



‘First of all’: On the Semantics and Ethics of Hesiod’s Cosmogony

Mitchell Miller

Hesiod devises his cosmogony in order to provide the basic context for his account, part narrative and part genealogy, of Zeus’ conquest of the Titans and establishment of the primacy of justice among gods and humans. The project of this essay is to explore Hesiod’s choice of ‘Chaos’ as the ‘first’ of all the divinities to come into being. The full significance of Hesiod’s choice emerges only if we recognize that his thinking led him to two very different possibilities, Chaos and Tartaros. Accordingly, in Part I of this essay I will try to bring to view their different claims to the status of being the ‘first.’ This will require challenging the now prevailing interpretation of the coming-into-being of Chaos (*Theogony* 116ff.), examining two suggestive passages, 726-728 and 736-738 (= 807-809), in Hesiod’s description of the underworld, and rereading the main cosmogonic passage, 116-133, in the new context opened up by these reflections. Rediscovering the alternatives Hesiod faced will position us, in turn, to recognize two different kinds of considerations, semantic and ethical, that likely motivated his decision, and in Part II I will lay these out and consider how they may be related. Semantically, to begin from Chaos is to affirm the priority of difference to the undifferentiated. Ethically, it is to suggest that the priority of the ‘half’ to the ‘all’ (*Works and Days* 40), that is, of sharing and justice to grasping and violence, belongs to the very nature of the cosmos. On this reading of the cosmogony, Zeus’s establishing of the primacy of justice both reflects and gains legitimacy from the most basic character of the world itself.

First, to provide a shared starting-point, let me present the key texts in Greek and in translation:

[i] *Theogony* 116-133:

- 116 ἦτοι μὲν πρώτιστα Χάος γένητ’· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
Γαί’ εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ
[ἀθανάτων οἳ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόεντος Ὀλύμπου],
Τάρταρά τ’ ἠερόεντα μυχῶ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης,
120 ἥδ’ Ἔρος, ὅς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι,
λυσιμελής, πάντων τε θεῶν πάντων τ’ ἀνθρώπων
δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.
ἐκ Χάεος δ’ Ἐρεβός τε μέλαινά τε Νύξ ἐγένοντο·
Νυκτὸς δ’ αὖτ’ Αἰθήρ τε καὶ Ἥμερη ἐξεγένοντο,

- 125 οὓς τέκε κυσαμένη Ἑρέβει φιλότῃτι μιγείσα.
 Γαῖα δέ τοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐγείνατο ἴσον ἑωυτῇ
 Οὐρανὸν ἀστερόενθ', ἵνα μιν περὶ πάντα καλύπτει,
 ὄφρ' εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ,
 γείνατο δ' οὖρεα μακρά, θεῶν χαρίεντας ἐναύλους
 130 Νυμφέων, αἳ ναίουσιν ἄν' οὖρεα βησσήεντα,
 ἥδ' ἐκαὶ ἀτρύγετον πέλαγος τέκεν οἴδματι θυῖον,
 Πόντον, ἄτερ φιλότῃτος ἐφιμέρου· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
 Οὐρανῷ εὐνηθεῖσα τέκε' Ὠκεανὸν βαθυδίνην...
- 116 First of all, Chaos came-to-be; then next
 Broad-breasted earth, a secure dwelling place forever for all
 [The immortals who hold the peaks of snowy Olympus],
 And misty Tartara in the depths under the wide-wayed ground,
 120 And Eros who, handsomest among the deathless gods,
 A looser of limbs, in all the gods and all human beings
 Overpowers in their breasts their intelligence and careful planning.
 And from Chaos came-to-be both Erebus and dark night,
 And from night, in turn, came-to-be both Aither and day,
 125 Whom she conceived and bore after joining in love with Erebus.
 But earth first begat, as an equal to herself,
 Starry sky, so that he might cover her on all sides,
 In order to be a secure dwelling place forever for the blessed gods,
 And she begat the tall mountains, pleasing haunts of the goddess-
 130 Nymphs who make their homes in the forested hills,
 And also she bore the barren main with its raging swell,
 The sea, all without any sweet act of love; then next,
 Having lain with sky, she bore deep-swirling ocean...

[ii] *Theogony* 726-728:

- 726 τὸν πέρι χάλκεον ἔρκος ἐλήλαται· ἀμφὶ δέ μιν νύξ
 τριστοιχὶ κέχυται περὶ δειρήν· αὐτὰρ ὑπερθε
 γῆς ρίζαι πεφύασι καὶ ἀτρυγέτοιο θαλάσσης.
- 726 Around it [sc. Tartaros] is driven a wall of bronze; and about it night
 Is spread in triple rows, like a necklace; while from above
 Grow the roots of earth and barren sea.

[iii] *Theogony* 736-738 (=807-809)¹

- 736 ἔνθα δὲ γῆς δνοφερῆς καὶ ταρτάρου ἡρόεντος
 πόντου τ' ἀτρυγέτοιο καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος
 ἐξείης πάντων πηγὰ καὶ πείρατ' ἔασιν, ...

¹ West 1966, 358 argues that the *verbatim* repetition of lines 736-739 at 807-810 is 'unlike' Hesiod and takes it as 'probable' that a later poet 'borrowed' 807-810 for insertion before line 740. I shall therefore henceforth identify passage [iii] as 807-809.

736 And therein [sc. in Tartaros], for murky earth and misty Tartaros
 And barren sea and starry sky,
 For all these there are, side-by-side, their springs and ends...

I. Recovering Hesiod's Alternatives—Chaos and Tartaros

Our present-day failure to appreciate Hesiod's selection of Chaos as a choice stems from our failure to recognize Tartaros as a real alternative. This failure is due in part to Hesiod himself, in part to a striking interpretive proposal made sixty years ago by Francis Cornford that is now widely accepted in English language scholarship. Hesiod devotes the first 114 lines of the *Theogony* to invoking the Muses, asks them his question—'which of the [gods] came-to-be first?'—in line 115, and relays their answer in line 116: 'Chaos'. It hardly befits his posture as an inspired singer to confess uncertainty, much less weigh alternatives, and he does neither; on the contrary, his declarative language conceals from view the processes of reflection and decision by which, I will try to show, he chose Chaos over Tartaros. The resultant eclipse of the claim of Tartaros has been inadvertently reinforced by Cornford's interpretation of the coming-to-be of Chaos as the separation of earth and sky. In his influential discussion of 116-133,² Cornford himself does not mention Tartaros, and in their now standard commentary Kirk and Raven (and, in the second edition, Schofield) refer to it only as earth's 'appendage' (Kirk and Raven 1957, 28 [= Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 38]). In beginning from the assumption that Chaos is the gap between earth and sky, Cornford focuses exclusively on the upper world, leaving unnoted and unexplored the fact that Tartaros is one of the three primordial powers, born directly after Chaos and along with earth—and a generation before sky. His interpretation thus has the unintended consequence of suppressing the question of the status of Tartaros. The project of the first part of this essay, accordingly, is to recover this question. We will proceed in three steps. First we lay out the difficulties—fatal, in my view—in Cornford's interpretation of the birth of Chaos (section A). We then try to work beyond the impression Hesiod himself gives with his declarative language at line 116, recovering textual evidence elsewhere in the *Theogony* that he recognized the possibility of beginning not from Chaos but from Tartaros (section B). Finally, we reread the whole cosmogonic passage, lines 116-133, with this possibility in mind (section C). This will put us in position, in the second main part of this essay, to interpret Hesiod's choice of Chaos.

A. Against Cornford—Chaos as the 'gap' between earth and *Tartaros*

For three fundamental insights, we are in Cornford's debt. Cornford recognizes, first of all, that the cosmogonic passage, lines 116-133, is of 'a different

² Cornford's interpretation first appeared in his 1941 essay 'A Ritual Basis for Hesiod's *Theogony*', included in Cornford 1950. Further citations of this work will be made parenthetically in the form, e.g., 'C 96'. Cornford restated his account in Cornford 1971, ch. 11.

³ This helpful phrase is introduced by Kirk and Raven 1957, 28f. (= Kirk, Raven, and Schofield

logical character'³ than all that follows it in the *Theogony*. Whereas in the main body of the poem Hesiod sings of divine persons, either anthropomorphic or monstrous in form, in the cosmogonic passage 'the veil of mythological language is so thin as to be quite transparent' (C 96). The only traces of anthropomorphism are the erotic partnerships between some of the divinities and the genealogical connections that relate the off-spring of Chaos and of earth. But even these characters are limited. The begettings by Chaos and by earth, until 'she' lies with sky to beget ocean at lines 132-133, are parthenogenetic ('all without any sweet act of love', 132), and Hesiod does not introduce any genealogical connections at all between the first four divinities to come-into-being. Throughout the passage, he refers directly to natural structures or powers—not to *mother* Earth or to *father* Sky, for instance, but to earth and sky as fundamental parts of the cosmos.⁴ Only after line 134 will he resume the mythic language which he inherited and represent these structures and forces in the traditional manner as individual agents in dramatic interpersonal relations. Second, the key to understanding 'Chaos' is its etymology. $\chi\alpha\text{-}$ means (and is cognate with) 'gap' in the sense of the breach or opening that takes shape in (now to mention a third cognate) a 'yawn'; the $\chi\alpha\text{-}$ of $\chi\acute{\alpha}\omicron\varsigma$ appears in $\acute{\chi}\acute{\alpha}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ and $\chi\acute{\alpha}\iota\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$, 'to yawn' or 'gape'. This rules out two anachronistic interpretations: $\acute{\chi}\acute{\alpha}\omicron\varsigma$ signifies neither 'disorder', 'mess', 'chaos' in its ordinary modern sense, nor the unbounded 'space' or 'place' in which sensible things are located, the interpretation Aristotle gives it at *Physics* 208b29. Rather, it is the spatial interval that 'comes into being by the separation of two things that were formerly together' and that made up a 'primal unity' (C 98). Third, and in accord with this, Hesiod conceives cosmogenesis as a 'process' of 'separation or division, out of a primal indistinct unity, of parts which successively became distinct regions of the cosmos' (C 100). The coming-into-being of Chaos is the originating division, the first event of differentiation, in the formation of the differentiated world.

