tion of sensate desire—a renunciation that the ego imposes on itself. "It is there we find one of the essential motives of the sacrifice, which from the beginning raises it above the magical vision of the world."[80] The simplest forms of the sacrificial act reveal a new orientation of will in human action. Up to then, that is, in the earlier magical state, the ego still knew no barrier that it could not truly surpass on occasion. With the appearance of sacrifice, everything changes, for the most obscure or even the crudest of sacrificial acts implies something unprecedented: a movement of self-abandon. It is the intuition that any expansion, any increase of the forces of the ego, is tied to a corresponding limitation.[81]

In the conclusion of the *Essai* and in profound agreement with what Cassirer will write twenty years later, Mauss observes that everyone finds an advantage in sacrifice: the collectivity and individuals, the social norm, and above all, civilization.[82] By means of sacrificial activity, the collectivity attains "this good, strong, serious, terrible character" that is one of the essential traits of any social personality. The fatherland, property, work, the human person, all are to be credited to sacrifice as a social phenomenon.[83] The asceticism within this institution enables the individual to discover a fixed center within, a singleness of will when confronted with the multiple and divergent flux of the pulsions of the sensations. The gift, the desire to give, and the oblation all confirm this orientation. It is then that the human being detaches himself to some extent from the objects of immediate desire. And this movement becomes broader and more elevated, from the fundamental forms of totemism to the enactment of animal sacrifice in the religions of the highly developed cultures with, as the ultimate expression giving sacrifice its true significance, the god who sacrifices himself—the figure that joins, for Cassirer as for Mauss, the mythology of the mysteries of Dionysus with the exemplary spirituality of the Christian mystery of the Eucharist.[84] Today, from a distance that is extended even more by the analyses published in this volume, it seems important to say that the notion of sacrifice is indeed a category of the thought of yesterday, conceived of as arbitrarily as totemism—decried earlier by Lévi-Strauss—both because it gathers into one artificial type elements taken from here and there in the symbolic fabric of societies and because it reveals the surprising power of annexation that Christianity still subtly exercises on the thought of these historians and sociologists who were convinced they were inventing a new science.[85]

TWO

At Man's Table: *Hesiod's Foundation Myth of Sacrifice*

Jean-Pierre Vernant

TO determine the status of Greek sacrifice we have at our disposal a mythical account that, if fully analyzed, provides a valuable key to the mental system to which the ritual refers and the vast network of meanings that it bears. In an episode of the *Theogony,* some sequences of which are taken up again in *Works and Days,* Hesiod tells the story of how Prometheus, acting as Zeus' rival, works by fraud, lies, and trickery to achieve his own aims while thwarting those of the ruler of the gods. Now, the first result of this battle of wits between Titan and Olympian is the ritual distribution of the pieces of the sacrificed domestic animal (in this case a great ox led, slaughtered, and carved by Prometheus) to men (the meat and the entrails laden with fat, everything that can be eaten) and to gods (the bare bones consumed in the sacrificial fire with some fat and aromatics).[1] Explicitly expressed in lines 556–57, "From this it happens that on earth the human race burns white bones for the Immortals on altars exuding the perfume of incense," the etiological value of this sequence of the myth has been recognized by all commentators. But its significance has been remarkably reduced. It has almost always been seen as the explanation of a particular and minor characteristic of the rite, the answer to a kind of paradox that the blood sacrifice, which is also a meal, would have posed for the religious conscience of the Greeks because of an incomprehensible detail. Sacrifice appeared as an offering to the gods to honor them and encourage their favor. Under these conditions, how can we explain that instead of setting the best part aside for them, men give the gods the inedible part of the animal, the scraps, as it were? By restricting the meaning of the first part of the text to this single point, we are forced to consider it more or less gratuitous and to misunderstand the connections with

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the following sequences that give the myth its overall import. If this epic presenting the character Prometheus, his rivalry with Zeus, and his final failure, recounted by Hesiod in the long passage of the *Theogony* (507–616) devoted to the descendants of Iapetus, concerns sacrifice only incidentally and by chance, we are then led to concede that Hesiod arbitrarily chose Prometheus to bear the responsibility for sacrificial practice. Hesiod would not reveal the profound significance of this practice by placing it at the nexus of an elaborate theological system but would instead propose a circumstantial explanation by creating a fable as one would concoct a pretext to justify oneself after the fact. From this perspective it would be impossible to see what the relationship could be between the first act of the Promethean drama in the Hesiodic version and what follows—between the carving of the ox and the ritual allocation of its parts on the one hand, and the theft of fire in the second part and the creation of the first woman that concludes this tragedy on the other. Thus Hesiod would have stitched completely disparate elements together in the same text. To the traditional theme of the theft of fire he would have artificially connected an etiological myth intended to account for what he found strange in sacrificial practice and a story entirely of his own invention about the origins of woman that reflected his personal antifeminist "philosophy." It would be as vain, then, to seek a coherent meaning in the myth as to hope to find some enlightenment there concerning the nature and function of sacrifice.

This position can no longer be maintained, not only because it arises from a conception of mythical thought that is now outmoded, but more specifically and also more concretely because the text contradicts it on all points. In his study of the *Theogony,* Hans Schwabl has shown that on the formal level the Promethean episode obeys strict compositional rules that give the entire passage an incontestable unity and make it a rigorously articulated whole.[2] This cohesion is no less strong on the level of the narrative content, since in the linking of the episodes Hesiod emphasizes the perfect continuity of the account and shows very clearly for each sequence its necessary dependence on the preceding one. It is because Zeus never forgets for an instant the trick Prometheus played on him by giving men the meat of the sacrificed animal that he decides henceforth to deny mortals his (heavenly) fire.[3] It is because he sees the fire, secretly stolen by the Titan, burning in the midst of the humans that he counters this new fraudulent gift that men have received by offering them this third and last fraudulent gift, this "opposite of fire," the first woman.[4] The action obeys a flawless logic from beginning to end, following the thread of a drama whose successive stages are rigorously governed by the order of the narrative. Finally, on the semantic level we have shown in a previous study[5] that a very tight network of symbolic correspondences exists, so that if the elements are linked to each other in the linear sequence of the narration, they form together at the end a unique picture in which all the parts echo one another in a highly ordered arrangement.

On the diachronic level, the theft of fire plays a mediating role; by it and through it the link is made between the first act, Prometheus' cunning (*dolos*) in allocating the sacrificial parts, and the last, Zeus' craftiness (*dolos*) in giving men the first woman. This deed also brings about the reversal of the action and respective positions of the actors. In the first part of the story, the initiative and guile belong to Prometheus; Zeus appears to be the dupe.[6] The Titan gives men gifts that delight them. After the theft of fire, everything is inverted. The initiative and cunning pass to the side of Zeus. Now it is he who "gives" to men, but the joy that the humans feel when presented with the divine gift is precisely the snare in which they will be caught and even, broadly speaking, the symbol of the unhappiness of the mortal condition. From this standpoint, the last episode appears not simply as the ineluctable consequence of what preceded it. As if in a mirror, it reflects all the preceding events, puts them into place, and organizes them. Because of it, they illuminate each other and take on their true meaning, which can be revealed only at the end of the whole adventure. It is necessary indeed for the "trap" of woman to have appeared in order for the true nature of the "trap" set for Zeus at the outset by Prometheus, when the Titan "fixes" the portions of the sacrificial victim so that men benefit from all the meat, to be revealed in all its ramifications. The good portion, over which the mortals congratulate themselves (as they do over the "beautiful evil" that Zeus grants them in the person of Woman), is revealed in reality as the bad. The ambush the Titan prepared to outwit Zeus backfires and ultimately redounds to the humans. Even fire, this fire stolen by Prometheus, despite its advantages, is a gift no less ambiguous than the first feminine creature, as it too is well adorned with dangerous seductive powers.[7]

In the texture of the narrative the sequences are too tightly knit, their symbolic values too enmeshed, for it to be possible to isolate them and treat each one separately. The myth must be taken for what it is, not an aggregate of heterogeneous episodes but a single story; and it is necessary to recognize that in this cohesive structure the relationships that unite the blood sacrifice, the Promethean fire, and the creation of woman cannot be the product either of pure chance or the gratuitous fantasy of the author. They respond to a necessary order that is the result of the very content of

the myth, of the function that Hesiod assigns it in the context of his *Theogony.* What is at issue in the conflict pitting the Titan's craftiness against the Olympian's faultless intelligence is, in the final analysis, the status of the human condition, the mode of existence characterizing humanity. Sacrificial practice is presented as the first result and most direct expression of the distance created between men and gods on the day that Prometheus started his road to rebellion. The myth connects the ritual of sacrifice to primordial events that have made men what they are, mortal creatures[8] living on earth[9] in the midst of countless ills,[10] eating grain from the fields they have worked,[11] and accompanied by female spouses.[12] In other words, men have become a race of beings completely separated from those to whom at the outset they were very close, living together and sitting at the same tables to share the same meals[13]—the Blessed Immortals, residing in heaven and fed on ambrosia, toward whom now rises the smoke of sacrificial offerings.

The episode concerning the sacrifice is neither secondary nor supplementary. It is at the heart of the myth. It does not aim to explain a strange detail of the ritual, the cremation of the bones. In the distinction between the shares allocated to men and gods in the sacrifice, it stresses the difference that now separates them, their membership in two distinct races. Just as this former proximity was mythically expressed by the image of a community of guests enjoying a banquet together, the eventual separation is reflected in the contrast between two types of eating. The difference between diets found at the very heart of the ritual seeks, however, to establish a kind of contact and communication between the two separated races, a bond that leads, as much as possible, to building a bridge between the earth and heaven.

The issue of food, so pronounced in the myth, has multiple echoes. Sacrifice is presented as a meal in which meat is eaten, but this consumption of fleshly food obeys a whole series of restrictions and constraints. First, it is limited to some animal species and excludes others. Second, the killing, butchering, carving, preparation, and consumption of the meat follow precise rules. Finally, there is a religious intentionality to the meal. It aims to honor the gods by inviting them to take part in a feast that is thereby at least theoretically their own, a *dais theōn,* at which they make themselves present in some manner and the offering of which they can either accept or reject.[14] In this sense as an alimentary rite sacrifice is not limited to establishing the conditions that authorize the slaughter of an animal for food and make it legal or even an act of piety for men to consume its flesh. Because it is directed toward the gods and claims to include

them with the group of guests in the solemnity and joy of the celebration, it evokes the memory of the ancient commensality when, seated together, men and gods made merry day after day at shared meals. However, if in its intent sacrifice hearkens back to these far-off times of the golden age when, sharing the same food, men still lived "like gods," far from all evils, work, disease, old age, and women,[15] it is no less true that sacrifice is a reminder that these blessed times when men and gods sat down together to feast are forever ended. The ritual sets the incorruptible bones aside for the gods and sends them, consumed by the flames, on high in the form of fragrant smoke and gives men the meat of an already lifeless animal, a piece of dead flesh, so that they may satisfy for a moment their constantly awakening hunger. Normally, meat cannot be eaten except on the occasion of a sacrifice and by following its rules. The presence of the gods sanctions this feast of fleshly food, but only to the extent that what truly belongs to the gods is set aside for them: the very life of the animal, released from the bones with the soul at the moment the victim falls dead and gushing forth in the blood splattering the altar—in short, those parts of the animal that, like the aromatics with which they are burned, escape the putrefaction of death. By eating the edible pieces men, even as they reinvigorate their failing strength, recognize the inferiority of their mortal condition and confirm their complete submission to the Olympians whom the Titan believed he could dupe with impunity when he established the model of the first sacrifice. The alimentary rite that brings men into contact with the divine underscores the distance that separates them. Communication is established by a religious procedure that in reminding men of the Promethean fault emphasizes the insurmountable distance between men and gods. It is the very function of the myth, as Hesiod tells it, to reveal the origins and dire consequences of this situation.

In this perspective the analysis of the Hesiodic account confirms and extends the conclusions that Jean Casabona, working from a completely different viewpoint, had drawn from his research on the Greek sacrificial vocabulary.[16] Recalling that for us sacrifice and butchering belong to different semantic zones, he noted that among the Greeks matters were completely different. The same vocabulary encompasses the two domains, from Homer to the end of the classical age. Ancient Greek has no other terms to convey the idea of slaughtering an animal to butcher it than those referring to sacrifice or killing for the gods. *Hiereuō* can be translated in the one way as well as the other. In Homer *hiereion* refers to the animal both as "sacrificial victim" and as "animal to be butchered"; in contrast to *sphagion, hiereion* conveys the sense of the victim whose flesh will be eaten.

The term simultaneously evokes sacrifice and butchering. Lastly, *thuō,* which eventually prevailed as the general term referring to the totality of the sacrifical ceremony and never ceased to convey the memory of burnt offerings and fragrant smoke, applies both to the rite of slaughtering the animal and the fleshly feast that follows it. It is found associated with terms meaning "to feast, to eat well."

By distinguishing, in the body of the ritually slaughtered animal, between two and only two parts,[17] which are sharply contrasted because they are opposites from the standpoint of their food value—in other words, by treating the sacrifice as a type of eating characteristic of man as distinct from the gods—Hesiod fashions this first sequence of the Promethean myth within the lines of traditional religious thought. Far from innovating on this point by forcing the meanings of the terms or quibbling about widespread notions, his account is firmly supported by the semantic field of the sacrificial vocabulary and can be substantiated by ordinary linguistic usage.

1. *The Quarrel over the Portions*

Whoever wishes to understand the form of Greek sacrifice that pertains to the consumption of food must therefore take Hesiod's account completely seriously. He must keep to the text as closely as possible, discounting nothing, and examine both the similarities and the differences between the two versions given in the *Theogony* and *Works and Days.*

First of all, how does the Promethean episode fit into each poem? And how may this context clarify the status of the sacrificial rite? In the *Theogony* the situation is clear. The work is entirely devoted to the origins, birth, battles, and victory of Zeus, his achievement of a sovereignty that unlike the preceding reign succeeds in establishing the foundations of a definitively assured, unshakable, and permanent power. Zeus' conquest of the celestial kingship not only means, as the text emphasizes on three occasions, that everything is set in place for the gods with a strict distribution of honors, functions and privileges among them;[18] along with the monarch who has instituted it, the ordered arrangement of the entire cosmos is henceforth maintained as immutable and intangible.

In an account where everything happens on the level of the gods and between gods, there is no place for an anthropogony in the strict sense of the word. We learn how the gods came to be, not men. The *Theogony* does not tell us whether Gaea, the Earth, gave birth to men as she did to the first divine powers, or whether they were created by Zeus and the Immortals, or born from the ashes of the stricken Titans, as the Orphic tradition

has it. Men are nonetheless present in the narrative; they suddenly appear in a byway, in an episode that the poet devotes to the offspring of Iapetus, or more precisely his son, Prometheus. Here is no human genesis, as one might expect in a creation poem. The text speaks of humans as if they are beings that were already there, living with the gods and mingling with them.[19] Prometheus' act does not bring men to the existence they already possess but reaffirms the status imparted to them at the heart of an organized universe; it defines their mortal condition in contrast to that of the Blessed Immortals. This positioning of humanity, this delineation of the ways of living that are appropriate to it and make it a separate race occurs by means of an allocation between men and gods of what is due each of them. At Zeus' demand, or at least with his agreement, Prometheus is responsible for bringing about this decisive apportionment; the procedure that he employs to carry out this task is precisely the carving and the distribution of the parts of the sacrificial victim.[20] The division of the ox slaughtered by the son of Iapetus and the creation, by his efforts, of two separate shares intended for gods and men determine the cleavage between the two races. The division of the animal both provokes and reflects the opposition between the two respective parties. The distance separating mortals from Immortals is begun in sacrifice and perpetuated by sacrifice. On the lines separating the different portions taken from the victim is projected the boundary between the immutable youth of the Olympians, masters of heaven, and this ephemeral form of existence that men on earth must assume to become who they are.

Thus humanity was made into what it is following a division analogous to the one over which Zeus presided with respect to the gods after he acceded to the throne, when he established the domain and attributes for each one.[21] But among the gods the division follows two modalities that stand in sharp contrast. In the case of his enemies and rivals for divine sovereignty, the Titans and Typhon, the distribution of honors is governed by violence and coercion.[22] Banished to Tartarus, the defeated gods are thrown out of the game. Shriven of all honor (*atimoi*), they are excluded from the organized world. Among the Olympians and their allies, on the other hand, the allocation is made amid harmony and mutual consent.[23] What of the distribution that gave men their status? It is the result neither of brutal violence nor mutual agreement. It was not imposed by force or decided by common consent. It operates according to a procedure that is fundamentally ambiguous, contradictory, and rigged. On the one hand, violence is concealed by its opposite: smiles, praises, politeness, and feigned reverence;[24] on the other, the contract and the rules of the game

function only as subterfuges that mask the ways the adversary is manipulated in spite of himself. Instead of the open warfare that divided the Titans and Olympians there is a muted conflict, a test of cleverness and duplicity, in which the rival is quietly defeated by being caught in his own trap. Instead of the loyal and trusted agreement that governed the allocation among victorious allies, there is deceit, a double game in which the words uttered in broad daylight always conceal a treacherous ulterior motive. This untrustworthy and contorted procedure corresponds to the equivocal character of the status of men in the relationships which bind them to the gods even as they separate them. For Zeus, men are not adversaries of such high caliber that it would be necessary to remove them once and for all by means of an all-out war. Nor are they peers who must be tactfully managed in an alliance by an equitable sharing of privileges. Like all mortal creatures, like the animals, they are on a different level from the gods, at a distance, alien to the divine sphere. But alone among mortal creatures and unlike the animals, their way of living involves a constant reference to the supernatural powers, a relationship peculiar to them alone. No city, no human life exists that is not linked by organized worship to the divine world and does not establish a kind of community with it. In the divine sphere it is Prometheus who exhibits the ambiguity of the human condition, as separate as it is close to the divine, both external and related to it. With respect to Zeus his position is equivocal on all levels. Though a Titan, he has not gone back to his brothers' clan to fight the Olympian in the war among the gods. He is not the enemy of Zeus, but according to Aeschylus by his plotting he himself ensured the Olympian's triumph. Nor will he be forever banished from the world, consigned at the end to the depths of Tartarus. For all that, however, he is not a faithful and reliable ally. At the very heart of the ordered universe over which Zeus presides, he stands as a rival, embodying even in the circle of the Olympian divinities an opposing point where is expressed, in the form of a claim or even rebellion, a sort of complicity with everything that the world contains in contrast to the gods—negative, gratuitous suffering, inexplicable and arbitrary misfortune. This opposition is all the more dangerous because it takes place on the very ground where Zeus sees himself as unsurpassable: that of intelligence, cleverness, foresight, of that "knowledge" of which men, for their part, claim to have their share. Prometheus uses the resources of a fertile and farseeing mind in order to favor the humans at the gods' expense. He seeks to remove the ills inseparable from the human condition and obtain benefits for them that the gods have kept as their privilege.[25] If he secretly undermines Zeus' plans, including the mission

with which the latter had entrusted him, it is because he aims, by reducing the distance between men and gods as much as possible, to make men into beings that in some way are his equals, truly Promethean creatures who will be neither completely separate, distant, inferior, and subordinate, as Zeus wishes them to be, nor completely identical, near, equal, and gifted, as the Blessed Immortals are among themselves. Men would be situated midway between, in an intermediate position that recalls his own mediating function, his ambiguous role of hostile ally, rival accomplice, freed bondsman, pardoned criminal, reconciled and redeemed rebel.

