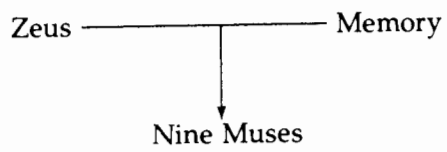
from Lamberton, Hesiod

written copies proliferated—the Hellenistic period. We know that the festival of the Muses in the valley of the Arkhontitsa near Thespiai had by that time institutionalized the poems and the persona of their singer. Once that had happened and a powerful institution was constantly reminding the Hellenistic reading public of the association of Hesiod, the Muses, and the slopes of Helikon above the Arkhontitsa, there could no longer be any question (*pace* Krates) of putting the opening invocations to the Muses aside as material not integral to the poems. This is not to say that the prooimia are Hellenistic forgeries. When and how they became associated with the rest of the material are questions no longer susceptible to meaningful inquiry. But it is highly probable that the institution of the Mouseia of Thespiai was the catalyst that guaranteed the transmission of the *sort* of Hesiod we have, a confessional, self-referential Hesiod who situates himself in a specific landscape and celebrates the Muses in a way otherwise unknown in archaic Greek poetry.

The prooimion of the *Theogony* is followed by an account of the beginnings of reality that is as abrupt as it is sublime. The genealogical model that will be the main organizing principle of the *Theogony* is already present in the prooimion, which starts from the proposition:



That this is something other than a historical narrative is clear from the start. What this poetry does is to elaborate on relationships among entities fundamental to our experience, entities such as art, memory, power, and love. The building

blocks of the human universe are to be set in order, and the principal tool at the disposal of this tradition of song for expressing such relationships is genealogy. The very first entities simply spring into being, divorced from any source or mechanism of generation:

> First of all, then, Khaos came to be . . .
>
> [116]

But subsequently the genealogical model in the form "*A* + *B* gave birth to *C*" is dominant.

The further implications of this genealogical model will be explored later. Our purpose here is to look at the poem as a whole, define its parts and their relationships, and draw what conclusions we can from such an overview.

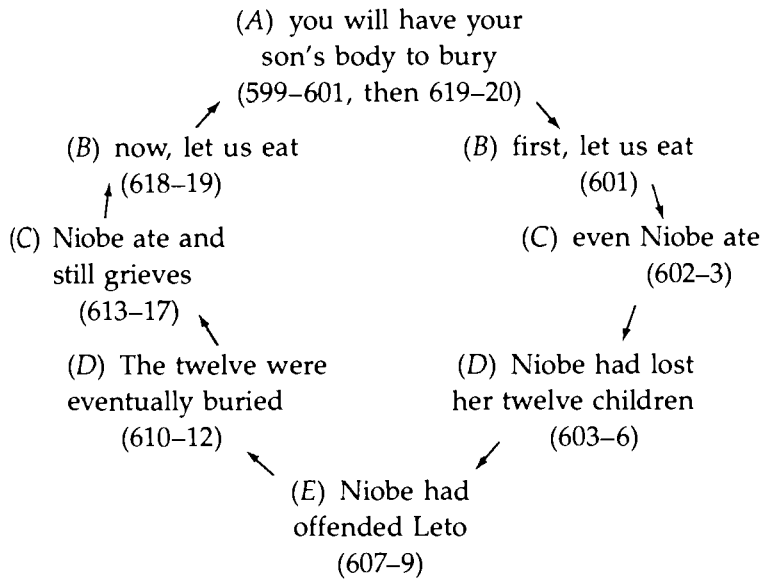
1–115 prooimion
116–336 The first beings: Khaos, Gaia, Tartaros, Eros, and their offspring
- 123–25 Offspring of Khaos
- 126–210 Offspring of Gaia (including those of Gaia and Ouranos = the Titans)
- 211–32 Offspring of Night
- 233–39 Offspring of Pontos (a parthenogenetic child of Gaia)
- 240–64 The Nereids
- 265–336 Offspring of Thaumas, Phorkys, and Keto (= sea creatures and monsters)

337–885 Offspring of the Titans—Zeus's rise to power
- 337–70 Okeanos + Tethys: rivers and streams
- 371–403 Hyperion + Theia: sun, moon, dawn
  Kreios [+ Eurybie]: 2 generations
- 404–52 Koios + Phoibe: 2 generations, including
  - 411–52 Hekate

453–506 Kronos + Rhea: Zeus, Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon
507–616 Iapetos + Klymene: 4 children = the rebellious Titans, including
535–616 Prometheus, whose story includes
570–616 Pandora
617–885 The Battle of Zeus against the Titans
820–80 Typhoeus
881–85 End of the war—Zeus distributes the honors of the gods
886–1018 Offspring of the Olympians
886–929 The wives and children of Zeus
930–62 Various matings of first- and second-generation Olympians
963–1018 Offspring of goddesses who married mortals
1019–22 Transition to *Catalogue of Women*