What is it, however, that the coming-into-being of Chaos differentiates from what? It is clear that one side of the gap is 'broad-breasted earth', which comes to

1983, 38), in the course of their synoptic reformulation of Cornford's position.

⁴ Note that Hesiod signals in advance that he will do this when, at line 108, he asks the Muses to 'tell how at the first gods and earth ($\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota$ καὶ γαῖα) came-to-be'. As West 1966, 190 remarks, the phrase $\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota$ καὶ γαῖα, 'gods and earth', is 'a little surprising, since Earth and the things that follow are themselves divine'. '[T]he things that follow' are 'rivers' ($\pi\omicron\tau\alpha\mu\omicron\iota$, 109), 'sea' ($\pi\acute{\omicron}\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$, 109), 'stars' ($\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\acute{\alpha}$, 110), and 'sky' ($\omicron\upsilon\rho\alpha\nu\omicron\varsigma$, 110). 'To Hesiod's audience', West continues, ' $\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota$ would suggest primarily the non-cosmic gods'. By pairing $\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota$ and γαῖα with καὶ, accordingly, Hesiod implies that γαῖα is not to be considered as one of the $\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota$ and, so, in effect distinguishes it, along with 'the things that follow', as a different sort of divinity from the $\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota$, the 'non-cosmic' and anthropomorphic 'gods' who dominate the *Theogony* after the cosmogonic passage. Of course, in the *Theogony* after line 133 Hesiod will revert to discourse of a 'mythical' rather than 'quasi-rationalistic' character and, accordingly, to the traditional treatment of earth as an anthropomorphic mother, sky as an anthropomorphic father, etc. Hesiod's 'surprising' language at 108 signals only the 'quasi-rationalistic' way they will be brought to mind in thinking about 'how at the first [they] came-to-be', not the way they will be treated in the later stories and genealogies.

⁵ Cornford 1950 also cites Polynesian, Egyptian, and, in the Greek world, Orphic and Cretan

be ‘next’, immediately after Chaos. What is the other side? Cornford’s response is to look outside the text, on the one hand to cosmogonic myth in a host of archaic cultures,⁵ on the other hand to sixth and fifth century Greek poetry. In the latter, in particular in Ibycus, Bacchylides, and Aristophanes, he finds uses of *χάος* to refer to the space between the upper sky and the ground, the space through which birds fly (C 98). In the former, especially in Hebrew and Babylonian myth, he finds stories of the formation of the world through an original separation of earth and sky. And so he proposes that the coming-into-being of Chaos is the separation of earth and sky.⁶ Does the text support this possibility? Cornford finds both corroboration and apparent resistance. Self-evident corroboration, he thinks, is offered by line 700, where, he asserts without argument, *χάος* ‘denotes the gap or void space between sky and earth’ (C 98). But the text, he recognizes, appears to resist his interpretation at lines 126-127: there, only a few lines *after* telling of the coming-into-being of Chaos, Hesiod tells how ‘earth first bore...starry sky’. If, as he presumes, Chaos is ‘the gap separating heaven and earth’ and it ‘has *already* come-into-being’, there should be no need for earth to go on to beget sky; that begetting ‘duplicates’ the coming-into-being of sky that must have already occurred with the coming-into-being of Chaos (C 99). Interestingly, Cornford attempts to render this ‘duplication’ unproblematic with his insightful recognition that the *Theogony* contains both the transparently rational cosmogony, the product of ‘a long process of rationalisation’ (C 102), and the very myths that have been rethought and reformulated to yield that cosmogony. Guided by possible parallels in Hebrew and Babylonian myth, Cornford identifies in the *Theogony* two mythic versions of the separation of earth and sky—Kronos’ castration of father sky and Zeus’ conquest of the monster Typhoeus. And he argues that the ‘duplication’ in the cosmogony has its source in this duplication in myth: the coming-into-being of Chaos is a rationalised reformulation of the castration story (C 103-104), and the begetting of sky by earth is ‘a trace’ of the story of Zeus’ defeat of Typhoeus (C 106).

Cornford’s proposal is burdened with a number of difficulties; we might well set these aside if, as his own presentation suggests he believed, it were the only possibility—but, as I will argue, it is not. Consider first these problems:

(1) Cornford’s own recognition of the distinction in logical character between the cosmogonic passage, 116-133, and the myths that follow, although it makes other kinds of ‘duplication’ plausible, makes the duplication of 116-118 by 126-128 harder, not easier, to accept. It is not surprising that we find among the myths

myths.

⁶ Cornford’s view is endorsed and supported with some fresh arguments (to which we shall reply) by Kirk and Raven 1957 and by Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, and the latter discussion has in turn been endorsed by McKirahan 1994, 10. Earlier than Cornford, Jaeger 1947, 13 also took this view, relying wholly on his interpretation, which coincides with Cornford 1950, of line 700; we discuss that passage below. (I owe thanks to Burt Hopkins for calling my attention to Jaeger’s discussion.)

⁷ Miller 1983, 133. Kirk and Raven 1957, 28 (= Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 38) do

several versions of what, from the point of view of critical reason, is the same ‘event’. In the main body of the *Theogony* Hesiod collects and orchestrates, but does not radically reformulate, the stories he has inherited, and there is no narrative incompatibility between, in particular, the castration story and the tale of Zeus’ conquest of Typhoeus. And since the mind-sets of the cosmogony and the myths are so different, it is also not surprising that the *Theogony* contains both mythic and rationalised versions of the same ‘event’; indeed, their very difference in logical character makes it possible for Hesiod to move without apparent redundancy from the cosmogonic account of the separation of sky from earth to the anthropomorphic tale of Kronos’ castration of father Sky. But it is *not* plausible that Hesiod would offer two mutually exclusive versions of this separation *within the cosmogonic passage itself*. A key element of ‘rationalisation’ is the critical discernment of inconsistency. Just insofar as Cornford is right that the cosmogonic passage is the fruit of ‘rationalisation’, it is the one passage in the *Theogony* in which we should least of all expect the contradiction that he asserts. If Hesiod had intended the coming-into-being of Chaos to be the separation of sky from earth and, as a result, the coming-into-being of each in its separateness from the other, he would surely have recognized the inconsistency of also taking earth to ‘first beget’ sky a generation later. And he *does* explicitly declare that earth ‘first begat...sky’ (126-127). It is not plausible, accordingly, that he took the coming-into-being of Chaos to be the separation of sky from earth.⁷

(2) An alternative to Cornford’s interpretation presents itself if we look again to one of his key sources, Aristophanes. Cornford is right to find passages in the *Clouds* (424, 627) and the *Birds* (192, 1218) in which χάος refers to the space between sky and earth. West 1966, 193 dismisses these, however, along with the passages Cornford cites from Ibycus and Bacchylides, as anachronistic: ‘this says nothing for Hesiod; new senses of the word Chaos are as old as Pherecydes, if he gave this name to water...’. But Aristophanes also gives us a passage in which we find what West regards as the archaic sense of Chaos. In the comic myth of origins at *Birds* 685ff. we hear these lines:

693 Χάος ἦν καὶ Νύξ Ἐρεβός τε μέλαν πρῶτον καὶ Τάρταρος εὐρύς,
γῆ δ’ οὐδ’ ἀήρ οὐδ’ οὐρανὸς ἦν· ...

698 οὗτος [sc. Ἐρως] Χάει ἡρόεντι μιγείς νυχίφ κατὰ Τάρταρον
εὐρὺν,
ἐνεόττευσεν γένος ἡμέτερον, καὶ πρῶτον ἀνήγαγεν ἐς φῶς.

693 There was at first Chaos and night and black Erebus and vast Tartaros,
But there was neither earth nor air nor sky;

acknowledge that ‘reduplication of accounts of a different logical character (quasi-rationalistic and mythical) is easier to accept than reduplication on the same, quasi-rationalistic level’. But—perhaps because they see no alternative to Cornford’s interpretation—they accept the latter reduplication nonetheless.

698 [Eros], lying with misty Chaos, dark as night, in vast Tartaros,
Hatched our race, and first led us up into the light.

Here ‘Chaos’ is a space associated not with earth and sky, which it precedes, but rather with the underworld, Tartaros, and the darkness—that is, ‘night and black Erebos’—and misty gloom that characterize it. If (as Cornford apparently did not) we hear *Theogony* 116ff. with this sense of ‘Chaos’ in mind, we will take Hesiod to be declaring as the ‘first of all’ to come-into-being the *underworldly* ‘gap’ between earth and Tartaros. And if we do, we will not be surprised to hear that the coming-into-being of Chaos (116) brings with it, ‘next’ (116), the coming-into-being of earth (117) ‘*and misty Tartara*’ (118). On this reading, the coming-into-being of Chaos is the originaive separation of earth and Tartaros and, so, their coming-into-being as well.

(3) Is there textual support for this reading elsewhere in the *Theogony*? Cornford cites line 700 without argument, as if—to borrow the language of Kirk and Raven—‘an objective judge would surely conclude that χάος at line 700 describes the region between earth and sky’ (Kirk and Raven 1957, 28 [= Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 38]). But, I suggest, line 700 is more easily read as support for the location of Chaos beneath the earth. In the passage in question Hesiod tells of Zeus’ massive assault by lightning on the Titans: here is Kirk and Raven’s translation of *Theogony* 695-703, followed by the argument they make in Cornford’s behalf:

The whole earth boiled, and the streams of Okeanos, and the unharvested sea; and them, the earth-born Titans, did a warm blast surround, and flame unquenchable reached the holy aither, and the darting gleam of thunderbolt and lightning blinded the eyes even of strong men. A marvelous burning took hold of Chaos; and it was the same to behold with the eyes or to hear the noise with the ears as if earth and broad heaven above drew together; for just such a great din would have risen up...