In the episode of the *Theogony* the Titan Prometheus, close enough to humanity to wish to bring it closer to the gods, represents a subverting of the Olympian order. This order has envisioned for the particular category of beings that is humanity (with whom the Titan is on special terms) fatigue, loss of strength, pain, disease, and death—in other words, all misfortune, which constitutes the radical negation of the divine state. If Prometheus had prevailed in this battle of wits waged to separate men and gods, sacrifice would commemorate men's access to this nonmortal form of existence to which men cannot help but aspire. Prometheus' failure not only makes the sacrificial rite into an act symbolizing the complete segregation of the two races, it gives this rupture the character of an irremediable and justified fall whose justice mortals acknowledge every time they sacrifice according to the Promethean mode and enter into communication with the higher powers.

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Indeed, the context and some details of the text in Hesiod's account of the series of misfortunes unleashed by Prometheus find their full justification on a theological level. Paradoxically, Prometheus is described as good, benevolent (*eus*).[26] But the benevolence he displays toward men is only the other side, the visible obverse of his secret hostility toward Zeus. The partiality (*heterozēlōs,* 1. 544) he shows in his allocation of the meat reflects his desire to subvert the distributive order embodied by Zeus the sovereign. The plots he contrives in carrying out the arbiter's tasks entrusted to him are the expression of his deep-seated rivalry with Zeus (*erizeto boulas,* 534). Humanity's fall is thus directly connected with competition, jealousy, and quarrelsomeness—in a word, with *eris,* that sinister daughter of Night who, because of Prometheus, has insidiously slipped into the ethereal world of the gods of Olympus. Now in this world *eris* is foreign. More exactly, with Zeus as king, *eris* should have vanished. Although this world was the result of an open battle, the victory of the son of Cronus has not only put an end to conflict but has consigned the period of the conflicts

between the gods to a time predating the Olympian order, just as it has banished the enemy powers to a space outside the realm of the Immortals.[27] A passage of the *Theogony* is clear on the subject; if any conflict and discord (*eris kai neikos*) arise among the Blessed Ones, a procedure has been established to dispatch the guilty party without delay or debate to the reaches beyond the divine domain. Deprived of awareness, breath, and life, wrapped in a deathlike sleep, he is excluded from the council and the banquets where the Immortals feast.[28]

As the narrative of an *eris* between a god and Zeus, the entire Promethean episode introduces into the plot of the *Theogony* the tale of a rivalry that is paradoxical, unlike others, and essentially concerning creatures other than the gods. Compared to the quarrel between the Titans and the Olympians, the difference is obvious. Promethean *eris* is not frank hostility or open war. It seeks no power and does not claim to usurp Zeus' place. It does not appear prior to his victory, at the foundation of order, when the honors were distributed. This *eris* does not question the Olympian's sovereignty, but in a surreptitious way attempts to bend it from within. And it does not resemble the other *eris* mentioned in the *Theogony* as occuring among the Immortals, whose rule, already firmly established and organized in divine society, is settled from the first by a quasi-juridical procedure of expelling the guilty one. Promethean *eris* does not appear after the foundation of the order or prior to it. It seems to occur mythically at the same time as the foundation of order, coextensive with the distributive tasks undertaken by Zeus. More exactly, it coincides with a very particular aspect of these tasks, with something that does not fit and raises a problem because it involves equivocal, disconcerting creatures whose status could only be the result of a lopsided compromise—a rough and ready arrangement at the outcome of a contest between divine adversaries who have opposed one another point by point, each blocking the projects of the other in turn until the final result is achieved. Certainly, at the end of the match, Zeus' will triumphs. But to prevail it must follow the path laid out by the conflict with Prometheus, accepting new stakes with each hand and keeping track of the points scored in favor of men by the Titan in his cleverness—points that Zeus, unable to simply make disappear, must turn against men.

This analysis explains the skewed character of the Promethean episode, which forms a parenthesis within the developmental line of the *Theogony.* It is a double parenthesis, which appears first on the level of the genealogical exposition and then on the succession of divine events. In line 337, Hesiod begins to relate the lineage of the Titans, whose names he has

already given in the order of their birth running (for the males) from Oceanus to Cronus—from eldest to youngest—by way of Coeus, Crios, Hyperion, and Iapetus. In this way we learn who were the children of Oceanus, Hyperion, Crios, and Coeus. But beginning with line 453, where the lineage of Cronus appears instead of Iapetus', the genealogical account, via Zeus' birth, connects with the account of mythical events forming the second set of legends of divine succession (the first set contained the emasculation of Uranus and the establishment of Cronus as king) and goes into the central theme of the conflicts over the sovereignty of heaven (the struggle between Zeus and Cronus, the Olympians against the Titans). Cronus swallows his children so that none of them will take his place on the throne. Zeus escapes his father's voracity. First he makes Cronus cough up those he has swallowed. Then he delivers the Cyclopes from their bonds, and they give him the instrument of his victory, lightning, "on which Zeus henceforth relies in order to reign over mortals and Immortals" (506). It is at this point that Hesiod interrupts the narrative of Zeus' battles to return to the genealogy with the lineage of Iapetus, which normally should have appeared after those of the Titans older than Cronus. But in reality the primary function of Iapetus' genealogy is to introduce the account of the *eris* that pits Prometheus against Zeus. This *eris* is at the periphery both of the battles for sovereignty (it has nothing to do with the battles of the Titans) and of the organization of the divine world under Zeus' reign (since this reign excludes *eris*). Thus its logical place in the account is neither clearly before nor clearly after Zeus' victory. It is located to the side, at the periphery, just as the status of the human race in the *Theogony* appears external and foreign to the great conflict over the possession of power that split the world of the gods. Indeed there is not the slightest allusion in the poem to human existence under the reign of Cronus. The Promethean sequence precedes the florid narrative of the war against the Titans, the triumph of Zeus, and the distribution of honors. Positioned between the liberation of the Cyclopes and the gift of lightning that precede it, and the liberation of the Hundred Arms signifying the Olympian victory, which immediately follows, this parenthesis appears in a context where Zeus' reign appears assured even before the details of the struggle have been the subject of a real narrative.

The scene takes place in Mecone, the ancient name for Sicyon. Therefore we know the exact earthly and human place that was the arena of the match but not the precise moment it occurred in the the divine chronology. In other words, to the extent that the confrontation between the two divinities concerns the nature of the relations between men and gods in-

stead of divine society itself, Promethean *eris* operates on a temporal axis that does not exactly match that of the gods. The two temporal orders seem to correspond in the account, but exact congruence is impossible. Similarly, Promethean *eris,* unlike the Titans' and the juridical *eris* of the Olympians, brings to the divine sphere a dimension of existence, a quality of being that is too closely linked to the human for it to be perfectly integrated into the hierarchical order of the divine powers.

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The drama of the *eris,* in the *Theogony* directed toward and finally reaching men by way of the gods, is played out in *Works and Days* on Boeotian soil with no intermediaries between Hesiod and his brother Perses.

The parallels between the contexts of each account are more developed than is first apparent. In the *Theogony,* the Promethean hoax concerning the parts of the sacrificed animal had been introduced by *gar,* "for," which connected the episode that is the source of man's misfortune directly with the preceding line relating Prometheus' *eris* toward Zeus. In *Works and Days,* the version of the Promethean theme also opens with a *gar,* which this time relates to the lesson that Hesiod has just given his brother on the occasion of the *eris* that divides them. Their *klēros,* their family inheritance, has been divided between them. This division is not the result of violence or brute force, as when one makes off with enemy loot in a war. Nor is it the result of an amicable agreement between the two brothers, as it should have been. To get more than his share Perses stirred up quarrels and dissension (*neikea kai dērin*). He brought the affair before the judgment of the kings of Thespiae, who in principle represent the distributive justice of Zeus the sovereign. But bribed by presents, the kings did not decide equitably. They gave a twisted sentence, a biased opinion. Favoring the party in the wrong, they divided the shares unequally, giving to one much of what belonged to the other, in the same spirit of partiality that, ironically, Zeus resented in Prometheus in the *Theogony.* The analogy between the two situations, divine and human, introducing the Promethean myth in each work with the sad consequences involved for mortals, appears obvious. This is not all. Hesiod does not stop with reminding his brother of the quarrel the latter had sought with him and of the fraudulent distribution he was able to obtain at Hesiod's expense. He widens the scope of this private conflict to the dimensions of universal justice and order, and founds on it what can be termed a veritable theology of *eris,* insofar as Night's daughter has stamped all of human existence with her seal. And this theology opens *Works and Days* with an explicit allusion to the *Theogony,* which it takes up and refines in the chapter on *eris.*

From the gods' perspective, in fact, *eris* appeared unique. The only example the Immortals knew was the violent fight during which Zeus triumphed over his rivals; his victory banished it from divine society.[29] But the moment matters are viewed from the human standpoint, the picture changes. Then there is no longer one *eris* but two, and this duplication of the daughter of Night corresponds to the omnipotence she exerts over men's lives, to her constant presence for good as well as for evil. In her contrasted, doubled, and ambiguous form, *eris* is consubstantial to the human condition. The bad *eris* already has two sides, just as there are two sorts of evil disputes among men: war with a foreign enemy on the battlefield, and discord within the community in the public square.[30] The first relies on the force of arms, the second sets tongues wagging and guile in motion.[31] However, whether they utilize force or guile, both have the same goal: to lay a hand on the loot, to take a part of the wealth at another's expense by stripping him of what is rightly his. Ill-gotten gains are short-lived. Zeus himself hastens to award the guilty the hard retribution for their crimes,[32] just as he squelched the brutal force of the Titans and punished the fraudulent ruse of Prometheus. This bad *eris,* extinct among the gods, punished among mortals, is not loved by men. If they honor it, says Hesiod, it is against their will, compelled by the decisions of the Immortals (1.15).

But before giving birth to this divisive *eris,* which the divine will has given man as companion against his will, Night had given birth to another one, similar but with a different nature, whose praises the wise man must sing. This *eris* inspires any man who sees abundance thrive in the fields and house of a neighbor who has worked harder than he to emulate that neighbor. From his luminous ethereal heights Zeus established this competitive *eris,* this zeal for work, as the foundation here below of any fairly-gotten wealth. He buried it deep in the roots of the earth (*gaie*)[33] where men live and from which they draw their subsistence. The son of Cronus wanted men to find the way to wealth by this *eris,* according to the order that he himself established. So there is no way for mortal man to escape *eris,* which completely bounds his life. There is only the choice of the good over the bad. It is not by idling away the hours talking in the agora, meddling in disputes, and avoiding agricultural labor (*ap' ergou*) that Perses can hope to manage his affairs.[34] If he is to have the means to live (*bios*), that is, the fruit of Demeter (*Dēmeteros akte*)[35] that Gaea gives to men in the necessary quantity when the earth is cultivated, he must devote himself to the task—water the furrows with his sweat, and compete with others in the work. How could it be otherwise? On the one hand, Zeus makes

men struggle to atone for the gains obtained by violence or deceit, the gains obtained by bad *eris;* on the other hand, he does not want them to acquire the wealth he concedes to them, these riches concealed in the earth that give them life (*bios*), without labor (***kai aergon eonta***),[36] without doing so through the good *eris*.

Once upon a time, however, during the Golden Age, things were different. The earth needed no plowing or sowing for the nourishing grains to sprout with such great bounty that neither destruction by war nor theft by stealth—no *eris* of any kind—had any place here below or in the heavens. People could live and eat without effort.[37] But from the moment Zeus found himself tricked by the wily Prometheus, the gods have hidden men's livelihood from them, burying it in the depths of the soil.[38] Since that time human existence is as we see it today: completely locked into a double struggle. Men are endlessly torn in two directions: mercilessly punished by the gods if they chose the bad *eris* in an attempt to avoid the harsh effort of labor, or shackled by the chain of painful toil if they chose the good one in hopes of peacefully enjoying honestly gotten riches.

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The two versions of the Promethean fraud echo and illuminate one another—one, located in the *Theogony* within the framework of the divine epic having consequences that concern men only indirectly, and the other in *Works and Days,* directly inspired by Hesiod's own bitter experience of his quarrel with his brother. If men's lives, unlike those of the gods, cannot avoid *eris,* it is because the mortal condition finds its origin and raison d'être in the *eris* that pitted Prometheus against Zeus. Inversely, if Prometheus holds an equivocal position in divine society as the founder of a sacrificial rite whose ultimate consequence is to remove men from the gods and deliver them to Night's progeny, it is because the Titan's affinity with humanity is expressed first of all in the nocturnal *eris* that he stirs up in his rebellion against Zeus even in the luminous world of Olympus. Sacrifice itself, with its delicate equilibrium, is a response to this tension between two competing poles. As the central act of worship it links men with gods, but it does so by separating their respective shares. Men cannot take more than what they were given at the end of the trial in which the two rival divinities confronted each other. By conforming to the ritual order in the fleshly meal, which reflects and recalls this first *eris* between the two powers of the beyond, sacrifice—by the same right as its mythical founder Prometheus and with an ambiguity comparable in all points—takes on a mediating role between gods and men. It serves as an intermediary between the two races. But if sacrifice makes communication between them possible, it is by means of an allocation that sets them against each other. It unites them, not so they may be rejoined (as Prometheus wished, according to the *Theogony;* as was indeed the case in the Golden Age, according to *Works and Days*) but to confirm the necessary distance between them.

2. *Ox and Wheat*

The comparison of the two accounts is enlightening on yet another point. *Works and Days* does not repeat the first sequence, which the *Theogony* had broadly developed, of the cutting and sham distribution of the pieces of the sacrificial meat. It only mentions it as if it were a well-known fact, with an allusion to Zeus' anger "when Prometheus with his crooked schemes had duped him."[39] Then it immediately proceeds to the second episode of the myth, the theft of fire. Thus we may wonder if the version in *Works and Days,* with its account of the divine rivalry from which the current state of humanity is derived, has dropped the issue of food, which seemed so fundamental in the *Theogony.* As we said, sacrifice, the model for which was established by the Promethean deception, is capable of establishing and expressing the distance between gods and men because it involves completely opposite types of food for each party. Why does Hesiod not refer more explicitly in *Works and Days* to the allocation that by establishing the first sacrifice not only began the whole process of decline but continues, by its twofold nature as religious rite and way of eating, to symbolize the ambiguity of a human condition, a state that finds men connected with the gods by cult and separated from them by everything that their portion of sacrificial meat unfortunately represents?

In reality, the alimentary dimension of the Promethean myth is no less pronounced in *Works and Days* than in the *Theogony.* The theme of a food reserved for man and intimately connected to his specific form of existence is central to each of the two accounts. The theme has only changed its locus. And this shift, which can be explained if we consider the different perspective of each text, sheds light on some of the essential aspects of the myth in its relation to sacrifice. In *Works and Days* the products of the cultivated soil—Demeter's wheat, or grain food—occupy a position analogous to that of the sacrificed ox—pieces of meat, or fleshly food—in the *Theogony.* Indeed, for the author of the *Erga* (i.e., *Works and Days*)[40] man is considered in his capacity as farmer. Therefore he is viewed first of all as someone "who eats bread." For the author of the *Theogony* man, seen from the viewpoint of the divinity, is the one who eats the part of the sacrificial victim offered to the gods that is ritually reserved for him. But in both

cases human food bears the same stamp of the Promethean *eris*. Ever since Zeus hid away his food (*bios*), man can eat bread only if he has paid for it with his suffering, earned it with the sweat of his brow. Grain foods, which are accessible only by labor, remind us of the Titan's spirit of rivalry just as the sacrificial animal does. Furthermore, grain was not simply hidden during the conflict with the Olympian. The change of status that made food once freely available to all disappear beneath the earth is Zeus' reply to the Promethean ruse of concealing the edible portions of the animal under its hide to give them to men.[41] The cultivation of grains is thus the counterpart of the sacrificial rite, its reverse. Thanks to Prometheus' deception, mortals henceforth have the flesh of the ox to eat; by Zeus' will the grain that they need in order to live no longer lies within easy reach.

Again, like the sacrificial victim, cereal food is eaten at the culmination of a regulated relation to the gods. The food creates a mode of pious communication between mortals and Immortals at the very moment that it underscores in that very communication the cleavage, distance, and disparity between the status of each side. For Hesiod the cultivation of wheat constitutes a truly cultic act that the peasant must perform for the divine powers.[42] In his eyes work is a daily devotion; each task is assiduously executed at the proper moment out of respect for such sanctified acts. If the peasant, his storehouse full of grain, has enough bread to live comfortably, it is the result of harsh, regimented toil whose exact accomplishment had the ritual virtue of making the performer dear to the Blessed Ones, of making him dear (*philos*) to Demeter.[43] But this divine friendship and proximity, which eliminate want (*limos*), presuppose that the hard-working peasant has recognized and accepted the austere law of the fields[44] imposed by Zeus, a law that with the end of the Golden Age signals that gone are the days when men, ever youthful, lived without work or fatigue, feasting like gods. The significance of grain foods is that to avoid starvation, man, this sad child of *eris,* has no other choice but to devote himself entirely to painful effort, to *ponos,* the other child of *eris*.[45] To escape the misfortune engendered by *eris,* one must take the way of his brother.

