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## The clash of the sexes in Hesiod's *Works and Days*

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## THE CLASH OF THE SEXES IN HESIOD'S *WORKS AND DAYS*

Hesiod's *Works and Days* is self-consciously a poem of the Iron Age. It is addressed to Iron Age men about how to manage the Iron Age human condition. The narrative ventures out of the Iron Age only to explain how we got here and how the present age compares to those which came before.<sup>1</sup> The Iron Age audience is addressed by a narrator who situates himself explicitly (and discontentedly) as a contemporary:

μηκέτ' ἔπειτ' ὄφελλον ἐγὼ πέμπτοισι μετεῖναι  
ἀνδράσιν, ἀλλ' ἢ πρόσθε θανεῖν ἢ ἔπειτα γενέσθαι.  
νῦν γὰρ δὴ γένος ἐστὶ σιδήρεον·

*Would then that I was no longer among the fifth race of  
men, but either died earlier or was born later.  
For now indeed it is a race of iron.* (Works and Days, 174–6<sup>2</sup>)

The Iron Age human condition is characterized first and foremost by the need to work. Men are at odds with the earth: unlike the Golden Race or those living pre-Pandora,<sup>3</sup> Iron Age men have to work for their livelihood.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, women are at odds with men: they pose a threat to production, poking around in granaries (373–5) and getting

<sup>1</sup> Prometheus and Pandora (*Op.* 42–105); the myth of the Races (*Op.* 106–201).

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this article, the Hesiod text I give is that of M. L. West: *Hesiod. Theogony* (Oxford, 1966) and *Hesiod. Works and Days* (Oxford, 1978); *Iliad* and *Odyssey* text is taken from the Allen and Monroe OCT editions (Oxford, 1963). All translations are my own. 'Hesiod' denotes both the persona of the poet of the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*, and the consistent driving force which I believe lies behind the poems. Whether or not these were one and the same does not concern me here – issues such as authorship, performance context, or orality versus writing are necessarily beyond the scope of the present article.

<sup>3</sup> Pre-Pandora: ῥηιδίως γὰρ κεν καὶ ἐπ' ἡματι ἐργάσσαιο | ὥστε σε κείζ ἐνιαυτὸν ἔχειν καὶ ἀεργὸν εἶναι: ('for easily you would have worked even in one day enough that you would have had sufficient for a year though being idle'; *Op.* 43–4); Golden Age: καρπὸν δ' ἔφερε ζείδωρος ἄρουρα | αὐτομάτῃ πολλὸν τε καὶ ἄφθονον: ('the grain-giving earth produced fruit of its own accord, abundant and unbegrudged'; *Op.* 117–18).

<sup>4</sup> βίος (livelihood) at *Op.* 31, 42, 232, 316, 501, 577, 601, 634, 689 (similarly, βίωτος at *Op.* 167, 301, 307, 400, 476, 499). The Heroes knew agriculture too: but with the land bearing them three harvests a year (τοῖσιν μελιηδέα καρπὸν | τρίς ἔτεος θάλλοντα φέρει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα, 'for whom the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing three times a year'; *Op.* 172–3) they hardly match the Iron Race in terms of toil.

lustful just when the summer heat has the farmer worn out (586–7). And Hesiod predicts more conflict ahead: children will be at odds with parents (182), guests with hosts (183), and brothers with brothers (184). Indeed, he chooses a brother as a didactic addressee and a quarrel as a didactic setting to make this very point.<sup>5</sup>

To manage this bleak Iron Age condition, men must work to make their *oikos* (household) self-sufficient rather than having to rely on others.<sup>6</sup> The farmer should be resourceful: weaving (538), sewing (544), and creating all his agricultural accoutrements seemingly single-handedly (423–36). He should focus on his own *oikos* as his first priority (οἶκον μὲν πρότιστα, ‘first of all a house’; 405) and distrust the outside world (οἴκοι βέλτερον εἶναι, ἐπεὶ βλαβερὸν τὸ θύρηφιν, ‘better to be at home, since the outside is more harmful’; 365). If help must be called for, it should be in the form of a forty-year-old farmhand who will concentrate on his task rather than being distracted by companions (443). Hesiod advises turning attention to one’s own livelihood (εἰς ἔργον τρέψας μελετῶς βίου, ‘having turned your attention to work, you take care of your livelihood’; 316) as opposed to looking longingly at the rewards reaped by others: Perses, on the other hand, who is Hesiod’s negative foil, has to be warned repeatedly against depending on others (27–41, 293–319, 394–404). By extension, even the poet should go it alone, relying as little as possible on the Muses: in the proem (1–10), Hesiod asks the Muses to sing of Zeus, whose powers he extols; then, in a reversal of audience expectation, he departs from the Muses’ song. Although the focus of the proem, Zeus will be replaced by the importance of work and justice as the main themes of the poem proper, and as such the Muses are being invited to sing a song tangential to Hesiod’s own.<sup>7</sup>

In this article I show how these Iron Age concerns are reflected in Hesiod’s suspicion of women. I argue that Hesiod’s (predominantly

<sup>5</sup> For Hesiod’s choice of addressee as purposeful, see R. Martin, ‘Hesiod and the Didactic Double’, *Synthesis* 11 (2004), 31–54.

