

Where a Homeric theogonic tradition can be constructed, parthenogenesis does not figure as a uniquely female ability as Zeus seems equally capable of parthenogenesis: Ares berates Zeus for his lax oversight of Athena, which stems from his sole engendering of her (*Iliad* 5.880). Likewise, in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* Athena's birth is truly parthenogenetic: Zeus has fathered Athena on his own (πῶς ἔτλης οἷος τεκέειν γλαυκῶπιν Ἀθήνην; "How did you dare to bear grey-eyed Athena all by yourself?" [323]), and no mention is made of Metis as a distinct entity; she appears only residually in the language of Zeus's contriving mind (τί νῦν μητίσσει ἄλλο; "What else will you *contrive* now?" [322]).

Moreover, in the Homeric tradition parthenogenesis results in deformity or monstrosity when Hera engages in it. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, Hephaestus is explicitly handicapped (παῖς ἐμὸς Ἥφαιστος ῥικνὸς πόδας, ὃν τέκον αὐτή, "my child Hephaestus, crooked in his feet, whom I myself bore" [317]), and Hera casts him into the sea out of shame (316, 318; cf. *Iliad* 18.395–405). When she next enacts parthenogenesis, the result is the monster Typhaon. In anger at Zeus, who has dared to father Athena without her help (305–54), Hera's bears him "without Zeus's help" (νόσφι Διός [338]). A creature unlike any of the gods or mortals (ἢ δ' ἔτεκ' οὔτε θεοῖς ἐναλίγκιον οὔτε βροτοῖσιν, "and she bore one similar to neither gods nor mortals" [351]), Typhaon becomes the foster child of the monstrous serpent of Delphi.

The various fragments that constitute the so-called Orphic texts also depict a Greek cosmogonic tradition in which female parthenogenesis—indeed, any female reproductive activity—is comparatively scarce or at least understated and plays little part in influencing the ultimate structure of the cosmos. The Derveni Papyrus, dated to about 400 B.C.E., seems to be a commentary on a fifth-century or earlier Orphic text depicting the origins of the universe;⁵¹ the commentary in the papyrus downplays the role of individual female deities, conflating Demeter, Rhea, Gaea, and Hera into one goddess embodying reproduction.⁵² In this cosmos Night appears to have been the firstborn and the mother of Uranus, who is succeeded by Cronus, then Zeus. Following the advice of his father Cronus, Zeus swallows the phallus of Uranus, thus impregnating himself

with the cosmos, which he then emits at some later point as a second creator of the universe. As Walter Burkert and Carolina López-Ruiz have shown, the Orphic cosmogony parallels some aspects of Hesiod's but diverges just enough to suggest an earlier Near Eastern source.⁵³

Aside from the temporal primacy of Night, male entities are the primary creators and shapers of this Orphic universe. Zeus's consumption of Uranus's phallus imitates female sexual and reproductive behaviors, thus investing Zeus with female generative capabilities. Night is the sole agent of parthenogenesis, but after producing Uranus, she withdraws and plays no further role in shaping the cosmos. Instead, the male entities assume creative roles and engage in asexual reproduction. Birth via castration and consumption occurs in both the Hesiodic and Orphic traditions and perhaps points to a shared Near Eastern ancestor,⁵⁴ but Zeus's impregnation is a departure from the *Theogony*, where pregnancy, particularly the inhabitation of multiple gods within one body, is largely the ability of goddesses rather than gods. As López-Ruiz observes, Zeus is infused "with a new creative power that transgresses the laws of sexuality and gender."⁵⁵ Whereas the Derveni Papyrus shows successful male appropriation of pregnancy and birth, male reproducers in the *Theogony* cannot appropriate female reproduction as successfully or completely. In Hesiod, Cronus swallows his children in order to remove them from the cosmos and fails in this endeavor when he is forced, by Rhea and Zeus, to regurgitate them. Similarly, Zeus usurps female pregnancy when he swallows Metis and gives birth to Athena, but, as I have discussed above, this type of birth is not equivalent to Hera's self-generation of Hephaestus, for despite the asexual nature of this reproduction, he still needs Metis to produce Athena and cannot produce a deity all on his own.