There is one last similarity. We have maintained that in the logic of the myth, the comestible parts of the sacrificial victim go to men because these pieces of meat, already deprived of life and endowed with the capacity to satisfy an ever-recurrent hunger or to renew strength that would fail without food, constitute the diet of thoroughly mortal beings. Unlike the vitality of the gods, which is pure of all negative elements, theirs is precarious, unstable, fleeting, and doomed to death from the outset. The very

term *bios,* which Hesiod employs to indicate the ear of grain men use as their particular food, underscores a relationship between grains and the vitality peculiar to men, a relationship so intimate that we must speak of consubstantiality. The fabric of human life is cut from the same material that forms the food that sustains it. It is "because they do not eat bread" that the gods are not mortals. Not knowing wheat, fed on ambrosia, they have no blood.[46] Their *ikhōr* knows no declines or eclipses in power—those ups and downs that among men are like the stigmata of an ephemeral existence, the first taste of death that eating can only postpone. Let us recall the formula from the *Iliad* that describes human beings: "At one time they are in the fullness of their ardor, eating the fruit of the cultivated earth, at another lifeless, they are eaten away."[47] To go back to the terms of the *Odyssey,* barley and wheat constitute the *muelos andrōn,* men's marrow, the very substance of their life force.[48]

These relationships and correspondences in the Promethean myth serve to establish a close connection between sacrifice and the cultivation of grain. They appear as two orders of phenomena that are both interrelated and equivalent. Their relationship is seen in the explicit textual references we have mentioned. It is perhaps even more evident in what the text does not say, in its silence. The abrupt and disconcerting allusion to Zeus hiding the *bios* in *Works and Days* would be a foreign, absurd, and incomprehensible element if the text did not presuppose, as part of the framing of the myth, the symmetrical position and complementary status of cereal *bios* and sacrificial victim. Since the sacrificial ritual has the same role in the context of eating meat that the cultivation of grains has in the eating of grains and vegetables, the sequence linking Prometheus' deceit with the need for men to work the fields to obtain the sustaining *bios* is amply justified by its mere presence in the text. Let us add that the ox slain and carved by Prometheus at the first sacrifice is the domestic animal closest to man, the animal best integrated into his sphere of existence, especially when it is harnessed to the plow to open the furrows of the earth. The ox is thus the very opposite of the wild animals that men hunt like enemies rather than sacrifice. In principle, domestic animals are sacrificed with their consent, as beings that can, by their proximity to men, if not represent them directly, at least serve as their delegates. The distance between wild animals and the human sphere is particularly marked in matters of eating. Wild animals eat one another, without any rule or restriction, without setting part of their prey aside for the divine powers. What they take is determined by no law but appetite. Indifferent to justice and piety, the animal meal does not reflect a higher divine order either in technique or

execution. It reflects the relationships of brute force in the war that the animals wage against one another for food.[49]

What the ox is to wild animals, wheat is to wild plants. Of all the fruits of the earth, it is the most humanized. Wild plants grow by themselves wherever conditions permit. Wheat is harvested only after being cultivated over a year of careful attention comparable to the education given children to make them men.[50] At harvest time, human effort and divine good will echo one another in a balance of regular exchanges. Noncarnivorous animals find their food growing in uncultivated nature, in the wild grasses and plants that grow away from the fields and orchards worked by human hands, beyond the domestic horizon.[51] Bread belongs only to man. It is a sign and guarantor of civilized life, separating humanity from the animals as well as from the gods. Eating cultivated domestic plants and sacrificed domestic animals are the features of a dietary regimen that serves to place the human race midway between animals and gods—beings both close and far from man—and establishes man in the intermediary status that determines the conditions of his particular existence.[52]

3. *Cook the Food, Burn the Dead*

Perhaps it is now easier to understand all the implications of the bond in the myth that links the theft of fire to the division of the sacrificial victim on the one hand and to the hiding of grain beneath the earth on the other. According to the *Theogony,* it is because he never forgets the trick Prometheus played by rigging the portions so men got the edible share that Zeus decides from that day forward not to give men (*ouk edidou,* 1. 563) the flame of his celestial fire, the lightning ever-ready in the ash trees that they had enjoyed while they lived and celebrated with the gods. Why this response and what is its significance? Clearly, Zeus wants first of all to prevent men from using the gift they have received as the outcome of this first hand of the game. By depriving them of fire, he forbids them to cook the meat, which they cannot eat raw. Thus, Promethean fire is first of all associated with food; and the Titan's parry when he snatches the flame, hiding it inside a fennel stalk to bring it to men, is intended to give them all that is necessary for sacrificial cooking. But cooking meat before eating it also reinforces the contrast with the animals that feed on raw flesh. So the value of the cooking fire of Hesiod's Prometheus is already far-reaching. It represents culture as opposed to wildness. In this way it prepares the way for the theme of the "civilizing" fire, "master of all arts," that will be developed in Aeschylus' *Prometheus.*[53] But it does so in its own way, with all the complexities and ambiguities brought to the myth by the

intermediate status of humanity. Promethean fire is not the fire of the gods, the fire of heaven, the lightning that is all-powerful in the hands of Zeus and like its master, immortal. It is a perishable fire, created, hungry, and precarious, like all mortal creatures. To start it requires a seed of fire, kept beneath the ashes or carried in the hollow of a fennel stalk in the Promethean manner.[54] To keep it alive it must be fed. It dies when it is not nourished.[55] Fire's insatiable voracity, which makes it devour everything in its path, would liken it to a wild animal, as many formulas appearing as early as Homer suggest,[56] if, placed in man's hands to be mastered, it did not appear tame at the same time.

This civilized aspect, which provides a balance to the unleashing of a violent and bestial nature, is seen in the intelligent artifice and subtle invention embodied by the Promethean fire. It is not only the product of a ruse that, escaping Zeus' vigilance, enabled men to appropriate what the god had refused them. It involves a technique of transporting, conserving, and lighting the fire, part of the know-how inseparable from human life. But the *tekhnai* men use are no less equivocal than the Titan who granted them. Fire is a *dolos,* a misleading trick, a trap directed first at Zeus, who let himself be caught, but also effective against men should the occasion warrant—not only because the "ardor of the tireless fire" harbors a power beyond human control, but more precisely because this force carries something mysterious, a supernatural quality called Hephaestus that adds a new dimension to animal savagery and the acquired experience of human culture.[57] On three levels—animal, human, and divine—fire can play a mediating role at the heart of the sacrifice. Lighted on the altar and rising toward the gods to carry the fragrant smoke to them, it is not confined to tracing the path linking earth to heaven. It brings the work of distribution undertaken by Prometheus to its full completion in the cooking process by differentiating what is only roasted or boiled and belongs to men from what is completely consumed and sent to the beyond with the animal's very life. By eating what has not been burned but only cooked—that is, softened and weakened to enable the puny forces of the human body to assimilate it—mortals in some ways have what is left over from the sacrifice. Men eat the remains of a divine meal in which the essential is accessible only through total cremation, leading to the complete disappearance of the victim, devoured in the heat of the flames, from here below.

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In this respect, the similarities and differences between sacrificial cooking and funeral cremation rites are illuminating. Walter Burkert believed he had found a virtual identity between the structure and function of the two

practices.[58] He insisted on the importance of the meal in funerals as well as in the sacrifice. But simply because funerals include a meal does not mean that it is of the same order as the sacrificial meal. For the funeral of Patrocles, Achilles offers a feast near the corpse of the dead man. Bulls, lambs, goats, and pigs are slaughtered, and this flesh is cooked "in the fire of Hephaestus," while the blood of the victims, collected in cups, is poured in libation all around the corpse.[59] In this case, then, the lives of the animals, whose edible parts will be eaten, are offered to the dead man. The sacrificial meal that opens the funeral establishes a kind of communion with him. Yet the fire lighted somewhat later on the pyre to burn the remains[60]—and with them the animals and the Trojans offered as a holocaust—is not a cooking fire: the corpse is not eaten.[61] The body is consumed by flames to open the doors of Hades to the *psukhē* of the dead man,[62] to send him from the visible world, where his earthly remains linger as long as the body has not had its "share of fire," to the invisible realm of the beyond.[63] Here again fire plays a mediating role, making the body disappear from human sight (*ap' ophtalmōn*, 1. 53), its flames devouring the flesh in the manner of a wild animal. The terms Homer uses to designate this fiery funeral feast are *nemomai, esthiō, daptō*.[64] Their connection with eating is strengthened by the relationship Achilles explicitly establishes between the glorious treatment given to Patrocles' remains, given to the flames, and the opposite, ignominious end the hero has in mind for the body of Hector, to be thrown to the dogs.[65] The opposition between honor and dishonor is not the only issue. To be devoured by fire means that the body is entirely consumed in its integral corporeal form, so that it moves as an intact whole into the realm of the beyond. On the other hand, to be devoured by dogs means, as the text clearly indicates, that the flesh is given to "be torn apart raw by the dogs" (*kusin ōma dasasthai*).[66] If Achilles had accomplished his plan, Hector's corpse, torn to pieces in its natural raw state, would be both dishonored in this world and forever deprived in the next of the invisible existence attained by cremation in the fire of the funeral pyre.

Something else must be kept in mind. The part of the human corpse that the flames devour without a trace is the same part of the animal victim that goes to men for their meal: the meat, including the tendons and internal organs, everything that is perishable and would rot after death.[67] But the funeral fire is not allowed to consume the body to the point that it cannot be distinguished from the ashes of the pyre. Wine is poured wherever the flames have reigned.[68] The remains of the dead man, that is, the bones, are then carefully gathered. Specifically these are the white

bones, *ostea leuka*,[69] which are clearly visible among the ashes (*tephrē*)[70] where they are easy to spot even if they have been charred.[71] Covered with a double layer of fat,[72] these bones are placed in a vial or small box wrapped with cloth and placed in a grave, the dead man's subterranean abode. In the funeral rite cremation totally consumes the body and sends into the invisible realm what would be the parts reserved in the sacrifice for man's meal; it makes the removal of these "white bones" possible. In the sacrifice these very bones, again covered with fat, constitute the gods' portion—the part that the *mageiros*, who has carved the animal so that the long bones are completely stripped, had set aside in advance to place on the altar to be burned. The two practices are indeed homologous, but since their purposes are different, they work in opposite directions. At the outset of the sacrifice, the incorruptible white bones are set aside and reserved for the gods, who receive them in the form of smoke. In funeral cremation, fire is used to burn the perishable flesh away from the white bones, cleaning them so that men may keep them as an earthly sign of the dead man in his tomb, evidence of his presence in the eyes of his kin. If the essential, the authentic living life of the animal is returned to the gods in the sacrifice with the calcinated bones, while men sustain themselves on the half-raw, half-cooked remains of the divine meal, the funeral uses fire to purify the body of all its corruptible parts, in which life and death are inextricably mixed, and to reduce the remains to the essential—the white bones, the intermediaries that connect living men with the deceased.

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In *Works and Days*, the episode of the theft of fire is introduced in an allusive, abrupt, and apparently illogical way. "The gods," explains Hesiod to Perses, "have hidden their *bios* (i.e., wheat) from men. Otherwise you could live without doing anything, without working. But Zeus hid your *bios* when he found out that Prometheus had deceived him. From that day on he plotted woes for men; he hid fire from them." We would wonder what fire was doing in this story if we did not already know from the *Theogony* that Zeus' refusal to give fire is motivated by the Promethean trick concerning the parts of the sacrifice. Nonetheless the account still seems completely incoherent. Zeus' anger at being duped by the Titan is invoked to justify the need for agricultural labor. Furious at being taken in, Zeus hides life by burying the grain. His "hiding the fire" appears purely gratuitous in this context, with no discernible relationship with what has gone before it—unless for the archaic Greek hiding the *bios* and hiding the fire had such an intimate and obvious relationship that the one could not appear without the other.

First, let us note that the situation at the beginning is the same for both fire and grain. During the Golden Age before men and gods were separated, before the business at Mecone, barley and flames are both freely and directly accessible to man. They are available to him as "natural" gifts: he has no need to seek them, nor are they the subject of any worry or searching on his part. For the gods, "to hide" grain and fire means concretely that grain must first be buried, hidden in the ground in the form of seed to germinate and then ripen on the surface.[73] As a seed, fire must be buried and hidden in the ashes or a fennel stalk in order to rise and then blaze above the hearth. From a moral or metaphysical standpoint these two benefits, hitherto given naturally for man's free use, must henceforth be acquired, won, and paid for. They can be attained only by penetrating the layer of evils that surrounds them: painful effort, laborious activity, constant and assiduous attention. These difficulties, the requisite counterpart to advantages that were once freely and prodigally dispensed, make barley and fire triumphs of human civilization instead of the natural products they were in the beginning. That is not all. For the Greeks, grains and all cultivated plants in general are to wild plants as the cooked is to the raw.[74] The cooking that distinguishes them is based not only on the fact that the species that lend themselves to cultivation are those in which internal "cooking" is more complete than in wild plants, whose raw humors remain dominant, but also that men's hands, by opening and turning the soil so that the sun penetrates it, contribute to a better, more developed "cooking" of domesticated plants. To these two cooking types, the first spontaneous and the second through agriculture, is then added a third to complete the process. In transforming flour into bread and cakes, the cooking done in the kitchen makes grains fully edible. It severs their last bond to the domain of nature and rawness in which flour is a hybrid, a half-formed thing neither raw nor cooked, wild nor civilized. Taken from the oven, bread has become something else. Henceforth it is *sitos,* human food, in the same way that a piece of raw and bloody meat is transformed into a civilized dish once it is roasted or boiled.[75]

Now, the earth spontaneously offered to men of the Golden Age fruits and grains that in their natural state possessed all the traits and qualities of cultivated plants. These products grew already cooked, as if the soil had been worked and turned by the plow without human labor. Furthermore, they were immediately edible without having to be transformed and humanized by the action of the cooking fire. The Golden Age does not reflect the opposition between a state of nature and civilization; it abolishes any difference between them. It presents civilized food as the spontaneous

products of nature that man, without having to do anything, would find already cultivated, harvested, stored, and cooked—ready to eat. In this respect, the harvests of grain the earth brought forth in the Golden Age are like these harvests of meat the fortunate Ethiopians found near the Sun's Table, according to Herodotus. Every morning, the meats were there, scattered about the plain that brought them forth from itself in the night, all carved, divided, and already boiled, so the diners merely had to sit down to eat. They are produced in a naturally cooked state.[76]

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Thus the end of the Golden Age signals the need for sacrificial fire to cook meat, agricultural labor to cook grains, and the cooking fire to make the grains edible. With one stroke, the angry Zeus hides fire and wheat to make men atone for the meat they received by the grace of Prometheus. If things had stayed this way at Mecone, men would not have been able to eat any more of the fruit of domesticated plants, for it would be raw, just as in the version of the *Theogony* they would not be able to eat the raw meat of domesticated animals.

Promethean trickery not only sets up the rules for sharing the victim once and for all. With the same harshness it brings an equally ineluctable consequence in its wake, the need for work, *ponos.* To eat human food men must devote themselves from that day forward to the cultivation of grains as well as sacrificial cooking.

4. The Titan of Hesiod, the Titans of Orpheus

Before considering the final sequence of the tale, Zeus' creation of the "beautiful evil" that will seal mortals' fate by changing them from the state of *anthrōpoi,* which they had occupied alone up to that point, to that of *andres,*[77] male men faced with female women, the necessary complement to males but also their negation, double, and opposite,[78] we must go back over some textual details to confirm and refine our analysis.

We have seen that the *eris* between Prometheus and Zeus takes place at Mecone. Why there? Hesiod sheds no light on this point, but accounts and allusions found elsewhere lead to three comments.

1. *Mecone* is an ancient name for Sicyon.[79] It is there, recalls Callimachus among others, that the gods had established their seat at the end of the war against the Giants (*hedranon*) when they divided up the honors (*timai*) among themselves using a lottery.[80] An earthly site and abode of the gods, Mecone can represent that place where men and divinities still living side by side used to be seated at the same tables, feasting together at banquets and eating identical food.

On the other hand, the name of this city, which passed for the most ancient in all Greece,[81] remains linked to the memory of the allocation by the Olympians after their victory over their competitors for heavenly sovereignty. The allocation through which Prometheus indicates his will when he carves the sacrificial ox thus is directly in line with the regulated distribution that Zeus inaugurates when he takes the throne and that is the very sign of his supremacy.

2. From Sicyon toward Corinth extends a plain that the ancients named Asopia. Its reputation for fertility was proverbial: all one needed to become rich, it was said, was to own land between Sicyon and Corinth.[82] With its rich plain Mecone evokes a land of felicity, the soil of the golden age when, to borrow Hesiod's formula from the *Works and Days,* "the fertile soil produced a generous and abundant harvest by itself."[83]

3. Not far from Sicyon, at the summit of a small rise along the Asopos river, is a place called Titane, the name for which, according to the locals, comes from the first inhabitant, Titan. A local tradition, undoubtedly, but one from which it is all the more difficult to completely divorce Hesiod's account, because connections can be seen rather clearly between the Titan of Sicyon, the mythical fertility of Asopia, and the primordial allocation at Mecone. With respect to Titan, Pausanias reports that the people of the country have made him a brother of Helios, the Sun; and he interprets this information in the following way: Titan was amazingly clever (*deinos*) at observing the seasons of the year and the moment the Sun makes the cereals and fruits grow by cooking them. For the Periegetae, then, the extreme fertility of the soil of this place, combined with the cooking of the sun's fire to obtain the maximum effect, is based on the exceptional ingenuity of the first inhabitant of the region.[84]

The kinship between this Titan and the Sun recalls a similar legend from Corinth. The Corinthians used to say that at the moment of the allocation, their country had been contested between Poseidon and Helios; each had claimed it for himself. The arbitration of the dispute was entrusted to Briareos, who judged that the isthmus, that is, the lower part, be awarded to Poseidon, and the upper portion above the town be given to Helios, as if dedicating the lower ground to the aquatic elements and the upper to the heavenly fire. Pausanias, once again our witness, observes while reporting the story that this theme of a quarrel between the gods and a judgment awarding a territory is not confined to Corinth.[85] He cites in particular the case of Attica, where, as we know, the history of the city begins with Cecrops, the autochthonous king, a primordial being born of the earth, half-man, half-snake, and sometimes presented as bisexual.

Called upon to resolve matters between Athena and Poseidon, who both claim dominion over the town, Cecrops chooses the goddess. Poseidon takes revenge by flooding the lands of Attica with salt water. Transcending human limitations, Cecrops takes on the functions of a civilizing hero for the Athenians. He wrests the first inhabitants of the country from their still savage existence.

