

THE WORLD OF HESIOD

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Toute pensée de l'origine des choses n'est jamais qu'une rêverie de leur disposition actuelle, une manière de dégénérescence du réel, une variation sur ce qui est.

Paul Valéry in his Preface to Poe's *Eureka*.

I Hesiod of Askra

The World of Hesiod is familiar as a title, but the world of Hesiod is difficult to locate in a single place¹. Indeed, it is a number of places. It seems to have its centre in Askra in Boiotia and to extend out in space as far as the high slopes of Mount Helikon. It is a land-locked world and its severe limitations are apparent from what the poet says about the sea and the short sea passage from the mainland at Aulis to Chalkis on Euboia. Even as he offers his advice to the seafarer, he admits that he has no experience in seafaring or ships himself (*W&D* 649). He had only made the trip across to the island of Euboia once to compete as a poet at the funeral games of Amphidamas (*W&D* 646-60). Hesiodic poetry, when it centres on Hesiod's home, seems to crowd into a very small and disagreeable patch of typical Greek countryside. But his Muses enlarge this world. They provide him with a knowledge that he cannot gain himself—both of seafaring and of the vast expanse of the physical world whose origins go beyond the very beginnings of human time. Hesiod's local Muses transport him from the springs of Permessos to the deep currents of Ocean and they disclose to him a universe vaster in its extent and deeper in time than that of the Homeric poems. A sign of these enlarged horizons is the fact that in the *Theogony* Hesiod begins to sing of the Muses of Helikon (1-4), but then shifts attention to the Muses of Olympos (36-80).²

When taken together, Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days* narrate a history that is both divine and human. Hesiod's encounter with the Muses on Mount Helikon makes it possible for him to sing a 'hymn' of the race of the blessed gods immortal (*Th.* 33 and 105). Hesiodic history begins with primordial Chaos and concludes with the establishment of the stable rule of Zeus over the gods; and in terms of human history, he can recite a narrative (*logos*) that begins with the gods' creation of a golden race of humans and continues down to Hesiod's own race of men of iron (*W&D* 106-201). But, although Zeus is called father and lord over gods and men in the *Theogony*, a human history, as distinct from a divine genealogy, is only implicit in the *Theogony*. It might be said to begin with Semele in line 942 and the violent juxtaposition of the epithets *athanaton thnetē* (for Dionysos and Semele). Indeed, as his descriptions of the knowledge of the Muses promise, he can also speak of the future, as he does when he speaks of the calamities that lie in store for those living in his age of iron.³

52. Nagy (n.6 above), 66-68.

53. In fact, *aletheia mathesasthai* ('speak true things') is attested as a textual variant of *aletheia gerusasthai* ('announce true things') in Hesiod *Theogony* 28: see Nagy (n.6 above), 68n.84.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*

57. Nagy (n.6 above), 52-81.

58. Nagy (n.6 above), 66.

59. It is in this context that we should compare *pseudea polla . . . etumoisin homoia* ('many fallacies that look like genuine things') at *Theogony* 27 with *oud' ei pseudea men poiōis etumoisin homoia* ('not even if you make fallacies look like genuine things') at *Theognis* 713, with reference to the storytelling abilities of Nestor (714).

60. In making this suggestion, I am following the advice that I have received from Richard P. Martin (*per litteras* 11 August 1992), who has kindly read and criticised a preliminary draft of this paper.

61. Nagy (n.6 above), 70f.

62. M. Griffith, 'Contest and Contradiction in Early Greek Poetry', in M. Griffith and D.J. Mastrorarde (eds.), *Cabinet of the Muses: Essays on Classical and Comparative Literature in Honor of Thomas G. Rosenmeyer* (Atlanta 1990), 194f.

63. Griffith (n.62 above), 205n.40. Here he cross-refers to 204n.34, where in turn he refers to his 1983 article (n.9 above), especially his remarks at 46f. I responded to those remarks in Nagy (n.6 above), 79. The forthcoming work to which Griffith refers can now be cited as Nagy *op. cit.* 57-65, with special reference to the *Works and Days* of Hesiod.

It is Hesiod's *Theogony* with which I am concerned, for his theogony is also a cosmogony and, in its Titanomachy and Typhonmachy, a cosmography. And, as a cosmogony and cosmology, it provided the terms against which the presocratic philosophers formulated their new conception of the world. Hesiod's theogony embraces Ouranos and Gaia—heaven and earth, and, below the surface of the earth, the nether region which Hesiod calls Tartara—'the region of Tartaros wrapped in mist in the recesses of the Earth of broad passages' (*Th.* 119; cf. 720-23). Then there is water. Of herself Gaia produces Pontos, the personified equivalent of *pelagos*, and in the generation created by her production of and union with Ouranos, Hesiod's world comes to include Ocean 'deep in its currents' (*Th.* 131-33). Water is an important element in Hesiod's *Theogony*. Hesiod, who tended his sheep near the springs of Permessos, Hippokrene and Olmeios on Mount Helikon, knows the rivers that spring up from the union of Okeanos and Tethys. He knows of the distant Nile and the Phasis, and can name 22 rivers and 41 *Okeaninai* (*Th.* 337-45, 346-66); and he knows of some 6,000 other rivers (364-76). It is a daunting task to name them all, but those who live nearby know their names, as does the poet himself as he names the springs of Helikon (*Th.* 5f.).

II The Cosmic Poetry of the *Iliad*

It is in his cosmogony that Hesiod stands in the most striking contrast to the poetry of Homer.⁴ In the *Iliad* Homer seldom leaves the plain of Troy to look back more than a single generation. The causes of the Trojan War remain very much in the background of the Homeric narrative as do the threats to the supremacy of Zeus ages before the Trojan War.⁵ Hesiod can characterise the generations that fought at Thebes and at Troy in four hexameter lines (*W&D* 161-65).

Despite his intense concentration on men in action, Homer can be made out as a natural philosopher and, as we can appreciate from Socrates' remarks in Plato's *Theaetetus*, the first Heraclitean.⁶ Plato refers to the possibility of allegorical interpretations of Homer (*Rep.* 2.378D), and much later in antiquity Homeric poetry was transformed into philosophy and even physiology in the alembic of allegoresis. Deep meanings were discovered in Homer's allusion to the golden rope of Zeus (*Il.* 8.19; cf. *Theaet.* 153C), the shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18.480-608), and Demodokos' lay of Ares and Aphrodite (*Od.* 8.266-369). And Strabo made a strong argument that Homer was the first geographer.⁷

To the superficial modern reader, none of the depth of Homer's concealed philosophy is apparent. In Homer, we find a cosmography, not a cosmology. In the Homeric epics, heaven is described as bronze, and twice in the *Odyssey* it is described as iron.⁸ The earth itself is very much like the circles described by the compass of the early Greek cosmographers that Herodotos found so ludicrous (*Histories* 4.36). Okeanos is overlaid on the rim of the shield Hephaistos fashioned for Achilles.⁹ It is from Homer's elaborate ekphrasis of the shield of Achilles that we gain our clearest sense of his conception of the physical

world. Indeed, the shield was described in antiquity as a 'representation of the world'.¹⁰ Hephaistos fashioned the shield out of four metals: bronze, tin, gold and silver. Three of these metals are applied to a variety of objects represented on the shield: it is likely that Hephaistos used tin for Okeanos on the rim of the shield, for the rim is described as 'marble' and glittering (479f.; cf. 474); tin was applied to the heifers, perhaps to their horns (574); gold perhaps to their bodies (574); the figures of Athena and Ares are distinguished from those of humans by their being rendered in gold and by their size (515); the rich deep ploughland is gold and miraculously darkens to black as it is turned up (449), the two talents laid out in the judgment scene are gold (505), as is the orchard (505); gold swords are suspended from silver belts (598); the herdsmen are rendered in gold (577); and silver is used for the shield strap (480) and to distinguish the vine poles in the gold orchard (563).

Bronze is only employed to distinguish spears in the battle scene on the river banks (534). It is the first metal Hephaistos founds (474). Since all other metals are applied to the shield, the shield itself must be of bronze and beaten out in five layers (481). This divine shield made of bronze is significant for Homer's conception of the world. The first things Hephaistos represents on the shield are (in order) the earth, then ouranos, the sea, sun and the waxing moon, and the stars. Since these elements of the Homeric universe are 'unmarked', they must be bronze—which means that heaven itself and the heavenly bodies are rendered in bronze. There are a number of striking features about this stage of Homer's cosmogony. The sequence in which Hephaistos elaborates a representation of the world is very nearly the sequence of Hesiod's cosmogony in the *Theogony*.

There is a striking verbal similarity between Hesiod's description of the emergence of chaos and Homer's description of how Hephaistos first made the shield upon which he later elaborated earth, heaven, the sea, and finally Ocean:

Ποίει δὲ πρῶτιστα σάκος μέγα τε στιβαρόν τε.

(*Iliad* 18.478)

And he made first a shield both large and sturdy.

ἦτοι μὲν πρῶτιστα Χάος γέενετ'.