[To take Chaos in line 700 to refer to the underworld] would be difficult: why should the *heat* penetrate to the underworld (the concussion of missiles does so at 681ff., but that is natural and effective)? The Titans are not in the underworld, but on Mt. Othrys (632); and it is relevant to add that the heat, also, filled the whole intermediate region. The following lines imagine earth and sky as clashing together—again, the emphasis is surely not on the underworld. (Kirk and Raven 1957, 27 and 28 [= Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 37 and 38])

But why is it not still more ‘natural and effective’ for Hesiod to be telling us, in line 700, that the fire of Zeus’ lightning ‘penetrates to the underworld’? He has just told us that Zeus’ fire burns the earth outwards to the outermost horizon (Ocean, 695) and upwards to the uppermost region of the sky (Aither, 697). Not

only does this already imply that the fire burns the space between earth and sky, but it leaves the underworld as the only region yet to be spoken of. Hesiod is describing the crucial phase of a battle for control of the *whole* cosmos; to enable Zeus to win this battle, his lightning must reach everywhere.⁸ Moreover, once he has won, he will imprison the Titans in Tartaros; to hold them there, his lightning must ‘penetrate to the underworld’. For these reasons, we should take χάος in line 700 to refer to the region below, not above, the earth.⁹

(4) This reading, moreover, makes line 700 consistent with line 814, which, surprisingly, Cornford fails to mention at all. There Hesiod describes Tartaros as the place where ‘the Titans dwell’, and he locates it with the phrase *πέρην χάος ζοφεροῖο*, ‘on the other side of dusky Chaos’. This clearly places Chaos under the earth, between earth and Tartaros.¹⁰

(5) Locating Chaos under the earth resolves one further difficulty that besets Cornford’s interpretation. ‘Another physical consequence of the opening of the gap’, he writes, ‘is that light is let in between the sundered parts. Accordingly, we hear next of the appearance of light out of darkness’ (C 99). Cornford is guided here by the parallel he seeks between Hesiod’s cosmogony and the primordial creation of light in *Genesis* (see C 101-103). But this leads him to collapse what are distinct stages in Hesiod: first comes Chaos, which *next* begets the figures of darkness, night and Erebus, and these *then* beget the figures of light, day and

⁸ Compare 839-841, in which Hesiod, describing the reach of the thunderclap with which Zeus initiates his battle against Typhoeus, tells how it resonates through earth and sky and sea and ocean and Tartaros.

⁹ Cf. Hoelscher 1953, 400; Vlastos 1955, 75n20 (point (4)); Miller 1983, 134; West 1966, 348, 351.

¹⁰ Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983 accept this location of Chaos at 814. But they proceed from there through a very puzzling set of steps to reaffirm their support of Cornford’s reading of the coming-into-being of Chaos at 116ff. as the separation of earth and sky. (Kirk, Raven, and Schofield in the second edition, 1983, 40-41, have preserved the line of argument of Kirk and Raven in the first, 1957, 30-31, but they have tempered some of the rhetoric of the first edition.) Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (i) take the *χάσμα μέγ[α]* that Tartaros is said to be at 740 to be the same as the *χάος ζοφεροῖο* of 814; (ii) take the latter phrase to ‘contain a reference to the initial χάος of line 116’ (40); (iii) take the author of both 740 and 814, which they suspect to be later ‘expansions’ of Hesiod’s original, to understand ‘the initial χάος to be dark and windy, like Tartaros’ (40), an interpretation they find supported ‘by the fact that in the original cosmogonical account Erebus and Night (both, presumably, gloomy) are produced from Chaos’ (40-41); and then (iv) reiterate Cornford’s view that ‘the first stage in the formation of a differentiated world was the production of a vast gap between sky and earth’ (41). Against (i), the place where the Titans live, namely, Tartaros, is said in 814 to be *πέρην χάος*, ‘on the other side of’ or ‘across from Chaos’, not in it; so the *χάσμα μέγ[α]* that Tartaros is said to be should not be identified with Chaos. I agree with (ii), of course. I shall address (iii) in point (5) of my text; but note the strain of looking to the fact that Chaos is the parent of Erebus and night to support a characterization of ‘the initial χάος’ (my stress) as ‘dark and windy’: ‘the initial χάος’, because it has not yet begotten Erebus and night, does not yet have them as characters. (Would Kirk, Raven, and Schofield regard this as too fine a point to press in interpreting archaic myth?) But the basic point for our purposes is that (iv) is a *non sequitur*; if, to agree just for the sake of argument, Chaos is to be assimilated to Tartaros, then it must be under, not above, the earth. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield’s line of argument should lead them to reject, not affirm, Cornford’s position.

Aither; rather than the coming-into-being of Chaos bringing ‘light out of darkness’, it brings darkness first, and this, not Chaos, then brings light. Thus focused, Hesiod’s account resists Cornford’s interpretation—and calls for the alternative. If Chaos were the space between earth and sky, it would indeed befit it to beget light, not dark, especially because the spatial figure for light is Aither, the uppermost region of the sky. That Chaos begets not light but dark—and, in particular, Erebus, the darkness of the underworld—suggests, instead, that it is the space between earth and *Tartaros*.

Thus there are a host of reasons to reject Cornford’s interpretation and take the coming-into-being of Chaos as the primordial separation of earth and *Tartaros*. Is there anything in the text to give us pause? As we noted earlier, Kirk and Raven 1957, 28 (and Schofield 1983, 38) characterize *Tartaros* as an ‘appendage’ to earth. They cite no text, but if pressed, they might point to the epithet with which *Tartaros* is first introduced at line 119: *μυχῶ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης*. *μυχός*, ‘innermost part, nook, corner’, is used especially of the ‘innermost part of a house’ (Liddell and Scott 1968, 1157); thus it suggests a place interior to and contained by another, a place that can be reached only by passing beyond the exterior and into the inner or hinter regions of that larger place. Accordingly, Kirk and Raven (and Schofield) translate the epithet as ‘in a recess of broad-wayed earth’. But this is not well focused. Hesiod speaks of earth not as *γαῖα* (or *γῆ*) but as *χθών*, and *χθών* refers ‘especially [to] the surface of [the earth]’ (Liddell and Scott 1968, 1991); this aspect is emphasized by *εὐρυοδείης*, for the ‘wide ways’ that traverse the earth (or, perhaps, the ‘ways’ that traverse its ‘wide’ or ‘broad’ expanse) traverse its surface.¹¹ *μυχῶ*, accordingly, suggests a location not so much within an enclosing earth as beneath or below its surface—hence my translation: ‘in the depths under the ground’. The notion that the earth *contains* *Tartaros* must be set aside, as Hesiod makes explicit later in telling how the Hundred Handers

117 ... drove [the Titans] under the wide-wayed ground (ὑπὸ χθονὸς
εὐρυοδείης) ...

720 as far below the earth as the sky is above it;
for so far is it from earth to misty *Tartaros*.
For a brazen anvil, for nine nights and days
Falling from the sky, on the tenth would reach the earth;
And again, a brazen anvil for nine nights and days

725 Falling from the earth, on the tenth would reach *Tartaros*.

This equidistance suggests that *Tartaros*, far from being an ‘appendage’ to earth, exists apart from it and—to borrow Hesiod’s phrase at line 126—is at least as much an ‘equal’ to it as is sky.

But this recognition of the status of *Tartaros* does not go far enough. To return

¹¹ West 1966, 195 comments, ‘The meaning of the epithet is uncertain; it is not a regular formation from *εὐρύς* and *ὁδός*, though this is doubtless how it was understood in Hesiod’s time’.

to 116ff. and the basic difficulty with Cornford's interpretation, sky is begotten by earth in the second stage of the cosmogonic process; and in the first, there come-to-be Chaos, earth, and Tartaros. We should therefore understand the coming-into-being of Chaos as the separation of earth not from sky but from Tartaros. This alternative eliminates the contradictory 'duplication' that Cornford finds in the cosmogonic passage and lets lines 116-119 make good sense within themselves: first comes Chaos (116); 'then next', paired by the enclitic conjunction τε (119), come the two 'sides' that are first formed by the opening of the gap between them, earth (117-118) and Tartaros (119).

B. The alternative not chosen—Tartaros as the 'ground' of the world?

Hesiod's fundamental declaration at line 116—*πρώτιστα Χάος γένετ'*, 'first of all, Chaos came-to-be'—implies but leaves unarticulated an even more fundamental question. Hesiod's language lets this question present itself under either of two aspects. If we focus on *Χάος*, the 'gap', the question will be topological. A gap can come-into-being only within some pre-existing 'field'; and for a gap to be the 'first of all' to 'come-to-be' implies that this pre-existing field did not itself come-to-be and suggests that before the gap arose within it, it was undifferentiated. What, then, was this pre-existing undifferentiated field? If, on the other hand, we focus on *γένετ*[o], the question will be genealogical. In every subsequent appearance in the *Theogony*, from line 123 to the end of the poem, *γίγνεσθαι* and its variants refer to birth and imply parentage, a being or beings *ἐκ* ..., 'out of' or 'from' which that which 'comes-into-being' first arises. What, then, is the parentage of Chaos?

That Hesiod does not himself pose these questions does not imply that he failed to recognize and respond to them. We can ask, accordingly, whether his silence is innocent or deliberate. Did he begin naively and unreflectively with the 'coming-into-being' of the 'gap', or did he realize the implications of this language, discerning and then for some reason setting aside a pre-existing undifferentiated and its claim to the status of parent? Especially if we accept Cornford's picture of a thoughtful Hesiod engaged in the 'process of rationalisation', we must doubt that he began unreflectively. But is there textual evidence to support the alternative? Consider first the various characterizations of Tartaros, then the topological images at 726-728 and 807-809.