Pausanias also could have mentioned the parallel of Argos, where Phoroneus—the first human king, son of the river god Inachus, whose sovereignty stretched with his waters across the entire Argolid—plays the same role as Cecrops in Athens. As the arbiter of a conflict between Hera and Poseidon who quarrel over the Peloponnesus, he gives preference to the goddess. Again the god takes revenge, but this time by withdrawing all the water sources from the Argolid. Lacking ground water to feed them, rivers and springs—beginning with the Inachus—empty in the summer and dry out as the land is deserted by the water needed to give and sustain life. Phoroneus gathers the scattered men and unites them into one community. In this civilizing action, he approaches Prometheus, even matching him on some essential points. The people of Argos attributed to him and not the son of Iapetus the introduction of fire to human existence and the establishment of the first sacrifice.[86] Phoroneus had a brother, Aigialeus, whose name after his death was given to the Peloponnesus, which became the Aigialaea. Now, before it was called Mecone, Sicyon itself was also called Aigialaea after the name of the autochthonous king Aigialeus, born of this fertile land from which he was the first to emerge.[87]

To the bond that connects Sicyon to the Argolid via Aigialeus, we must add certain significant relationships between Asopia and Attica, especially the plain of Marathon. In his epic poem devoted to the history of Corinth, Eumelus maintained that the country's sole inhabitant at the very beginning was a daughter of Oceanus, Ephyra, followed by Marathon, the great grandson of the Sun and master of the land. After emigrating to Attica toward the plain that bears his name,[88] Marathon gave his kingdom to his two sons, Sicyon and Corinthos. Henceforth Asopia was called Sicyon and Ephyra, Corinth.[89] Now, as scholars have not failed to note,[90] the Titan and the place-name Titane of Asopia correspond in Attica, on the one hand, to the *Titanis gē,* the Titan's land, which in early times would have designated the territory of Athens, and on the other hand, to two characters specifically located on the plain of Marathon. The first of these is Titenius, living near Marathon, who was a Titan but more ancient than the people of the same name. He existed prior to the divinities and was a stranger to their quarrels, since, alone among all the homonyms, he re-

fused to fight on either side in the war between the gods.[91] Then there is Titacus of Aphidna, at a similar distance from Marathon. When evoking these figures Ister, in the *Atthides,* his collection of stories of Attica, implies that these were not Titans in the ordinary sense of the term but rather autochthonous kings like Cecrops, whom they preceded as first inhabitants and rulers of the land.[92] These Titans, neither gods nor men and of a time prior to the disjunction between the two, figure as primordial beings tied to the earth out of which they are born and where they abide, as humans do. But in these creatures the earthly element seems combined with an igneous element. The earth produces them aided by the action of solar heat. Indeed their name evokes calcinated earth, the white ash or quicklime that Greeks call *titanos* without always clearly distinguishing it from gypsum, *gupsos.*[93] Made of a mixture of earth and fire, the first chthonic beings not only arose directly out of the sun-scorched ground with no need for the union of male and female to create them,[94] they are also distinct from men and closer to the gods because of their igneous nature, which preserves them from the rotting and corruption that befall all mortal creatures. If, as Aristotle says, the inhabitants of hot countries live longer than other people "because they have a drier nature, and what is drier is less corruptible and lasts longer, as death is a type of rotting," we understand that the autochthones, like gods, are unacquainted with old age and mortality.[95] What makes Titans unlike humans is what differentiates earth mixed with fire (quicklime or gypsum, *titanos* or *gupsos*) from earth mixed with water (mud or clay, *pēlos*).[96]

In the *Theogony* Hesiod is silent about how the human race, the *genos anthrōpōn,* made its appearance on earth in the days when it was living side by side with the gods in Mecone. Not a word appears, either, about the material out of which men are made. On the other hand, in the case of the "beautiful evil" from which the race of women, the *genos gunaikōn,* is issued, we know that Hephaestus "forms it with earth into the likeness of a chaste virgin according to the wishes of the son of Cronus" (572). The formula is repeated almost word for word in line 71 of *Works and Days.* But this time Hesiod is more explicit about the meaning of this "formation" with or from earth. Indeed Zeus orders Hephaestus "to moisten the earth with some water"[97] to give it "the lovely form of a virgin in the likeness of the immortal goddesses." In the *parthenos,* henceforth associated with man, the face, *eidos,* is that of a goddess, but the substance, a mixture of earth and water, is mud or clay, *pēlos.*[98] Now in the most widespread Greek tradition—which Hesiod could not fail to know since it is already expressed in a passage in Homer (Menelaus takes aside the

Achaians, who hesitate to face Hector in man-to-man combat, and says to them, "All of you here, be earth and water once more," [*hudōr kai gaia*])—it is not only women but the entire human race that is made of mud or formed out of clay.[99] If Aeschylus closely follows Hesiod when he evokes in Pandora "the mortal woman, issued from fashioned clay,"[100] Aristophanes gives the formula its full breadth when he uses it to contrast male men, *andres,* these *plasmata pēlou,* these beings "formed of clay," with aerial and celestial beings, the immortal gods.[101] In the same way, to describe man Callimachus uses the expression, *ho pēlos ho Promētheios,* "Promethean clay," the value of which is made clear in another passage: "If Prometheus made you, you are born from clay and nothing else."[102] To be born of clay does not mean just that one will once again become clay, that one will perish; born from a prosaic and common material, one is doomed to obscurity, impotence, and insubstantiality. "Aware of who he is and what clay he is made from," is what Battaros, the seller of girls, will say of his adversary to discredit him before the judges in one of the *Mimes* of Herondas.[103]

Hesiod's silence on the origin of the *anthrōpoi*—before Prometheus' deception results in their condition as *andres,* associated with women and therefore facing the double fate of procreation and death—is perhaps explained by the fact that he found it impossible to accept either of the solutions offered by the representation of earthly creatures made of earth and fire or earth and water. In the first case, the humans of Mecone, like the primordial autochthones of Sicyon, Argos, and Athens, would be too close to the gods to ever become what they must inevitably be: poor perishable creatures. In the second, humanity "formed from clay" would be doomed from the outset to all weaknesses and ills that the creation of Woman must introduce into existence: hunger, fatigue, work, sickness, old age, and death.

With Hesiod the myth of the Promethean sacrifice is intended to justify a religion that places man midway between animals and gods and that bars all possibility either of identifying him with one or the other or of completely dissociating him from them. Mud and clay would reduce man to the condition of animals; quicklime and gypsum would lift him toward identification with the divine.

When she emerges from the hands of Hephaestus, Pandora's likeness to the gods—her external appearance, her beautiful face that will ensnare male desire (*kalon eidos epēraton*)[104]—is only a pretense. Within she is endowed with the spirit of a bitch, *kuneos noos,* which reflects her deep-seated animality. What she shares with the *andres* and makes her "human" (*anthrōpou,* in line 61) is only strength (*sthenos*) and articulated speech (*audē,*

61–62 or *phōnē,* 79). Nothing about her suggests the presence of a divine element, the breath or fire introduced into the clay from outside to "animate" the product of Hephaestus' art in order to grant it, along with life, a status other than that of simple earth moistened with water.

What, then, sets man apart from animals shaped from clay like himself? What puts him in his own particular intermediary position, separated as much from the gods as the animals, to be sure, but tied to both nonetheless? In the interplay of the three elements, earth, water, and fire, that cause generation in the model we have noted, one solution emerges. All that was needed was for man to embody all three elements at once, for him to be their point of intersection. It is this figure that Ovid depicts with great clarity when he outlines the genesis and appearance of man in the first book of the *Metamorphoses.* The elements are differentiated and established. Animals already inhabit the earth. Only one is lacking, nobler than the others. The earth, which has just separated from the burning ether, still contains in her breast the seeds of heaven. It is this soil sown by fire that Prometheus, who had mixed it with the waters of a river, shapes in the image of the gods.[105] In other versions such as that of Servius in his commentary on Virgil, Prometheus makes man out of mud, then, rising with Athena's help to heaven, he touches the Sun's wheel with his fennel stalk and steals a seed of fire, which he introduces into man's breast to bring his work to life.[106]

This sort of conception is alien to Hesiod, not only because it presupposes a notion of the elements and how they combine that came after him as an outgrowth of Ionian philosophy, but also for intrinsic reasons concerning the way he views the problems of man in relation to animals and gods. If Hesiod does not express man's "intermediate" condition via traditional images contrasting man, made of earth and water, with luminous and celestial beings such as the Olympian gods, or with beings made of earth and fire such as the autochthones, it is because in his view man's humanity does not reside either in a particular "nature" linked to the elements that form him or in an origin peculiar to him alone. Man's true nature arises from the position that he occupies in the midst of a whole, from his status in a hierarchy of functions, prerogatives, and honors. Of course flesh-and-blood men are not made of the same material as the Immortals. Nor did they come to be at the same time or in the same manner as the gods. Their genealogy follows a completely different course. The Titans are the sons of Uranus, the sons of the Heaven. Their progeny, particularly the children of Cronus, i.e., the Olympians, also belong to an Uranian lineage. But Uranus himself was born of Gaea, the Earth, who

bore all beings, whoever they are, except for Chaos. In this way, if one goes all the way back to the very beginning, gods and men have a common origin: Gaea, the Earth-Mother, from whom also derives the fire of heaven as well as the waters of Oceanus, Pontos, and all the rivers. So Hesiod is not contradicting himself in *Works and Days* when he introduces the creation of the different races of men who have appeared on the surface of the earth with counsel addressed to Perses, "And bear in mind that gods and mortal men have the same origin,"[107] and then goes on to say that the first two are produced (*poiēsan,* 110 and 128) by the immortal inhabitants of Olympus, the following two by Zeus (*poiēse,* 144 and 158), and the last appear without any indication of the producer.

The variations between one race of men and another, like the distance that separates the human race in general from gods and animals, are not put in terms of the differences between the elements from which they all are issued and to which they are linked (golden, silver, or bronze men are not made of these metals, any more than Hesiod and his contemporaries are or believe themselves to be made of iron). The divergences correspond to contrasting types of life, conduct, and behavior. Each race is defined by the functions it assumes, the activities to which it is devoted. What does it do, and above all, how? Does it observe Justice, the daughter of Zeus, venerated by the gods, or give itself over to Hubris?

What brings men close to the gods, then, is not the more or less hidden presence of a portion of the divine but the observance, out of a respect for Justice, of rules that govern the relations of mortals among one another and with the higher powers. By fully submitting to these norms, men institute a type of communication with the gods that establishes their exact place and at the same time makes them fully men, i.e., miserable, weak, and mortal creatures whose hearts are inhabited by Shame and Fear, *Aidōs* and *Nemesis,* and whose minds are capable of recognizing Justice.[108]

For Hesiod no other kinship between men and gods exists besides the one constituted through cultic acts and maintained by the scrupulous execution of rites—whence, from his standpoint, the importance and breadth of the foundation myth of sacrifice. For Hesiod, revealing man's condition does not consist in defining a "human nature" about which he has no idea but in uncovering, by means of the account of the foundation of the sacrifice, all the implications, narrow and broad, of the cultic procedure with respect to the status of humans and their assigned place in an order based and affirmed far away in Zeus.

Thus, any eschatological dimension, any opening onto a realm beyond earthly existence, is from the outset excluded from Hesiod's vision of hu-

mankind. Piety is not supposed to develop the part of our being shared with the gods to raise us to their level but rather to establish the type of relationship with the divine that puts us in our place. Death does not separate the part of us made of and belonging to earth from the part that comes from above and rejoins its place of origin. Like hunger, sickness, and old age, death is one of the constitutive marks of human existence, one of the characteristics that is proof of the unbridgeable abyss that separates the ever-youthful Immortals from the ephemeral creatures who are doomed, at the end of a life in which no good appears without evil, no light without shadow, to disappear into the anonymous darkness of Hades.

On this level, the connections and dissimilarities with what we can learn of the Orphic anthropogony appear with more clarity. As Marcel Detienne has demonstrated,[109] the status of humans in this anthropogony has its basis and explanation in a myth of sacrifice—this time an impious, monstrous sacrifice, for it concerns the death of the child Dionysus and his dismemberment and consumption at the hands of the Titans. Unlike those of the *Theogony,* the Titans of this account are not the first royal gods, the children of Uranus fighting under the leadership of their brother Cronos against the younger divinities warring for the power that Zeus wishes to command. They are the ancestors of humanity, and beneath the layer of gypsum they have put on to outwit the small god/child, they seem very close to the Titans of Sicyon and Marathon, those autochthonous beings that emerged from the sun-scorched earth.

The fable of the criminal Titans cutting Dionysus apart in order to devour him is not the aberrant and gratuitous invention of late Hellenism. It is based on the local legends that Hesiod had already used—as the allusion to Mecone attests—extensively reworking them himself. The reference to an initial sacrifice that is the basis for the human condition, which is common to both Hesiod's and the Orphic versions, shows that it is not possible to separate the two mythical accounts, despite their differences; they complement one another. On several points their differences correspond and reinforce each other, which makes the fundamental divergences in religious orientation more apparent. Each one must be studied in the context of the other, which illuminates it by contrast.

For Hesiod the justification of blood sacrifice is intimately linked to man's acceptance of his mortal status with all its particularities, as well as to the observance of a religious practice requiring that the distance between gods and earthly creatures be recognized, respected, and sanctified in every act of worship and throughout the course of daily life, in order

to establish communication with the divine. Among the Orphics the radical condemnation of sacrifice, which is tied to the sacrilegious murder the Titans committed in the beginning, entails both an entirely different status for man and the rejection of the official religion. Engorged with the flesh of Dionysus, whose body they devoured piece by piece except for the heart, the Titans are struck by Zeus' lightning and reduced to ashes. From this calcinated dust men are born.[110] Made of the same burnt matter as the beings from which they are issued, humans, because of their Titanic heredity, bear the weight of the criminal fault that stamped their origin and dooms them to a life of expiation. But they also partake of Dionysus, whose flesh was assimilated by the ancestors who had eaten part of it.[111] Instead of locking men in an immutable position between animals and gods, the myth assigns them a trajectory leading from the scattered ashes of the Titans, where they begin, to Dionysus, who has been wholly reconstituted from his preserved heart by the gods.[112] Piety no longer means keeping an equal distance from each of the two poles between which man is located but leading a kind of life that raises man toward the higher of the two. By consenting to sacrifice a living animal to the gods in the Promethean manner, as official worship requires, men only repeat the Titans' crime indefinitely. By refusing this sacrifice, by forbidding the bloodshed of any animal, by turning away from fleshly food to dedicate themselves to a totally "pure" ascetic life—a life also completely alien to the social and religious norms of the city—men would shed all the Titanic elements of their nature. In Dionysus they would be able to restore that part of themselves that is divine. By returning to the god in this way each would accomplish, on the human level and within the framework of individual existence, this same movement of reunification that Dionysus himself knew[113] as a god during the torment in which he was first dismembered and then reconstituted. This is the same movement that the Orphic theogonies celebrate in the cosmic realm when they sing of the return of the world at the sixth divine generation—that of Dionysus, to be exact—to its original total unity from a dispersed and differentiated state.

5. *The Perils of Mediation*

In the logic of these two equally consistent theological systems, the characters responsible for the introduction of the human race do not have the same status and functions in both versions. Once their crime is committed, the Orphic Titans disappear from the scene, giving way to those born from their ashes, men. They survive only in the trace left at the very heart of humanity in the form of the Titanic fault inherited by each individual in

his own unique existence, a fault that the Orphic way of life should abolish, as the Titans themselves were blasted from the surface of the earth by Zeus' lightning. Because the religious drama played out within each human creature follows the same model and course as the cosmic and divine drama—from unity lost to unity regained—the Titans have no other function than to join anthropogony to theogony. They are not to serve as intermediaries between men and gods; on the contrary, they represent the part of man that he must root out if he is to identify with the divinity through expiation, paying the price for the ancient murder.[114]

For Hesiod, Prometheus belongs to the divine world. He is an Immortal. But his unfortunate encounters with Zeus give him a marginal place in the society of the Olympian gods; even when he is pardoned and admitted to heaven, he remains apart. It is precisely the somewhat strange and equivocal character of his position in the divine universe that gives him the vocation of mediator for those earthly and mortal creatures whose own intermediary status both sets them apart and brings them close to the gods in a relationship that is never free from ambiguity. Prometheus can no more vanish from the divine scene—like the other Hesiodic Titans who were expelled from the cosmos and shut away in the Night of Tartarus where they lie forever in chains—than men can escape their "mediate" position. The existence of a sacrificial rite among men, which completely separates them from the gods in order to unite them, is based on the correlative presence in the divine realm of a being who combines in his person two opposing figures: the rebel, chastised and rebuked; and the benefactor, the civilizer, at last unbound from his chains, welcomed and redeemed.

More details can perhaps be determined about this "complicity" between Prometheus and the human race as it appears at the end of the duel between Zeus and the son of Iapetus in Mecone. All the benefits men owe to the Titan are also revealed as misfortunes and punishment, for them as well as for him. And the moral of the mythical account, "Thus, it is not possible to hide from or elude the mind of Zeus" (*Theogony,* 613), is intended for men; but it comes to them via the example of the "beneficent Prometheus who, despite all his skills," suffered because of them (614–616). From their unlucky benefactor men have inherited characteristics that in some respects make them Promethean creatures. First of all, know-how and a form of intelligence that gives them access to an orderly, reasoned, and civilized life—on the condition, however, that they do not claim to compete with the wisdom of Zeus, as Prometheus thought he could. His failure reveals, both to men and to himself, the limits of Promethean intelligence. Here cleverness and foresight are always joined by foolishness and improvidence. Prometheus and Epimetheus, the two brothers, form a single and unique figure of which one side, the Promethean, is closer to the gods and the other, the Epimethean, closer to men. With this symbiosis of two opposite figures, every ingenious project one undertakes is realized by the other in the form of an unexpected disaster.

The Titan's revolt against Zeus brought men a life completely devoted to rivalry and struggle. Whether it is a good thing—emulation of work—or evil—war and discord—the same *eris* holds us that pushed Prometheus to rebel against the decisions of Zeus. Again, the Titan's failure offers an unforgettable lesson to those who have inherited his fighting spirit. Rooted by Zeus on earth, *Eris* extends its power to all realms of human life except the relationships with the heavenly gods. Men can indeed compete with one another for everything; but they can never compete with the Immortals, claim to equal them in any fashion, nor attempt to approach the divine state. To perform the blood sacrifice according to the Promethean model is to commemorate the Titan's *eris* and its consequences, and thus to engage in a relationship of complete submission to the gods precluding the slightest impulse toward *eris*. In the sacrificial ceremony the festive side of joyous communion with the gods can never be separated from the other aspect of the ritual—recognized and proclaimed subordination to the gods, the resigned acceptance of the mortal condition, and the permanent abdication of all claims to what lies beyond the human. All participants in the sacrifice wear a crown, a symbol of accomplishment, victory, and consecration. But this auspicious festival adornment recalls the memory of the founder of the sacrifice; it is the "crown of Prometheus," the one the Titan had to consent to wear always, as a price for his reconciliation with Zeus in exchange for the chains from which he had been freed.[115] On the heads of those who approach the gods to have communion with them through sacrifice, the crown of consecration, this "Promethean bond," also represents the chains that bound the rebel Titan to punish him for his "partiality" toward the human race.

Even in his punishment, Prometheus appears in a mediating position, torn between gods and men. In the spectacle of his torment, the Titans and Typhon are hurled into Tartarus, as far below Earth as the Earth is below heaven, beyond the abode of Night in that deep world guarded by Prometheus' brother Atlas, also in punishment, "holding up the vast heavens, with his head and arms,"[116] like an immense column or cosmic pillar. Prometheus, for his part, is bound to the summit of a high mountain, in the air, between heaven and earth. Hesiod notes that to bind him Zeus

had wound his chains "halfway up a column."[117] The image of a heavenly column, *kiōn ourania,* is all the more familiar because Typhon is sometimes represented, not bound halfway up the column like the son of Iapetus but lying under it, crushed beneath the earth by its massive weight.[118]

Prometheus brought fire down from heaven, where it belonged, and placed it on earth, unbeknownst to Zeus. In this transfer from above to below, Prometheus is the flame-bearer, the *purphoros.* What Zeus hurls at him in punishment in the form of the royal or wild eagle, equivalent to lightning, is his own kingly flame-bearer,[119] the flying winged arrow that, on his orders, draws a trail of fire between heaven and earth.[120] To punish the guilty Titan for the theft of fire and the deception at Mecone, this lightning-bird, this flame-bird, becomes a ravening animal, a voracious dog. It comes like a vulture, uninvited and insatiable, to the feast where Prometheus appears no longer as the founder of the sacrifice or designated distributor of the portions but as the victim condemned to offer his body as the choice morsel of food. Greek tradition is unanimous concerning the organ that the eagle sent by Zeus devours: "The eagle ate his immortal liver,"[121] writes Hesiod. In the tragedy of Aeschylus, Hermes speaking in Zeus' name announces to Prometheus what lies ahead of him in these terms: "Then Zeus' winged dog, the wild eagle, will voraciously carve into pieces a large strip from your body . . . he will feed until the black food of your liver is gone."[122] Why the liver? Perhaps we have the right to venture some hypotheses on this point deriving on the one hand from the status of the liver in the sacrifice and, on the other, its place and functions among living creatures, particularly man. In sacrificial cuisine the liver plays a special role among the *splankhna* that represent, by the way they are cooked and eaten, those pieces where the shares of gods and men tend, if not to overlap, at least to be as close as possible. It is the organ that the sacrificer first reaches for to examine when the animal has been cut open.[123] Its configuration, sheen, grain, and color tell whether the victim may be accepted or not,[124] whether the animal's life is suitable for ensuring communication between earth and heaven. The liver, along with the other *splankhna,* is more than one of the "vital" parts connected with the blood of the sacrificed animal. Hidden inside the animal, it seems to be turned toward the divine world because of its divinatory role. In it are reflected, down in the entrails of the victim, the dispositions of the divinities with respect to mortal beings and their consent or refusal to come into contact with them by the path of the sacrificial ritual.