(*Theogony* 116)

Well then, first Chaos came to be.¹¹

In the *Theogony*, Gaia comes into being after Chaos (117), produces Ouranos (127), Pontos (131f.), and mating with Ouranos she gives birth to Okeanos (133), and then in another sexual union Theia and Hyperion produce the sun and moon—or Helios and Selene (371). The constellations that Homer goes on to name are not a part of Hesiod's cosmogony, but they are implicit in the epithet for Ouranos—*asteroëis* ('starry', 127).¹² One clear cut difference

between Homer's cosmogony and Hesiod's cosmogony is the fact that the majestic features of Homer's world displayed on the shield of Achilles are earth, the heavens, the sea, and stars, not Gaia, Ouranos, Pontos, Helios and Selene. Where the features of Hesiod's world behave as both persons and places, the main features of the shield of Achilles are no more than places.

Every translator who faces Homer's description of the shield of Achilles is forced to turn poesis into some kind of picture. Alexander Pope's sketch for his illustrator is an example of one such attempt among many.¹³ The two features of the cosmography of the shield on which all illustrators agree are the central disk and the round rim of circumambient Ocean. The rim of Ocean is the last element in Homer's description of the shield of Achilles: 'On the shield he created the great might of Ocean/along the rim of the stoutly made shield at its edge' (18.607f.). Shield makers and the artists who reproduced the shield of Achilles are careful to identify Ocean at the circumference of their shields. A shield of the 'Herzprung' type from Kouklia-Palaipaphos on Cyprus shows a kymation pattern on its outer rim, and as does John Flaxman's recreation of the shield of Achilles in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.¹⁴ The shield was not a flat target, and its raised hemisphere gives a three dimensional *imago mundi*. The vault of heaven is bronze, precisely as Homer describes it.¹⁵ In depicting the massive features of his physical world upon a raised shield, Homer has a clear advantage over the early Ionian mapmakers and their 'circuits of the earth'. Their universe was flat and incised on a bronze tablet.¹⁶ When Aristagoras left Miletos for Sparta to seek support on the Greek mainland for the Ionian revolt, he brought with him a 'bronze tablet with a map of the earth and all of the sea and all of the rivers incised on it' (Herodotos 5.49). Because the shield of Achilles was a raised hemisphere, Homer could show the heavens aloft in a circle above the earth and symmetrical to the Ocean flowing around its rim.

But what lay below the world of Achilles' shield Homer could not describe. Homer in fact knows of Tartaros below.¹⁷ Early in Book 8 of the *Iliad*, Zeus makes a cosmic threat against any of the gods assembled on Olympos attempting to intervene in the battle before Troy. If any god becomes involved in the fighting:

ἢ μιν ἐλὼν ῥίψω ἐς Τάρταρον ἠερόεντα,
τῆλε μάλ', ἤχι βάθιστον ὑπὸ χθονός ἐστι βέρεθρον,
ἐνθα σιδήρειαί τε πύλαι καὶ χάλκεος οὐδός,
τόσσου ἐνερθ' Ἀΐδεω ὄσσου οὐρανός ἐστ' ἀπὸ γαίης.

(*Iliad* 8.13-16)

I will seize him and hurl him down to Tartaros wrapped in mist,
far away, a place where there is a pit deeper than any other,
where there are iron gates and a bronze threshold,
as far from Hades as heaven is from earth.

In this scene on Olympos, Zeus goes on to give the other gods an illustration

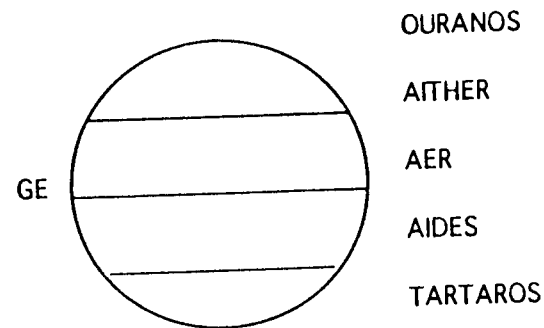


Figure 1 (after H. Erbse, *Scholias Graeca in Homeri Iliadem* ii. 301)

of his power. This illustration depends on a tacit proportional mapping of the universe (17-27). Should all the other gods join together and fasten a golden rope from heaven, they could not pull him down to the earth (17). But if he took a mind to he could take hold of this rope and hoist the earth itself and the sea with it and loop this rope around the peak of Olympos to suspend the entire world: 'By so much am I stronger than gods and men' (27). The conception underlying this cosmic threat is confusing, and Zenodotos athetised lines 25 and 26 for their apparent absurdity.¹⁸ Olympos is itself a mountain on the earth. But, as we shall see, in Hesiod's *Theogony* Gaia can abjure her role as the middle term between Ouranos and Tartaros, and Ouranos is associated with Olympos and Tartara with Gaia (cf. *Th.* 841).

There has been the inevitable temptation to attribute this piece to a poet later than and inferior to the poet of the *Iliad*. But the proportional scheme indicated by the correlatives (*Il.* 8.16f., 27) is arresting, for it points to a complex scheme in which one three tiered proportion is coordinated with a two tiered proportion, and in which the natural world is set in parallel to the divine world. Diagrams seem wrong for an oral poet, but for the modern reader a diagram might clarify the conception underlying Zeus's threat. Despite the unpromising details in the cosmic threat of Zeus, some ancient readers were enterprising enough to draw an illustration of the world that it implies and we have versions of the Figure 1 offered here in mss A and T; and perhaps a visual image is more revealing than the dictionary entries digesting the Homeric conception of the world.¹⁹

There are problems with this version of the world envisaged from Olympos. The gravest of these is the subterranean position of *aer*. Another way of describing the relations of the three levels of the world is to articulate them in a proportional scheme:

I	A	heaven (<i>ouranos</i>)	II	A ¹	Olympos/ <i>ouranos</i>	Zeus
	B	Hades/ <i>earth (gaia)</i>		B ¹	earth	the other gods
	C	Tartaros				

The first column gives the expression of a proportion of distance: Tartaros (C) is as far from Hades (B), as earth (B) from heaven (A). In the second column, the relative power of Zeus (A¹) to that of the other gods (B¹) is aligned on this axis. In the first scheme there is only one divine term—Hades; in the second there are none, but as in the first terms are interchangeable: here they are Olympos and *ouranos*.

What dimly emerges is first a conception of a universe whose centre is equidistant from its extremes on a vertical axis; and there is a symmetry of the extremes: *ouranos* is of bronze, as is the threshold of Tartaros. Then when the initial proportion shifts from the natural world to a conception of the proportion of Zeus's power to that of the other gods the bottom term, Tartaros, is elided, or perhaps it is subsumed under earth, as it is in the chthonology of *Theogony* 725f. and the expression 'nether regions of the earth' (*tartara gaiēs*, 841). And the natural conception of the world is reiterated and threatened as all power is seen to descend from heaven (or Olympos). As we shall see, this proportional scheme has its analogue in the chthonology of Hesiod's *Theogony* (720-25), where the measure of the distances between A and B and B and C is made explicit.²⁰ There is also another point of comparison with Hesiod's *Theogony*: as in this cosmic passage from *Iliad* 8, the successive threats to the world order and Zeus posed by the Titans and Typhoeus have the effect of revealing the order of the world in its hidden complexities.

This passage gives us a unique view of the Homeric world as aligned on a vertical axis. The shield of Achilles gives us a three dimensional view of heaven, earth and ocean. But the rest of this world view is murky. The Homeric world ends in a mysterious west and dusk or *zophos*.²¹ The sun leaves the streams of the river Ocean at the eastern extreme of this world and sets in the gloom of the west. Its compass has no clear north or south. The pygmies to whom the cranes bring death and destruction in their southern migrations are located on the streams of Ocean (*Il.* 3.5), and to the north Kirke marks out for Odysseus the limit of Ocean, where the fog-bound and sunless Kimmerians live (*Od.* 11.13-19). But, however clear it is in its central features and however murky in its penumbra, the world of Homer is a stable world and the fitting subject for cosmography. And thus it has inspired a number of attempts to map it on what can be termed the Hekataios Projection.²²

It is only in *Iliad* 14 and the episode known as 'The Deception of Zeus' that we gain a tantalising sense of its origins. These are, as we have seen, to be discovered in Ocean. Okeanos is described in two phrases. Hera uses the first to describe her fictive trip to visit her family at the ends of the earth (201-302, where Iris repeats Hera's language):

εἶμι γὰρ ὄψομένη πολυφόρβου πείρατα γαίης,
'Ωκεανόν τε, θεῶν γένεσιν, καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν.

(*Iliad* 14.200f.)

I am going to visit the ends of the fertile earth,
and Okeanos, the origin of the gods, and mother Tethys.

The second phrase is that of Sleep, who describes Okeanos as the source of all things (246).²³ This conception of Okeanos as primordial and the origin of the gods (201-302) and of all things (246) does not surface elsewhere in the Homeric epics, and as we have seen it attracted the attention of Plato and Aristotle as they wrote their histories of philosophy.