<sup>6</sup> On self-sufficiency in *Works and Days*, see P. Millett, ‘Hesiod and His World’, *PCPhS* 210 (1984), 84–115; and M. Marsilio, *Farming and Poetry in Hesiod’s Works and Days* (Lanham, MD, 2000). Self-sufficiency is foregrounded throughout *Works and Days* as Hesiod’s Iron Age ideal; whether or not it was an economic reality does not concern me here – for this issue see e.g. A. Bresson, *La cité marchande* (Bordeaux, 2000), 109–30; and E.M. Harris, M. Wooler, and D. Lewis (eds.), *Markets, Households, and the Ancient Greek Economy* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> For the Muses’ song as tangential to Hesiod’s own, see J. S. Clay, *Hesiod’s Cosmos* (Cambridge, 2003), 72–8; and J. H. Haubold, ‘Shepherd, Farmer, Poet, Sophist: Hesiod on His Own Reception’, in G. Boys-Stones and J. H. Haubold (eds.), *Plato and Hesiod* (Oxford, 2010), 21.

negative) views on women in the *Works and Days* are inextricably linked with his persistent anxieties about life in the Iron Age. That Hesiod's approach to gender in *Works and Days* is an expression of cultural anxiety has been the subject of studies by (for example) Patricia Marquardt and Froma Zeitlin, with Marilyn Arthur and Nicole Loraux (among others) exploring corresponding concerns in the *Theogony*.<sup>8</sup> I hope to complement such studies by pinpointing the ideal of self-sufficiency as a driving force behind Hesiod's view of women, and by showing how gender in the *Works and Days* is framed in terms of balance (itself a concern throughout the poem: μέτρα φυλάσσεσθαι, 'keep the right measures'; 694). Hesiod's suspicion of women in the *Works and Days* is driven both by concern for the productivity of the individual *oikos* and by a perceived imbalance between the sexes. Women can therefore be tolerated when they fulfil a low-risk role<sup>9</sup> or when the genders are in equilibrium. Further, I add to the scholarship on gender in the *Works and Days* by showing that this attitude to women can be traced in the Days section too: I argue for a link between the earlier and latter parts of the poem which has mostly been ignored.

## I

The trouble started with Pandora. In the mythical section of the *Works and Days* her creation and the ensuing threat she poses are emphasized.<sup>10</sup> We can see this already through a comparison between the two versions of the myths of Prometheus and the first woman in the *Theogony* (534–601) and the *Works and Days* (42–105): the *Theogony* concentrates on Prometheus (thirty-four lines; seventeen in the *Works*

<sup>8</sup> Some of the most relevant items include: N. Loraux, 'Sur la race des femmes et quelques-unes de ses tribus', *Arethusa* 11 (1978), 43–89; P. A. Marquardt, 'Hesiod's Ambiguous View of Woman', *CPh* 77.4 (1982), 283–91; M. B. Arthur, 'Cultural Strategies in Hesiod's *Theogony*: Law, Family, and Society', *Arethusa* 15 (1982), 63–82; M. B. Arthur, 'The Dream of a World Without Women: Poetics and Circles of Order in the *Theogony* Prooemium', *Arethusa* 16 (1983), 97–116; F. I. Zeitlin, 'Signifying Difference: The Case of Hesiod's Pandora', in *Playing the Other. Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature* (Chicago, IL, 1996), 53–86.

<sup>9</sup> By 'low-risk' I mean fulfilling a role which contributes to the production of the *oikos* as much as or even more than the woman herself consumes.

<sup>10</sup> For further details (including an expansion of an expansion within *Works and Days* itself) and for bibliography (to which one might add C. Tsagalis 'Poet and Audience: From Homer to Hesiod', in F. Montanari and A. Rengakos [eds.], *La poésie épique grecque. Métamorphoses d'un genre littéraire* [Vandoeuvres-Geneva, 2006], 124–6), see L. G. Fraser, 'A Woman of Consequence: Pandora in Hesiod's *Works and Days*', *Cambridge Classical Journal* 57 (2011), 9–28.