Surprisingly, Plato assigns the liver an analogous mediating function in the human body.[125] This is most startling because this organ, localized in

the lower abdomen below the diaphragm and laden with food, is the seat of the inferior part of the soul, concupiscence or *epithumia.* The soul, we know, has three parts. Between the immortal part and the *epithumia,* as between the head and the belly, the intermediary role should be reserved for the part of the soul designated by its medial position (between the "wall" of the diaphragm and the "isthmus" of the neck) and role as intercessor (the soul forcefully rules desire with the commandments of reason) to ensure the joining of the extreme elements and thereby submit the whole body to its best part. This mediating soul is *thumos,* courage, located in the thorax, seated in the heart, and thereby placed "at the watchman's post" to send blood, as if from a spring, through all the vessels to wherever reason demands obedience from the body.

Plato presents the liver as a "manger" (*phatnē*), to which the part of the soul that has the appetite for food and drink is tied like a wild animal (*hōs thremma agrion*) that must be fed while bound. Roped forever to this rack where it finds its sustenance, the hungry soul has been confined "as far away as possible from the part that deliberates, bringing it the least possible trouble and noise, so that it may leave this master part to deliberate in peace over everything concerning the good of the whole or the parts of the body."[126]

Thus the maximum distance separates the liver and the intellect, so that the dichotomy of functions and the opposition between mortal and immortal will be respected. However, as if Plato the physiologist could not completely forget what the languages of religion and myth say about the liver, this distance is paradoxically matched by a peculiar closeness. The liver is a manger, but its structure is such that, in its place in the abdominal cavity, it functions as a mirror reflecting the thoughts directly projected there by the power of the intellect in the form of images. In a kind of emanation, the *nous* may frighten the liver by drawing fearful visions on its surface or calm it with light and gentle figures, making it the organ of divination during sleep.

In man the liver represents the wildness of the appetite for food bound with the need to eat. But in the reflections that form on its surface this organ possesses the capacity to be "impressed" by what lies beyond it, surpasses it, and belongs to another domain of reality. Down in the manger of the liver, the immortal and divine element contained in the human soul can, outside all reason and bypassing the intermediary of the heart, be manifested in some way in the phantasms that haunt the dreams of the sleeper.

Prometheus' liver is a "mediator" from yet another standpoint. As is

normal for a divine being, his liver is immortal, *hēpar athanaton,* as Hesiod insists in line 524. But its nonmortality is not the constant plenitude, the immutable youth enjoyed by the Blessed Ones. It is an immortality of eclipses, a regular cycle of disappearance and rebirth whose phases alternate, just as night and day endlessly follow each other on the surface of the earth. In the day the eagle devours the liver down to the last bite. "He will feed until the black food of your liver is gone," proclaimed the Hermes of *Prometheus Bound.* Hesiod is more specific: "The eagle ate the immortal liver, but it grew back again at night to be in all ways the equal of what, during the day, the eagle with open wings had devoured."[127]

Midway between human life, which inexorably moves from birth toward death where it is annihilated, and divine life, with its complete permanence and stability, the immortality of the Promethean liver corresponds to the mode of existence of these natural phemonena that, without ever disappearing, nonetheless survive only because they are periodically renewed.[128] Once eaten, the liver grows back, and it grows back in order to be devoured once more. The nightly growth is matched by the ever-renewed hunger of Zeus' winged dog, a guest whose hunger, like that of men, is born again each morning in search of new food.

Along with the fire he gave them, Prometheus determined the type of food fit for mortal men: meat from sacrificed domestic animals and wheat from cultivated fields. The other side of these benefits was that men would need absolutely to eat in order to live, because they would be inhabited by a hunger that no meal could sate forever but only appease for a short while. Like the Titan's immortal liver, the hunger of mortal men grows back during the day to its original size, making it imperative for the foods that sustain men in their precarious and brief life to be ceaselessly renewed. The irony of the punishment inflicted on the son of Iapetus is that the founder of the sacrifice is made into the victim of insatiable hunger, transformed through his liver into a meal readied daily, into a portion of meat that is indefinitely restored with no hope of ever satisfying the immortal appetite that Zeus has set against him. His suffering is both the expiation for and mockery of the diet that men owe to him, in which eating no longer appears without two sinister companions, both Night's progeny, Hunger and Death.[129]

One detail should be emphasized at this point. To say that Prometheus' liver "grew back" during the night, Hesiod uses the term *aexeto,* which literally means, "it grew," and whose value in this passage becomes more specific if we observe that Hesiod uses it on two other highly significant

occasions. It appears in *Works and Days* (394) regarding the fruits of Demeter, the grain plants that, if the farmer has carried out his labors on time as he should have, "each grow in their time (*hekasta hōri' aexētai*)" and keep the peasant from having to beg for bread. In the *Theogony* (444) the poet pays homage to Hecate who, with Hermes, knows how "in the stables to make the animals grow (*en stathmoisi . . . lēid' aexein*)." Devoured every day, Prometheus' liver grows back every night, just as two types of "cultivated" foods grow in seasonal rhythm and with the help of the gods and human labor, foods that since the drama at Mecone have become the specific diet of the human race—the products of grain cultivation and the meat of domesticated animals.[130]

6. A Story of Stomachs

Let us now look at the way Prometheus goes about rigging the two portions of the victim that he gives Zeus to choose from. The portions are to be arranged in such a way that each appears to be the opposite of what it truly is. The one that is good to eat must seem inedible and repugnant, while the one that cannot be eaten must seem appetizing. Thus, Prometheus "hides" the actual contents of each ration in a deceptive wrapping. Split into an exterior and interior that contradict each other, the shares are a lie, a perfidious ruse. They are *doloi,* "traps." But what exactly is the structure of these traps, and what do they correspond to in the overall foundation myth of sacrifice? For the portion Zeus keeps, there is no problem. Prometheus gathers in a heap the white bones, stripped completely of flesh; then he disguises it all with a layer of white fat. Thus prepared, this share essentially corresponds to what in the rite is indeed placed on the altar to be burned for the gods: the bones covered with fat.[131] And the second portion? It contains the flesh and the entrails (with both viscera and intestines) laden with fat: that is, all the edible parts of the animal. First wrapped in an ox-hide, the edibles are hidden in the animal's stomach, *gastēr.* The use of the hide is understandable: completely inedible, it is all the better adapted to its role of "concealing" the edible internal parts because it already covers them on the living animal. Moreover, in the sacrifice the hide, even though uneaten, in fact returns to men. It is not burned as an offering to the gods with the bones on the flames of the altar. Whatever its purpose—as the priest's share, which can be sold to collect the revenue of the *dermatikon,* as an exhibit commemorating the completed sacrifice (*endrata*), or for use in making a stuffed ox as in the Bouphonia—the hide is what remains here below of the victim when its

bones have been burned (for the gods) and its flesh eaten (by men). It recalls both the living animal and the ritual act that immolated the animal, consecrating its life to the divinity. In the *Odyssey*[132] Odysseus' companions, wracked with hunger, slaughter the oxen of the Sun, the god's property forbidden to humans in an impious parody of sacrifice. The slaughtered animals were skinned, carved, and the pieces put to cook on the spit. But this divine, immortal herd, not subject to "growth" or generation, is not of the comestible type. The sacrilegious sacrifice was carried out; the sacrilege remains and will be punished. But the sacrifice cannot really have taken place. On the skewers the raw and cooked flesh lows with the powerful voices of the oxen. The skins move all by themselves, as if the external wrapping, despite being emptied of flesh and bones, is nonetheless still inhabited by the living animal.

So in all respects the hide is suited to its role of wrapping the share that will fall to men. But why "conceal" this package with an additional disguise by stuffing it in the stomach? This is a detail that is all the more surprising—and consequently all the more meaningful for the interpreter—because the stomach, unlike the skin, is an "internal" part of the animal. First, the *gastēr* is of a repellent aspect; the Greeks do not eat it. Between a portion of tempting white fat and a fibrous stomach, we understand why Zeus, invited to choose first, shows no hesitation. Moreover, the shape and solidity of the *gastēr* evoke a receptacle used to cook meat. The part of the tripod placed on the fire, the cooking pot, is called *gastrē*, the belly or the paunch of the tripod.[133] Describing the forms of sacrifice among the Scythians, Herodotus brings us information about the *gastēr* that perhaps is more revealing of the Greek imagination on the subject than of the customs of the Scythians.[134] The victims having been flayed, he says, the flesh is stripped from the bones and thrown into the lebes, caldrons, of the country, which resemble the craters of Lesbos. But if the Scythians, as it sometimes happens, have no lebes, "they put all the flesh of the sacrificed animals in the stomachs (*es tas gasteras*) mixing it with water" to boil them there. Herodotus adds, "The *gastēr* easily contains the flesh removed from the bones." We need also recall that, again according to our author, the Scythians, even less well provided with wood than kettles, use the animals' bones as fuel, "which burns quite well under the stomach." In this way, "an ox is cooked by itself and the other victims as well, each one cooking itself." Did Herodotus remember, while "describing" the Scythian sacrifice, which is as impious (the bones of the victim are not offered to the gods) as it is ingenious and economical, the Greek

recipe of which an early example is found in Homer? In chant 38 of the *Odyssey,* Antinous gives the claimants the menu for which the two palace beggars, Iros and the disguised Odysseus, are ready to fight one another: "We have on the fire," he says, "goat stomachs (*gasteres aigōn*) stuffed with fat and blood."[135]

So the *gastēr* could sometimes be used the way we would use intestines today to make blood sausage, as a receptacle in which to cook the animal's blood and fat[136]—a minor culinary custom that certainly does not reveal the essential. On the contrary, in the very passage of the *Odyssey* we have just mentioned, the real reason is clearly revealed for the role that Hesiod assigns to the *gastēr* by making it the wrapping where the part of the victim is hidden, as if in a sack, that will fall to the humans and decide their condition. The goats' stomachs are on the fire; the meal is ready. Odysseus, who plays the weakened old man exhausted from misery, must find a reason to explain why an old man like himself accepts the risk of confronting someone younger and stronger. He has no desire to expose himself to blows, "But," says he, "the evil *gastēr* is urging me."[137] *Gastēr kakoergos,* the ill-doing belly, *gastēr stugerē,* the odious belly, *gastēr lugrē,* the contemptible belly, *gastēr oulomenē,* the deadly belly, the belly that "gives so much pain," that brings "so many painful cares to mortals,"—this theme returns with an obsessive force in the *Odyssey* to denounce the curse of the "belly," the frightful need man suffers to eat in order to live, and in order to eat, to have what is necessary.[138] Man is a "belly" or "slave of the belly" when, possessed by hunger, he can think only of ways of satisfying it. Jesper Svenbro has noted certain social implica-ions of the "belly" in Homer and Hesiod.[139] For example, the poet who depends on others—on his audience—for his subsistence, for want of sufficient resources at home to protect him from hunger, is necessarily re-uced to the state of a belly; it is the *gastēr* in some way that commands his song.

However, the term seems to us to have a more general value. It indicates the human condition in its totality. As Pindar says, "Each one makes an effort to keep pernicious hunger away from his *gastēr.*"[140] The *gastēr* represents the ardent, bestial, and wild element in man, that internal animality that chains us to the need for food. The formula in the *Odyssey* (7.216), "Is there nothing more like a dog (*kunteron*) than the odious belly," is echoed by Epimenides' epithet for the Cretans, those liars, "evil wild beasts, lazy bellies (*kaka thēria, gasteres argai*)."[141] Just as *gastrizō* means to fill one's paunch, to feast, and as *gastrimargia* refers to the gluttony that

Plato will say in the *Timaeus* makes the human species "a stranger to philosophy and the muses (*aphilosophon kai amouson*),"[142] and *gastris*, pot-bellied, evokes the glutton, the term *gastēr* is used throughout a long textual tradition to represent the one who, dominated by his appetite for food, has no other horizon or mainspring than his belly. This voracious sensuality, this gluttonous greed is often found associated with sloth and lewdness, as if, according to the expression that Xenophon puts in the mouth of Socrates, one were slave all at once to "the belly, sleep, and dissipation."[143] This is why the same Xenophon, in the choice of a wife, requires a well brought up woman, *amphi gastera,* just as he will only accept as a housekeeper the one of his women servants who seems to him to be the least inclined "to the *gastēr,* to wine, to sleep, and to union with men."[144] A precept from the *Golden Verses* (9–10) recommends: "Master first of all the *gastēr,* and sleep, luxury, and anger." In his commentary, Hierocles explains the priority of the *gastēr* in the cohort of vices: "The *gastēr,* when it is too full, provokes a surplus of sleep and these two excesses together . . . incite one beyond measure to the pleasures of Aphrodite."

In Hesiod, as we will see, the idle and lewd aspect of the *gastēr* is found particularly projected on women. To be sure, the feminine *gastēr* is not unacquainted—far from it—with gluttony. It is even less exempt from this defect in Hesiod's picture because, since women do not work, they represent not the producer in the couple but the consumer. When gorging themselves at their husband's table, women stuff their stomachs with food the poor fellow had to accumulate painfully by the sweat of his brow.[145] However, in the case of female creatures, the appetite for food seems easily to lead to sexual appetite. This connection is explained by the fact that with reference to women the term *gastēr* designates the stomach, as it does for men, but also the womb, the "breast" where the child is conceived and fed.

At Mecone, when Prometheus presents the two shares of the victim to the assembled gods and humans, there were no women yet; their belly will appear later on. Wrapping men's share in the ox's *gastēr* means first of all, of course, giving it the most repugnant appearance in hopes of tricking Zeus. Then and above all it means, from Hesiod's standpoint, emphasizing that when he set all the meat aside for the mortals, Prometheus made them a fool's bargain. To keep in the sacrificed animal all of what can be eaten implies that one becomes a *gastēr* oneself, that one begins an existence in which life can only be sustained or strength restored by stuffing one's paunch, ever and again, just as the flesh and entrails of the ox are

stuffed in the *gastēr.* The most tragic part is that, thanks to the Titan, humans are led to assume this status of "belly" within the very framework of the ritual that unites them, to the extent it is possible in their new state, with Immortals who live on ambrosia. It is by eating, by the indirect means of the meal, by becoming in some way a meat sack, that the mortal creature normally communicates (i.e., by sacrifice) with the gods.

Undoubtedly, for some "divine men" like Hesiod, there are other paths.[146] In the beginning of the *Theogony* the poet tells how the Muses have singled him out and inspired him while he was pasturing his flocks, as shepherds do, at the foot of Mt. Helicon. They taught him the beautiful song that they themselves used on Olympus to charm the ears of Zeus.[147] By telling of everything that was from the beginning, everything that is, and everything that will be—about the gods that came first, the birth of the son of Cronus, his struggles, his victory, his reign, and about Prometheus as well, with his race of men—this chant celebrates the glory of the sovereign who dominates the world. It distinguishes his power and order with the brilliance of praise and the radiance of the sung word.[148] By repeating this truthful song on earth, by joining his human voice in unison with those of the daughters of Zeus to sound the great epic of the Olympian among mortal creatures, the inspired poet contributes here below, among humans, to this glorification needed to ensure the permanence of the divine order.[149] In this manner he takes a mediating role between earth and heaven analogous to that of the king of Justice, the nursling of Zeus, that the Muses must also inspire.[150] Since the separation from the gods was accomplished, human life has been devoted to *eris* and unhappiness. With soft words the king knows how to calm quarrels; with the sweetness of song, the poet knows how to lull sorrow to sleep.[151] One works by justice, the other by poetry to create a bridge between mortal existence and the universe of the gods. They establish a link that bypasses the Promethean sacrifice, one that does not go through the belly. When the Muses spoke to Hesiod, they first addressed him in the plural, failing to recognize him in the crowd of shepherds like him. They said, "Herdsmen abiding in the fields, sad shameful people, who are nothing but bellies (*gasteres oion*)."[152] But in granting him the privilege to proclaim, as they do, not fictions but truths (*alēthea*),[153] and to sing of the genesis of the gods and the world, Zeus' distribution of honors, Prometheus' fault, the sacrificial allocation, and man's ambiguous status, the Muses make the inspired poet one who, although establishing the inevitable place of the *gastēr* in the sacrifice, no longer is likened only to a belly in his relationship with the gods.