Since the Homeric passages that represent a view of the world larger than that of the human actors on the plain of Troy are sometimes (and inevitably) taken out of context in order to present Homer as a forerunner of presocratic cosmology, it is worth returning them to their context in the *Iliad*. First we have the descent of Hera from Olympos to the plain of Troy (*Il.* 5.767f.); then the threat of Zeus on Olympos (8.1-27); next the deception of Zeus on Mt Ida (14.153-362, 15.1-366); and finally the shield of Achilles fashioned by Hephaistos on Olympos (18.480-608). All these passages share one feature in common—their divine altitude. From the heights of Olympos, or Gargaros on Ida, or Saoko on Samothrace,²⁴ the world is viewed stretched out under a large and divine perspective. It is from these heights that we gain a glimpse of the world of Hesiod's *Theogony*. Homer was aware of the traditions that are incorporated and ordered in Hesiod's ambitious description of 'the race of the gods', just as Hesiod of the *Theogony* with its Titanomachy and Typhonomachy displays an awareness of how battle is described in the epic.²⁵ Homer's awareness of these theogonic traditions becomes apparent in the cosmic poetry of the *Iliad*. Here his narrative leaves the plains of Troy for the heights on which the gods dwell, and it is from these heights that Okeanos, *gaia*, *ouranos*, Styx, and the Titans are visible, as is the world seen from the heights of Mt Helikon in the distance to the west—'lofty and god haunted Helikon'.

III Hesiod the Cosmologist

1. Hesiodic Philosophy

The ancients did not recognise the modern philosophical map that separates both Homer and Hesiod from the presocratics on the steep divide *vom Mythos zum Logos*.²⁶ Plato, to whom we owe the distinction between *muthos* and *logos*, seems to take both Homer and Hesiod seriously as early natural philosophers. The mysterious lines from the *Iliad* and the episode of the Deception of Zeus which describe Okeanos as the 'genesis' of the gods and the genesis of all things were treated by Sokrates in the *Theaetetus* as evidence that Homer was the first of the natural philosophers who viewed the world as flux.²⁷ In his own history of early Greek philosophy, Aristotle speaks seriously of the thinkers who compared Thales' conception of water as the primary form of matter to the conception discovered in these lines from Homer.²⁸ After Plato and Aristotle there were many philosophers who associated Hesiod and less often Homer

with the *physiologoi* or natural philosophers. And before Plato and Aristotle, and most importantly, there were those of the presocratic philosophers who wrote in dactylic hexameter and associated both Homer and Hesiod with their own theories of the origins of the world and its present state—both in their choice of metre and in the telling and unmistakable allusions to their predecessors. And Plato recognised the connection Parmenides draws between his own cosmogony in the 'Way of Doxa' and Hesiod's *Theogony* when Phaidros quotes Hesiod and then Parmenides' tacit correction to it in *Symposium* 178E.²⁹

But Homer and Hesiod are also segregated from one another and, as they are, Homer is made to stand in isolation as a poet rather than a philosopher. Herakleitos pairs Homer with Archilochos in his invective against the kinds of poets who should be driven from public contests (DK 22 B42); and he associates Hesiod with Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Hekataios in his epigram on their learned ignorance (DK 22 B40). It is true that he singles Homer out for insincere praise as the 'wisest of the Greeks', but only to show how his wisdom is defeated by a child's riddle (DK 22 B56). It is Hesiod whom he takes seriously. He calls him 'Hesiod, the teacher of most'—leaving it unclear whether he means 'of most things' or 'of most men' (DK 22 B57). The teacher of most is also the teacher of a needless plurality, and Herakleitos turns on his blinkered conception of day and night as being distinct and his distinction between lucky and unlucky days with vehement scorn.³⁰ It would seem that in the tacit history of earlier thought to be found in the presocratics Hesiod was the figure who loomed largest as a thinker. And later, the young Epikouros was vexed with Hesiod's conception of chaos, thinking evidently to the axiom that would stand at the head of his physiology: 'nothing comes into being from nothing.'³¹

2. Teleology without Purpose

There is something to be said for the attention later philosophers paid Hesiod. Hesiod's world picture presents the constituent parts of the universe in a number of relations: some are governed by the metaphors of human generation; others are what might be termed parthenogenic. Still others depend on metaphors of place. Gaia, as we have seen, produces Pontos without mating with Ouranos. The sea is a feature of earth herself. But the humanised river Okeanos springs from their union, for like Ouranos himself he is separate from her and defines her. In Hesiod's genealogical metaphor of genesis, that which is primary is 'parent' to that which comes after it and is distinct from it. More important for what develops in the cosmologies of Ionia, there are symptoms of a primitive teleology in the *Theogony*, where we discover the present encoded in the past.

To begin with the first stage of his cosmogony. Chaos comes first. Then comes Gaia, who, with Ouranos, defines the gap that opened with Chaos.³² Gaia defines Chaos and is the first of the race of gods; yet she can be described proleptically as 'the seat of the gods who hold Olympos' (*Th.* 116-18). Interestingly, not all of our witnesses to this text quote line 118.³³ The reason for their omission is readily understandable. The line describes a future state and is not appropriate to the first stage of cosmology in which Gaia fills the

gap in which she is inscribed. The appositional phrase 'the seat of the gods who hold Olympos' is the near equivalent of 'to be the seat of the gods who hold Olympos'. Hesiodic epithets for the gods tend to have the effect of projecting the present back into the past. They are 'anachronistic' only in our linear way of thinking.³⁴

This peculiar teleology without design is apparent in the cosmogony of Hesiod's *Theogony*. Chaos comes into being first; then comes Gaia; then Eros. Gaia does not immediately produce Ouranos; she bears him only after the poet has named Eros:

Γαῖα δέ τοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐγένετο ἴσον ἑωυτῇ
 Οὐρανὸν ἀστερόενθ', ἵνα μιν περὶ πάντα καλύπτοι,
 ὄφρ' εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεί.

(*Theogony* 126-28)

Gaia first produced starry Ouranos,
 equal to her, to confine her all around,
 so that he could be the stable seat for the blessed gods.

Here we have markers in the final conjunctions that make explicit what was only implicit in the appositional phrase describing Gaia as 'forever the seat of all things' in line 117. It was not Gaia's purpose in producing Ouranos to have a brilliant, material hemisphere to contain her on all sides or to provide a new seat for the gods; but for Hesiod this was the end or final development of her producing Ouranos.

In Homer, Olympos, not Ouranos, is the seat of the gods (as for example at *Od.* 6.42), but his language describing Olympos 'where is the seat of the immortals'³⁵ resembles that of Hesiod, except for the function of *hina*. In Homer *hina* is a relative adverb; in Hesiod it and *ophra* are final conjunctions. The world of Homer has become stable and there are only hints in the cosmic poetry of the *Iliad* that it was not always as it is now. The world of Hesiod is one of genesis ending in final stability. His teleology is a teleology without a purpose. Gaia is unlike the demiurge of Plato's *Timaeus* or the God of *Genesis*. She makes nothing.³⁶ Hesiod's teleology resembles rather the teleology of the presocratics and Anaximandros in particular. Its purpose—its end—is explanation, not the discovery of design or a designer. Paul Valéry describes the character of these teleologies without purpose in a brilliant aphorism from his fragmentary essay on Edgar Allen Poe's cosmological poem, *Eureka*: 'All thought concerning the origin of things is never more than a dream version of their actual state, a manner of degenerating the real, a variation on what is.' This aphorism is the epigraph for this essay.³⁷

Anaximandros' *apeiron* has this in common with Hesiod's *khaos*: to imagine the period in the history of this world that preceded the articulation of its mass into *aither*, *aēr*, water and earth the only plausible procedure is degeneration, returning the present to a past that produced it but was its opposite.³⁸ The

aboriginal state of Anaximandros' world was one that lacked the *peirata* or boundaries of his actual world, but in its lack of the articulations of this world it is defined by the limits of this world. The *alpha* privative of the word *apeiron* involves a denial, as the tradition of interpretation preserved in Diogenes Laertius makes clear: 'Anaximandros of Miletos, son of Praxiades, claimed that the origin and primal element of the world is the unlimited and he did not distinguish *aer* or water or anything else' (DL 2.1 = DK 12 A1). The assertion that the *apeiron* is the origin of the limits of the world involves a denial—a denial reflected in Theophrastos' version of Anaximandros' thought (which also seems to inform the passage from Diogenes Laertius): for Anaximandros 'neither water nor any of the so-called elements' made up the primal matter from which the world emerged, but the *apeiron*.³⁹

It is possible to detect in the fragments of Anaximandros a notion of how his conception of the limited masses of the world developed out of the unlimited, and there are a number of sturdy links that allow us to associate Anaximandros' cosmology with that of Hesiod. But Hesiod's conception of *khaos* is a more positive one than Anaximandros' negative *apeiron* or the primordial states of matter imagined by some of the later presocratics. Empedokles' cosmology is cyclic rather than linear, and as he describes the state in which the force of Union (*Philia*) held the elemental masses of *aithēr*, *aēr*, water and earth together, he proclaims: 'At this time the swift limbs of the sun could not be distinguished, nor again the shaggy might of the earth nor the sea' (DK 31 B26.1f.); Diogenes of Apollonia began his book by asserting that everything that is now distinct in this world originated in the same source (DK 64 B1 and 2); and Anaxagoras' book began with the revelation 'All things were together' (DK 59 B1). Other examples of the denial of the precise configuration of the present in the face of the past are plentiful.⁴⁰

The assumption that a primordial confusion of what is now distinct proceeded and developed into the present articulation and organisation of the world is shared by a number of the presocratics and it is stated dramatically in the cosmology of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1.5-7).⁴¹ But their mode of thinking is quite different from that of Hesiod in one respect: Hesiod saw in *khaos* the face of the present; for Hesiod *khaos* was not confusion but the gap that came to be enclosed with the union of Gaia and Ouranos.