*and Days*), the *Works and Days* on Pandora (forty-six lines; twenty-nine in the *Theogony*); furthermore, the organization of allusions in each version is such that the Prometheus story is consistently abbreviated in the *Works and Days*, and the Pandora myth abbreviated in the *Theogony*. These relative proportions and the distribution of allusions are driven by the respective focuses of each poem. Prometheus is of more importance to the *Theogony* because there the focus is on gods and the perspective is that of the gods.<sup>11</sup> In the *Works and Days*, however, the two stories are included primarily to explain why humankind must work (47–8), so Pandora is crucial because she epitomizes the ‘male dilemma’:<sup>12</sup> sexual desire vs. economic stability, and family continuity vs. problems of property and inheritance.<sup>13</sup>

From Pandora on, women have consumed resources and increased the need for productivity. Hesiod warns of this most pointedly at 373–5:

μηδὲ γυνή σε νόον πυγοστόλος ἐξαπατάτω  
αἰμύλα κωτίλλουσα, τήν διφῶσα καλιήν.  
ὃς δὲ γυναικὶ πέποιθε, πέποιθ’ ὅ γε φιλήτησιν.

*Don't let a woman with a torted-up arse deceive your mind  
with cajoling words, while she rifles around in your granary.  
He who trusts a woman, trusts a cheater.*

Perhaps most striking here is the *harpax* πυγοστόλος, which has succeeded in inspiring all manner of detailed discussion about what exactly women do to attract attention to their rear.<sup>14</sup> The word has proved a distraction – just like the woman it describes. It characterizes the exchange between the man and the woman: she is busy with something

<sup>11</sup> Prometheus is himself the son of a Titan (*Theog.* 134). His divine punishment is described at *Theog.* 521–5 and again at *Theog.* 615–16; this particular myth is included to mark the beginning of the separation between gods and men (καὶ γὰρ ὅτ’ ἐκρίνοντο θεοὶ θνητοὶ τ’ ἄνθρωποι, ‘for when the gods and mortal men were reaching a judgement’; *Theog.* 535).

<sup>12</sup> A. Brown, ‘Aphrodite and the Pandora Complex’, *CQ* 47.1 (1997), 26. W. Blümer, *Interpretation archaischer Dichtung. Die mythologischen Partien der Erga Hesiods* (Münster, 2001), ii, goes even further, arguing that Pandora is not the first woman but wickedness personified.

<sup>13</sup> Clay (n. 7), 120.

<sup>14</sup> Such as: dressing in a particular manner (West [n. 2], *ad loc.*; W. J. Verdenius, *A Commentary on Hesiod Works and Days vv. 1–382* [Leiden, 1985], *ad loc.*; Marquardt [n. 8], 289, *ΣOp.* 373–4); walking in a certain way (ἡ κινουσα τὴν πυγὴν ἐν τῇ πορείᾳ ἢ ἀποστίλβουσα τὸ σῶμα, ‘moving her arse with her gait or showing off her body’; *ΣOp.* 373b); or sticking out one’s behind (F. Martinazzoli, ‘Un epiteto esiodo della donna’, *PP* 15 [1960], 203–21). Verdenius *ad loc.* comes up with the neologism ‘dressed in buttocks’, while U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Hesiodos’ Erga* (Berlin, 1928), *ad loc.*, and later O. Vox, ‘Πυγοστόλος: una donna-uccello?’ *Glotta* 58.3/4 (1980), 172–7, link the adjective with a bird.

else, something detrimental to him, turning her back while he can see nothing but her. This is not an equal, direct, face-to-face encounter. Further, the main threats that Hesiod describes are the woman's appearance and her words: both can be linked back to Pandora, the καλὸν κακόν ('the beautiful evil'; *Theog.* 585) whose beautiful appearance stood in contrast to her deceitful nature. Hermes gave Pandora αἰμυλίους τε λόγους ('wily words'; 78), just as this woman speaks αἰμύλα.

Women are, however, a necessary evil. Female fertility is an integral part of Hesiod's ideal state: the Just City is visited by Εἰρήνη κουροτρόφος ('child-rearing Peace'; 228) and its women bear children like their parents (τίκτουσιν δὲ γυναῖκες εἰκότα τέκνα γονεῦσιν; 235), whereas the women of the Unjust City bear no children (οὐδὲ γυναῖκες τίκτουσιν; 244). The link between women and justice persists in the conception of Dike (Justice) herself:

τῆς δὲ Δίκης ῥόθος ἐλκομένης ἢ κ' ἄνδρες ἄγωσιν  
 δωροφάγοι, σκολιῆς δὲ δίκης κρίνωσι θέμιστας.

*There is an uproar whenever Justice is dragged to where gift-swallowing  
 men lead her, those who make judgements with crooked justice.*

(*Works and Days*, 220–1)

The abuse of Dike is phrased in terms of sexual violence.<sup>15</sup> That Justice is depicted as a violated maiden (παρθένος; 256) shows that, despite Hesiod's mistrust of women, he concedes that they are to be accepted and indeed protected when they fulfil a contributory role.