7. A Beautiful Evil, Fire's Counterpart

We have to come to the last act of the myth, woman. By creating her (*teuxen, Theogony* 570 and 585), Zeus pulls off his master coup. He ends the game with Prometheus. The Titan can no longer respond. He has been checkmated. The trap closes on the *anthrōpoi,* who are forced into an ongoing confrontation and need to live with this "half" of themselves created for them with the intention of making them what they are, *andres;* but they do not recognize themselves in her. Their indispensable complement, whom they cannot live with or without, presents the dual aspect of unhappiness and attraction. In the eyes of humans, once only males, women are strange beings.[154]

Every trick employed by the cunning, deceitful, and thieving Prometheus in preparing the sacrificial portions and stealing fire is turned against the humans by Zeus when he creates the "beautiful evil" (***kalon kakon***) intended for them.[155] This gift is also a "trap," which suddenly springs shut and permits no escape (*dolon aipun, amēkhanon anthrōpoisi*).[156] She has the appearance of a chaste virgin, like the immortal goddesses in every way.[157] Her divine beauty, her white robe, the multicolored veil that covers her, the crowns of flowers, the diadem, the engraved jewelry that adorn her make her into an astonishing marvel to behold (*thauma idesthai*),[158] a being haloed with a radiant charm[159] whose appearance incites desire.[160] One cannot see her without loving her;[161] but behind this irresistible attraction, this almost supernatural grace (*kharis*), what is there? What does the ***kalon*** conceal? Prometheus had hidden bones beneath the brilliant white of the fat; inside the green freshness of a stalk of fennel, he had hidden the glowing embers. Beneath the beauty of woman is not only this mixture of earth and water of which she is made. Inside her Zeus hides the spirit of a bitch and the temperament of a thief (***kuneon te noon kai epiklopon ēthos***), which Hermes, acting on his orders, puts into the mud along with lies and deceitful words (*pseudea th' haimulious te logous*).[162]

In the versions in both the *Theogony* and *Works and Days,* the creation of woman, whether she is the one out of whom issues the race of female women (*Theogony* 590–91) or bears the name of Pandora (*Works* 80–82), follows the second round of the game between Zeus and Prometheus. It is when he sees the flames of the heavenly fire burning on earth, the fire that he had resolved always to keep from humans to prevent them from cooking meat, that Zeus gives way to his rage and decides to deal the final blow.[163]

Also, in both versions the text gives equal emphasis to the idea that this creation of a being, heretofore nonexistent, constitutes the reply to Prometheus' theft. Woman, this evil, ***kakon,*** is sent into the world ***anti puros,*** as a counterpart to fire (*Theogony* 570; *Works* 57). What does this mean? The simplest solution is to suppose that since Prometheus had offered men a good thing in the form of fire, Zeus in revenge restored the balance with the gift of an evil. This interpretation would seem all the more justified because the ***kakon*** is not only described as ***anti puros,*** the counterpart to fire, but on two occasions (*Theogony* 585 and 602), as *ant' agathoio,* the "counterpart of a benefit," or "in place of a good." Consequently it is tempting simply to identify the fire with a good and see in the expressions *anti puros* and *ant' agathoio* two equivalent formulas. However, this reading is not possible. It has the defect not only of smoothing over the text by ignoring its complexities but of rendering the *ant' agathoio* of line 602 incomprehensible. How does it do so? Fire, at least the fire that men have at their disposal through the theft committed by Prometheus, is undoubtedly a good, but it is not a "pure and simple" good. It is an ambiguous gift, like the meat of the victim and, we have already had occasion to stress, has dangerous and worrisome aspects. To be sure, after his thievery Prometheus is glad to have stolen the fire and tricked Zeus, but his adversary immediately puts things in their place: "You rejoice," he says to the Titan, "over what, for you and for the men to come, is a great misfortune, *mega pēma.*"[164] Conversely, if woman is incontestably a misfortune, it is still necessary to add that this evil has the appearance of a good. Woman is beauty; now, for the Greeks, the beautiful is not possible without the good. On the one hand, Prometheus takes delight in fire as if it were a good, while it is also a great misfortune. On the other hand, men, before the misfortune that is woman, "will rejoice in the depths of their hearts to surround her with love,"[165] as if their misfortune were also a good.

Furthermore, all women are not equally bad. There is one *genos gunaikōn,* one race of women, but several *phula,* in the plural, different tribes of these women.[166] After all, Hesiod admits that one can chance upon a good and wise wife, who pleases your heart;[167] she will give you what is one of the greatest "goods" in life, one that only a woman, even the worst of them, can procure for a man: a son like his father, who will continue the line after his death. Woman is not entirely bad, any more than fire is entirely good. What is still true, however, is that even if she is among the best, even if her heart is in agreement with yours, she was made by Zeus as a feminine woman in such a way that all through life, in her and by her, misfortune will come to balance out the good (*kakon esthlōi antipherizei, Theogony* 609).

Thus the *anti* of *ant' agathoio* works on two levels. Woman, this misfor-

tune, is with respect to fire the counterpart of a good; but with respect to herself, in her own feminine nature, this misfortune is like the obverse of a good. We will note in this respect that not once does Hesiod simply say *kakon ant' agathoio,* a misfortune in the place of a good. When he uses this expression in the first passage,[168] it is to emphasize from the outset that, because of her beauty, this misfortune contains a positive aspect. Indeed, he writes *kalon kakon ant' agathoio,* which from this standpoint can be translated, to bring out the nuance, "A beautiful misfortune, the reverse of a good."

The second use of the phrase is even more instructive.[169] Hesiod has just likened the presence of women in the midst of the *andres* to that of the drones acting as parasites among bees. "Evil works" and "hard works" are associated both with women in the home and drones in the hives.[170] Thus it is indeed in the form of a misfortune that Zeus has placed women in human dwellings. But before telling of the consequences of this misfortune, Hesiod adds that Zeus has thereby procured for mortal men *heteron kakon ant' agathoio.* What does this *heteron* mean? Unlike *allos,* which indicates difference in general, *heteros* refers to one out of two, an other, but in cases where it can be a matter of only one or the other. *Heteron kakon* means "one of the two misfortunes," "a second evil with respect to the first." In what way would woman be "another" misfortune or second evil in this precise meaning of the word, if the good to which she is the counterpart is fire? The sentence would be meaningless. This is why M. L. West comments on the first *ant' agathoio,* in line 585, by saying, "The *agathon* is fire; cf. 570: *anti puros teuxen kakon.* The words *kakon ant' agathoio* are repeated in line 602"; and then goes on to note at line 602, "*Kakon ant' agathoio* is repeated from 585; the *agathon,* in this case, is celibacy (Guyet)."[171] To avoid having to make this jump from fire to celibacy while elucidating a formula that is presented as a repetition, it is necessary to view the problem as a whole. In this passage to say that the good is celibacy is insufficient. If a woman is an evil, celibacy, the lack of a woman is necessarily a good. The interest of the formula and the use of *heteron* (*kakon*) results from the effect of a reversal that they produce, the oscillation between a good and a misfortune, which are as connected as they are contrasted with the *anti* that links them in the text. The dilemma woman–absence-of-woman (marriage-celibacy) does not correspond to a simple choice between evil on the one hand and good on the other (as would have to be the case if we grant that woman is all evil, fire all good). Woman, an evil, contains a good; the absence of woman, a good, contains another evil, *heteron kakon.* Hesiod's text is perfectly clear in this respect.

Ever since Zeus created the race of women to live with men, the *andres* are stuck with a choice between two and only two solutions. They may decide to shun the feminine "evil" and refuse to marry. Then for the rest of their lives they spend their days without care or misery; they will have bread for as long as they live, since woman, that drone, that parasite, will not eat theirs.[172] But because of the lack of sons to continue their lineage and carry on their place in the house, the wealth they have been able to accumulate during their lives because of their celibacy is dispersed among distant kin after their death.[173] The status of woman is such that her absence (the refusal of marriage) entails another evil that replaces the first, taking its place like an only son, who is opposite the father from a generational standpoint but his equivalent from the standpoint of the *oikos* and who is the successor when his old man is gone.[174]

The second alternative is as follows. One gets married. Then one will have children, either one son, "to feed the paternal holdings—so the wealth of houses grows,"[175] or several, who can also "bring an immense fortune."[176] On this level, then, everything is for the best. But this happiness must be paid for. Most often it is bought by a life of hell with the drone, a pain for which there is no cure, in the person of the wife one had lodged in one's own house. And if one has the rare good luck to encounter a woman who resembles the worker bee more than the drone—even with her, inexorably, "the bad will offset the good."[177]

Thus each alternative is presented either as a good balanced out by an evil or an evil balanced out by a good. Ever since the creation of the *genos gunaikōn,* the *andres* struggle in vain. With a woman or without one, they will always be faced with a *kakon ant' agathoio.* If they claim to avoid the one, they run into the other (*heteron*). As a snare handed to men, woman is truly a twofold creature: through her, good and evil are combined in human existence like the two inseparable sides of the same reality. We understand why Zeus bursts out laughing at the idea of the *kalon kakon* that he is going to have fashioned for the humans. With this evil whose beauty makes men love her as a good, the good itself can only appear as the reverse of another evil.

These remarks enable us to understand the full significance of the expression *anti puros.* First of all, woman is the countergift to fire in the banal sense that, if Zeus brought her to men, it is to make them pay for the fire that Prometheus had stolen from him as a gift to them. However, once again, *anti* does not only mean "in exchange," "in return," but also "equal to." The epithet that describes an Amazon as *antianeira* presents her both as an enemy of men—against them—and the same as men—

equal to them. Woman can compensate for fire and provide the balance because she herself is a kind of fire, which will burn men alive by consuming their strength day by day. The fire stolen by the Titan is echoed by this other type of fire, this thieving fire that Zeus creates as the instrument of his revenge placed among mortals forever.

But in what way, it will be asked, do women in Hesiod's eyes "roast" (*optan*) their husbands, in what way do they put them "on the grill" (*statheuein*), to borrow the expressions that Aristophanes uses in *Lysistrata*?[178] In two ways, according to the Boeotian poet: first of all by their appetite for food and then by their hunger for sex. And this double need, which makes the woman an insatiable *gastēr,* corresponds to both the misfortunes that stalk the male, depending on whether he marries or stays single. In the first place, woman is a ravenous belly that cannot adjust to the frugal regimen of poverty but wishes to be able to eat until sated or surfeited (*koros, Theogony* 593); when she smiles at a man she is already eyeing his storehouse like a thief toward taking the contents for herself.[179] When she moves into a man's house, it is to store up the fruit of the labors of others in her *gastēr,* like a drone.[180] All day long worker bees toil outside to store honey that the drones, like thieves, will feed on in the shelter of the hives. All day long human men, too, toil in the fields, parched by their labor (*ponos*) to harvest the grain that the women—with their thieves' temperament (*epiklopon ēthos, Works* 67 and 78)—will eat. Because she is *deipnolokhēs* (*Works* 74), ever on the lookout for a feast, always ready to sit down to a meal, woman, writes Hesiod, "no matter how vigorous her husband, grills him over the fire, dries him out without a torch (*heuei ater daloio*), and sends him into premature old age."[181] With her insatiable appetite the wife is like an incarnation of Hunger, *Limos,* the progeny of *Eris* that the daughter of Night bore when she gave gave birth to *Ponos* (hard labor). Hesiod makes Hunger the companion of the *anēr aergos,*[182] the man who refuses to work and who thereby himself becomes, like a woman, similar to a stingless drone among the bees.[183] What Hunger is to the idle man, a wife is to the hardworking man: a hunger settled in like a companion under his roof, a burning hunger, ablaze, *limos aithōn,*[184] which burns like the flaming fire, *aithomenos pur.*[185] Need we recall that, according to a Hesiodic fragment, Erysichthon, the man Demeter afflicted with a devouring hunger in punishment, is named precisely because of his insatiable appetite, *Aithōn,* the Burning One?[186]

The ardor of the woman's belly for food, an ardor that absorbs the vigor that the males have expended in agricultural labor along with the grain products, forms one aspect of this *kuneos noos* (*Works* 67), that doglike

spirit that, by Zeus' orders, inhabits women. "Is there anything more like a dog (*kunteron*) than the odious belly?" exclaimed Odysseus, wracked with hunger, in the *Odyssey*?[187] Narrating the crime of Clytemnestra (the "bitch face," *kunōpis*), Agamemnon repeats the formula word for word, replacing "belly" with woman, "Is there anything more like a dog than a woman?"[188] and the same terms are found, following Clement of Alexandria, in the Orphic precept according to which "there is nothing more like a dog than a woman."[189] However, this feminine *gastēr* that sweeps up the foods of life for its own benefit, who gulps them down into her depths at the male's expense, is the same belly who bears and nourishes in her breast a child to give to her husband. Since the time when, thanks to Prometheus, grains no longer grow by themselves, it has been necessary to bury seeds in the belly of the earth and then watch them disappear in the form of *sitos,* grain food, into the bellies of women. From the day that Zeus' will determined the existence of women, men, like wheat, no longer grow by themselves out of the ground. Men must put their seed in the belly of their wives so that it may germinate; and when the time comes, legitimate children who can extend their father's lineage will emerge from it. However, even on this level, where the woman's belly appears beneficial, the woman takes on the role of *anti puros,* the opposite of fire. Henceforth the procreation of children will result from sexual union. And in this area even the best of women, the most chaste of wives, are liable, when Sirius approaches the earth and consumes it with his fire, to be transformed into lascivious and lewd creatures who draw from their laboring husbands the little bit of moisture they maintain during that burning season. For at the hottest time of the summer, women, made of water and clay, feel their own immodest ardors rise within (*makhlotatai, Works* 586); men, by contrast of a less humid temperament, with their skin dried out and their head and knees[190] burned by Sirius the burning Dog (*Works* 587–88), are already so weakened by natural dryness (*aphaurotatoi, Works* 586) that they do not wish to see their wives, bitchlike in this season, add their erotic heat to that of the Dog Days.[191]

By her double voraciousness for both food and sex, the shameless feminine *gastēr* consumes the male's energy and dispatches him from the greenness of youth to a desiccated old age. In this sense Hesiod's text, in a series of concordant references, indeed presents the woman as a fire created by Zeus as a counterpart to the fire stolen by Prometheus to give to humans. To the modern commentators who, finding this analysis too subtle or forced, remain skeptical, and to those who have given their irony free rein concerning this point, we will only observe that the Greeks, who

were no less capable of understanding Hesiod than they are, read him in this manner. This reading does not, as some who have challenged it have written,[192] date from the sixth century A.D. but from the fifth century B.C., since it is already found in Euripides in a fragment of the *First Hippolytus,* where, according to the poet, women were created as a counterpart to fire (*anti puros*), like another fire that is stronger (*allo pur meizon*) and more difficult to fight.[193] In the same vein, two texts from Palladas of Alexandria provide the best commentary on the interpretation that we believe can be offered. They appear in book 9 of the *Palatine Anthology,* numbers 165 and 167, and their discovery seems to us to confirm a reading that the text of Hesiod had originally suggested to us by itself. According to the first passage, "Zeus, for the ransom of the fire (*anti puros*), gave us the gift of another fire, women. Would it please the gods that neither woman nor fire appeared! At least fire can be quickly extinguished, but woman is an inextinguishable fire, full of ardor, who always bursts into flame." The second is more specific in its reference to Hesiod: "Woman is Zeus' anger; she was given to us to avenge fire (*anti puros*), a fatal gift that is the countergift of fire (*dōron aniēron tou puros antidoton*). For she burns the man with cares, she consumes him (*andra gar ekkaiei tais phrontisin ēde marainei*), she transforms his youth into premature old age."

8. To Marry the Worker Bee or the Drone?

In addition to the wife, *Works and Days* mentions other types of women. There is, for example, the woman that the peasant must first obtain along with his house and a working ox if he wishes to begin work with some hope of profit, a servant woman that Hesiod describes as "bought, not married."[194] Also there is the maiden, the *parthenos* with delicate skin, ignorant of the works of Aphrodite, typically depicted cozily in her house with her mother in deepest winter, bathing her tender body and rubbing it with rich oil before stretching out in the warmth.[195] On the other hand, in the versions of the Promethean myth in the *Theogony* and *Works and Days,* in the third and final act of the drama, after the allocation of the sacrificial parts and the theft of fire, the woman who, by order of Zeus, emerges fashioned by divine hands has no other form than that of the wife. To be sure, it is in the form of a *parthenos* that Hephaestus models the clay into a feminine creature;[196] but the product of his art is completely different from the sweet young maiden of the genre we mentioned, who, ignorant of the works of Aphrodite, remains at her tender mother's side in her own home.[197] The *parthenos* that Zeus intends for the *andres* emanates seduction. She provokes men's desire, knows it, and plays upon it.

She is the young maiden already a woman (*gunē parthenos,* as the *Theogony* says in 713–14), good and ready to marry, about to leave for the house where she will be the spouse. The fashioning done by Hephaestus is a prelude to the "outer" preparations of which Athena is in charge, either by herself or aided by the Charites, the Hours, and Peitho, and to the "inner" wiles that Hermes will place in the creature's heart. Athena garbs her in a white robe; she ties her belt (which the husband will untie); she drapes over her forehead the veil that covers her face; and she crowns her with a diadem, exactly as one prepares the *numphē,* the veiled bride, on the day of her wedding.

It is indeed as a wife that Pandora, conducted by Hermes, who is well-suited to lead this nuptial procession, is sent to Epimetheus. A gift (*dōron*) sent by all of Olympus to earth, she constitutes, as a spouse accepted in the husband's house for regulated cohabitation, the (poisoned) present from all the gods "to men who eat bread."[198] Prometheus, the Foresighted, warned his brother Epimetheus, the After-thinker, never to accept any "gift" from Zeus, but if he received one, to send it back whence it came immediately. Epimetheus, as he must, forgets the advice. He opens his door, welcomes the gift, the misfortune (*pēma*)—Pandora, "gift of all the gods."[199] He understands the evil, *kakon,* that the race of mortals will inherit with him only when the wife has taken up her abode in his house.[200]

This version of the myth, where the first woman is called Pandora and is the wife of Epimetheus, appears in *Works and Days.* The *Theogony* neither tells the tale nor mentions her name. What then does Hephaestus create on Zeus' orders in the corresponding sequence of the *Theogony*? An evil (*kakon,* 570), a beautiful evil (*kalon kakon,* 585), a trap (*dolos,* 589), in the likeness of a chaste virgin (*parthenōi aidoiēi ikelon,* 572); and it is from this "she" (*ek tēs,* 590; *tēs gar,* 591), from the feminine that is never named or directly designated but simply evoked in the mode (neuter or masculine) of what it will represent for the males, that the race of women issues, described as a terrible scourge (*pēma mega*) because they live with mortal men (*thnētoisi met' andrasi naietaousin*).[201] The signs are already clear; woman is seen in her status as wife who has come to share the house of her husband. This is why the theogonic version of the creation of woman reaches its natural conclusion in the recognition of man's inescapable dilemma: to flee marriage (*gamon pheugōn,* 603) or to accept it as his fate (*gamou meta moira,* 607). That is not all. If Pandora and Epimetheus are not explicitly referred to as the first married couple, this is because, in the economy of the theogonic account, the case of the brothers of Prometheus

in general and Epimetheus in particular has already been decided in a preceding passage introducing the Promethean myth (507–519). Now, in this preamble, the few lines devoted to Epimetheus (511–14) refer to him unequivocally as the husband of this first woman, whose fashioning by Zeus (to win victory over Prometheus) Hesiod is about to recount. Epimetheus is described in the following way, "Epimetheus, the clumsy one, who from the beginning (*ex arkhēs*) brought misfortune to men who eat bread;[202] for Epimetheus was the first to welcome under his roof (*hupedekto*) the *gunē parthenos,* the virgin woman shaped by Zeus."[203] Thus in the context of our myth it is the first marriage that is represented by the creation of woman. As a human institution inaugurating conjugal life, with the foundation of the blood sacrifice, the fire stolen by the Titan, the cultivation of grain, and the institution of labor, this marriage acts to determine man's condition since that time in Mecone when, because of Prometheus, the apportionment between gods and mortals was made under the sign of *Eris.*

It seems to us that the matrimonial implications of this last sequence of the myth shed some light on the significance of the comparison between women and drones and account for its apparently paradoxical aspects. How is the account presented? Hephaestus and Athena have finished their work. Zeus parades the "beautiful evil," a deep, inescapable trap intended to be the human lot, before both Immortals and mortals, still united and equally amazed. It is from this creature, continues the text, that the cursed race and tribes of women spring forth, a terrible scourge living with mortal men and making themselves their companions not in the bane of poverty but only in satiety. That is all on the subject of women; nothing more is said about them. Then a comparison begins introduced by *hōs,*[204] "in this way," and leading six lines later to a return to women by means of a *hōs d' autōs,*[205] "likewise in this way," permitting without further ado the conclusion that it is indeed for the great unhappiness of mortal males that Zeus founded the race of women. Therefore the whole weight of the text is a result of the likeness it establishes between drones among the worker bees and women among men.