Hesiod's cosmology is articulated in three stages. In the first, the elemental masses and features of the physical world come into being, either by sexual union or by association. In the second, the violence of the struggle between Zeus and the Titans threatens to disturb the order of Hesiod's world even as it reveals the complex order of the world as it has evolved. This is the Titanomachy (*Th.* 617-725), which involves the chthonology that describes the realm beneath the earth into which the Titans have been driven by Zeus and the Hundred-Armed (726-819); last comes the final threat to the authority of Zeus and the stability of the world that it symbolised, the Typhonomachy (820-80).

3. *The World of the Titanomachy*

As it first emerges, the world of Hesiod articulates into three distinct elemental masses: to name in sequence earth, heaven, sea is one way of describing them. To name Gaia, Ouranos, Pontos is another. Tartaros is named too (in the neuter plural, *Tartara*, at 119), but in a line excluded by some editors. There is nothing yet that corresponds to the elemental *aithēr* of the Ionians and Empedokles, nor is there any element of fire. Since Earth gave birth to Pontos 'without the passion of sexual union' (132), it is clear that Pontos is a part of Gaia, unlike Ocean, who is the product of her union with Ouranos and distinct from her (133). This arrangement of the world is confirmed both by Hesiod's descriptions of the world as it has become stable and the threats to its stability which all come from the lightning of Zeus. To begin with there are a number of binary pairs. Atlas holds broad heaven aloft at the limits of the earth (517-19), and sea and land are distinguished as two distinctive masses (189, 582). But larger cosmic panoramas open up in two of the most Iliadic episodes of the *Theogony*: the Titanomachy (617-725) and the Typhonomachy (820-80).

In both of these, it is the element of fire, introduced into the poem as it is represented by the lightning shaft of Zeus, that reveals the complex articulations of Hesiod's world as it threatens them. These passages seem the illustration of Herakleitos' aphorism on the cosmic fire that, as it comes upon the world, makes it distinct and intelligible (DK 21 B66). And with fire, human technology and metalworking are noticed in the *Theogony*, and gods and men are brought together on the surface of Gaia.

The battle of gods and Titans on the plain between Orthys and Olympos effects the primal world that had emerged before the Titans and the third generation of gods born of Rhea and Kronos. Pontos, *gē/gaia*, *ouranos*, Olympos, Tartaros and Okeanos are all shaken, and editors waver in the assignment of majuscules for *gaia* and *ouranos*. Zeus casts his blazing shafts of lightning 'from heaven and from Olympos' (689), and blinds the Titans (called *khthonioi*, 697)⁴² on the plain below; the area between the earth and Ouranos/Olympos is 'filled by a divine blaze'. Hesiod's word for this area is *khaos* (700). With the flame Zeus casts down upon the plain of Othrys, not only are the masses of Hesiod's world thrown into confusion, but his text becomes disturbed as the element of *aithēr* enters the *Theogony*:

ἔζεε δὲ χθῶν πάσα καὶ Ὠκεανοῖο ῥέεθρα
πόντος τ' ἀτρυγέτος· τοὺς δ' ἄμφεπε θερμὸς αὐτμῆ
Τιτῆρας χθονίου, φλόξ δ' αἰθέρα διὰν ἴκανε.

697 αἰθέρα Naber: ἠέρα codd. Σ (μετ. τὸν μέγαν αἰθέρα Ζ)

(*Theogony* 695-97)

The whole earth boiled and the streams of Okeanos
and the unharvested sea; and hot breath surrounded
the Titans of earth, and fire reached divine *aithēr*.

In line 697 the manuscripts' reading *ēera* is wrong, as Naber saw,⁴³ for as the translation shows it would describe the flame of Zeus's lightning bolts reaching 'divine *aēr*'—the mist hugging the earth and filling Tartaros. Clearly we should emend to *aithera*. In the *Theogony*, Aither is the son of Night and Erebus (124); but *aither* as a feature of the natural world occurs only here. *Aithēr* in the Titanomachy introduces a new element into the *Theogony*—the pure, high, glittering air later associated with fire. It is at this moment in the *Theogony* that a new opposition emerges under the pressure of the blaze of fire that descends upon the earth from heaven and Olympos and makes the earth (*khthōn*), the streams of Ocean and the sea (all the products of Gaia) boil (695f.). As fire descends to the earth, a scorching heat invades *khaos*, which can only be the area enclosed by heaven and earth, and returns to divine *aithēr*. And *aithēr* is set into opposition to misty Tartaros—that is, Tartaros filled with *aēr*. In this enclosed area a great 'gap' (*khasma*, 740) matches the *khaos* of the Titanomachy (700).

Hesiod's *khaos* has perplexed more students of nature than Epikouros, and it will always be enveloped in some obscurity; but the violence of the Titanomachy brings some of the elements of the world of Hesiod into a greater clarity than they were at the beginning of his cosmology. The original features of his world reappear, and some of them are further developed in his chthonology. As the fire of Zeus threatens the order of the physical world, Hesiod's cosmology is driven backwards. Chaos reappears (as *khaos*, 700) and earth and heaven are threatened with collapse in lines that have long perplexed editors:

εἶσατο δ' ἄντα

ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδεῖν ἢ δ' οὐασιν ὄσσαν ἀκοῦσαι
αὐτως, ὡς ὅτε γαῖα καὶ οὐρανὸς εὐρὺς ὑπερθε
πίλινατο· τοῖος γάρ κε μέγας ὑπὸ δούπος ὀρώρει,
τῆς μὲν ἐρειπομένης, τοῦ δ' ὑψόθεν ἐξεριπόντος.

(*Theogony* 700-04)

It seemed then
for the eye to see or the ears to hear
just as when Earth and broad Heaven above
came together. Such was the crash that would arise
as Earth collapses when Heaven has fallen from on high . . .

The reader would expect the qualification 'just as if', but the formula clearly relates to a past time and the hypothetical statement is introduced only with the modal particle *ke* in line 703.

4. Chthonology

We have seen that in Homer, the West is a place of vagueness;⁴⁴ it is the edge of the earth into which the sun sets and from which darkness wells up after the sun has set. Odysseus expressed the sense of ignorance of the Greek mariner (as contrasted with the knowledge of the divine metal worker on Olympos) as he and his companions make land on Kirke's island, Aiaie. Her island is 'wreathed by the boundless sea' (*Od.* 10.195). In his speech of encouragement to his companions, Odysseus confesses to cosmic ignorance: 'Friends, we do not know the place of darkness (*zophos*), nor the place of dawn, nor the place where the sun that shines under the earth goes beneath the earth/nor where it rises on its return' (10.190-93). The world beneath the earth, associated in Homer with Hades (*Il.* 8.13-16), was a realm of conjecture, and the conjecture recognised by both Homer and Hesiod was that it bore an exact proportion to the visible and bounded world.

As with almost every passage we must examine to recreate a mapping of the world of Hesiod, his chthonology (720-819) has been credited to one or more interpolators. But the function of this long section of the *Theogony* is clear: it discloses the nature of the invisible and infernal half of the world. The Titans, who had been described as earth-bound (*khthonioi*, 697) as they fought on the plain of Othrys, are driven under the earth and bound there in their defeat (717)—as far beneath the earth as heaven is from earth (721-25). This proportional scheme is recognised in Homer (*Il.* 8.13-16); and recognised only to be denied by Xenophanes.⁴⁵ In Hesiod, the proportional distances are made precise by an illustration: it takes ten days and nights for a bronze anvil to fall from heaven to earth, and ten for it to fall from earth to Tartaros (721-25). The exactitude of the proportion is striking, and the example is striking itself. In Homer (*Il.* 1.592f.) it takes an entire day for Hephaistos to fall from Olympos to Lemnos. Then there is the anvil; it is bronze. The adjective 'bronze' (*khalkeos*) occurs here for the first time in the *Theogony*. Ouranos is great, broad and starry, but not bronze. Metals and metalworking now become important to the world: Gaia produced the Kyklopes (Brontes, Steropes and Arges) who gave thunder to Zeus (who was unborn when they were born) and fashioned the lightning bolt (139-41; cf. 501-06). Metals are prominent in Hesiod's chthonology and then in his Typhonomachy. A bronze fence (*herkos*) is built around Tartaros and about this wall Night is poured in triple folds—'about its neck'. (By contrast, the roots of the earth and sea are said to 'grow' above it.) Poseidon has placed giant bronze doors upon it, and a wall encircles it. And here are the springs and limits of dark earth, of misty Tartaros, of the sea, and of starry heaven (726-28).