Aeschylus's *Eumenides* likewise demonstrates the privileging of male over female creation in non-Hesiodic Greek cosmogonies. The Furies themselves argue that children have a blood relation only with their mothers (605-8)⁵⁶ and appeal to their mother Night (321, 844-45), never mentioning their father.⁵⁷ The Furies' argument does not hold up in court, however. Athena explains her vote for Orestes with her preference for all things male, stemming from her sole parentage by Zeus (734-41). As in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, no mention is made of Metis's role in Athena's conception: Athena clearly acknowledges only one parent, a father. Similarly, the female role in sexual reproduction is limited when Apollo argues that a mother merely serves as an incubator for the father's seed, adducing Athena's parthenogenetic birth from a male as proof of

male parthenogenesis having no female counterpart (657–66). Given the victory of Apollo and Orestes over the Furies, who do not refute this argument, the implication is that an Aeschylean cosmogony precludes female parthenogenesis, unlike Hesiod's.

CONCLUSION

Hesiod's *Theogony* has left a lasting legacy of cosmogonic and theogonic thought; one need only consider the fame of Botticelli's painting *The Birth of Venus* for proof of Hesiod's continuing influence on how we think about the Greek gods. Given the relative prominence of his voice within the cosmogonic traditions, we must consider how the prevalence of female deities within Hesiod's cosmos affects the overall theogonic narrative. On one level Hesiod's *Theogony* provides an originary example of gender definition, as the gods' births are described in ways naturally analogous to the reproductive processes of human and animal procreation. The tempting but fallacious extreme of this reading would be to see gender conflict and female oppression and subsequent deliverance as the focus of the *Theogony*; as James Redfield points out, "A contrast . . . is dramatized between male and female powers, persons, and principles. Nature has an erotic history. In the early stages of the cosmic story females predominate."⁵⁸ Redfield's comments are astute, but what I have endeavored to show here is that gender difference, as the cosmos develops, serves a more complicated function. In Hesiod's cosmos female deities play a prominent role, partly stemming from their unique reproductive abilities. The mere possibility of parthenogenesis in the cosmos empowers female deities to shape the cosmos, an ability that dovetails with their influential participation in the succession myth; they play neither of these roles in the other cosmogonic traditions closely related to Hesiod's. Parthenogenesis even becomes an assertion of anger in the later stages of the cosmos when Hera produces Hephaestus. Gender difference, of which parthenogenesis is a symptom, produces conflict, but it is a conflict that paradoxically results in coalescence, as all the struggles in the *Theogony* ultimately reinforce and perpetuate Zeus's status as king of the gods. The *Theogony* presents us with a paradox, then: gender difference and conflict are defining features of the cosmos, yet they yield further reinforcement of Zeus's rule. Hesiod's cosmos is rife with potential violence but also stability. It is a cosmos wherein conflict and concord continually coexist as equally important and essential features of the succession myth.

NOTES

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1. All translations are my own. Parenthetical citations are line numbers of the original Greek in R. Merkelbach and M. L. West's 1990 Oxford Classical Text of Hesiod's *Theogony*, *Works and Days*, and *Shield*; David B. Monro and Thomas W. Allen's 1920 Oxford Classical Text of Homer's *Iliad*; James George Frazer's 1921 Loeb Classical Library text and translation of Apollodorus's *Library* (Harvard University Press); Denys Page's 1972 Oxford Classical Text of Aeschylus; and M. L. West's 2003 Loeb Classical Library text and translation of the *Homeric Hymns* (Harvard University Press).

2. Indeed, the creation and generation of the cosmos would be impossible without the early existence of gender difference and conflict. On the primacy of male–female opposition among the gods, see Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 518; on the equal participation of the gods and goddesses in the defining conflicts of the *Theogony*, see Nicole Loraux, "What Is a Goddess?" trans. A. Goldhammer, in *A History of Women in the West*, Vol. 1, ed. Pauline Schmitt Pantel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 15; for an argument that the violent conflicts between Uranus and Gaea, and Cronus and Rhea, ultimately serve the greater end of creation, see L. S. Sussman, "The Birth of the Gods: Sexuality, Conflict and Cosmic Structure in Hesiod's *Theogony*," *Ramus* 7 (1978): 61–77.

3. See Jenny Strauss Clay, *Hesiod's Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20n21; A. Bonnafé, *Eris et Eros: Mariages divins et mythe de succession chez Hésiode* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1985), 148; K. Deichgräber, "Die Musen, Neriden, und Okeaninen in Hesiods Theogonie," *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz* 4 (1965): 194.

4. M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony. Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 235; Apollodorus, *Library*, 1.2.6.