(1) *Tartaros as the undifferentiated*? Strictly speaking, a pre-existing undifferentiated is beyond the reach of mythopoeic representation. Mythopoeisis proceeds by imaging, and an image, because it at once distinguishes one thing or feature from another and sets these into relationship, differentiates and integrates what it presents to mind. 'A' pre-existing undifferentiated lacks both differentiation and integration. Accordingly, it can be imaged only negatively or retrospectively, as the absence of differentiation and integration or, more precisely, as their failure to consolidate themselves in the constitution of a stable object. Bearing this in mind, the characters and conditions and even the initial naming of Tartaros are striking. It is a 'vast abyss' (*χάσμα μέγ'*, 740), both 'wide' (*εὐρὺν*, 868) and so

deep that

740 ... not until a full year had reached its end
 would a man, once he were within its gates, arrive at the bottom...

To sight and touch, it is a realm of obscurity and disintegration. To sight, Tartaros is filled with ‘murk’ or ‘gloom’ (ζόφω, 729, also 653) and ‘mist’ or ‘haze’ (ἡερόεντα, 119, 721, 729, 736 [= 807]); these, by blotting out light, make it a place in which nothing can come clearly to view; even if there were distinctive regions or contours to discern (and Hesiod mentions none), one would be unable to make them out. To touch, being in Tartaros is being χώρω ἐν εὐρώεντι (731, also 739 [= 810]), ‘in a dank’ or ‘moldy’ or ‘slimy place’; the feel of it, the word εὐρώεντι suggests, is of physical decay and decomposition (West 1966, 361). Accordingly, it is appropriately associated with Erebos, underworldly darkness, and is a fit site for the home of Night and her children Sleep and Death (744-745, 756-757)—the negations, respectively, of sight and consciousness and life. And the negativity is violent and engulfing: the radical disorientation one would experience in such a place is evoked by the figure of being thrown in every direction by a ceaseless series of windstorms (ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα φέροι πρὸ θύελλα θυέλλης ἀργαλέη, 742-743). To go back and begin again from line 740:

740 [It is] a vast chasm; not until a full year had reached its end
 Would a man, once he were within its gates, arrive at the bottom,
 But stormblast after stormblast would sweep him one way and another,
 Bewildering; ...

Even the initial naming of Tartaros conveys this manifold sense of structurelessness and disorder. The word itself, Τάρταρος, derives from ταρασσειν, ‘to stir, trouble, throw into disorder’ (Liddell and Scott 1968, 1757f.), and the internal repetition of the stem syllable ταρ- gives it onomatopoeic force—a linguistic effect that Hesiod, a keen etymologist¹² and cultivator of word-play¹³ in other namings, may well have meant to exploit. It is therefore striking that in first introducing Tartaros at line 119, Hesiod gives not the customary masculine singular but the neuter plural, Τάρταρα. No doubt he chose this form for its contribution to the euphony of the larger phrase, Τάρταρά τ’ ἡερόεντα: the -ρατ- in the third beat reverses the ταρ- of the first two, while the τ’ ἡερ- of the fourth and fifth, itself echoed by the closing -τα-, reiterates them.¹⁴ He may have also intended, as a semantic complement to this euphony, a two-fold disruption of expectations: giving Τάρταρος not in the more familiar masculine but in the neuter checks the impetus to personify, and giving it not in the expected singular but in the plural keeps ‘it’ from presenting ‘itself’ to mind as an integrated unity; these displacements nicely fit with the onomatopoeia to elicit the sense of a

¹² Cf., e.g., his namings of Aphrodite (195-200) or the Titans (207-210).

¹³ Cf. his naming of the Muses (77-79, referring back to 65-71).

¹⁴ See, for a simpler choice of the plural for the sake of euphony, line 841, which ends with the phrase τάρταρα γαίης.

‘field’ of unrestricted turbulence, without internal articulation and integrity.

The question left implicit at 116, however, involves not just an undifferentiated field but, further, a *pre-existing* undifferentiated field with, accordingly, claim to the status of being that ‘out of’ or ‘from’ which the differentiated world first arose. Is there evidence that Hesiod might have understood—or, more precisely, might have recognized the possibility of interpreting—Tartaros as the parent of the world?

(2) *Tartaros as the ‘subsoil’ of the ‘world-tree’?* With this question in mind, consider lines 726-728, given above as passage [ii]. In two important respects, lines 726-728 support our preceding reflections. First, they present in their own distinctive way the same three-leveled topology we have found at lines 116-119: our familiar world, characterized by the basic differentiation into earth and sea, is the uppermost region, and Tartaros is the lowermost; in between is the space that Hesiod calls *Χάος* at line 116, here represented as the region in which, ‘grow[ing]’ ‘from above’,¹⁵ ‘the roots of earth and sea’ reach down towards Tartaros. Second, that the roots first give rise, above themselves in the uppermost region, to the fully developed and distinct masses of earth and sea implies that Tartaros, by contrast, lacks any such internal articulation; walled off and triply wreathed by the darkness of night, it is in itself undifferentiated.¹⁶

Against the background of these convergences, however, the difference of lines 726-728 from lines 116-119 stands out. In 726-728 Hesiod does not name *χάος* or even focus on what is between the upper and lower worlds as a ‘gap’ or in between space; rather, he gives us the image of ‘the roots’ pushing down ‘from above’. West observes that the ‘origin’ of Hesiod’s metaphor may be ‘the idea’, common to many archaic cultures, ‘of the world as a tree’.¹⁷ Thus the three-leveled topology is conveyed by the three-fold image of the tree with its above-ground trunk and branches, its roots that disappear below ground, and the ground itself or subsoil that holds and nourishes the roots and up out of which the roots and the tree emerge into the light. This is a botanical or plant metaphor, and as

¹⁵ The Greek is *ὑπερθε*. Lattimore 1959, 166 translates this ‘upward from [Tartaros]’. But the usual force of the *-θε* suffix is ‘from...’, so Hesiod should be understood to be telling us how the roots grow down ‘from above’ towards the subsoil. Hesiod’s image of the roots growing downwards does, of course, itself imply the image of the tree as a whole growing upwards. The weakness of Lattimore’s translation is that it gives us the latter image alone, not, as Hesiod’s Greek does, the latter by way of the former.

¹⁶ West 1966, 361 envisages ‘the clear division between land and sea gradually disappearing in the underworld, as the two elements branch out in roots or veins that are inextricably intertwined with one another. Below this even the distinction between earth and water disappears...’. But—unless (as his use of the lower case may suggest) he means the term in its modern sense, not Hesiod’s—I cannot agree with his next step: ‘chaos takes their place’. Hesiod does not speak of *Χάος* in this passage. If, nonetheless, we ask where it is, we should take it to be the region directly beneath our familiar upper world, the region down through which ‘the roots’ of our world ‘grow’. ‘Below this’, where ‘even the distinction between earth and water disappears’, is not *Χάος* but Tartaros.

¹⁷ West 1966, 361. He refers to Norse, Celtic, Egyptian, Babylonian, Finnish, Estonian, Asiatic, and Polynesian myths. And he notes that traces of the idea can be found in Pherecydes and Pindar; ‘otherwise it is unfamiliar [to ancient Greece], or no longer familiar’.

such it lacks genealogical content. (The figure of the tree does not turn our thoughts to its ‘parent’ tree.) But if we consider its *potential* genealogical content, were we to anthropomorphize and translate botanical into personal relations, the implications are striking. Were we to proceed as Hesiod does throughout the *Theogony* and distinguish and relate the terms of the metaphor as parents and off-spring, earth and sea would be off-spring, and the whole that they compose, ‘the world as a tree’, would have the underworld as its parent. Tartaros, as the lowermost region and, so, the deepest ‘subsoil’ up out of which the differentiated world arises, would precede and give rise to it.

Of course, Hesiod does *not* translate the tree metaphor into genealogical terms. At line 116, he withholds from genealogy altogether and names not Tartaros but Chaos as the ‘first’ that ‘came-into-being’. What is made plausible by lines 726-728, on the reading that I have offered, is only that Hesiod recognizes the possibility of naming Tartaros as the parent of the world—in which case, at line 116 he chooses deliberately against it.

(3) *Tartaros as both source and sourced?* Further evidence that he recognized this possibility, evidence at once more definite and more problematic, is provided by lines 807-809, given above as passage [iii]. Consider first the several ways in which, as West observes, ‘in sense [this passage] corresponds to and elaborates 728’.¹⁸ In place of the ‘roots’ of line 728, Hesiod now offers a different image, ‘springs’ (πηγαί, 809), for the same basic notion of beginnings or points of origin. And he now pairs this with the complementary image, ‘ends’ or ‘boundaries’ (πείρατ[α], 809), for the complementary notion of endings or points of termination. Finally, whereas lines 726-728 give us the picture of the roots ‘grow[ing]’ ‘from above’ and, so, *down towards* the ‘subsoil’ of Tartaros, lines 807-809 now place their equivalent, ‘the springs and ends’, squarely ‘therein’ (ἐνθα, 807), that is, *in* Tartaros. Hence the different elemental masses of the upper world—earth and sea and sky—both emerge in their distinction from one another out of Tartaros and disappear, losing their distinction from one another, into it. Tartaros itself, in turn, is now pictured not as their ‘subsoil’ but as the ‘ground’ from which, as ‘springs’, they first emerge—hence as their source. And both as their source and as that place in which, at their ‘ends’, they cease to be, it is not itself subject to their distinction from one another; it is internally undifferentiated and indeterminate. Thus, as at 726-728, so here: Tartaros presents itself as that pre-existent undifferentiated field that—*had* Hesiod chosen to take up the topological and genealogical implications of Χάος and γένετ’ (116), respectively—he might have identified as the absolutely ‘first’, preceding Chaos, and as the parent of the differentiated world.