We will return to these nether limits of the earth at the end of this essay. What calls for attention now is the appearance of bronze: the bronzesmith Poseidon, the 'throat' of Tartaros and the new conception of a world of four elemental masses. This hateful region Hesiod describes as a great gap (*khasma meg'*, 740)—words which clarify the obscure description of night being poured

around the 'neck of Tartaros'. Just as there is a gap between earth and heaven (700), so there is a gap between earth and Tartaros. The visible and known allows the poet to frame a conception of the invisible and unknown. Hesiod describes three of these elemental masses in familiar terms—Tartaros is misty (736; cf. 119); the sea is 'unharvested' (*atrygetos*); heaven is filled with stars (737); but earth, which has been distinguished from *khthōn*, is now, described in her nether aspect, gloomy (736). Up to this point, the epithets for earth had been 'black' (69), 'broad-breasted' (117), 'of many seeds' (365), 'limitless' (187; cf. 878), 'giant' (159, 479, 505; cf. 821, 858, 881), but her chthonic aspect had been registered only once as 'gloomy' (334). Here the adjective *eremnos* is clearly chosen to describe the subterranean dwelling of the snake guarding the golden apples of the Hesperides to the extreme west.

The oppositions are quite sharp here: the surface of the earth can be described as black, broad-breasted, great or giant; its interior as gloomy or like *erebos*. The mists of Tartaros (given the epithet *ēeroeis* in 736) contrast with the *aithēr* above (697). Here are the dwellings of murky Night wrapped in sable blue clouds (744f.). And associated with Night is Atlas, supporting broad heaven with head and hands, and standing at a place where the paths of Night and Day draw near and where they can address one another as Night enters the bronze threshold and Day leaves (746-55). Atlas has already been noticed in the *Theogony* as the son of Iapetos and the Okeanid, Klymene (509); but he is evoked again as Hesiod recounts the fate of his brother Menoitios, whom Zeus strikes with his thunderbolt and drives to the realm of darkness—*cis Erebos* (510-15). Erebos calls for the description of Atlas, who 'compelled by strong necessity, holds up wide heaven/at the limits of the earth, near the Hesperides of sweet voices' (517f.). Only the particle *de* marks the transition from Erebos to Atlas, but the connection seems clear: Erebos, the realm of darkness, is conceived as lying to the West in the region of Ocean and the setting sun. It seems too that when Hesiod returns to Atlas he has this connection in mind, for Atlas is described immediately after Hesiod has described the dwellings of night (744-48).

Many are the personifications that inhabit the dwellings of Night. Styx, the oldest daughter of Ocean, is to be found there. The potency of her subterranean waters for oaths taken by the gods is recognised, as it is by Hera in the oath she takes before Hypnos (the son of Night) in *Iliad* 14.271. One feature of the 'famous dwellings' of Styx calls for attention as we approach the world disclosed by the final threat to the supremacy of Zeus in the Typhonomachy: silver columns support the roof of her rock cave 'positioned towards heaven' (778f.). And there is another metal named in this passage: gold. Iris carries the waters of the Styx up to Olympus *en khruṣēi prokhoōi* ('in a golden jug', 785). Under the violent pressure of the threat of the Titans to the supremacy of Zeus, the world of Hesiod reveals depths only glimpsed in the two scenes that were preluded to the Titanomachy: Zeus's defeat of Kronos and liberation of the gods from beneath the earth, and the despatch of Menoitios to Erebos. The scholia to the *Theogony* carry no illustrations, but it is tempting to construct

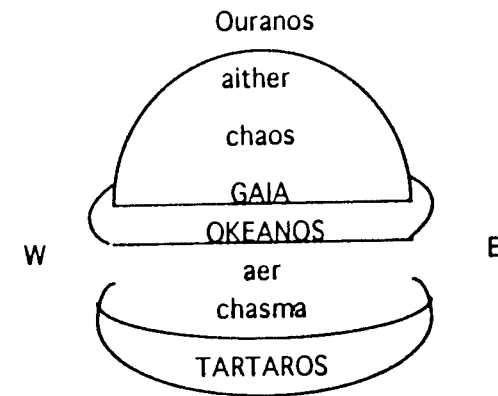


Figure 2: An elevation of the world of Hesiod

an illustration of the symmetrical structure of the world of Hesiod along a vertical axis. In offering Figure 2, I am well aware of the verdict Charles Kahn reached about Hesiod's description of Tartaros: 'It would be hopeless to draw a diagram to accompany such a description.'⁴⁶ The situation is certainly true for Tartaros itself. How, for example, should the illustrator show Night 'wrapped in three rows' around the enclosure of Tartaros (*Th.* 726f.)? Only the lines describing these three rows as surrounding the 'neck' of Tartaros suggest that Tartaros might be circular—or something corresponding to H.G. Evelyn-White's 'neck-circlet'.⁴⁷ There must be entrances to this bronze enclosure to West and East (*Th.* 748-57), but the full elevation of Hesiod's world picture is intelligible in its massive symmetries and proportions and these can be illuminated by an elevation of an Egyptian cosmography (Figure 3). In the Hesiodic world picture, Ouranos encloses Gaia on all sides (*min peri pasan eergoi*, 127) and is equal to Gaia (126); a bronze enclosure (*khalkeon herkos*) is constructed around

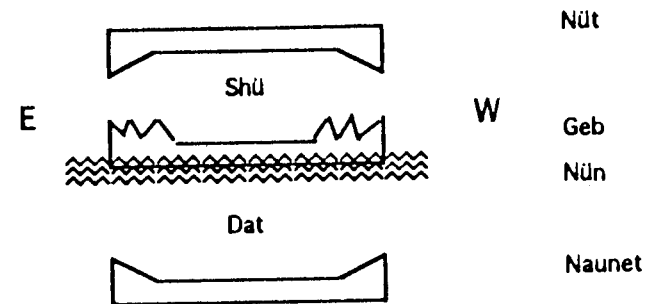


Figure 3 (after J. A. Wilson, *Before Philosophy*, p. 55)

Tartaros. Chaos is enclosed by Gaia and Ouranos (700); a great chasm (*khasma meg'*) opens up between Gaia and Tartaros. And Ouranos is precisely as far from Gaia as Gaia is from Tartaros.

5. *The World of the Typhonomachy*

There is a simile in the *Iliad* to introduce the conception of the world disclosed by Hesiod's description of the last challenge to the cosmic supremacy of Zeus. This challenge comes from the last of the sons of Gaia and her only son by her latest husband, Tartaros. The simile from the *Iliad* is earth-bound. The Achaian forces described in the Catalogue of Ships march out in formation:

Οἱ δ' ἄρ' ἴσαν ὡς εἶτε πυρὶ χθῶν πάσα νέμοιτο·
 γαῖα δ' ὑπεστενάχιζε Διὶ ὡς τερπικεραύνῳ
 χωμένῳ, ὅτε τ' ἀμφὶ Τυφῳεὶ γαῖαν ἰμάσση
 εἰν Ἀρίμοις, ὅθι φασὶ Τυφῳέος ἔμμεναι εὐνάς·
 ὡς ἄρα τῶν ὑπὸ ποσσὶ μέγα στεναχίζετο γαῖα
 ἐρχομένων· μάλα δ' ὤκα διέπρησσον πεδῖοιο.

(*Iliad* 2.780-85)

And now they began to move, as if flame licked the entire earth,
 and the earth groaned in response, as if to Zeus in his anger,
 Zeus who delights in lightning, when he lashed the earth and
 engulfed Typhoeus,
 in Arima, where legend places the lair of Typhoeus.
 Just so, under the feet of the moving army, the earth groaned,
 and quickly and loudly did they make their way across the
 plain.

It is appropriate to begin this treatment of the Typhonomachy by noticing this simile in the *Iliad* and to end by noticing a simile in the *Odyssey*. The emergence of snake-like Typhoeus from Gaia comes as the last offence to Zeus, who had received his thunder, lightning bolt and lightning flash from the Kyklopes, once he had liberated them from their bondage inside the earth (*Th.* 501-06). The end of Gaia's fertility comes as the end of threats to the rule of Zeus 'over gods and men'. It also comes at the last moment we see the articulations of the world of Hesiod and the last episode of Cosmic Disturbance.⁴⁸

The Typhonomachy (*Theogony* 820-80) seems to replicate the earlier Titanomachy, and for this reason (and others) it has come under editorial suspicion.⁴⁹ It can be said in justification that the Typhonomachy necessarily follows on Hesiod's chthonology and comes as the end and conclusion of the history begun with Gaia's union with Ouranos. Typhoeus is the last of her sons.

The battle scene of Zeus on high on Olympos casting his lightning down upon the earth and Typhoeus resembles that of the Titanomachy (especially in lines 696-700). And it resembles the simile we have noticed from Homer's

Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2 (*Th.* 853-58). Once again, the great members of the world tremble at the sound of thunder: earth, wide heaven above, the sea, the streams of Okeanos, and the nether regions of the earth (839-41). But there are two features of the Typhonomachy that present novelties. One is small, but significant: Tartaros is described as 'wide' (868), and this epithet reinforces the symmetry of Tartaros and 'wide Ouranos' (cf. Figure 2). But most remarkably there is an ambitious simile, the third and last of the *Theogony*. Hesiod's comparison runs as follows: the flame that flares out from the body of Typhoeus as he is struck by the lightning of Zeus in the deep mountain glens causes the huge earth to burn and melt:

κασσίτερος ὡς
 τέχνη ὑπ' αἰζηῶν ἐν εὐτρήτοις χροάνοις
 θαλφθείς, ἢ ἐ σίδηρος, ὃ περ κρατερώτατός ἐστιν,
 οὔρεος ἐν βήσσησι δαμαζόμενος πυρὶ κηλέῳ
 τήκεται ἐν χθονὶ δίῃ ὑφ' Ἡφαίστου παλάμησιν.