5. Cf. Marilyn B. Arthur, "Cultural Strategies in Hesiod's *Theogony*: Law, Family, Society," *Arethusa* 15 (1982): 66, who, although she seems to consider Aphrodite's birth an example of male parthenogenesis, nevertheless acknowledges its contentious nature, and thus suggests an argument for birth through division rather than through generation: "[Aphrodite represents Uranus's] antithesis rather than his equal in character, the embodiment of the sexual attraction which overwhelms the male rather than of the authority and martial skill through which he asserts his prowess."

6. For a summary of other such unusual births in Greek myth, see Euterpe Bazopoulou-Kyrkanidou, "Mythos and Logos in Hesiod's *Theogony*, Circa 700 B.C.," *American Journal of Medical Genetics* 62 (1996): 133–35; and J. Boardman, "Unnatural Conception and Birth in Greek Mythology," in *Naissance et petite enfance dans l'Antiquité*, ed. V. Dasen (Fribourg: Academie Press, 2004), 103–12.

7. For a discussion of the role of Metis and her possible Egyptian model Maat in legitimating monarchic rule, see Christopher A. Faraone and Emily Teeter, "Egyptian Maat and Hesiodic Metis," *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser., 57, no. 2 (2004): 177–208.

8. Froma I. Zeitlin, *Playing the Other* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 108.

9. See P. Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966). For a discussion of Near Eastern elements in both the *Theogony* and the *Iliad*, and for a comprehensive bibliography on the topic, see Friedrich Solmsen, "The Two Near Eastern Sources of Hesiod," *Hermes* 117, no. 4 (1989): 413–22. Perhaps the most lucid, concise, and complete analysis of parallels between Hesiod and his Near Eastern models is M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 276–333. For a discussion of Egyptian and Indian mythological systems as possible influences alongside the Near Eastern models, see Robert Mondi, "Greek Mythic Thought in the Light of the Near East," in *Approaches to Greek Myth*, ed. Lowell Edmunds (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 142–98. See Carolina López-Ruiz, *When the Gods Were Born: Greek Cosmogonies and the Near East* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), for an examination of Near Eastern influences on Greek cosmogonies, including but not limited to Hesiod's.

10. Cf. West, *East Face of Helicon*, 281n9.

11. For a concise and lucid synopsis of Freud's, Lacan's, and Kristeva's discussions, see Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 24–30.

12. See West, *East Face of Helicon*, 280–82, for a more detailed summary of the *Enuma Elis*. See López-Ruiz, *When the Gods Were Born*, 90–91, for an explanation of the line of succession.

13. See López-Ruiz, *When the Gods Were Born*, 91–92, for an explanation of the blended Hurro-Hittite ascription of this myth.

14. For a translation of the *Song of Kumarbi*, see Gary M. Beckman, ed., and Harry A. Hoffner, trans., *Hittite Myths* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 40–43; see West, *East Face of Helicon*, 278–79, for a summary.

15. Scholars acknowledge that at least some of his material derives from a previous Phoenician source, perhaps only as early as the Hellenistic period, but possibly as early as 700 B.C.E. Cf. M. L. West, "Ab ovo: Orpheus, Sanchuniathon, and the Origins of the Ionian World Model," *Classical Quarterly*, n.s., 44, no. 2 (1994): 293–95, esp. 294n20. For summaries of the *Phoenician History*, see López-Ruiz, *When the Gods Were Born*, 94–101; and West, *East Face of Helicon*, 283–86. See P. Walcot, "The Text of Hesiod's *Theogony* and the Hittite *Epic of Kumarbi*," *Classical Quarterly*, n.s., 6, nos. 3–4 (1956): 202, for a comparison between Hesiod, the *Phoenician History*, and the *Song of Kumarbi*.