The significance of lines 807-809 is made problematic, however, by the one ‘elaboration’ of line 728 still to be noted. Hesiod adds to the ‘earth and barren sea’ of 728 not only the ‘starry sky’ (808) but also ‘misty Tartaros’ (807). The

¹⁸ West 1966, 363. Kirk and Raven 1957, 30 (= Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 40) take lines 736-738 to be ‘evidently an attempt to improve 726-8’.

passage therefore places *in Tartaros* the ‘springs and ends’ of earth and sea and sky *and Tartaros itself*. With this the image turns against itself and becomes impossible to complete in the mind’s eye: how can the self-same Tartaros both be that ‘in’ which (ἐνθα) the elemental masses or places in the differentiated world have their beginnings and endings and yet itself stand among these masses, having its own beginning and ending there beside theirs? On the one hand, it is the ultimate source of the cosmos, outstripping all that it gives rise to; on the other hand, it itself first arises out of and disappears into—and, so, is both preceded and outstripped by—this ultimate source. How can Hesiod make Tartaros both the ultimate source and one of the several beings that it sources?

In the ‘inconsistenc[y] and impossibilit[y]’ of this, Kirk and Raven find grounds to dismiss the passage as a ‘superficial expansion’ of lines 726-728 ‘by [a] composer who [was] either careless or stupid’.¹⁹ On this view, it is implausible that Hesiod would have produced such a contradiction, so the passage must be a later insertion by a lesser mind. But there is another possibility that is philosophically more interesting.²⁰ As we have observed, following Cornford, to interpret cosmogenesis as a process of division or differentiation implies a pre-existing undifferentiated field. To think this mythopoeically, however, involves a paradox, and the image at 807-809 may be read as an attempt to articulate it. *On the one hand*, Tartaros is the internally undifferentiated that, as such, defies our powers of discernment and orientation and precedes the differentiation that defines our familiar world. This we have seen implied by Hesiod’s negative images of obscurity and disintegration and violent disarray, on the one hand, and by the image of the ‘subsoil’ in which the world-tree is ‘rooted’, on the other. But lines 807-809 bring the point into focus by giving Tartaros the status of that ‘wherein’, ἐνθα, all the determinate elemental masses or places in the world have their ‘springs and ends’, their points of origin and termination; in this status Tartaros stands radically prior to the ordered world of earth and sea and sky as the

¹⁹ Kirk and Raven 1957, 30-31. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 40-41, preserve this position but with more moderate language.

²⁰ A third possibility, also philosophically interesting but textually implausible, is offered by Vlastos 1953, 65f., who takes lines 736-739 (= 807-809) to make Chaos the source of earth and Tartaros and sea and sky. In his brief arguments for this reading (n20), Vlastos also takes lines 740-741 and 742 to be about Chaos. He appears to regard this as self-evident, for he does not mention even as a possibility that these three passages are about Tartaros. Does he—as West 1966, 361 also appears to do (see n16 above)—assimilate Tartaros to Chaos? Crediting him with this assimilation would enable us to make sense of his readings of 740-741 and 742 (which are about Tartaros) but would not help with his reading of 736-739; for then he would, albeit without acknowledging it, restore the paradox that the ‘springs and ends’ of Tartaros are in Tartaros. If we do not credit him with that assimilation, if, that is, we take it that he intends to keep Chaos distinct from Tartaros, then he seems to misread 740-741 and 742; for these passages describe a place ‘within the gates’ (741) and so refer back to the description at 729-733 of the walled-in region where the Titans have been imprisoned by Zeus (729-733), and this is clearly Tartaros. The philosophical interest of Vlastos’ interpretation lies in the way he sees in Chaos a precursor to the *apeiron* of Anaximander. It is possible to reject Vlastos’ interpretation while preserving in kindred form the thought behind it; on my reading, it is the figure of Tartaros, not Chaos, that anticipates Anaximander’s *apeiron*.

pre-existing undifferentiated field within which cosmogenesis first occurs. *On the other hand*, Tartaros cannot be brought to mind in this character except by contrast with the differentiated plurality of determinate elemental masses or places—earth and sea and sky—that arise out of it; or, to put this positively, it can be brought to mind as the undifferentiated only if it is imaged along with, as a ‘one’ among, these others that are differentiated from one another. This is already indirectly exhibited in lines 726-728: as the ‘subsoil’ down towards which ‘the roots’ of earth and sea ‘grow’ ‘from above’, Tartaros is imaged along with the roots and, more vaguely, the trunk and branches of the world-tree. But the point is brought into focus at 807-809 when Tartaros is granted its own ‘springs and ends’ and these are placed ἐξείης, ‘side-by-side’, the ‘springs and ends’ of earth and sky and sea: that Tartaros has a ‘spring’ implies that it *comes-to-be*; that it has an ‘end’ or ‘boundary’ implies that it has its own *determinate-ness*; and that it has its ‘spring’ and ‘end’ ἐξείης, ‘side-by-side’, those of earth and sea and sky implies that it is by virtue of its *relatedness* with these others that it has its coming-to-be and its determinateness as Tartaros. On these counts, Tartaros rightly belongs together with earth and sea and sky as a being that first *is*, and is *what it is*, in the context of its relations with them.

If it is this paradox that is expressed by lines 807-809—that the source depends for its very character and priority as source on its relatedness to that which is sourced in it—, then their author is hardly a lesser mind. On the contrary, the ‘inconsistenc[y] and impossibilit[y]’ they present is the achievement of a thinker who pushes his thought-form to its limits. The *Theogony* predates by about two centuries the efforts of the Milesians, then of Heraclitus and Parmenides, to develop a distinctively logical discourse. Its author cannot, as it were, step outside the images and stories he has inherited; these are the very medium of his thought. What he *can* do, however, is develop the thought that his imagery expresses to the point that, sorting itself into opposed moments, the imagery comes into conflict with itself. This is a key transitional situation, for the opposed moments, thus brought to the fore, present themselves as alternatives and, so, enable a choice. Lines 807-809, I suggest, bring this question into view: should Tartaros be thought as the ultimate source from which the determinate elements of the world first emerge, or should it be thought to stand with these elements as itself just one part within the larger differentiated whole they form together?

If this is right, the elaboration of 726-728 by 807-809 gives us evidence that Hesiod both understood the claim of Tartaros to the status of being ‘first’ and reflected critically upon it. Further evidence, but in a different key, is provided by 116-133, in which we find his decision against Tartaros and in favor of Chaos.

C. The alternative chosen—the cosmos as a thoroughly differentiated whole

A full-scale exegesis of the main cosmogonic passage, 116-133, would require another essay.²¹ For the specific purpose of completing the context for interpreting Hesiod’s decision to begin with Chaos rather than Tartaros, however, four

sets of remarks will suffice.

(1) *The first four beings: topology and semantics.* As we have observed, Hesiod refrains from making any genealogical connections among the first four beings that come-into-being, Chaos (116), earth (117), Tartaros (119), and Eros (120). He makes this withholding conspicuous by saying of Chaos—and, so, implicitly of the other three as well—that it γένετ[ο] ('came-into-being'), for as we have observed, the natural and recurrent sense of this in the *Theogony* is 'was born'. Hearing this, we cannot help but wonder how, in the absence of family ties, the four are related, and this sharpens our appreciation for the different sorts of relationship the text suggests. The first three are *topological* partners. Chaos, I have argued, is the 'gap' between earth and Tartaros; these, paired by the τ[ε] at line 119, are born directly 'after' (ἔπειτα, 116) Chaos. The birth of Chaos, accordingly, gives us the spectacle of the primordial separation that, as the opening up of a space that first differentiates the 'sides' that border it, first distinguishes the upper and lower worlds, constituting them in their potential specificity as earth and as Tartaros, respectively. The birth of Eros, in turn, has a primarily *semantic* character. Whereas χάος signifies breach and separation, ἔρος signifies attraction and coming-together;²² likewise, whereas the *birth* of Chaos is an event of breaking-apart and distancing within what is initially undifferentiated, the *birth* of Eros is the coming-to-be of a force that draws together partners that are initially separate. Thus, as the ἦδ[ε] in line 120 signals in recalling the ἦτοι μὲν of line 116, the birth of Eros answers the birth of Chaos, providing to Chaos an opposite and complement.

(2) *The implicit logic in the begettings by Chaos and earth: two principles in interplay.* That the birth of Chaos constitutes earth and Tartaros only in their *potential* specificity becomes evident when we consider the subsequent begettings by Chaos and by earth, introduced at 123-133. Only through these begettings do earth and Tartaros take on the basic characters and positions that actualize them in their full identities *as* earth and *as* Tartaros. These begettings are ordered by—and, so, express—two principles, and each of these principles serves to complete the work of the other. To understand this complex interplay is to recognize the fundamental order of the cosmos Hesiod envisages. Let us take this step by step:

(i) *The need of an opposite for its opposite.*²³ We have just observed that the birth of Eros (120-122) complements that of Chaos (116): the drawing-together of partners that are initially separate both begins from and opposes the condition

²¹ For an attempt at this exegesis, see Miller 1983. Much of the substance of this section was first argued in that essay.

²² Hesiod gives us the 'poetic form' ἔρος, not the more familiar ἔρωξ (Liddell and Scott 1968, 691).