Hesiod gives advice on procreation and on marriage, albeit reluctantly. His suspicion is evident at 702–5:

οὐ μὲν γάρ τι γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ λήϊζετ' ἄμεινον  
 τῆς ἀγαθῆς, τῆς δ' αὖτε κακῆς οὐ ῥίγιον ἄλλο,  
 δειπνολόχης, ἢ τ' ἄνδρα καὶ ἴφθιμόν περ ἐόντα  
 εὔει ἄτερ δαλοῖο καὶ ὠμῶ γῆραϊ δῶκεν.

*For a man gets nothing better than a good wife,  
 but nothing worse than a bad one,  
 an ambusher-at-dinner, who burns without a brand  
 her man however strong, and brings him to early old age.*

The first two lines form a balanced pair, the second two then expand on the idea of the bad wife. The structure suggests that Hesiod

<sup>15</sup> For ἔλκω in connection with rape cf. e.g. Hom. *Il.* 6.465, 22.62; *Od.* 11.580.

appropriated a traditional balanced proverb, then tethered it to his own purposes: 704–5 sway the balance in a distinctly Hesiodic, negative direction.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the latter lines have particular resonance in terms of Hesiod's poetry. For example, the *hapax* *δειπνολόγης* (704) should perhaps best be translated as 'an ambusher-at-dinner', a distraction which recalls the cajoling woman of lines 373–5.<sup>17</sup> The paradoxical metaphor *εὔει ἄτερ δαλοῖο* ('burn without a brand'; 705) recalls earlier associations in the poem between women and fire or heat: at line 57 Pandora was given in exchange for fire (*ἀντί πυρός*), and in midsummer the heat which scorches men's heads only makes women more lustful (586; see further below).

The threat of women bringing men to early old age (*ὠμῶ γήροϊ*; 705) is also found at *Odyssey* 15.357, a parallel which created a variant reading in the *Works and Days* (though the thrust of the passage is quite different, as there it is the woman's death which ages her husband). However, it seems to me that in the context of the *Works and Days* it takes on a greater, even hyperbolic, significance. In the apocalyptic passage of the myth of the Races, Zeus will destroy the Iron Race when children are born grey at the temples (*εὔτ' ἄν γενιόμενοι πολιοκρόταφοι τελέθωσιν*; 181). The echo of this premature aging here suggests that women will be this Race's downfall. Women for Hesiod are not only associated with the current Iron Age condition, but they actually put it at risk and threaten further deterioration. That nothing is *ρίγιον* than a bad wife has, I would suggest, an even wider resonance. I translated *ρίγιον* as 'worse', to simplify the antithesis with *ἄμεινον* ('better'), but this does not quite do the word justice. It suggests something horrible, something at which to shudder: a rather severe description of one's wife. At *Iliad* 19.325 Achilles says:

εἵνεκα ῥιγεδανῆς Ἑλένης Τρωσὶν πολεμίζω

*I make war upon the Trojans on account of Helen, at whom one shudders.*

<sup>16</sup> For a similar example of such Hesiodic tethering, see *Op.* 405–6. 405 sets out the means of production, 406 expands upon one: the woman, specified as hired not wedded. 405 supplies the generally applicable term *γυναικῶνα* ('woman'); 406 contextualizes the advice, as Hesiod is just beginning his Calendar and is outlining what a farmer must do to begin his work, so at this point he recommends not a wife but a servant woman.

<sup>17</sup> This interpretation can be found at *ΣOp.* 699–705, F. A. Paley, *The Epics of Hesiod* (London, 1861), *ad loc.*; W. Nicolai, *Hesiod's Erga* (Heidelberg, 1979), 720; and E. F. Beall, 'Notes on Hesiod's *Works and Days* 383–828', *AJP* 122.2 (2001), 164–5.



The resonance intensifies the force of ῥίγιον in the Hesiodic passage, linking a bad wife to the very model of the troublesome woman, and perhaps even hints at a kind of blame speech which echoes throughout the early hexameter tradition.<sup>18</sup>

To minimize the risk posed by women, Hesiod offers practical solutions: he recommends a family that fits with his Iron Age ideal of self-sufficiency. For productive, self-sufficient *oikos* living, one should not stray too far from the homestead but should prize neighbours: the γείτων has already been introduced at line 23; at lines 343–9 Hesiod delineates (at uncharacteristic length) the benefits of having good neighbours. At line 700 he applies the same rationale to the ideal choice of wife: ἥτις σέθεν ἐγγύθι ναίει ('she who lives nearby'; see further below). Furthermore, the perpetuation of one's line is presented in confined terms: at line 376 Hesiod advises having only one heir, so that the *oikos* will not be diminished by division. As Goldhill notes: 'The tension between the danger of having one son and the danger of having several sons is integral to the political dynamics of the Greek *oikos*',<sup>19</sup> and indeed the Homeric poems offer a glimpse into the counter-side to this worry, as in the Homeric world of warfare to be *mounogenes* is a bad thing.<sup>20</sup>