16. West, *East Face of Helicon*, 278–86; López-Ruiz, *When the Gods Were Born*, 84–129.
17. Cf. Sussman, “Birth of the Gods,” on creation through conflict in Hesiod.
18. Bettina L. Knapp, *Women in Myth* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 43.
19. For a discussion of these monsters, see Jenny Strauss Clay, “The Generation of Monsters in Hesiod,” *Classical Philology* 88, no. 2 (1993): 105–16.
20. See Richard Caldwell, *The Origin of the Gods: A Psychoanalytic Study of Greek Theogonic Myth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 76–78, for an incisive discussion of the question of Near Eastern influence.
21. G.S. Kirk, *The Nature of Greek Myths* (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 1975), 255.
22. See West, *Hesiod*, 199. West does note the explicit textual references to asexual reproduction (132, 213, 927) but does not offer much explanation for why parthenogenesis is specified other than to say, “For Earth at least . . . no suitable husband was available.” Cf. Clay, *Hesiod’s Cosmos*, 6, who similarly notes some instances of asexual reproduction but provides little comment except that Erebus and Night “may be considered aspects of [Chaos]” and that Gaea’s parthenogenetic line “defines herself in opposition to Chaos as having form and substance.”
23. For a discussion of how the *Theogony* anticipates modern genetics to some degree, see Bazopoulou-Kyrkanidou, “Mythos and Logos in Hesiod’s *Theogony*,” 125–44.
24. Although at this point it is unclear how much gender can be assigned to any of these abstractions, their relations and interactions with one another identify them as male, female, or neuter beings. The isolation of Chaos confirms its grammatical neutrality: it does not copulate or even interact with any other entity, male or female. Cf. Robert Mondi, “ΧΑΟΣ and the Hesiodic Cosmogony,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 92 (1989): 30, where he ties Chaos’s neutral gender to its “general lack of definiteness and form.” See also P. Philippson, “Genealogies als mythische Form,” *Symbolae Osloenses*, supp., 7 (1936): 7–42, reprinted in *Hesiod*, ed. E. Heistch (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966), 651–87; and O. Gigon, *Der Ursprung der griechischen Philosophie von Hesiod bis Parmenides* (Basel: Schwabe, 1945), 29–30.
- Gaea, by contrast, is manifestly female, both in grammatical gender and in her later interactions with Uranus and Tartarus. Likewise, Tartarus, despite his grammatical gender—here he is neuter plural but unequivocally masculine singular elsewhere (682, 721)—acts as a decidedly male figure in his coupling with Gaea (821–22); cf. West, *Hesiod*, 194–95. See also E. F. Beall, “Once More on Hesiod’s Supposed Tartarus Principle,” *Classical World* 102, no. 2 (2009): 159–61. Beall presents an attractive argument that Tartara here is not Tartarus personified but rather represents, along with Olympus, one abode of the gods. Beall may be correct, but for simplicity’s sake and because Beall’s claims do not affect my argument one way or another, I defer to West.
25. J.-P. Vernant, “One . . . Two . . . Three: Eros,” trans. D. Lyons, in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 466, citing J. Rudhardt, *Le Role d’Eros et d’Aphrodite dans les cosmologies grecques* (Paris: Presses

universitaires de France, 1986). Cf. James Redfield, "The Sexes in Hesiod," *Annals of Scholarship* 10 (1993): 31: "It seems that Eros has a role in *all* acts of generation."

26. Caldwell, *Origin of the Gods*, 129. Cf. *Theog.* 814 (χάεος ζοφεροῖο). For a thorough discussion of Chaos in Hesiod, see Mondì, "ΧΑΟΣ and the Hesiodic Cosmogony"; and Michael C. Stokes, "Hesiodic and Milesian Cosmogonies—II," *Phronesis* 8, no. 1 (1963): 17–23.

27. West, *Hesiod*, 197.

28. Clay, *Hesiod's Cosmos*, 16.

29. Fritz Graf, *Greek Mythology: An Introduction*, trans. Thomas Marier (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 84.

30. West, *Hesiod*, 35–36.

31. *Ibid.*, 231.

32. Loraux, "What Is a Goddess?" 39n140, argues that Night's and Gaea's parthenogenetic acts are different: Night produces children through fission or division, whereas Gaea's children are born within her. I agree that Hesiod does not specifically document the incubation of Night's children within her body, but I see Night and Gaea as parallel cases regardless, as they each are able to conceive and generate children without the participation of a male partner.

33. Clay, *Hesiod's Cosmos*, 16. Cf. Vernant, "One . . . Two . . . Three," 466: "Ouranos sprawls over Gaia, covering her permanently, and discharges into her without stopping, imposing on her an incessant copulation—at least, at night . . . There is neither spatial separation nor temporal interlude between them, in this union without pause. Ouranos and Gaia are not yet really separate."

34. By giving such early prominence and significance to a female deity and by ascribing the birth of a male counterpart to her, Hesiod foreshadows the victory over Uranus and the later similar victory over Cronus that Gaea will initiate and enable.

35. See Carolina López-Ruiz, "Some Oriental Elements in Hesiod and the Orphic Cosmogonies," *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 6 (2006): 71–104; and *When the Gods Were Born*, 91–94, for further differences between the Hesiodic and the Hurro-Hittite cosmogonies.