²³ For clarity's sake, let me remark from the outset that I intentionally hold back from attributing to Hesiod recognition of the distinction between the relation between contraries and the relation between a term and its contradictory as two species of opposition. The earliest possible evidence for this distinction is in Parmenides—and finding it there requires that we adopt the interesting but con-

achieved by the separation of what is initially undifferentiated. To be what it is, accordingly, Eros needs what it opposes. In this is foreshadowed the relationship between the first and second generations in the line of Chaos—but only foreshadowed, for now the opposition is fully reciprocal, whereas that between Eros and Chaos is not.²⁴ Appropriately,²⁵ as we have observed, Chaos first begets the powers of darkness: Erebus, the gloom of the underworld, which is darkness in its local aspect, and night, which is darkness in its temporal aspect (line 123). But darkness cannot be what it is without its contrast to light; *as an opposite, it requires and can exist only in conjunction with its opposite*. Hesiod gives expression to this need by having Erebus and night, as soon as they are born, ‘join in love’ to beget their correlative opposites: Aither, the radiance of the upper atmosphere, and day (124-125). The forms their conjunctions take are, respectively, distribution to opposite locations, above and below the earth, and temporal alternation.²⁶

It is tempting to see this principle—that opposite needs opposite—also at work in earth’s first begetting: she ‘first begat, as an equal to herself, starry sky...’ (126-127). But this would be premature. In their initial conditions, without further begetting, there is nothing to contrast or oppose earth and sky; they are simply ‘equal’ or similar masses. We will return to this in (iv) below.²⁷

(ii) *The need of a whole for its parts*. A second principle is expressed by earth’s next two begettings, after sky. Abstractly put, *it is by its articulation into parts that a whole is first constituted as a whole, and as the whole that it is*. Concretely, earth would not be earth if it did not bear within itself the topological features of ‘hills’ (129) and ‘sea’ (131); by her parthenogenetic begetting of them, earth first constitutes itself in its essential internal differentiation.²⁸

(iii) *Self-differentiation into opposites*. That the conjunction of opposites can

troubling reading of B2 proposed by Mourelatos 1970, ch. 3; it may be, however, that it is anachronistic to find the distinction before Plato. For background, see Lloyd 1966.

²⁴ The ‘unity’ that Chaos opposes is a unity by default, not the sort of integration that is achieved by Eros: as we have observed in reflecting on Hesiod’s use of the plural in first naming Tartaros at line 119, what is undifferentiated is also unintegrated. (I deliberately leave aside the later notion of indivisible or simple unity, first articulated by Parmenides.) Thus Chaos does *not* presuppose Eros, whereas Eros *does* presuppose Chaos. Did Hesiod recognize this asymmetry? It is tempting to see this recognition as the reason why he does not have Chaos beget Eros, as, by contrast, he does have night and Erebus beget day and Aither.

²⁵ For further discussion, see Miller 1983, 136-137.

²⁶ Since the parent-child relationship is asymmetrical, Hesiod cannot express this reciprocity genealogically; it is made manifest, rather, by the forms that their conjunctions take. The symmetry of the locations of Erebus and Aither speaks for itself; but Hesiod makes patent his awareness of it when he asserts the equidistance of sky and Tartaros from earth in lines 721-725. The mutuality of the need of night for day and of day for night is expressed by his image at 748-754 of their deferential greeting as they pass each other at the entrance to their shared house in the underworld, the one retiring while the other journeys forth over the earth, at dawn and at dusk.

²⁷ Kirk and Raven 1957, 26 (= Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 36) are also puzzled about how to interpret earth’s begetting of sky—and remain so because they fail to analyze the interrelatedness of earth’s series of begettings at 126-133. See (iv) below.

serve to complete the constitution of a whole is also exhibited by earth's begetting of hills and sea. Hesiod characterizes the hills as 'tall' (μακρά, 129); as 'forested' (βησσήεντα, 130) and, so, fertile; and as the 'pleasing haunts of goddess nymphs' (θεῶν χαρίεντας ἐναύλους Νυμφέων, 129-130). In each of these respects the sea is their opposite: as a πέλαγος (131), it is low and flat, an expanse stretching out toward the horizon (Liddell and Scott, 1968, 1356) rather than up into the sky; as ἀτρύγετον (131), it is 'barren' or infertile; and with its 'raging swell', οἰδματι θυῖον (131), it is a site of violence, utterly *un*-'pleasing' and inhospitable to the love of life symbolized by the figure of the 'goddess nymphs'. In this opposition, hills and sea go together as part and counterpart, each setting the character of the other into relief and thus confirming it, and this complementarity, in turn, intensifies the sense in which earth, in differentiating itself into them, constitutes itself as an integral one, a genuine *whole* of its parts.

(iv) *Opposition of the differentiated and the undifferentiated.* That, in turn, the self-articulation of a whole can serve to complete the conjunction of opposites is exhibited by the full sequence of earth's begettings, in lines 126-133. 'First' (πρῶτον, 126) she begets, parthenogenetically, sky (126-128) and hills (129-130) and sea (131-132); 'then next' (ἀντάρ ἔπειτα, 132), for the first time joining in erotic partnership, she and sky beget ocean (132-133). How do these begettings fit together? To begin at the end: by jointly begetting ocean, earth and sky give cosmic expression to their unity. Whereas 'sea' (Πόντον, 132) refers to inland bodies of water like the Mediterranean,²⁹ 'deep-swirling ocean' ('Ωκεανὸν βαθυδίνην, 133) refers to the great circular stream that, encompassing sea and land together, flows around the disc of the earth at the farthest horizon and there forms a seam-line or 'point of contact between earth and the enclosing bowl of sky' (Kirk and Raven 1957, 26n1 [= Kirk, Raven, and Schofield 1983, 36n1]); by together begetting ocean, earth and sky consummate and make manifest their conjunction. But their conjunction *as what*? In first begetting sky, earth produces an 'equal...to herself' (ἴσον ἑωυτῇ, 126); as we have observed in (i), they are merely similar masses, with nothing to contrast or oppose them. But at this point earth has not yet acquired its defining internal differentiation. Hesiod indicates the essential connection of the begetting of sky with those of hills and sea by at once pairing the latter two with an adverbial καὶ ('also', 131) and introducing them as complements to the first with an adversative μὲν...δ'...ἡδὲ... (126, 129, 131): it is only with its self-articulation into hills and sea that earth makes her relation to sky fully determinate. Now earth stands as the opposite to sky, for sky,

²⁸ That the self-articulation by which a whole constitutes itself as a whole need not be topological and need not take the form of articulation into opposites is evidenced by the later parthenogenetic begettings of Night (211-225) and Strife (226-232); see Miller 1983, 135-136.

²⁹ Used alone, both πόντος and θάλασσα can mean 'sea' or 'ocean' in a general sense, as θάλασσα does at line 728 and as πόντος does at line 808; but when, as here in lines 132 and 133, either is set into contrast with Ὠκεανός, it refers to an inland sea, paradigmatically the Mediterranean, by contrast to the sea beyond Gibraltar that the early Greeks took to circle the earth. Liddell and Scott, 1968, 2031, also 1448 and 781.

a region without distinct parts, lacks the internal articulation by which earth has defined itself as an integrated whole: as the internally differentiated and integrated, on the one hand, and the undifferentiated, on the other, earth and sky now relate as part and counterpart. And this is why it is now timely—‘then next’ (ἀντὰρ ἔπειτα, 132)—for earth and sky to consummate their conjunction in the begetting of ocean. The self-articulation of earth as the whole of hills and sea actualizes the opposition of earth to sky and, so, lets them stand together to form the larger whole of the upper world.

(3) *The thoroughgoing differentiation of the cosmos as a whole.* These last reflections on the begettings by earth provide two keys to understanding Hesiod’s vision of the cosmos. First, the coming-into-being of Chaos, earth, and Tartaros no more stands alone, as if self-sufficient and fully realized, than does the birth of sky as earth’s ‘equal’; as with the latter, so with the former, the relationship is fully determined only through the begettings that follow. Second, in its full determination, the relationship between earth and sky presents itself as an analogue to the relation between earth and Tartaros. Let us go back to the beginning one more time in order to rethink the cosmogonic process as a whole with these insights in mind: the birth of Chaos is the primordial separation or differentiation that first constitutes, as the contrasting ‘sides’ that it sets apart, earth and Tartaros. But this contrast, like that of earth and sky at 126–128, is initially only a matter of occupying different places. It first becomes qualitatively and structurally determinate when earth, by differentiating itself into hills and sea, comes to stand as the fit counterpart to undifferentiated sky; for as part and counterpart, earth and sky constitute the upper world as a differentiated whole, and *this* whole, in turn, stands as the fit counterpart to undifferentiated Tartaros. Thus, just as the differentiated whole of the earth with its hills and sea relates to the sky, so the differentiated whole of earth and sky and ocean relates to Tartaros. At both levels, that of the upper world alone and that of the cosmos as a whole, Hesiod shows us a differentiated whole constituted by, as its parts, a differentiated whole and its correlative undifferentiated.

(4) *The viability of the alternative beginning: Tartaros as self-articulating whole? as seminal opposite?* This recovery of the vision of the cosmos in lines 116–133 does more than prepare us to address our central question: why did Hesiod choose to begin cosmogenesis from Chaos, not Tartaros? It gives the question the urgency of a riddle. For seen in light of the implicit logic at work in the cosmogonic passage, the claim of Tartaros to the status of ‘first’ appears to be compelling. We can bring this into focus in either of two ways; each takes its bearings from one of the two aspects under which Tartaros was disclosed in the pointed ambiguity of lines 807–809.

On the one hand, is not the birth of Chaos, understood as the primordial separation or opening of a ‘gap’, the internal differentiation of what was until then absolutely undifferentiated? And is this not Tartaros? Not, indeed, Tartaros as that whose ‘springs and ends’ stand ‘side-by-side’ (ἐξείης, 809) with those of earth and sea and sky, placing it as a ‘one’ among them, but rather Tartaros as

that *within which* (ἐνθα, 807) the ‘springs and ends for all these’ stand together, Tartaros as the ultimate ground or source out of which the elemental masses of the cosmos first emerge and into which they disappear. That Hesiod might well have begun cosmogenesis from Tartaros understood in this way, we see from its potential analogy with earth in its self-articulation into hills and sea at lines 129–132. On this line of reflection, he might have taken the birth of Chaos—that is, the primordial separation or splitting-apart—to be Tartaros’ self-articulation as a whole into earth and sea and sky as its parts. And if he had, he would have given pride of place to Tartaros, either omitting Chaos altogether (as with the analogous case of earth’s self-articulation, in which the event of differentiation is displaced by the figure of earth’s begetting) or giving it merely subordinate status.