(*Theogony* 862-66)

like tin,
 when it has been heated by the skill of strong workmen
 in a carefully perforated crucible, or iron, a metal harder to
 melt,
 as in mountain glens it is subdued by fire
 and melts in the earth divine, under the skill of Hephaistos.

The first of the similes of the *Theogony* likens the troubles that come from women to a swarm of bees (594-602), and the second likens the effects of Zeus's lightning on earth to the collapse of earth and heaven (700-05). This third one is remarkable for being drawn from the world of human technology, not the world of nature. It is in this respect reminiscent of the two similes Odysseus invokes in the *Odyssey* to describe how he blinded the Kyklops. He and four of his men turned a stake of still incandescent olive wood in the socket of the Kyklops' eye, as two shipwrights turn a drill on a ship's plank; and his eye sizzled as when a blacksmith tempers the great blade of an axe or an adze in cold water (9.384-95).

The incongruity of the Homeric simile—as vivid as it is—comes from the fact that it seems to recognise a tradition concerning the Kyklopes as metal workers not found elsewhere in Homer's *Odyssey*. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, the Kyklopes are associated with fire and the working of metals. Gaia and Ouranos produce the three Kyklopes (Brontes, Steropes and Arges), who give thunder to Zeus and fashion for him the lightning bolt: 'strength, power, and skill they applied to their work' (*Th.* 139-45). What this means is made clear as Zeus frees the Kyklopes, called Ouranides, from their bonds, and they give him lightning and its attributes in return. These huge Gaia had 'hidden before' (*Th.* 501-05).

In the last cosmic battle of the *Theogony*, Gaia and Ouranos are united, as

they were in the beginning of time. The element of fire, present in the earth as well as in heaven, reveals not only the metals named in Hesiod's chthonology, but the working of metals, both by Hephaistos on Olympos and by mortals working in the wooded hollows of the earth. The anvil that falls from Ouranos to Gaia and from Gaia to Tartaros seems the emblem for what is introduced in the last stage of Hesiod's theogony. We know of only one anvil in heaven. It belongs to Hephaistos and we discover it in his workshop on Olympos (*Il.* 18.476; *Od.* 8.274). Humankind is not a part of Hesiod's history of the race of the gods in his *Theogony*, but human technology becomes a part of Hesiod's history of the gods as the recesses of the earth are revealed in Titanomachy, chthonology and Typhonomachy. Bronze, silver, gold, tin and iron. Four of these metals describe Hesiod's history of the ages of man, down to his own, in the *Works and Days* (106–201). The metal working of a god and of anonymous human smiths is acknowledged in the simile conveying the effect of Zeus's lightning on the body of Typhoeus.

Hesiod does not explain the emergence of humankind in his theogony. The Muses on Olympos entertain the gods with a song of 'the race of men and mighty Giants' (*Th.* 50), but this is not the song of Hesiod in the *Theogony*. The existence of humans and the condition of their earth-bound mortality is recognised in the poem as gods and men are on the one hand joined in the formula for Zeus ('father of gods and men') and on the other separated in the fixed contrasts between gods (unmortal, who have their home in heaven) and men (mortal, who live upon the earth). Revealingly, gods and men are united and without a history or an explanation in the episode of judgement and Promethean sacrifice at Mekone—a passage that carries the Heraklitean suggestion that gods can be described as mortal (*athanatoi thnētoi: thnetoi athanatoi*, 'immortals [are] mortals, mortals immortals', DK 22 B50):

καὶ γὰρ ὄτ' ἐκρίνοντο θεοὶ θνητοὶ τ' ἀνθρώποι
Μηκῶνῃ

(*Theogony* 535f.)

For when the gods and mortal men were coming to arbitration
at Mekone . . .

Here we have Hesiod's etiology for the origin of woman in the retribution Zeus devised for Prometheus' theft of fire, an element that clearly belongs in heaven and not upon the earth (*Th.* 558–69 and 570–612), although fire is clearly present and without apology to humans on earth as a means of sacrifice (*Th.* 556f.). Hephaistos brings this creation of his plastic art 'to the place where the other gods and men were' (586). And both the gods immortal and mortal men are seized by amazement (588). Hesiod does not tell us how gods and mortals became separate. Their ancient union is suggested by the arrangement by which the immortal gods and mortal men are juxtaposed:

θαῦμα δ' ἔχ' ἀθανάτους τε θεοὺς θνητοὺς τ' ἀνθρώπους.

(*Theogony* 588)

And wonder possessed both immortal gods and mortal men.

This primitive association of mortals and immortals is clearly indicated by the line from the *Works and Days* that serves to link Hesiod's narrative of Prometheus' career with his history of the races of men, in which he asserts:

ὡς ὁμόθεν γεγάασι θεοὶ θνητοὶ τ' ἀνθρώποι.

(*Works and Days* 108)

. . . that gods and mortal men have come to be from the same source.

Fire is a distinguishing element in the world of Hesiod, and it resembles the fire (*krinomenon pur*) that distinguishes male from female in Empedokles' *On Nature* (DK 31 B62.2). It enters the *Theogony* with Hesiod's tale of Zeus and Prometheus and returns in the Titanomachy. It makes its last appearance in the simile describing the effects of celestial fire on Typhoeus. Yet this simile also suggests, as Hesiod had suggested already when he described Gaia as concealing the thunder and lightning flash of Zeus (*Th.* 504f.), that Gaia herself contains fire. The conception of Earth containing volcanic fire and its thundering explosions is probably in the background of this description,⁵⁰ and Tzetzes seems to have read *Aitnēs* ('of Aitna') instead of the adjective *aīdnēs* ('hidden') at *Theogony* 860, giving us a source of subterranean fire in Mt Aitna. The presence of this subterranean fire disrupts the neat conceptual mapping of the world attempted in Figures 1 and 2. Gaia, who lies at the origin of all that is recognisable and distinct in the world of Hesiod's *Theogony*, still contains elements that had become distinct in the evolution of the world: fire and metals, gods and men. She remains, even as Hesiod's world rises in its three tiered elevation, 'common to all' (in the words of Poseidon in *Iliad* 15.193).

6. *The Ends of the Earth*

Gaia seems clearly defined at the beginning of the *Theogony*. She produces Ouranos to confine her completely and as equal to her. Whatever Gaia's shape is, it is defined by the enclosure of Ouranos. This is a tidy arrangement, and it has been recognised as the precursor of the geometrical and proportional world of Anaximandros.⁵¹ And for good reason. In its elevation it bears a strict symmetry and proportion of its parts (as shown in Figure 2). But if the world of Hesiod is reduced in a 'round plan', Ouranos and Tartaros are occluded from view. From Hesiod's *Theogony* we have no precise notion of the shape of Okeanos; it is not represented as a circle drawn around Gaia, as it is on the shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18.607f.) and in the Hesiodic shield of Herakles (*SH* 314–17). But Hesiod's epithet for Okeanos, 'backward flowing' (*Th.* 776), answers to the epithets for Okeanos in *Iliad* 18.399 and *Odyssey* 20.65, and the noun phrase *teleentos potamoio* ('the river that completes its circle', *Th.* 242) represents the

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same conception. And in the *Theogony*, one of his daughters bears the speaking name Amphirho, or 'she who flows around' (360). Then Gaia has limits, both as she extends horizontally to the West (335 and 622) and as she reaches downward to Tartaros (731). The image created by attending to these details (and neglecting others) is that of a bounded world with clear limitations to the masses that make it up. It is a world of limits (*peirata*) and extremes (*eskhata*), and its definition helps us understand the world picture of Anaximandros and Xenophanes, who deny its limitations.

But the world of Hesiod, conceived of as a ground plan, oddly resists any elegant depiction in terms of limited world masses. In Homeric and Hesiodic Greek *peirai* (plural *peirata*) means 'boundary', or 'limit', or, in temporal extension, 'cut-off point'. Its negation is *apeirōn*, or more rarely *apeiritos* (or *apeirosios*)—'unlimited', 'unbounded'. And, incredibly, we find that both the earth and the sea (*gaia* and *pontos*) are described as 'boundless'; and earth is elsewhere described (as is the sea surrounding Kirke's island in the *Odyssey*) as *apeiritos* (*Th.* 878; cf. *Od.* 10.195).⁵²

How can one and the same poet speak of the limits of the earth and in the same poem describe both the earth and the sea that Gaia produced parthenogenically as *apeirōn* or *apeiritos*? One sign-post to a way of understanding this apparent contradiction is to notice the contexts in which the epithet *apeirōn* describes *gaia* in the *Theogony*. In *Theogony* 187 the expression *ep' apeirona gaian*, 'upon the limitless earth', is given as the location where the Melian Nymphs are so called. (A very similar formula, *kat' apeirona gaian* ['throughout the limitless earth'] is used in connection with the employment of the term *hēmitheoi* ['half-gods'] in *Works and Days* 160.) And in *Theogony* 878 the winds are described as destroying the labours of 'earth-born' (*khamaigeneōn*) men *kata gaian apeirion*, 'throughout the limitless earth'. In these passages we have descended to the earth of mortal men and the human perspective of Odysseus lost in some part of the 'limitless sea' (*Od.* 10.195). The elegance of the elevation of Hesiod's cosmography disappears into confusion as he moves to the earth and away from heaven.