The arbitrary nature of this graphic outline, with its imposed subordination of passage to passage, must be kept in mind. The organization of the whole is in fact accumulative and characterized by parataxis, or juxtaposition, rather than subordination. It proceeds by juxtapositions and elaborations that depart from some element in the text and may or may not return to their point of origin. When such a development does proceed in a self-contained, orderly way, returning to its original point of departure, it is said to show "ring composition," a pattern characteristic of oral composition but not prominent in the *Theogony.*

As the name implies, ring composition designates a narrative pattern in which the speaker returns to his point of departure. Moreover he returns by the same route he took in embarking on the tale, coming back to the same ideas or motifs in reverse order. The resultant pattern is somewhat analogous to the arrangement of musical themes in classical sonata form: *A–B . . . B–A.* In the absence of highly developed Hesiodic examples, we may take as typical the passage in the *Iliad* (24.599–620) where Akhilleus is speaking to Priam, come to reclaim the corpse of Hektor, and evokes the story of the mourning Niobe. The speech develops as follows (reading clockwise from the top):



M. L. West singles out six rings in the *Theogony* (37–52, 53–62, 411–15 with 426–49, 629–36, and 713–819). Most are short passages that might be qualified as digressions and that close with strong echoes of sound and sense, sometimes in the form of a repeated line. The most substantial example, the great ring in the titanomachy (713–819), has a clearly defined *A–B . . . B–A* structure framing a development of about

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The sequence of revelation of the elements of this traditional story—the essential Hesiodic myth, in that for purposes of archaic Greek tradition it seems to have belonged exclusively to Hesiodic poetry—is thus governed by the sort of contrasts and juxtapositions this poetry clearly relishes. But since there are two versions of the Prometheus/Pandora story in Hesiod, one in each of the major poems, it will be useful simply to place them side by side in order to get a sense of that story's specifically Hesiodic form (as opposed to the more complex and perhaps more familiar Aeschylean one).

Theogony	Works and Days
Prometheus was crafty (511) and was punished by Zeus (521–25), but the eagle was eventually killed by Herakles and Prometheus was liberated (526–34).	
At Mekone, when a settlement was made between gods and men, Prometheus divided the sacrificial animal and piled the good meat under the unattractive skin, the useless bones under the rich and desirable fat, and invited Zeus to choose (535–49). Although Zeus was *not* deceived, he still chose the bones and resented being cheated (550–61).	
Therefore, he withheld fire from mankind, but Prometheus stole some fire and delivered it to man (562–70).	Zeus hid fire because Prometheus had cheated him (48–50). Prometheus stole it back, and Zeus, furious, promised man some evil in return, "an evil they will cherish" (57–59).
In revenge, Zeus and Hephaistos created a woman (unnamed in this version). Athena clothed her and Hephaistos made her beautiful jewelry (571–84). Both men and gods were amazed at her charm (585–89).	Zeus had Hephaistos make a woman. All the gods gave some gift to this creation—hence her name, Pandora (60–82). Epimetheus accepted her in spite of Prometheus's earlier warnings about Zeus's gifts (83–89).
From her was born the cursed race of women, who live by the labor of men, like the drones in the beehive (590–602). Zeus added another curse: those who do not marry have no offspring, while those who do get at best a mixture of good and evil (603–12).	Before, there was no evil, no labor, no disease, but she took the top off the jar and released all of these, trapping only hope inside. Now the world is full of evils (90–104).
So Zeus cannot be tricked, and Prometheus still suffers (614–16).	There is no way to avoid what Zeus plans (105).

The distinction between gods and men seems to be blurred here. If Epimetheus accepted the woman, how did she bring miseries to mankind and not just to the Titans' offspring themselves? Or is Epimetheus really a man mas-

from: Lamberton, Hesiod

makes men "unspoken of or praised / famous or unsung" (*aphatoi te phatoi te / rhetoi t' arrhetoi te*, 3–4). This is said to come about through Zeus's will, but of course the unspecified agents of the fame and praise are the poets, as all the speech-related verbal adjectives hint. The fifth line describes the world and itself, Zeus and its speaker, simultaneously:

> Easily he makes things grow [*briaei*], easily crushes
> what has grown big.