Because of its Iron Age trajectory, the timescale of the *Works and Days* is predominantly cyclical: it is concerned with the present age, and how we should always behave in it. The seasons revolve; the good and bad days come round again and again; fable is used to highlight facets of the human condition that are constant. Hesiod begins his Calendar in autumn, despite the fact that elsewhere he specifies that the farmer's year begins in the spring:<sup>21</sup> this impression of two beginnings chasing one another emphasizes the circularity of the seasons, the revolving years where each depends on the results of the last. One exception proves the rule: in the myth of the Races there is a direct linear progression from gold, through silver, bronze, and heroes, to iron. Here Hesiod can depart

<sup>18</sup> See also Theognis fr. 10.2; Mimnermus fr. 4.2; Semonides fr. 6.2; Clem. Al. *Strom.* 6.2.5.3.2. I am indebted to the anonymous reader of this article for bringing this potential resonance to my attention.

<sup>19</sup> S. Goldhill, 'Idealism in the *Odyssey* and the Meaning of *Mounos* in *Odyssey* 16', in P. Mitsis and C. Tsagalis (eds.), *Allusion, Authority and Truth. Critical Perspectives on Greek Poetic and Rhetorical Praxis* (Berlin, 2010), 124.

<sup>20</sup> See *ibid.*: every example of *mounos* applied to a child in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* is when a child is specifically at risk: e.g. Hom. *Il.* 9.482, 10.317, 14.492; *Od.* 16.19. See esp. *Od.* 16.117–20, with Goldhill (n. 19), 124.

<sup>21</sup> *Op.* 475–7, 561–3.

from the cyclical structure because he is glancing away from the inexorability of the Iron Age back to a time of legend.<sup>22</sup> This cyclical arrangement of Hesiod's teachings urges the farmer to follow the pattern of the seasons, to understand what needs to be done when, and to be conscious of the right time in all things.<sup>23</sup> Do this (he says), and you begin to handle the ever-present problem of the Iron Age: work.

In this all-important seasonality, however, men and women are at odds:

μαχλόταται δὲ γυναῖκες, ἀφαιρότατοι δὲ τοὶ ἄνδρες  
εἰσὶν, ἐπεὶ κεφαλὴν καὶ γούνατα Σείριος ἄζει

*Women are at their most lustful, but men at their weakest,  
when Sirius scorches the head and knees.*

(*Works and Days*, 586–7)

The parallel structure of line 586 establishes a polarity, weighing the two sexes against each other. The comparison shows not parallel but conflicting behaviour: as Clay notes, 'nature affects male and female in opposite ways, so that the sexes are eternally out of synch'.<sup>24</sup> There is an imbalance between the sexes, particularly evident in the summer: a complex season with mixed hard labour under strict time constraints (the harvest, 571–81; threshing and management, 597–608) and a time of enforced inactivity (582–96). Hesiod's negative attitude to women is thus driven not only by the threat they pose to production but also by their lack of synchronicity with the very cycle of labour.

This may have particular relevance to Hesiod himself as poet. The summer is heralded by the cicada:

ἦμος δὲ σκόλυμός τ' ἀνθεῖ καὶ ἠχέτα τέτιξ  
δενδρέφω ἐφεζόμενος λιγυρὴν καταχέυετ' ἀοιδίην  
πυκνὸν ὑπὸ περύγων, θέρεος καματώδεος ὥρη

*When the golden thistle blooms and the chirping cicada,*

<sup>22</sup> Although interpretations of ἢ πρόσθε θανεῖν ἢ ἔπειτα γενέσθαι ('[I would that I had] died earlier or been born later'; 175) as suggesting a cyclical view of the ages are attested already in the scholia (*ΣOp.* 160–1) and have been propagated by e.g. J. C. Carrière, 'Les démons, les héros et les rois dans la cité de fer: les ambiguïtés de la justice dans la mythe hésiodique des races et la naissance de la cité,' in *Les Grandes figures religieuses. Fonctionnement pratique et symbolique dans l'Antiquité* (Paris, 1986), 193–261; and B. Mezzadri, 'Structure du mythe des races d'Hésiode,' *L'Homme* 28 (1988), 51–7.

<sup>23</sup> The theme of the right time surfaces again and again in the *Works and Days*, for matters as diverse as ploughing (617), sailing (630, 642, 665), and marriage (695).

<sup>24</sup> J. S. Clay, 'Works and Days: Tracing the Path to Arete', in F. Montanari, A. Rengakos, and C. Tsagalis (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Hesiod* (Leiden, 2009), 86.