The map of his world is not that geometrical and circumscribed production of the Ionian mapmakers. It resembles more closely the Babylonian Map of the World we have already noticed in passing. This tablet (Figure 4) displays the world known to the Babylonians of the new empire (c. 600 B.C.). It shows a circle of the 'Bitter River' and the Euphrates river leading down to an oblong plan of Babylon. The hole in its centre was probably produced by the point of a compass. The world inscribed by this compass is not self contained, for at the edges of the 'Bitter River' stand six—or perhaps eight—triangles that surmount the circumference of what the Greeks would call Okeanos. They designate outlying districts. The cuneiform text surrounding these triangles, and included in them, makes it clear that these districts contain fantastic creatures that flank the world of Babylon in all directions.⁵³

The Babylonian Map of the World is different from a mapping of Hesiod's

THE WORLD OF HESIOD

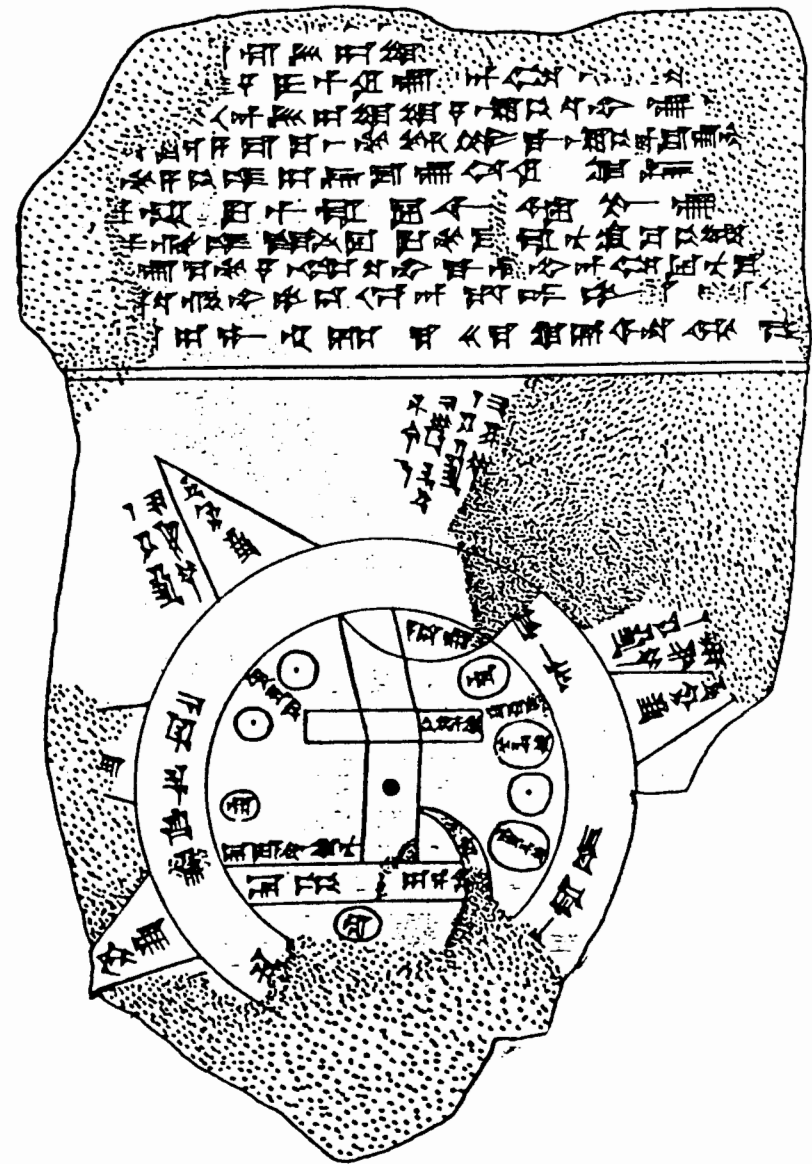


Figure 4 (from *Cuneiform Texts* 22 Plate 48 [BM 92687])

world on a ground plan in one respect: we can place triangles representing fantastic districts only to the West, 'beyond famed Okeanos' (*perēn klutou Ōkeanoio*, *Th.* 215). Okeanos, since it is conceived of as a river, should have an outer bank.⁵⁴ It is here somewhere on this outer bank, or in waters 'beyond famed Okeanos', that Hesiod locates the Hesperides, daughters of Night (*Th.* 215). Here too he places the Gorgons 'who dwell beyond glorious Okeanos, towards night, at the ends of the world, where live the Hesperides of sweet voices' (*Th.* 274f.). The only human (or hero) to penetrate this region is Herakles, who crosses the passage (*poros*) of Okeanos to discover the cattle of Eurytion in a misty enclosure, beyond famed Okeanos (289-294). All of these projections of the known world beyond Okeanos are to the West; two involve Herakles, who is the only human to figure in this stage of the *Theogony*. All three phrases are designations of the limits of human experience. All abolish the limits of Gaia and Okeanos and give us Hesiod's equivalent of Anaximandros' *apeiron* in that they deny the established limits of the world. But these realms to the West are not to be discovered in the history of Hesiod's *Theogony*; they are intelligible only in the song of the Muses of Olympos, who sing of 'the race of men and mighty Giants' (*Th.* 50), and only once the world of men had come into being upon the earth.

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NOTES

1. As a title, it is familiar from A.R. Burn's historical study (devoted mainly to the *Works and Days*), *The World of Hesiod* (London 1936).
2. Another way of describing the shift from the Muses of Helikon to those of Olympos is to say, with Gregory Nagy, that Hesiod is leaving the local traditions and inspiration of Boiotia for the 'pan-Hellenic' perspective of Olympos. See G. Nagy, 'Hesiod and the Poetics of Pan-Hellenism', in *Greek Mythology and Poetics* (Ithaca and London 1990), 36-84; cf. also his contribution to this volume, pp. 119f and 128 n.8 above.
3. In the poem of the *Theogony*, we find two versions of the scope of the knowledge of the Muses. In the first (32), they are said to impart to the poet their knowledge of the future and the past. This would exclude their inspiration for a work devoted to the present like the *Works & Days*. But in the musicology of the second (38), the Muses of Olympos are said to know 'the present, the future and the past' (like Khalkas at *Il.* 1.70).
4. Although Homer himself recognises the possibility of epic poetry concerning the gods in Demodokos' 'Lay of Ares and Aphrodite' (*Od.* 8.266-366) and indeed in the scenes describing the divinities of Olympos in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; and likewise Hesiod recognises epic poetry that has men as its subject (*Th.* 99-101, *W&D* 161-65). For the range of early hexameter poetry, see Jenny Strauss Clay, *The Politics of Olympus: Form and Meaning in the Major Homeric Hymns* (Princeton 1989), 4f.
5. The motivation of the goddesses Hera, Athena and Aphrodite is only glanced at in *Iliad* 24.25-30, and the instability of Zeus's rule on Olympos and the fate of Kronos are glancingly recalled in *Iliad* 1.396-406, 503f., and 586-94. Going further back in time, Homer recognises Typhoeus (*Il.* 2.782f.), in a simile reminiscent of the *Theogony* (cf. pp.146-49 below). The Titans called *hypotartarioi* (*Th.* 851) are invoked in Hera's oath to Hypnos (*Il.* 14.271-79).
6. *Theaetetus* 154E; cf. *Cratylus* 402B and Aristotle *Metaphysics* A 3.983b27.
7. The reader can now turn to J. J. Kearney and R. Lambertson, *Homer's Ancient Readers* (Princeton 1992), as well as Lambertson, *Homer the Theologian: Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London 1986), for an account

of the major part of the history of Homer's salvation as a serious poet in antiquity. The claim of Strabo that Homer was the first to enter his field of philosophical geography is made at the outset of his work (1.1-11).

8. Bronze: *Iliad* 5.504, 17.425 and *Odyssey* 3.2; iron: *Odyssey* 15.329, 17.565. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, Ouranos (or *ouranos*) is not bronze, but it is as we shall see solid. The Hebrew analogues to the Greek conception of heaven as a solid and metallic dome are adduced by John Pairman Brown, 'Cosmological Myth and the Tuna of Gibraltar', *TAPA* 99 (1968), 37-46.

9. *Iliad* 18.167f. = G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge 1983), passage 4.

10. Perhaps by Krates of Mallos. The history of the ancient interpretations of the shield is ably written by P.R. Hardie, 'Imago-Mundi: Cosmological and Ideological Aspects of the Shield of Achilles', *JHS* 105 (1985), 11-22.

11. I cite Hesiod from Friedrich Solmsen, *Hesiodi Theogonia, Opera et Dies, Scutum* (Oxford 1970), and refer throughout to the commentaries of M.L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony* (Oxford 1966) and *Hesiod: Works and Days* (Oxford 1978).

12. The stars and heaven are included in the program of the invocation to the Muses of Olympos in 105-110, but 108-110 are considered by some editors to be later interpolations.

13. *The Iliad of Homer*, edited by Maynard Mack in *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, Volume VIII (New Haven and London 1967), Plate 18. Another version is that of Malcolm M. Willcock, *A Companion to the Iliad* (Chicago 1976), 210 (reproduced in J. B. Harley and D. Woodward [eds.], *The History of Cartography* 1 [Chicago and London 1987], 131, Fig. 8.1).