On the other hand, might not Hesiod also have begun from Tartaros under the aspect I just set aside, that Tartaros whose ‘springs and ends’ stand ἐξείης, ‘side-by-side’ (809), those of earth and sea and sky? This is Tartaros understood not as a whole of parts but, rather, as an opposite—namely, as the absolutely undifferentiated—which derives its being from, and in turn bestows being upon, its counterpart—namely, the differentiated whole of earth and sea and sky. Does not the birth of Chaos initiate the sequence of begettings by which this differentiated whole is constituted? And might not Hesiod have taken this sequence to express and respond to the need of an opposite—again, of the absolutely undifferentiated—for its complementary opposite? Here the potential analogy would be with the begettings by Erebos and night of Aither and day at 124–125. On this line of reflection, Hesiod might have begun with Tartaros and imaged cosmogenesis as the sequence of begettings that, in constituting the differentiated whole of the upper world, provide Tartaros with the opposite that it needs in order to be what it is. And, again, if he had, he would have given Tartaros pride of place and, turning directly to its begettings, let Chaos go.

Given the evidence we have gathered that Hesiod did have this option—and, we can now add, had it as a course seemingly congenial to his ways of thinking—, it becomes all the more striking that he decided against it. He begins with Chaos, not Tartaros. Indeed, Tartaros is not even the second power he mentions. ‘First of all, Chaos came-to-be; then next...earth...and...Tartara...’ (116, 117, 119). Why does he choose this beginning, rejecting genealogical connections and giving Chaos, then earth, pride of place over Tartaros?

II. Hesiod’s Choice—Semantic and Ethical Considerations

There are, I think, two possible lines of reply. On one construal, these are alternatives; on another, the one functions to motivate the other. I begin by outlining an interpretation that keys from the semantics of the cosmogonic question, then articulate and address several objections to this approach. In the final section I outline an interpretation that focuses, instead, on the ethical project that unites the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*. Considering the two possible ways of construing the relation between these lines of reply will provide a transition from

the first to the second.

A. The semantic conditions for the thought of Tartaros

In lines 807-809, I have argued, Hesiod develops to the point of contradiction a deep ambiguity in the thought of Tartaros in lines 727-728: to think Tartaros, the in itself undifferentiated and, so, unintegrated, as that out of which the differentiated elemental masses of the world first arise is *also* to think it, in the specificity this contrast implies, as paired with these others and, so, as a ‘one’ among them. Lines 116-133, in turn, reveal Hesiod’s choice between the options this ambiguity implies. Hesiod could have translated the metaphor of the ‘ground’ or ‘source’ out of which all else ‘arises’ into genealogical terms, making Tartaros the parent of earth and sky and ocean; as we have just noted, each of the logical relations that he expresses by the genealogical figure of parent and child, the relations of an opposite to its opposite and of a whole to its parts, invite this privileging of Tartaros. But this would have been to ignore what he brought into view in lines 807-809, the semantic dependency of Tartaros; in the order of thinking or, to say the same thing in a different way, in the semantic order of a thought and its presuppositions, Tartaros is not entitled to the status of the ‘first’. On the contrary, it is at best the third. The thought of ‘the un-differentiated and un-integrated’ presupposes the thought of ‘the differentiated and integrated’; it is only as *not* differentiated and *not* integrated, hence as the contradictory to the differentiated whole of earth and sky and ocean, that Tartara³⁰ can be brought to mind. Hence earth, in her implicit partnership with sky and ocean, is semantically prior to Tartara. And prior to the earth-centered upper world and Tartara alike, in turn, is the very contrast or difference between them; the pairing in thought of the differentiated whole, on the one hand, and the undifferentiated and unintegrated, on the other, is possible only by virtue of the thought of the difference, as such, between them. Hence Chaos, the ‘gap’ or ‘yawning space’ that, as the differentiation of each from the other, first lets earth and Tartara *be*, precedes them. Seeing this, Hesiod chooses to give Chaos the status of ‘first’ (πρώτιστα, 116), then, even as he pairs them (cf. τ[ε], 119), to mention earth second and Tartara third.

To this first reconstruction of Hesiod’s thinking, there are at least three sets of possible objections. Surprisingly, however, reflecting on them reveals the strength of the reconstruction, in part for the depth it discerns in Hesiod’s thought, in part for its attunement to Hesiod’s historical situation. Here, first, are the three sets of objections. (i) If Hesiod is indeed struggling to express his incipient sense of the *unthinkability* of Tartaros without earth, and of the pair of them without Chaos, why does he say of Chaos that it γέvet[o], ‘came-to-be’, with this term’s inescapable connotation of birth? Does this not imply just what, by placing Chaos ahead of earth and Tartaros, he seeks to deny: that prior to the differentiated world-whole there was—as, indeed, its parent—the undifferentiated? (ii)

³⁰ I transliterate the Greek plural as a reminder that, as we discussed at the end of section 1 B(1) above, Hesiod first introduces Tartaros in the plural at 119.

Does not this line of interpretation impute a conspicuous inconsistency to Hesiod? If, as I have suggested, Hesiod holds back from asserting parent-child relations between ‘the undifferentiated’ and ‘the differentiated’ because the first is not thinkable without the second, why does he not also hold back from making Erebus and night parents of Aither and day, respectively, and earth the parent of sky, and, again, earth the parent of hills and sea? If Hesiod recognizes the unthinkability of an opposite without its counterpart opposite and, again, of a whole without its defining parts, should not each of these latter sets of powers, no less than Tartaros and earth, come-to-be simultaneously? Or, conversely, now to take our bearings from the genealogical ties by which Hesiod relates these other powers, if an opposite *can* be thought as parent to its counterpart opposite and, likewise, a whole *can* be thought as parent to its defining parts, why should Tartaros not equally well be thought as parent to earth? What justifies taking Hesiod to treat Tartaros and earth differently from Erebus and Aither, night and day, earth and sky, and earth and hills and sea? (iii) Finally, does not this line of interpretation impute to Hesiod two basic conflations: if Hesiod thinks that Tartaros cannot *be* the ‘first’ of the elemental powers because it is *unthinkable* without the differentiated and the very difference between itself and the differentiated, does he not fail to distinguish the orders of being and of thinking? And, further, if it is on the basis of its priority in the order of thinking that Hesiod takes this very difference, that is, Chaos, to be the ‘first’ to come-to-be, does he not fail to distinguish semantic and temporal priority?

To begin with (iii), my interpretation does indeed impute these conflations—or, better, these failures to distinguish—to Hesiod. But this is as it should be, for even while he thinks to the very limits of archaic mythopoesy, Hesiod remains within them. Only with Anaximander’s notion of the *ἄπειρον* is the distinction first marked between what-is and what is thinkable; only with Heraclitus’ notion of the unity of opposites does the distinction of semantic and temporal priority present itself; and only with Parmenides’ poem does thought begin to find the language it needs (and that we retroactively rely on) in order to articulate these recognitions. Hesiod’s decision to make not Tartaros but Chaos the ‘first’ helps to motivate the development of these distinctions, for it has the provocative *effect* of putting the differentiated structure of the whole prior to any begetting. But because Hesiod has only genealogy and anthropomorphic narrative to work with, he cannot himself explicitly articulate the distinctions that his vision involves. The best he can do, working from within these modes of discourse, is to think *against* them at crucial moments, selectively defying the expectations they generate. This, I suggest, is the way to understand the inconsistencies to which points (i) and (ii) object. With regard to (i), what is remarkable is not that Hesiod says of Chaos that it γένετ[ο], ‘came-to-be’ or, connotatively, ‘was born’; he has little choice. Rather, what is remarkable is that, in face of the assumption that what ‘comes-to-be’ must have a parent, he holds back from naming one and instead declares Chaos to have come-to-be ‘first’. In the same way, with regard to (ii), it is hardly striking that Hesiod has recourse to the figure of parent-begetting-child

to express the semantic interdependence that binds together, as contemporary terms, an opposite and its counterpart opposite and, again, a whole and its defining parts; he has no other way to express these relations. On the contrary, what is striking is that he recognizes such semantic interdependence in the first place and, above all, that in the singular and crucial passage in which he must name the primordial powers of the cosmos, he lets this interdependence emerge in its own right by holding back from naming Tartaros as the parent of the upper world. By *not* translating the metaphors of 'roots' in lines 727-728 and of 'springs' in lines 807-809 into the parent-child relations that genealogy requires, Hesiod provides a space, as it were, in which the semantic order can begin to come to light in and for itself, and he lets this order guide him to a strikingly new vision of the basic structure of the cosmos. Not the undifferentiated and unintegrated but rather what the thought of it presupposes—the very difference, as such, between it and the differentiated and integrated—discloses itself as the 'first'.

B. Chaos and the ethical priority of the 'half' to the 'all'

Does this interpretation of Hesiod's choice against Tartaros and for Chaos and earth make him out to be too much of a disinterested theoretical cosmogonist? There are two ways such an objection might go. One might reject *any* such interpretation *tout court*, regarding it as the anachronistic reading-in of later philosophical interests and ideas into a thoroughly mythopoeic text.³¹ Alternatively, we might affirm the interpretation so far as it goes but deny its self-sufficiency. Let it be granted, we might say, that Hesiod discovered the priority of difference; still, since he was not concerned with cosmogony for its own sake, one must now go on to ask: what other concerns opened him up to this discovery? Or, to distinguish the subjective and objective moments of this question, with what basic interests in mind did Hesiod first approach the question of what came-to-be first of all, and what was it in the semantics of Tartaros and Chaos that, in its appeal to these interests, caught his attention and moved him to resist genealogy and Tartaros' claim to the status of parent of the world?