What do drones represent with respect to worker bees? Three characteristics stand out. First, cohabitation: living "in vaulted hives"[206] they share the house of the workers where they are established as if at home. Then, inactivity: they live without doing anything, without taking part in the labor of their hosts; while the latter busy themselves all day long outside the hive, the drones remain "inside," sheltered under the roof of the hives.[207] Finally, the *gastēr:* in the hollow space of the dwelling where they lodge, the drones form many other hollows within the greater one; they are mouths to feed, bellies to fill; the only activity of these inactive ones is to "store" in the base of their *gastēr* what the bees harvest outside so it may be stored on the honeycombs.[208] And in this way, for those who must feed them, the drones, the *aergoi* or idle ones, are very much like the *kaka erga,*[209] the works of evil. If the same complicity between the "works of evil" can describe the position of women among men,[210] it is because of their conjugal status. In the eyes of the Greeks they appear to be dwelling in the house of their husband, confined to the domestic space and excluded from all outside work, which, whether agriculture, pastoral activities, or maritime enterprises, is reserved for males. The creatures dedicated to living "inside" and depending on their husbands for food are also "bellies" who, by ingesting the harvests with which they have had nothing to do, empty the storehouses where the peasant locks up the fruits of his labor. The comparison is valid in all respects. Moreover, it sheds some light on the tie that in the myth links the "gift" of woman to man's new condition: since Zeus hid the wheat the male must toil greatly to feed himself. But this is not all. In addition to his own *gastēr,* which he must fill every day if he wishes to survive personally, he is again compelled, if he wants a son to survive him after his death, to satisfy the voracious *gastēr* of his feminine half. And this increase in effort, expended without respite, dries him up the way a fire would.

However, this extensive comparison between women and drones has something wrong with it, which is related to a point that is central enough that it first seems to affect the entire force of the comparison. The analogy between the human and insect worlds is indeed intended to clarify the status of women with respect to men. Yet sexually, the terms have been reversed. In the insect world, the parasites are males (*hoi kēphēnes*), and the workers, the feeders, are female (*hai melissai*). Among humans, the males are in the position of female, worker bees, and the women created by Zeus are in that of male drones. This contradiction did not escape Hesiod, who explicitly stresses it. He develops his comparison in six lines; the first two pose the general relation between worker bees and drones, the former "feeding" the latter.[211] The next four lines are divided into two equal parts: first concerning the worker bees and then concerning the drones. And each of these parts, introduced by *hai men* ("*they* [fem.]," on the one hand) and *hoi de* ("but *they* [masc.]," on the other), clearly contrasts the behaviors by denoting them as feminine or masculine. Furthermore, as we have al-

ready indicated, the same comparison in *Works and Days* (303–306) this time likens the drones not to women but to the *aergos anēr,* the male who refuses to work.

What then does this disparity, which Hesiod did not seek to minimize (since, to the contrary, the text of the *Theogony* emphasizes it), mean for the status of the two sexes? Let us first note a detail in *Works and Days* that gives the idle male, by his likeness to drones, a feminine connotation. Drones are described as *kothouroi,* stingless.[212] Since this adjective, close to *kolouros,* also evokes what is mutilated, cut off, and, more specifically, what has its tail cut off, we will accept all the more easily that the term for the drone, *kēphēn,* is itself related to *kōphos,* "dulled," "weakened." Plato will express the contrast between the stingless drone and the stinging insect in terms of the difference between that which is less virile and that which is very much so (*anandroteron/andreiotaton*).[213] The pairing of *kothouros* to *kēphēn* when referring to a male shifts the idle man to the realm of the effeminate if not to that of women—women who by their very nature, in the logic of the myth, embody nonparticipation in manly work.

Having clarified that point, let us move on to the essential. Two arguments can explain this reversal of the status of the sexes when we move from humans to insects. Let us begin with the least important. The Promethean version of the sacrificial myth told by Hesiod presents humans in a position midway between animals and gods. The differentiation of the sexes and its correlatives—sexual union, birth from procreation, aging, and death—are characteristics shared by humans and animals. However, monogamous marriage, fitting for civilized humanity and more a contractual matter than a natural bond, grants the married woman and her relations with her male mate a different character from that of the female animal living in generalized sexual promiscuity that, like omophagia and allelophagia (the eating of raw food and all forms of cannibalism), determine for the Greeks a state of savagery or bestiality. The full implications of the presence of woman are understood only in the framework of the Promethean adventure, in connection with the characteristic eating habits of the human species, with the mastery of fire and the hardworking life that are the lot of mortals since their separation from the gods. The human wife is not a "natural" being but the sophisticated product of the *mētis* of the sovereign of the gods, Zeus' reply to the tricks of Prometheus. A comparison with animals that permits women to be condemned as an "evil," with its reversal of male and female, underscores the distance between animals and men at the very point where it seems they must be completely

identified. Her origins, her functions, and her meaning in human life differentiate woman from the female animal. The text proves it in the very example chosen to show the likeness between them. The model that most clearly reveals the status of the wife at home is the beehive. But in the hive it is the male who holds the role that Zeus has assigned to the human woman.

The second reason is more basic and more clearly reveals the wifely value of the feminine creature created by Zeus. As Marcel Detienne has shown, in Greek tradition a model animal for the human wife exists, a symbol of conjugal virtues such as fidelity, decency and reserve, moderation of the appetites and sensuality, the diligent care brought to domestic interests, and the steward's vigilant attention to preserve the wealth accumulated in the household by the male.[214] The qualities of the legitimate wife are emblematically expressed, in the ritual of the Thesmophoria as well as in literature and myth, in the image of the bee—chaste, pure, laborious, a stranger to all the deceits of seduction. In this respect the text of Hesiod has an ironic and polemical meaning. The tone is mocking. No, woman is not a bee. She has nothing of this modest and chaste creature that Xenophon, following Semonides, represents as innocent of all gluttony, drunkenness, and amorous license so she may dedicate herself completely to household work. In the hive she is a famished belly that demands satisfaction, the drone. In the married couple it is the male who plays the role of the bee, in expiation for the Titan's revolt.

Even in marriage, which distances man from the animals and connects him with the gods, negativity and unhappiness take the form of the wife so that men are reminded of their sorry state. The wonder (*thauma*), the gift that the gods sent to humans to live with them in their homes, the fine present that they fashioned for them with their hands "in the likeness of goddesses," is a snare, like the portions of the sacrificial victim, an ardor that burns like the fire stolen by Prometheus, a trap that makes them rejoice, to be sure, and which they will never be able to do without, but in which they are lost with no hope of escape.

9. *Full and Empty: Pandora's Jar*

After the twists and turns of the route we have taken sometimes a bit slowly to explore some of the secret contours of the text, we can say that in the continuous series of disasters unleashed by the Titan's transgression in the allocation at Mecone, married life, like the cultivation of grain, seems linked to sacrificial cooking. If bread is to vegetable food as the

cooked meat of the sacrificial victim is to fleshly food, union with a married woman, a *gunē gametē,* is to sexual union what bread and cooked meat are to the consumption of food.

Sacrifice, agriculture, and marriage are the three inseparable factors of the human condition since the *anthrōpoi,* cut off from the Blessed Immortals, became both *andres,* male men, and poor mortals. Perishable creatures but once very close to the gods, they can only sustain their lives as individuals or perpetuate them in the family group by acts in which biological necessities are conjoined with religious needs. The satisfaction of vital needs is then carried out by means of cult practices that bring about a delicate balance, an uneasy compromise between the mode of existence shared by all mortal animals and the status reserved for the divine. Like animals, men must kill, eat, and procreate in order to survive. But in these three activities rigorous prohibitions circumscribe the domain of what is possible for humans, actions that must be both licit and pious with respect to the gods. One cannot kill just any living creature, eat just any kind of food, or couple with whomever one pleases.[215] The slaughter of animals, the eating of food—both animal and plant—and sexual union obey strict rules. Carried out according to ritual, these activities are not only under the patronage and warranty of the gods, they constitute religious procedures by which men and gods are joined, united, and enter into common fellowship. It is by sacrificing a victim and eating of its flesh, by working the soil as is fitting, and leading one's spouse home according to rite, that a man establishes and maintains contact with the divine; by these very acts he places himself within the boundaries of the human realm. The drama, which the foundation myth of sacrifice accounts for in its fashion, is that the union with the gods also constitutes the distance, barriers, and renunciation of that state of quasi-divine felicity humanity once knew and sacrificial ceremony evokes—at the very moment that it consecrates and justifies its disappearance.

This polarity that myth places at the heart of the sacrifice extends to the whole of human life in man's own torn condition. As sacrifice both brings men and gods together and separates them, both likens men to animals and brings out the distance between them, it puts humanity in a state of being that is fundamentally ambiguous and marked by dualities and contradictions. Henceforth everything will contain its opposite, its nocturnal side. No more abundance without painful effort, no more men without women, no more birth without death, no more good without the counterbalancing of an evil. The Promethean part in us, which raises us above the animals, is not without its opposite, that of Epimetheus, who brings

about the break with the earlier beatitude when man was close to the gods, and with it the fall into an inferior existence doomed to unhappiness and discord.

A philosopher might describe such an existence by saying that being is entwined with nonbeing, plenitude with privation. Hesiod is no philosopher. As we read his tale this form of existence that is now ours emerges as a crucible, a mixture of interlocking goods and evils that can never be separated, a tension that is constantly maintained, and an oscillation between contrasting and similar poles, opposed and inseparable sides.

Undoubtedly, it is in this context that we must view the episode of the jar of evils opened by Pandora—an episode that serves as a conclusion to the Promethean myth in *Works and Days.*[216] This passage poses several problems, which the text is unable to resolve and which are, moreover, secondary to its interpretation. We do not know exactly where this jar comes from, who gave it, or received it—whether Epimetheus or Pandora, since the jar is found at their house. According to the scholia, Prometheus, after receiving it from the Satyrs, gave it to his brother to keep so that it would remain forever unopened. One thing is certain: by opening the jar the woman, that beautiful evil, that trap set by Zeus under Epimetheus' roof, carries out her office as instrument of divine punishment. When Pandora "lifts the great lid of the *pithos* with her hands,"[217] her action recalls and avenges the offense made against the sovereign of the gods when, "lifting the white fat with his hands" and finding the bare bones,[218] Zeus knew he had been duped by Prometheus. Moreover, "the painful cares" (*kēdea lugra*) that the woman envisions for humans by acting as she does are the very ones that Zeus, in the beginning of the account, already envisioned for them in his fury at being the dupe of the rascally Titan.[219]

How is this story of the jar presented? Hesiod has just explained that the thoughtless Epimetheus understood only later after the fact the blunder that he committed by welcoming into his house the gods' gift, a misfortune that will be with him evermore.

This evil, this *kakon,* is the very subject of the rest of the tale. "For beforehand" (*Prin men gar*), continues the text—in other words, referring to the times before Pandora and the incident at Mecone—the tribe of humans lived on earth in a state comparable to that of the men of the golden race: "separated and far from all misfortunes"[220]—painful work, sickness, old age, and death. These are the evils, *kaka,* that Pandora, by removing the lid, scatters throughout the world, "filling"[221] the earth and sea with their wandering presence. In these unhappy surroundings, men

henceforth have myriads of ills at their side: never leaving them day or night, the *nousoi,* "sicknesses," cling fast to ruin and destroy them "by bringing them pains," *kaka.*[222] The situation surpasses the punishment of Prometheus: holding fast to the Titan, the eagle tears off pieces of his liver during the day; but at least during the night the bird leaves him in peace, and the liver can take advantage of this respite and entirely regain its shape. Moreover, the pain (*nousos*) that gnaws away at Prometheus' body is a single event; Hercules, driving off the eagle with Zeus' consent, forever liberates Prometheus from the cruel malady (*kakēn nouson*)[223] that the Olympian had set upon Prometheus to torture him.

This "plenitude" of ills in the sphere of human life recalls the fate of another of the races Hesiod describes in the series after the Promethean myth. It is the last of races, that of the men of iron who live "now" and of which Hesiod and his contemporaries are part—in other words, humanity in its present state. These men, we are told, "never cease suffering miseries and fatigues during the day, nor cease being consumed by them at night; the gods will give them the gift of painful cares."[224] However, Hesiod immediately goes on to add, "for the latter as well, good will still be mixed with misfortune."[225] The present mix of good and evil contrasts on the one hand with the golden race in which men enjoy all good without knowing any ill, and on the other hand with the apocalyptic view the poet expresses—of a humanity adrift, cut off from all its connections with the divine and having no respect for justice or fear of the gods anymore, living like wild animals, given over to bad *Eris*—when there will be no remedy for evil and humans will be left with nothing but those painful sufferings (*algea lugra,* 200) that Zeus and Pandora had envisioned for mortals (*kēdea lugra,* 49 and 95) and that the woman had freed from the jar to occupy the inhabited world (*muria lugra,* 100).

But what is the exact form of this "melange" of good and ill that characterizes the humanity of today? To answer this question requires examining the relationship between the "evil" introduced by Zeus among men in the person of Pandora and the "evils" introduced by Pandora among the same men when, on Zeus' order, she opens the jar. Between the first evil and the evils released from the jar there is first of all a homology, if not a redundancy. In some ways, the episode of the jar only repeats the theme developed on another level that the creation of Pandora and her coming to Epimetheus had already established: the intrusion of evil in its varied guises in the life of mortals.[226] However, the two stories do not repeat one another; in many respects concerning the mixture of good and evil the second story fills out and completes the one that precedes it.

In Pandora good and evil are connected in two ways. The first relationship is that of exterior to interior. The evil is disguised inside Pandora beneath a seductive exterior. And this seduction entices the eyes—with the deceptive charm of her beauty—as well as the ears—with the misleading attractiveness of her speech, her *phōnē.*[227] In this respect woman is indeed a trap (*dolos*): the evil she conceals is seen and heard in the guise of a good. Good and evil are joined together like the two sides of a coin. Woman is an evil, but without this evil the corresponding good is lacking. It is impossible to have one without the other.

What about the evils that escape from the jar? In the beginning they are hidden within it. As long as they remain there, they are harmless. It is when they move from the inside to the outside that humans are assailed with misfortunes. This unhappiness does not have Pandora's ambiguity: fatigue, suffering, disease, and death have nothing seductive about them. If we could avoid them, we would not fail to do so. Still, it would be necessary to be able to assess them and recognize them. Now, no matter what we do, they strike at any time, as if they were produced by spontaneous generation (*automatoi*), in the same way that in the golden age of yore the food of life (*bios*) grew all by itself, independently of men and their efforts. Misfortunes can no more be seen ahead of time than heard. They move forward silently and invisibly. Zeus has denied them the *phōnē* with which he endowed women to dupe men.[228]

So, the situation is this: The evil that can be seen and heard is hidden in the seductive form of a desirable good. Once hidden in the jar but today scattered outside it, the evils that cannot be taken for a good remain hidden and overtake us by surprise. In both cases man can neither foresee nor avoid the evil. When he sees it, he mistakes it for a good; and even when he does see it and recognizes its true nature, this evil remains invisible until it has befallen him.

Let us go one step further. The evils were lodged inside the jar as if in a house (*en domoisin,* "in their lodging," in 96; *thuraze,* "beyond the doors," in 97)[229] or inside a belly (*hupo kheilesin,* "below the lips," in 97). What is a jar, for Hesiod; what normally contains this domestic "belly" in the house, and what does opening it normally mean? In *Works and Days,* in addition to the episode of Pandora, we find three cases where a *pithos* is involved, and in all three it is precisely a question of opening it (*oigō* in 819, *arkhomai* in 815 and 368).[230] To open a jar is to begin using provisions, the "reserves stored in the house," as Hesiod says (*to g' ein oikōi katakeimenon,* 364). Since wheat no longer grows by itself, man can no longer live in idleness, sure of finding food every day without having to

worry about the morrow. Just as he must work the soil so that the wheat ripens, he must store up the grain after the harvest in the cellar, in the *pithoi* that he will open on the suitable dates (not all days are good for this),[231] depending on the resources that he has been able to husband for himself.

In this respect the representation of the jar in the text is related to Pandora; it too has something deceptive about it. When a peasant stores a closed *pithos* in his house, this jar hides within it the *bios* the household will live on. The day it is open is like a holiday; the peasant drops his miserliness and for once gives himself over to satiety (*arkhomenou de pithou . . . koresasthai*).[232] Pandora's jar, then, is a double deception. It does not contain, as it should, *bios,* life food; it is full of all the evils that grind man down and consume his life. Moreover, the woman has barely opened the lid when all the evils fly outside at once (*exiptamai,* 98) and are scattered (*skedannumi,* 95) around the world, over land and sea—rather than moving slowly in a measured way without leaving the domestic enclosure, as the *bios* moves from the belly of the jar to those of the members of the family. When full Pandora's jar must always remain closed; the moment it is opened it is empty, at least of what a *pithos* is supposed to contain, the *bios.* Yet unlike the *kaka,* something has not passed the lips of the jar. It remains inside (*endon emimne,* 97)[233] like the drone in the hive, like Pandora in the house, and does not fly away (*oude thuraze exeptē,* 98). It is *Elpis* (Expectation), which, by the will of Zeus, the woman shutting the lid gave no time to leave.

10. Elpis *Remains inside the House*

Before examining the meaning that should be given to *Elpis* and its status in the account (is it an evil, a good, or both? does its presence in the jar mean it is within men's reach or does it remove it from their life?), we must further clarify the relations between the *bios,* customarily stored in the peasant's *pithoi,* and the *kaka* enclosed in Pandora's *pithos.* To put it clearly, the "evils" that escape from the jar essentially are the counterpart or reverse of the *bios;* they are the price that mortals must henceforth pay to eat the food that enables them to live. The evils once enclosed in the *pithos* and now wandering throughout the world are of two types: painful work (*khalepos ponos*) and painful diseases (*argaleai nousoi*), which bring males death (if we read *kēras* in line 92) or old age (if we read *gēras*). Death or old age. In either case the term *nousos* must be taken in the broad sense: everything that harms men's health, everything that destroys their vital integrity.[234] That is what is clearly stated in line 93, borrowed from the

Odyssey but entirely fitting in this context: "For mortals age quickly in the state of misery (*en kakotēti*)." The gods' inalterable youth and their immortality are only the other half of their status as Blessed Ones (*Makares*) who know no work, fatigue, or painful cares. As long as humans lived in the felicity of the golden age, without doing anything, far from "labors and suffering" (*ater te ponōn kai oizuos,* 113), they too did not grow old; never wearing down, they remained forever as they always were.[235] What in the iron age, on the other hand, is the source of their loss and leads to their destruction (*phtheiromenoi,* 178) is "fatigue and suffering" (*kamatou kai oizuos,* 177),[236] to which the gods add the gift of "painful cares" (*khalepas merimnas,* 178).