The balance of the two statements in the verse reproduces the so-called "thought rhythm" of Semitic poetry in a manner characteristic of much of the Hesiodic wisdom poetry (though whatever connection may exist between the *Works and Days* and the material preserved in Proverbs is beyond our ability to recover and trace). Embedded in the balanced statement here is a playful and self-conscious formal detail that shapes the richly worked language. The first syllable of the word "easily" (*rhea*), the repeated pivot of the thought of the line, changes in metrical value from the first to the third foot . . . the poet easily expands it and easily contracts it, exercising the control Zeus exercises over human affairs.

Throughout this talk of expanding and contracting, strengthening and weakening, the subject is clearly man, but the latent metaphor throughout these expandings and contractings is agricultural. The first verb in the line quoted above (briaei) is rare, but it also occurs in the *Theogony* (447), where it refers to what Hekate does to the flocks—she causes them to increase. Thus the prooimion by its language establishes a connection between Zeus's impact on human affairs and the influence of the forces of the natural world (including Hekate as the moon) on agricultural prosperity. Zeus strengthens, frustrates, diminishes, increases, straightens, and finally withers man, and behind that statement the choice of verbs

repeatedly reminds us of the way the moon, planets, and seasons affect the productivity of the earth and agricultural wealth. The association of the agricultural calendar with justice is thus announced from the start, along with the peculiar Hesiodic insistence on the juxtaposition of the global and the specific, and the characteristically self-conscious Hesiodic problematics of language.

Enough has already been said about the violence we do these poems by imposing on them descriptive tables of contents that subordinate one section to another with misleading decisiveness and clarity. Still, given the confusing organization of the *Works and Days*, it seems essential to distinguish at least major sections in order to appreciate at once their independence and their interrelatedness.

1–10 prooimion
11–26 the "two strifes" (competition and conflict)
27–41 address to Perses: work! don't watch lawsuits!
42–105 Prometheus/Pandora
106–201 the five ages
  174–201 criticism of the present (iron) age
202–85 the fable and injunctions to Perses and the kings
  202–12 the fable
  213–24 injunction to Perses on Justice
  225–47 the city ruled by law and the city ruled by crime
  248–73 injunction to the kings on justice
  274–85 the fable interpreted
286–828 various advice to Perses
  286–326 praise of work
  327–41 treat others fairly and sacrifice to the gods
  342–80 proverbs
  381–617 the agricultural year

- 381–413 general principles and requirements
- 414–47 September–October: cut wood, make plow
- 448–503 November–December: plow and seed—plan ahead
- 504–63 January–February: winter activities
- 564–70 March–April: hoe, trim vines
- 571–81 May–June: harvest
- 582–608 July: eat and drink well in the heat, thresh and store grain
- 609–17 August–September: harvest grapes, make wine

618–94 instructions for seafaring

- 619–94 choose the right time
  - 633–40 how our father came to Askra
  - 641–45 general advice on seafaring
  - 646–62 my trip to Khalkis, contest and victory
  - 663–94 the sailing season

695–764 general advice

- 695–705 choosing a wife
- 706–64 more proverbs

765–828 the lucky days (with a possible anticipation of the lost *Ornithomanteia* that might have been performed next)

Some major shifts and movements within the poem appear immediately. The traditional title itself points to the problem—a title not attested before the second century of our era, though it may be a great deal older than that (West 1978, 136). The two elements of the title refer most obviously to discrete passages within the poem. The *Works* (*erga*) are the instructions on the various tasks of the agricultural year (381–617).

We might stretch the designation to include the instructions on seafaring attached to the agricultural lore (618–94), but the transition between the two sections is nevertheless clear. The *Days* (*hemerai*) are certainly the closing section (765–828) on lucky and unlucky days. The title thus seems to designate a provisional composite, but many more elements are actually present than those designated, and the solution of setting a limit at line 764 and declaring everything up to that point the *Works* (to the exclusion of the *Days*) proves unsatisfactory. In fact, the highly developed persona is explicitly stringing together a composite performance consisting of a variety of parts. Transitions such as line 106:

> If you like, I'll run through another story . . .

emphasize the provisional quality of this particular performance and the speaker's power to pick and choose from an implied range of set pieces that vastly exceeds what he actually gives us here. Stand-up comedians use exactly the same technique. It is an enhancement of their power over us, a feigned indifference that is part of the act. But it does reveal at least what the speaker *wants* us to think of the organization of this poem. Any organic or necessary organization of the parts is explicitly denied and their provisional configuration expressed as a function of the choice—the explicitly free and arbitrary choice—of a highly individualized speaker, an identity in striking contrast to the impersonal and traditional nature of the information conveyed.

What the speaker in fact gives us is a long, somewhat rambling poem of advice and exhortation (286–828), prefaced by a far more complex sequence of myths, fables, and other traditional lore organized around the conflicts of a domestic lawsuit. The autobiographical material is essential to the opening section but penetrates the poem of advice explicitly