*sitting in a tree, pours out a dense clear-sounding song  
under its wings, in the season of toilsome summer*

(*Works and Days*, 582–4)

In one tradition surrounding this creature, the cicada is a divine singer with links to the poet. The sound of the cicada is described as ‘song’ which projects well (583 λιγυρήν...ἀοιδήν): at Hom. *Il.* 3.151–2 the Trojan elders are likened to cicadas with a ‘silver’ voice (ὄπα λειριόεσσαν; the cicadas there too sit in a tree: δενδρέω ἐφεζόμενοι). The connection with the poet is realized by Hesiod in his description of his own song at line 659 λιγυρής...ἀοιδῆς, which mirrors line 583. As the cicada heralds the ‘festival’ or leisure season, there may be a suggestion here that summer with its enforced inactivity is the perfect time for song and poetry:<sup>25</sup> but at this time, women get in the way.

Despite this negative characterization, women can fit into Hesiod’s vision of the ideal *oikos* when they fulfil a low-risk role – although even in that case some suspicion remains. For example, the tender-skinned maiden is described through a vignette surprisingly gentle in tone:

καὶ διὰ παρθενικῆς ἀπαλόχροος οὐ διάησιν,  
ἦ τε δόμων ἔντοσθε φίλη παρὰ μητέρι μίμνει  
οὐ πω ἔργ’ εἰδυῖα πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης:  
εὖ τε λοεσσαμένη τέρενα χροά καὶ λίπ’ ἐλαία  
χρῖσαμένη μυχίη καταλέξεται ἔνδοθι οἴκου

*But through the tender-skinned maiden the wind does not blow,  
who inside the house sits beside her dear mother,  
not yet knowing the works of much-golden Aphrodite:  
washing well her tender skin and anointing it richly with oil  
she lies down inside the house in the innermost chamber.*

(*Works and Days*, 519–23)

The reason for this tone is that the primary function of the vignette, like most of the winter passage, is description. The section on winter (493–563) has been considered by many to be inconsistent with the latter part of the *Works and Days*. Most nineteenth-century editors rejected the passage,<sup>26</sup> and Evelyn-White argued that only lines 493–503 are

<sup>25</sup> See R. Rosen, ‘Poetry and Sailing in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*’, *ClAnt* 9 (1990), 107; Marsilio (n. 6), 27; C. Tsagalis ‘Poetry and Poetics in the Hesiodic Corpus’, in Montanari, Rengakos, and Tsagalis (n. 24), 150.

<sup>26</sup> A. Twisten, *Commentatio critica de Hesiodi carmine quod inscribitur Opera et dies* (Kiel, 1815); K. Lehrs, *Quaestiones Epicae* (Königsberg [Kaliningrad], 1837); C. Goettling, *Hesiodi Carmina* (London, 1843); G. F. Schoemann, *Hesiodi quae feruntur carminum reliquiae* (Berlin, 1869); A.

genuine.<sup>27</sup> This is mainly because of the highly descriptive nature of the passage – seen to be inappropriate in a Calendar meant to give practical advice – and the disproportionate number of lines given to it.<sup>28</sup> However, as more recent work such as that of Stephanie Nelson has shown, the primary focus of the Calendar is *not* practical instruction but a coherent and descriptive picture of the seasonally revolving life on a farm and the importance in all things of hard work and the right time.<sup>29</sup> The length and pacing of the various parts of the Calendar reflect the seasons' activity. As Nelson notes, 'The length of the section reflects not how long the month of January is, but how long it seems to be. There is no task'.<sup>30</sup> Hesiod moulds the form to fit the content, describing a season lacking in activity through leisurely narrative.

The girl in winter is introduced as a *παρθενικῆς ἀπαλόχροος* ('tender-skinned maiden'): this is one of the many noun-adjective pairs which make this section feel descriptive (similarly *πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης*, 'much-golden Aphrodite', 521; *τέρενα χρόα*, 'delicate skin', 522).<sup>31</sup> In the rhythm of the passage the girl allows a moment of serenity in a tale of struggle. She is a vehicle of contrast, both with the preceding old man bowling along in the wind and the following *ἀνόστεος* (the boneless one gnawing at its feet). So in order to facilitate this gentle, descriptive tone, Hesiod chooses a woman whose youth, vulnerability (*τέρενα χρόα*, 522), and innocence (*οὐ πω ἔργ' εἰδύια πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης*, 'not yet knowing the works of much-golden Aphrodite'; 521) mean that she does not yet constitute a threat to production. Although all women are a drain on resources to a certain extent, only adult women can really cause the 'male dilemma': it is significant that Hesiod describes the maiden in detail, but mentions her mother only in passing.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, the maiden is good in so far

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Fick, *Hesiods Gedichte in ihrer ursprünglichen Fassung und Sprachform wiederhergestellt* (Göttingen, 1887); Paley (n. 17).

<sup>27</sup> H. Evelyn-White, 'Hesiod's Description of Winter: *Works and Days* ll.493–560', *CR* 30.8 (1916), 209–13.