Thus on the one hand there is the *bios,* the cereal food belonging to men "who eat bread," a food with which their energy is restored, that makes them survive and is, we have seen, like the fabric of their lives. On the other are the *kaka*—labor, the fatigue from work, the suffering associated with them, and last, disease (*ponos, kamatos, oizus, nousoi*)—everything that saps the strength of mortals, ruins their vitality, and makes them age and die (as woman does likewise). However, if the myth of Prometheus teaches us anything, it is that Zeus, hiding the *bios* from men, makes it available to them only through a series of misfortunes he has concocted for them, misfortunes closely related to *Eris* in the catalogue of the Children of Night. To fill the jars with *bios* and ensure an adequate supply of the food of life, it is necessary for the male to spare no pain, fatigue, or suffering; he must exhaust his strength, little by little ruin his health, and spend his youth in hard labor.

We can go further. By opening the jar, Pandora, following Zeus, envisions the *kēdea lugra,* for men the sad cares (just as the gods offer painful worries to the men of iron). But when the harvest has been plentiful and the jars are full of wheat, man is no longer anxious about the *bios* for the time being; he lives without worrying about the morrow, in the manner of the men of the golden race his heart free of care (*akēdea thumon*).[237] Hesiod is extremely clear on this point. If by slow accumulation one creates reserves, one's soul will be in peace. It is good (*esthlon*),[238] he says, to take from what one has. There is nothing better than finding everything at home, for "it is not what one stores at home that gives man care (*anera kēdei,* 364–66)." What puts suffering in the heart (*pēma de thumōi,* 366)[239] is, on the contrary, needing what one does not have (*khrēizein apeontos,* 367), being a man in a state of indigence (*anēr kekhrēmenos,* 478). The "care" is related to the lack, the emptiness, the absence of the *bios.* But who among mortals "lacks bread" (*khrēizōn biotoio,* 499)? Whose "life is

not assured," not "sheltered from care" (*tōi mē bios arkios eiē,* 501)?[240] And who in this way finds himself the prey of cruel anxiety or the dupe of a vain hope (*keneēn epi elpida,* 498)? It is the *aergos anēr,* the man who does not work, the drone. His companion is not only Hunger (302), but also the Hope that is not good (*elpis d' ouk agathē,* 500), the bad *Elpis.* The idle man is contrasted with the one who has understood the lesson of the Promethean misfortunes and who devotes his life to work. Demeter fills his storehouse full of the life-giving wheat (*biotou,* 301): he can "clear the spider webs from his pots (*ek d' angeōn*)";[241] for, the moment the threshing is over, he will have put all his *bios* in his pots (*en angesin*), measuring and storing it inside his house (*endothi oikou*).[242] Since the *pithoi* of this peasant are full of *bios,* for him hope is not empty, either. Hesiod deems this man worthy of having good hope (*eolpa,* 475) because he will have the joy of taking the *biotos* from the stores he has gathered and living in plenty until spring, without looking to his neighbor; on the contrary, it is he that the stranger will need.[243] Of course, this happy lack of care had to be acquired, to be bought by always having in mind at the proper moments the "care" that is the task at hand. *Meletē*—care, diligence, the ardor for work (443), the attention to each task (457), the zeal for work (380, 412), the recourse to work to watch over the bread (*meletais biou,* 316), the constant preoccupation with work (*memēlota erga,* 231)—this is what secures a man a moment of respite, a share of good in the midst of the evils and sad torments that Zeus has prepared for mortals. Here again the good, the *esthla,* appears inseparably blended with the evils, the *kaka.*[244] It is by thinking of the *bios,* by caring for it during the whole cycle of agricultural activities from sowing to harvest, that one is freed from the "painful cares" and vain hope that accompany those who, because of culpable lack of care for their work,[245] are seized with anxiety or sustained by deceptive illusions at the sight of empty jars.

Our comments thus far give an idea of the interpretation of *Elpis* that emerges from our reading of Hesiod's account. Without going into the details of the controversies generated by this sequence of the myth, we must address two objections that are likely to be raised. First of all, shouldn't we recognize that, since *Elpis* is enclosed with the ills in the *pithos,* that Hesiod too saw it as an evil? And doesn't this lead to a contradiction—if the evils must escape from the jar in order to enter human lives, isn't *Elpis,* by remaining inside, removed from human existence and forever out of reach? If we accept the two parts to this conclusion, which seem founded on sound logic, we make of *Elpis* not Hope, or expectation in general, but the expectation of misfortunes, a kind of negative foresight.

Then its continued presence inside the jar is interpreted as the course Zeus must have taken at the last moment in order to keep human existence from being absolutely intolerable. That there are evils, it has been observed, is still tolerable; but if men knew by *elpis kakōn* all the catastrophes that would befall them, how would they find the strength to live?

The key issue revolves around whether the logic supporting this interpretation is indeed that of the text. Let us begin with the term *elpis.* In order to defend the idea that the Hesiodic *Elpis* refers exclusively to the expectation of misfortunes, we consult a passage from the *Leges* (644 c–d) where Plato makes a distinction between two forms of human opinions concerning the future. All opinions relating to the future (*doxai mellontōn*) bear the common name *elpis;* but when it is a question of the *elpis* of a coming pain, it is called *phobos,* fear, and in the opposite case, *tharros,* confidence. *Elpis,* then, has the general meaning not of hope, which implies the prospect of a good, but of expectation. What this text proves is that *elpis,* when neither specified as fear or confidence, is neutral; it can refer to a good or an evil. This raises a question: if Hesiod, by placing *Elpis* in the jar along with the misfortunes, was classing it as something bad and making it exclusively the anxious expectation of misfortune, wouldn't he have called it *Phobos* rather than *Elpis* to avoid all ambiguity? There is a more serious matter. The moment that *Elpis* is made into the expectation of misfortunes, it can be seen as the "ultimate evil," "the worst of all." More terrible than the misfortune itself is this foreknowledge of evils to come; its presence dwells in man's mind even before any actual misfortune befalls him.

Now, to us *Elpis* contains a fundamental dimension of uncertainty. It may be the expectation of an evil or a good; it is never firm or assured. It does not have the value of *pronoia,* prescience. Since it is on the order of conjecture, always implying some credulity,[246] it wavers between the dreams of the presumptuous and the terrors of the fearful.[247] With regard to Hesiod we will say that *Elpis* is no less foreign to *promētheia,* foresight, than it is to *epimētheia,* understanding after the fact. By his *mētis* Prometheus represents, in the misfortunes that strike him, the prescient hero: "I know beforehand precisely all the events to come; for me, no sorrow (*pēma*) will arrive unforeseen."[248] The complete certainty that the Titan possesses concerning his foreordained suffering is in a way the opposite of the uncertainty of the *Elpis* that is the human lot. Pindar will be able to contrast, in the case of the men to whom Zeus "has refused all clear indications of the future," *elpis,* on the one hand, with *promētheia,* foresight, on the other.[249]

This same opposition between *elpis* and the foresight of misfortune can be seen in a passage in *Prometheus Bound* in which it appears to us that Aeschylus is recalling Hesiod. The Titan enumerates the benefits he has showered on men: "I delivered mortals," he proclaims, "from the foreknowledge of death (*thnētous g'epausa mē proderkesthai moron*)." "What cure have you found for this ill (*nosos*)," asks the chorus. "I have given them endless blind hope (*tuphlas en autois elpidas katōikisa*),"[250] replies Prometheus. Here it is not the foresight of evil or foreknowledge of death that is called *elpis;* on the contrary, the *elpis* permanently placed (*katoikizō*) in men, as Pandora is placed among them, constitutes *in its blindness* the antidote to foresight. It is not a cure for death, which has none, since death is inscribed, no matter what one does, in the course of human life. However, lodged in the innermost hearts of mortals, *elpis* can counterbalance their consciousness of mortality with their ignorance of the moment and manner in which death will take them.[251]

Next, how could Hesiod by depicting *Elpis* enclosed in the jar convey the idea that, unlike the evils, *Elpis* is at least set aside, away from contact with men? It is impossible to make such a claim unless the Promethean myth is taken out of the context of *Works and Days*. Furthermore, it would be necessary to view the *Elpis* remaining in Pandora's jar as having no connection either with the *elpis* that to Hesiod is related to the *anēr aergos* or with the other *elpis* that Hesiod on two occasions claims for himself,[252] first when he counts on an abundance of *bios* for the man who has worked and then when he is hopeful that Zeus will not leave crimes unpunished or allow the unjust to triumph. Let us even admit for a moment that the *Elpis* of the jar is not neutral (the expectation of either an evil or a good) or ambiguous (now good now bad); let us posit that it is categorized solely as an evil. Even in this case, the reference to a bad *elpis,* which is associated with a refusal to work, forces the interpreter either to recognize that for Hesiod men actually possess *elpis,* that they use it and too often, alas, misuse it, or else to maintain that the *elpis* of the idle man, which is explicitly qualified as bad, is however something completely different from this *Elpis* in the jar, also characterized by its malignity.

If we take all the passages in which *elpis* is mentioned into consideration, something becomes very clear. In *Works and Days, Elpis* occupies a niche that is comparable on all points to that of the other "polar" notions that offer both positive and negative aspects: *Eris, Zēlos, Aidōs,* and *Nemesis*. To speak, as Hesiod does, of *Elpis ouk agathē,*[253] presupposes that there also exists a good *Elpis*. The parallels between the bad *Aidōs* and the bad *Elpis* are complete, moreover; the same formula is used to describe both of

them. It is a bad shame that clings to the indigent in line 316; it is a bad *elpis* that clings to the indigent in line 500. That bad *Aidōs* exists does not in any way keep it from being indispensable to men's life nor from characterizing the condition of their existence wherein evil is mixed with good and righteousness still counterbalances the spirit of immoderation (*Hubris*) and discord (*Zēlos* or *Eris*). But the day that *Aidōs,* with *Nemesis* (equally ambivalent because she figures among the children of Night while playing a benevolent role), "will leave" the humans among whom she has sojourned to rise to rejoin the Immortals, there will no longer be "any remedy for evil."[254]

Things are no different for *Elpis*. The departure of *Aidōs* for heaven, which Hesiod fears, echoes the cynical remark of Theognis: "All conscience (*Aidōs*) is ever afterwards dead among men."[255] And the poet adds elsewhere in the same spirit: "*Elpis* is the only good divinity that has remained among men (*en anthrōpoisin . . . enestin*); all the others have abandoned them to go back to Olympus."[256] In this human world—where happiness and misfortune are inextricably mixed, where there is no possibility of foreseeing either one with complete certainty, where men's minds, scrutinizing the future, oscillate between the exact foresight of Prometheus and his brother's total blindness—it is in the ambiguous form of *elpis*—of expectation, whether vain or well founded, good or bad—that the horizon of the future is laid out for mortals.

Two questions remain. First, why, if it is not entirely bad, is *Elpis* found mixed with the evils in the jar? To a large extent P. Mazon has provided the answer: "Because," he writes, "if hope is not an evil, it only can accompany evils—it is the daughter of unhappiness; it could not exist in Good Fortune."[257] Let us simply add, in pure good fortune. The gods, the men of the golden race, the *andres* of our myth before the drama at Mecone, cannot know *elpis*. They have nothing to desire; all good things are theirs, and they have nothing to fear; all evils are far from them. Introducing evils into the human universe to mix them with what is good automatically means giving *Elpis* a permanent home there, making it, for better or worse, the inseparable "companion" of humans.

There is a second question: Why does *Elpis,* unlike the evils, remain in the jar? If *Elpis* is not purely bad, if there is a good side or a good use to it, and if, moreover, its enclosure in the jar does not mean that it is placed outside of human reach—what exactly does the difference between the freeing of the evils and the enclosing of *Elpis* mean? We can propose several related ideas. Just as men leave the house and bees fly out of the hive, the evils flee from the jar. Filling up land and sea, they occupy the entire ex-

terior world where virile activities, the *erga* of the males, normally take place. Like Pandora, *Elpis* remains inside, in the domestic space at the bottom of the empty jar. This contrast is reinforced by another characteristic of the evils released from the jar: their incessant motion, their continual wandering (*alalētai,* 100). They move about here and there striking men, sometimes one, sometimes another, in their random peregrinations over land and sea. When the *nousoi* do not reach their victims by day, they come to visit them at home at night. They visit them (*phoitōsi,* 103) like a passing stranger who comes to the house but does not intend to stay there. *Elpis,* on the other hand, does not leave the house. It lives permanently with humans, all share it equally; whereas misfortune encounters certain men on certain days, as it goes around the world. In their unforeseeable mobility, the evils act *automatoi:*[258] following their own route, their own movement, they suddenly descend on man, who can do nothing about it. On the contrary *Elpis,* despite being shared, fixed, and constant, still depends on human initiative. Whether one is just or injust, pious or impious, hardworking or lazy, the expectation nursed by every man, no matter who, shifts from one side to the other. His *elpis* may be good or bad, taking the form of hollow illusions that lead a man astray from his tasks and doom him to disaster, or of legitimate confidence in the equity of all-seeing Zeus.[259] To the man of merit, who does not spare his sweat on the long and arduous route of effort,[260] the god gives prosperity at last[261]—or at least the share of wealth that the just man still has a right to count on in the midst of innumerable ills.

The *Elpis* of *Works and Days* combines the two sides of the Promethean myth in the framework of this vast poetic exhortation to work. In this context the misery that men owe to the faults of Prometheus is first of all the need for work, work that cannot be avoided if a man wishes to have enough to eat, enough to live on.[262] When the fertile wheat fields, *aroura,* germinated by themselves, unlike today, there was no need for men to have *pithoi* filled with wheat in their lodgings. Nor, for that matter, was there any need for the evils flying out of Pandora's *pithos* or the *Elpis* shut in the bottom of the jar. Now that the evils have escaped, we must fill the bellies of our jars with vital food and carefully measure it out during the course of the year to fill our bellies and those of our wives. The fear of want when the jars are empty, the aspiration to seeing them filled with wheat after the harvest is finished—this is the *Elpis* that inspires the good man to the labor imposed by Zeus and moreover guarantees him plenty, the same *Elpis* that lulls the idle man with an illusory hope and brings him the evil of poverty.

Linked to this first aspect of *Elpis* is another dimension, which could be called anthropological (not to say metaphysical) and was highlighted by the sacrificial myth in the *Theogony.* Zeus' punishment of the Titan's deception is of course hard work without which no well-being is possible for men. It is also in a broader sense the separation from the divine life that we once led in the company of the Blessed Immortals, without need or fatigue, age or death, and without women—a life that knew no "care," no preoccupation with the morrow, and neither anguished nor confident expectation of the future—because at the time no distance separated "now" and "forever" for us any more than it did for the gods. Associated with sacrifice, agriculture, and marriage, *Elpis,* like woman the ambiguous companion of man, puts its imprint on the new condition of mortal existence, halfway between animals and gods, in the mixed human universe that characterizes the age of iron. If, as in the golden age, human life contained only good, if all the evils were still shut up in the jar, there would be no need to hope for anything other than what one has.[264] If life were completely, irremediably given over to evil and unhappiness, again there would be no place for *Elpis.*[265] But since evils are henceforth inextricably bound up with good without our being able to foresee exactly what will happen to us tomorrow, we are always waiting, fearing, and hoping. If men had Zeus' infallible prescience at their disposal, they would have no need for *Elpis.* If they lived bounded by the present, without knowing anything of the future, without the slightest worry about it, again they would not know *Elpis.* But caught between the lucid foresight of Prometheus and the unreflecting blindness of Epimetheus, oscillating between the one and the other without ever being able to separate them, they know in advance that sufferings, sickness, and death are their inevitable lot, and not knowing what form this misfortune will take, they recognize it only too late, once it has already struck.

For immortal beings such as the gods, there is no need of *Elpis.* No *Elpis,* either, for creatures like animals who are unaware they are mortal. If man, mortal like the animals, foresaw the whole future as the gods do, if he were entirely Promethean, he would not have the strength to live, lacking the ability to look his own death in the face. But since he knows himself to be mortal without knowing when or how he will die, since he knows *Elpis*—foresight but blind foresight, a necessary illusion, a good and an evil at the same time—only *Elpis* can enable him to live this ambiguous, dual existence caused by the Promethean fraud when the first sacrificial meal was instituted. Henceforth everything has its opposite: no more

contact with the gods that is not also, through sacrifice, the consecration of an unbridgeable gap between mortals and Immortals; no more happiness without unhappiness; birth without death; plenty without suffering and fatigue; food without hunger, decline, old age, and mortality. There are no more men without women, no Prometheus without Epimetheus. There is no more human existence without the twofold *Elpis*, this ambiguous expectation both fearful and hopeful about an uncertain future—*Elpis* in which, as in the best of wives, "bad throughout life comes to offset the good."[266]

THREE

Greek Animals: Toward a Topology of Edible Bodies

Jean-Louis Durand

all' esatta violenza appartiene un' esatta stenografia
Adriano Spatola, *Il poema Stalin*

FOR the Greeks of the classical age, as for us today, the relationship to animals is established through use of meat. But the meat of Greek animals comes via the gods.[1] All edible flesh is treated first of all within the rite,[2] a religiously determined context, and everything relating to meat is of importance with respect to this context. From the outset, then, we are faced with a problem of categories. Butchering, religion, cooking—the Greeks combine these into what they called *thusia* and we call sacrifice. This alignment of categories arises out of a different relationship to the killing of animals and practices utterly different from our own approach, which until recently was stamped with the theoretical imprint of Christianity. Any look we take at the practice of another is, by virtue of the fact that we have a point of view, already a "key" to a reading. The perspective that determines the observations presented in the following pages, and doubtless the point of view of most readers as well, is the cultural context of the West, which is informed by practices that are largely Christian. Here the death of animals, which in other cultures has religious significance, is radically excluded from the domain of the sacred. Only one sacrifice is possible, that in which the god is the only victim worthy of himself. As a

This material was analyzed some time ago by my friend Guy Berthiaume in his work on the status of the *mageiros* (Berthiaume, 122–40). Since considerable progress has been made in the field studies on which the analysis are based as well as in procedures for pottery interpretation, a new overall view of the data in accord with solutions that have been brought to light since earlier attempts seemed necessary. I am of course solely responsible for the conclusions offered in these pages. Furthermore, the problem of the economic implications of sacrificial practice, which received special attention in the work of G. Berthiaume, has not been examined here. We have dealt only with the anthropological side of the questions raised by the killing and carving of animal victims.

The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks

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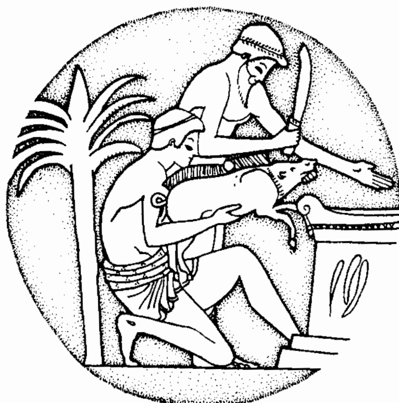

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