36. Clay, *Hesiod's Cosmos*, 27.

37. Cf. West, *Hesiod*, 220, l. 185.

38. Apollodorus, *Library*, 1.6.3.

39. See West, *Hesiod*, 381–83, for a summary and refutation of the arguments against the authenticity of these lines. Cf. Michael C. Stokes, "Hesiodic and Milesian Cosmogonies – I," *Phronesis* 7, no. 1 (1962): 4; Stokes notes the purpose of this episode in establishing the finality of Zeus' reign.

40. West, *Hesiod*, 24. Cf. West, *East Face of Helicon*, 300–304. See also Walcot, "Text of Hesiod's *Theogony* and the Hittite *Epic of Kumarbi*," 198–206.

41. Clay, *Hesiod's Cosmos*, 26–27. Cf. F. Blaise, "L'Épisode de Typhée dans la *Théogonie* d'Hésiode (v. 820–885): La Stabilisation du Monde," *Revue des études grecques* 105 (1992): 349–70. Blaise argues that Gaea's birthing of Typhoeus, allegiance or opposition to Zeus notwithstanding, is the next logical step in defining the cosmos.

42. Robert Mondi, "The Ascension of Zeus and the Composition of Hesiod's *Theogony*," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 225 (1984): 334.

43. Owen Goslin, "Hesiod's Typhonomachy and the Ordering of Sound," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 140 (2010): 351–73.

44. Cf. Julia Kristeva, "Motherhood According to Giovanni Bellini," in *The Portable Kristeva*, ed. Kelly Oliver (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 303–9. For a psychoanalytic interpretation of the succession myth as a whole, see Caldwell, *Origin of the Gods*, 126–85.

45. Later Roman myth foregrounds and increases Hera's parthenogenetic capabilities: in Ovid's *Fasti* all of Juno's children are conceived without a father (5.229–60). Ovid thus magnifies Hera's (Juno's) defiance of Zeus (Jupiter) through parthenogenesis, although it is unclear in both Hesiod and Ovid what type of revenge Hera means to achieve through Hephaestus's birth. For further discussion of Hera and parthenogenesis in post-Hesiodic versions of the myth, see Marcel Detienne, *The Writing of Orpheus: Greek Myth in Cultural Contact*, trans. J. Lloyd (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 50–58.

46. For a discussion of the contradictory depictions of Hephaestus on vase paintings, see Stephen Fineberg, "Hephaestus on Foot in the Ceramicus," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 139, no. 2 (2009): 275–324. For an argument that Hephaestus's association with building and construction may derive from Near Eastern sources, see Jan N. Bremmer, "Hephaistos Sweats; or, How to Construct an Ambivalent God," in *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformations*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Andrew Erskine (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 193–208.

47. See H. Humbach, "ἄμφίγυος und ἀμφίγυήεις," in *Studi linguistici in onore di Vittore Pisani*, vol. 2 (Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1969), 569–78.

48. Cf. Arthur, "Cultural Strategies in Hesiod's *Theogony*," who argues that female primacy in the *Theogony* declines with each successive generation.

49. See Johannes Haubold, "Greek Epic: A Near Eastern Genre?" *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 48 (2002): 1–19, for a persuasive discussion of an intercultural "history of the world" genre in which the Homeric poems are situated as the middle heroic section rather than the beginning theogonic section. He argues that this genre is common to both Greek and Near Eastern traditions.

50. Pace A. Kelly, "The Babylonian Captivity of Homer: The Case of ΔΙΟΣ ΑΠΑΘΗ," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 151 (2008): 274–85. Kelly argues that these references designate Oceanus and Tethys the origins of rivers only, not the origins of all the gods, and thus do not present any alternative cosmogony to the *Theogony*.

51. For a translation of the Derveni Papyrus, see André Laks and Glenn W. Most, eds., *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 9–22. For a lucid introduction to Orphic and Phoenician succession myths, see López-Ruiz, *When the Gods Were Born*, 130–70.

52. Col. 22; see Laks and Most, *Studies on the Derveni Papyrus*, 20, for a translation.

53. Walter Burkert, *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis: Eastern Contexts of Greek Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 92; López-Ruiz, *When the Gods Were Born*, 136–50.

54. Cf. López-Ruiz, *When the Gods Were Born*, 137–44.

55. *Ibid.*, 143.

56. For a history of Greek theories of reproduction and heredity, see David D. Leitaó, *The Pregnant Male as Myth and Metaphor in Classical Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 18–57.

57. This appeal differs from Hesiod's version, in which the Furies spring from Uranus's blood, but Aeschylus does preserve a Hesiodic chronology of the gods' birth by making the Furies older than the Olympian gods (150, 778, 808).

58. Redfield, "Sexes in Hesiod," 31.