<sup>28</sup> For contrasting features with other seasons, see R. Hamilton, *The Architecture of Hesiodic Poetry* (Baltimore, MD, 1989), 70–1.

<sup>29</sup> S. Nelson, 'The Drama of Hesiod's Farm', *CPh* 91.1 (1996), 45–53; eadem, *God and the Land. The Metaphysics of Farming in Hesiod and Vergil* (New York and Oxford, 1998).

<sup>30</sup> Nelson 1996 (n. 29), 50.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. e.g. *κάκ' ἤματα, βουδόρα πάντα* ('evil days, all ox-flayers'; 504); *Θρήκης ἵπποτρόφου εὐρέι πόντω* ('the wide sea of horse-rearing Thrace'; 507); *πολλὰς δὲ δρυὺς ὑψικόμους ἐλάτας τε παχείας* ('many high-leaved oaks and dense firs'; 509); *χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ* ('much-nourishing earth'; 510); *νῆριτος ὕλη* ('immense wood'; 511).

<sup>32</sup> *φίλη παρὰ μητέρι μίμνει* ('she stays beside her dear mother'; 520).

as she epitomizes the inside: the *oikos* and self-sufficiency.<sup>33</sup> One can imagine a father who has worked hard enjoying a sight like this: his daughter taking a warm bath even in the depth of winter, next to her mother, at home.

Yet despite the gentle tone and the descriptive impetus, Hesiod's suspicions persist. In a poem so focused on the importance of hard work, a scene of such complete idleness as this cannot be without pointed negative connotation. The maiden is 'unprofitable';<sup>34</sup> she stays beside her mother (φίλη παρὰ μητέρι μίμνει, 520), just like the childish Silver Race who would ultimately be destroyed.<sup>35</sup> The Silver Race are a matriarchal society with no male role models, and this situation explains why, when they finally do grow up, they do not grow out of childish sibling rivalry. That the maiden stays inside may in some respects fit with *Works and Days* ideals, however there are negative connotations with the formulation ἔντοσθε μίμνει ('she stays inside'; 520): it recalls *Theog.* 598, ἔντοσθε μένοντες, used of the idle drone bees in the simile describing women.<sup>36</sup> Even her claims to innocence are not as straightforward as they first appear: she is said to be ignorant of the works of Aphrodite, yet she is actually linked with the goddess. The description of her bathing and anointing herself (522–3) is a type scene, which often had as the central figure Aphrodite herself, and in any case featured prominently in bridal preparations before the wedding ceremony.<sup>37</sup> As Pandora earlier in the poem stood in for Aphrodite in a dressing-up type scene,<sup>38</sup> so here the maiden stands in for the goddess in this bathing *topos*. This link with Aphrodite, and with Pandora by proxy, points to an uncomfortable awareness on Hesiod's part, even here, of the future potential for sexual allure and the Iron Age problems that it brings.

<sup>33</sup> δόμων ἔντοσθε ('inside the house'; 520); μυχίη ('innermost'; 523); ἔνδοθι οἴκου ('inside the house'; 523).

<sup>34</sup> Marquardt (n. 8), 288.

<sup>35</sup> παρὰ μητέρι κεδνή ('at his good mother's side'; 130); indeed this formulation is attested as an unmetrical variant at 520.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. also ἔνδον ἔμιμνε (97): when Pandora releases evils, *elpis* stays inside the jar. Whether this is positive or not depends on whether *elpis* is good or bad, and whether she is kept for men or kept away from them. For the various interpretative possibilities of this passage see *Lexikon des Frühgriechischen Epos*, s.v. 'elpis'; Verdenius (n.14), *ad loc.*; I. Musäus, *Der Pandoramythos bei Hesiod und seine Rezeption bis Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Göttingen, 2004), 13–30.

<sup>37</sup> See *Hymn. Hom.* 5.61 = *Hom. Od.* 8.364: ἔνθα δέ μιν Χάριτες λούσαν καὶ χρίσαν ἐλαίῳ ('there the Graces bathed her and anointed her with oil').

<sup>38</sup> See 73–5 with Fraser (n. 10).

Similarly, even Hesiod's description of the ideal woman who lives nearby betrays some anxiety:

ἡ δὲ γυνὴ τέτορ' ἠβώοι, πέμπτω δὲ γαμοῖτο.  
 παρθενικὴν δὲ γαμεῖν, ὥς κ' ἦθεα κεδνὰ διδάξεις.  
 τὴν δὲ μάλιστα γαμεῖν, ἥτις σέθεν ἐγγύθι ναίει,  
 πάντα μάλ' ἀμφὶς ἰδών, μὴ γείτοσι χάρματα γήμης.