14. Illustrated by Heide Borchhardt in *Archaeologia Homerica: Frühe griechische Schildformen* (Göttingen 1977), 40, Fig. d; similar is Flaxman's shield of Achilles, illustrated in Klaus Fittschen, *Archaeologia Homerica: Der Schild des Achilleus* (Göttingen 1973), Table VI Fig. a.

15. 'Heaven of layers of bronze' as it is described in *Iliad* 5.504.

16. One possible illustration of the flat pinax on which a compass-drawn earth is incised is the fragment of the Babylonian map of the world (sixth to fourth century B.C.), shown by Charles H. Kahn in *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* (New York and London 1960), 88 Plate I, and Harley and Woodward (n.13 above), 114 Fig. 6.10. See pp. 149-52 below.

17. In Hera's infernal oath to Hypnos (Sleep) in *Iliad* 14.277-79 she swears by the gods beneath Tartaros who are called Titans, while Hypnos (271-76) mentions the gods 'below' who live with Kronos and the waters of Styx, described in *Theogony* 775-79.

18. H. Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem* (Berlin 1969-), ii.301.

19. These are to be found in E. Buchholz, *Die homerischen Realien*, Vol. 1 (Leipzig 1871) s.vv. Himmel, Aether, Luft, Hades (Erebus), Tartaros and Okeanos. There are in fact drawings to illustrate this scheme in the scholia to A and T, and Figure 1 below is a composite of these.

20. A striking parallel to these proportional schemes laid out along a vertical axis is the Egyptian triad of Nüt - Geb - Naunet, with Geb equidistant from the overarching goddess Nüt above and the waters of Naunet below. This is illustrated by J.A. Wilson in H. and H.A. Frankfort, J.A. Wilson and T. Jacobson, *Before Philosophy: The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Harmondsworth 1949), 55. For the sky hieroglyph *pet* (Gardner's N1), there are convenient illustrations in Richard H. Wilkinson, *Reading Egyptian Art* (London 1992), 126f. A version of this scheme is given in Figure 2 on page 145 below.

21. Strabo 3.6.

22. Here Ginn & Co comes to serve with its 'The Geography of Homer' in its *Classical Atlas* (Boston 1886), 2f. (for which I thank my colleague John Younger).

23. That the poet has the vague neuter plural in mind is suggested by the phrase *andrasin ēde theois* ('for gods and men') in the added line (246a) known to Plutarch (*De facie* 938D). In this line the ambiguities of the neuter plural are resolved in a clear statement of just what originates in Okeanos.

24. *Iliad* 13.10-31; cf. Strabo 10.457. This is now Fengari and according to the *Guide Bleu* it is possible for a human to see even today the plain of Troy from its peak at 1,600m. above sea level.

25. Robert Mondì, 'Tradition and Innovation in Hesiod's Titanomachy', *TAPA* 116 (1986), 25-48, provides a convenient conspectus of some of the similarities between the Titanomachy of *Theogony* 617-720 and battle scenes from the *Iliad*.

26. G. J. G. Wilson, *Mythology in Vom Mutter zum Leber?* (Stuttgart 1975), 21-52.

27. *Iliad* 14.201 = 14.302 = Kirk, Raven & Schofield (n.9 above), passage 10; cf. *Theaetetus* 152E. Sokrates' historical construction makes Protagoras a philosopher who shares the views not only of Herakleitos (DK 22 B12 and B91) and Empedokles (DK 31 B26.10-11), but also of the representatives of the two main genres of dramatic poetry—Epicharmos of comedy (DK 23 B2—an argument developed in the Hellenistic period as the 'growing argument': A.A. Long and D. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* [Cambridge 1987], passage 28A) and Homer for tragedy.

28. *Metaphysics* A 3.983b27-984a. His allusion—despite the plural—is clearly to Plato and Sokrates' sweeping gesture in *Theaetetus* 152E; cf. J.B. McDiarmid, 'Theophrastos and Presocratic Causes', *HSCP* 61 (1953), 85-156.

29. Phaidros quotes *Theogony* 116-18 and 120. He also brings the cosmologist Akousilaos into agreement with both Hesiod and Parmenides on the antiquity of Eros in the formation of the world; cf. Parmenides DK 28 B11 (with Aristotle *Metaphysics* A 4. 984b23) and Akousilaos DK 9 B2. Hesiod and Parmenides are once again paired in *Symposium* 195C.

30. He has in mind *Theogony* 123f. and 748-57 for the distinction between day and night, and for lucky and unlucky days, *Works and Days* 765-828.

31. Diogenes Laertius 10.2 and 38.

32. It will be clear that I accept the interpretation of Chaos proposed by F.M. Cornford, 'A Ritual Basis for Hesiod's *Theogony*', in *The Unwritten Philosophy* (Cambridge 1950), 98, endorsed by Kirk in Kirk, Raven and Schofield (n.9 above), 36-39.

33. Plato *Theaetetus* 152E, Aristotle *Physics* 208b30 and Sextus 9.8 all cite the text without line 118.

34. West *Theogony* (n.11 above) has a number of telling observations about these proleptic epithets, especially on the phrase 'through the plans of great Zeus' to describe the fate of Kronos even before Zeus had been born.

35. *Iliad* 5.360, 8.456.

36. Cf. *Timaeus* 29E-30C and *Genesis* 1.4.

37. From *Morceaux choisis: Prose & Poésie* (Paris 1930), 123.

38. Friedrich Solmsen has successfully attempted to remedy the tenuousness of the connections that have often been made between *khaois* in Hesiod and Anaximandros' *apeiron* in 'Chaos and *Apeiron*', *SIFC* 24 (1950), 235-48 (repr. in his *Kleine Schriften* I [Hildesheim 1968], 68-81).

39. Theophrastos is preserved in Simplicius' commentary to Aristotle's *Physics* 24.13 = DK 12 A9. The elemental theories denied in Theophrastos' version of Anaximandros' thought are broken up in the prism of Aristotle's history of the *physiologoi* in *Metaphysics* A, as is clear from McDiarmid (n.28 above); see too Kahn (n.16 above), 32f.

40. As in the cosmology of Diodorus Siculus 1.7.1; Aristophanes *Birds* 694; Euripides fr. 484 Nauck²; Apollonios of Rhodes *Argonautica* 1.496-500.

41. ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum
unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe,
quem dixere Chaos, rudis indigestaque moles.

Before sea and lands and heaven which covers all,
nature had but one face in the whole orb,
which they called Chaos, an unwrought and unseparated mass.

42. This epithet (from the passage cited below) has caused much perplexity. Despite the explicit reference to *khthōn* two lines before, West *Theogony* (n.34 above, ad 697) and Mondì (n.25 above, 41-47) take the word to indicate that the Titans are beneath the earth, not on it.

43. But he made no argument: *Mnemosyne* 4 (1855), 207. Cf. West's *apparatus*, here quoted: *Theogony* (n.11 above), 137.

44. Illustrated perhaps by the recreation of the world map of Hekataios of Abdera in Dorothea Gray's article, *Seewesen in Archæologia Homerica* 1 G (Göttingen 1974), 3.

45. DK 21 B28 = Kirk, Raven and Schofield (n.9 above), passage 180. According to the doxography, Anaximandros calculated that the depth of the earth was 1/3 its diameter, *op. cit.* passage 122 A (DK 12 A25) and B (Hippol. *Ref.* 1.6.3 from DK 12 A11) and Kirk, Raven and Schofield are probably right in bringing Anaximandros within Xenophanes' sights, especially since Xenophanes invokes the term *apeiron* to express his scepticism about attempts to state the limits of the world. For references see *op. cit.* passages 175, 179, and 186-189.

46. Kahn (n.16 above), 82.

47. Hesiod, *The Homeric Hymns, and Homerica* (Cambridge MA and London 1914).

48. As Robert Mondì (n.25 above, 43) has named the theme.

49. West *Theogony* (n.11 above), ad 381-83, gives a useful conspectus of the arguments against its being organic to the *Theogony*, as well as his own strong reasons for treating it as organic and necessary.

50. As West suggests in *Theogony* (n.11 above), ad 505. Mt Aitna is sighted in the *periodos ges* of the Boreades in Hesiod fr. 120.25 MW.

51. Particularly by Gregory Vlastos, 'Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies', *CPh* 42 (1947), 156-78, repr. in D.J. Furley and R.E. Allen (eds.), *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy I* (London 1970), 59-61; cf. esp. 75 and n.101.

52. *Theogony* 187 and 878; cf. *Works and Days* 160.

53. Cf. n.13 above. For the map itself, see B. Meissner, 'Babylonische und griechische Landkarten', *Klio* 19 (1925), 97ff., and Eckhard Unger, 'From Cosmos Picture to World Picture', *Imago Mundi* 2 (1937), 1-7. There might possibly be a parallel to the triangles radiating out from the Babylonian Map of the World in the eight triangles radiating out from Ocean in the Star Fresco from Teleilat Ghassul, Jordan, in Harley and Woodward (n.13 above), 106 Plate 1.

54. The point is made by James R. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought* (Princeton 1992), 15.