Whether as an alternative or as a decisive supplement to our reflections on the semantics of Tartara, there is a second line of reply to the question why Hesiod gives Chaos and then earth pride of place. Key to it is the larger ethical project that motivates, as its complementary phases, the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*. To bring this project into focus in just a few words: by its genealogies and its narration of the overthrows of sky and Kronos that culminate in the rule of Zeus, the *Theogony* provides an account of the divine order in which justice prevails; thus it prepares the way for the *Works and Days*, in which Hesiod, condemning the attempt to dominate by violence, claims that Zeus has ordained for humankind a life of justice, foresight, and hard work. The unity of these virtues Hesiod expresses in his arresting polemic against the short-sightedness of vio-

³¹ Thus, e.g., Kahn 1960, 95 asserts: 'serious speculation...plays very little part in Hesiod's *Theogony*'.

lence: 'Fools all! who never learned by how much the half is more than the all!'³² To attempt to seize 'all' for oneself will only provoke others to counter-violence, and in the end one will be left with nothing. The far-sighted course is therefore to be content with 'half', to respect a pattern of distribution that, by allotting to each a proper share of or place within the whole, preserves peace and lets everyone flourish by their own hard work. This insight is given narrative expression at the level of the gods by the famous succession myths in the *Theogony*. Sky, attempting to keep 'all' for himself, refuses to let his own off-spring be born, 'push[ing] them back again, deep inside [their mother] Earth' (137); this provokes his son Kronos, answering suffering Earth's appeal, to respond in kind, castrating him and seizing power for himself. Kronos then repeats Sky's short-sightedness, attempting to keep 'all' for himself by swallowing his own off-spring; once again this only provokes a son, now Zeus, again in complicity with a suffering mother, now Rheia (who is, moreover, acting with the counsel and assistance of her mother, Earth), to respond in kind, waging war against Kronos and casting him into Tartaros.³³ Once victorious, Zeus breaks with the oppressive ways of Sky and Kronos. By his first two actions, he preserves his power by sharing it: he 'made good distribution to [his brothers and sisters] of honors and prerogatives' (ὁ δὲ τοῖσιν ἐν διεδάσσατο τιμᾶς, 885), and then, swallowing his first wife Metis ('wisdom' or 'cunning') 'so that [she] should think for him' (900), he himself gives birth to their daughter Athena, 'the equal of her father in wise counsel and strength' (896). Thus, in effect, he himself becomes the thoughtfulness that welcomes the other³⁴ and, so, lives in justice and peace. Next he ordains for humankind the new order that these first two deeds exhibit, marrying Themis (essentially, what is right and proper according to custom) and with her beget-

³² νήπιοι, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν ὅσῳ πλέον ἤμισυ παντός, *Works and Days* 40. Lattimore 1959, 23 translates ὅσῳ πλέον as 'by how much *better*' (my stress), putting qualitative superiority in place of quantitative and so, at the very least, dulling the paradox Hesiod presents; I prefer the more literal 'by how much...*more*...'. I also prefer the more literal translation of παντός as 'the all' to Lattimore's 'the whole', in order to preserve the implicit contrast between, on the one hand, the order in which, because some one dominant figure claims everything for himself, there is an undivided 'all' and, on the other hand, the order in which, because each party accepts the wisdom of sharing with the other and claims only 'half' for itself, there is a *whole* that is *differentiated into parts*.

³³ Hesiod creates a thematic echo of this sequence with the story of the three Hundred Handers, sons of Sky. 'Struck with envy at their overwhelming vigor and beauty and massive size' (618-619), Sky imprisons them in Tartaros. Later, seeking their help against Kronos, Zeus releases them. Furious at being suppressed, they are grateful to Zeus, and their aid in the Titanomachy is decisive. True, it was by Sky, not Kronos, that they were first imprisoned; but Kronos did not release them when he took power.

³⁴ Needless to say, this is no straightforwardly selfless act. Indeed, in its most obvious aspect it appears as a suppression of the other to the extreme degree, going beyond Kronos' pre-emptive violence analogously as Kronos had gone beyond Sky's: whereas Sky had pushed his children back into the womb of their mother Earth, Kronos swallows his children as soon as they are born, thereby taking them into himself; now Zeus, swallowing Metis, takes the pregnant mother herself into himself. Moreover, he does this so that she will not do to him what Rheia did to Kronos and Earth did to Sky, namely, beget a child who will someday overthrow him. But there are crucial differences as well: Zeus, in swallowing Metis, not only appropriates her to himself but also assimilates himself to her;

ting, as the divinities charged ‘to oversee the deeds of mortals’, Lawfulness (or better, Good Distribution),³⁵ Justice, and Peace (901-903).

If, now, we return to our question of why Hesiod gives Chaos, then earth, pride of place before Tartaros, does his choice not make ethical sense? To have made Tartaros the ‘first’ would have been to give pride of place to the undifferentiated ‘all’. By contrast, to make Chaos the ‘first’ is to honor differentiation and to declare that *it belongs to the cosmos from its very beginning*—hence, in effect, in its very nature—to be a whole differentiated into ‘halves’. In this regard, moreover, the earth-‘half’ goes on to mirror the cosmic whole, both internally, by differentiating itself into hills and sea, and in the larger whole that it forms by pairing itself with undifferentiated sky. Thus, analogously as Zeus’ initial actions, once he is in power, exhibit at the level of the gods the new ethical order that Hesiod urges for mankind, so does the coming-to-be ‘first of all’ of Chaos, then of earth and, thirdly, of Tartaros, exhibit this order at the level of the cosmos. For human beings to be guided by the recognition that ‘the half is more than the all’ is, therefore, to live in accordance not only with the will of Zeus but also with the very structure of the cosmos in which his will appropriately prevails.³⁶

Department of Philosophy
Vassar College
Poughkeepsie NY 12604

she becomes his very thinking. Further, in direct contrast to Sky and Kronos, Zeus lets the child be born—indeed, *he himself gives birth* to her—, and she is, as Hesiod makes emphatic, his ‘equal’ in mind and body. Athena’s love for Zeus and his for her are well-known; he is at once her father and mother. Thus, to bring all this together, Zeus preserves his power by himself producing an other with whom, as a beloved equal, he in effect shares it.

³⁵ ‘Lawfulness’ translates the Greek εὐνομίην, on which Adkins 1985, 47-48 offers this comment: ‘The word is usually derived from *eu* (‘well’) and *nomos* (‘law’), and is often said to imply not so much having good laws as having laws which are obeyed. This was certainly the view of Aristotle (*Politics* 1294a3ff.); but Aristotle was living between three and four hundred years after Hesiod, and his knowledge of the archaic period was not much greater than ours. It is worth observing that *eunomie* by the usual rules of Greek word-formation may also be developed from *eu* + **nem* (‘allot’, ‘apportion’); *nomos* itself is from **nem*. Such a derivation would endow *eunomie* with the additional sense of ‘a situation in which *the apportionments [moirai] are correct*’ (my stress). Thus interpreted, Εὐνομίη expresses as a principle what in his narrative Hesiod has Zeus *do* at 885: ὁ δὲ τοῖσιν ἐν διεδάσσατο τιμάς, ‘he made *good distribution* to [his brothers and sisters] of honors and prerogatives’. (On ἐν, see West 1966, 400.)

³⁶ Earlier versions of this essay were presented at a colloquium at Vassar College and at a panel on Hesiod’s cosmogony at the annual meeting of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, both in October 1997. For stimulating discussions of various issues explored in this essay, I owe thanks to Rachel Kitzinger, Ron Brady, and Michael Degener; to my colleagues in the Vassar College Philosophy Department—Giovanna Borradori, Herman Cappelen, Jennifer Church, Jesse Kalin, Michael McCarthy, Michael Murray, Uma Narayan, Bryan Van Norden, and Doug Winblad; and to my SAGP co-panelists Robert Hahn and Gerard Naddaf. I owe thanks as well to Ronald Polansky and an anonymous reader for *Ancient Philosophy* for having challenged me with valuable objections and suggestions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adkins, Arthur. 1985. 'Cosmogony and Order in Ancient Greece' 39-66 in Robin Lovin and Frank Reynolds edd. *Cosmogony and Ethical Order: New Studies in Comparative Ethics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cornford, Francis. 1950. *The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cornford, Francis. 1971. *Principium Sapientiae: The Origins of Greek Philosophical Thought*. Gloucester, MA.: Peter Smith.
- Furley, David, and R.E. Allen edd. 1970. *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*. vol. 1. New York: Humanities Press.
- Hoelscher, Uvo. 1953. 'Anaximander und die Anfaenge der Philosophie' *Hermes* 81: 255-277, 385-417. (In English translation in Furley and Allen edd. 1970.)
- Jaeger, Werner. 1947. *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers: The Gifford Lectures 1936*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kahn, Charles. 1960. *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kirk, G. S. and J.E. Raven. 1957. *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kirk, G. S., J.E. Raven, and M. Schofield. 1983. *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lattimore, Richmond tran. 1959. *Hesiod: The Works and Days, Theogony, the Shield of Heracles*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. 1968. *Greek-English Lexicon*. revised and augmented by Henry Stuart Jones. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lloyd, G.E.R. 1966. *Polarity and Analogy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McKirahan, Richard D., Jr. 1994. *Philosophy Before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.
- Miller, Mitchell H., Jr. 1983. 'The Implicit Logic of Hesiod's Cosmogony: An Examination of *Theogony*, 116-133' *Independent Journal of Philosophy* 4: 131-142. (Originally published in a French translation by Louis Pamplume as 'La logique implicite dans la cosmogonie d'Hésiode' *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 82 [1977] 433-456.)
- Mourelatos, A.P.D. 1970. *The Route of Parmenides*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Vlastos, Gregory. 1953. 'Review of F.M. Cornford: *Principium Sapientiae*' *Gnomon* 27: 65-76. (Reprinted 42-55 in Furley and Allen edd. 1970.)
- West, M.L. 1966. *Hesiod, Theogony*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.