*The woman should be in the fourth year of maturity; marry her in the fifth.  
 Marry a maiden, so that you might teach her respectable behaviour.  
 Most of all marry a woman who lives near you,  
 having looked all around, lest you should marry as a joke to your neighbours.*

(*Works and Days*, 698–701)

A man should choose a woman from his neighbourhood so that she is a known quantity: he can do his research, and find a wife who will not bring him shame. Reputation is a recurring concern in the *Works and Days*: the two Strifes are described in terms of praise (ἐπαινήσειε, 12) and blame (ἐπιωμητή, 13); wealth is prized for the κῦδος ('renown') it brings (313); if you plough at the wrong time, few will admire you (παῦροι δὲ σε θηήσονται, 482); gossip is reciprocal (721), and Rumour is a goddess (760–4). However, the fact that the girl lives nearby is not necessarily without risk. The formula recalls an earlier passage:

τὴν μὲν τοι κακότητα καὶ ἰλαδὸν ἔστιν ἐλέσθαι  
 ῥηιδίως· λειή μὲν ὁδός, μάλα δ' ἐγγύθι ναίει·

*Misfortune can be achieved in abundance and  
 easily, for the way is smooth and she lives very nearby.*<sup>39</sup>

(*Works and Days*, 287–8)

The impetus of these lines in their context is apotroptic: Hesiod wants to turn his audience away from κακότης towards ἀρετή ('goodness').<sup>40</sup> He makes the point that κακότης is deceptive: she *seems* an attractive choice because she is convenient and she fits with the ideal of self-sufficiency, but in reality she only brings trouble. With this in mind, it is difficult to avoid reading into the repetition of ἐγγύθι ναίει ('she lives very nearby') at line 700 yet another reference to female deception,

<sup>39</sup> I offer a very general translation of κακότης here: it was the use of such openly applicable terms that made Hesiod's 'two roads' image the most quoted part of *Works and Days* in antiquity – see H. Koning, *Hesiod. The Other Poet* (Leiden, 2010), 144, n. 74, with commemogram (11).

<sup>40</sup> For a notorious distortion of the passage, see Pl. *Resp.* 364c, with H. Koning, 'Plato's Hesiod: Not Plato's Alone', in Boys-Stones and Haubold (n. 7), 97.

or at least find ammunition against even the most promising wife within Hesiod's own work.

## II

The discord between the sexes continues into the Days (765–828). This constitutes an element of consistency which might help us to reach a greater understanding of how this section fits with the rest of the poem. No ancient critic is known to have questioned the authenticity of the Days. Although there are relatively few references in antiquity to passages after 764, the citations begin in the sixth century BC with Heraclitus and continue with, for example, Herodotus.<sup>41</sup> Since the nineteenth century, however, many editors and critics have suspected this section of being inauthentic: a later interpolation, or a separate poem which at some point coalesced with the *Works and Days*. The first to express this suspicion was Twosten; in his edition Wilamowitz-Moellendorf went so far as to delete the whole section; in the Oxford Classical Text Solmsen brackets the section.<sup>42</sup> Such suspicions are methodologically questionable, however, as they are based not on historical or textual evidence but on perceived problems of inconsistency and tone, such as the prevalence of superstitious advice, which contrasts with earlier, rational teachings in the *Works and Days*; the use of the lunar calendar in contrast to earlier solar and stellar markers; the general disorder of the section and its monotonous and compressed style; material discrepancies with the Hesiodic farm.

There have, on the other hand, been scholars who accept the section as authentic.<sup>43</sup> West, for example, addressed and rightly countered each and every one of the objections to the Days.<sup>44</sup> However, even some of

<sup>41</sup> DK B106; Plut. *Vit. Cam.* 19.1 = fr. 59; Hdt. 2.82.

<sup>42</sup> Twosten (n. 24), 60–2; Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (n. 14); F. Solmsen, R. Merkelbach, and M. L. West, *Hesiodi Theogonia, Opera et Dies, Scutum, Fragmenta Selecta* (Oxford, 1990<sup>3</sup>). These suspicions were also taken up by, e.g., H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* (Munich, 1962<sup>2</sup>), 124, 143–4; F. Solmsen, 'The "Days" of the *Works and Days*', *TAPhA* 94 (1963), 293–320; A. E. Samuel, 'The Days of Hesiod's Month', *TAPhA* 97 (1966), 421–9; W. Marg, *Hesiod. Sämtliche Gedichte übersetzt und erläutert* (Zurich and Stuttgart, 1970), 383–6.

<sup>43</sup> E.g. P. Mazon, *Les travaux et les jours* (Paris, 1914); T. A. Sinclair, *Hesiod. Works and Days* (London, 1932); P. Walcot, 'The Composition of the *Works and Days*', *REG* 74.1 (1961), 14; and E. Pellizer, 'Per l'unità dei "Giorni"', in A. Balanza and P. Cassola Guida (eds.), *Studi triestini di antichità in onore di L.A. Stella* (Trieste, 1975), 169–82.

<sup>44</sup> West (n. 2).

the scholars who accept the lines do so with reservations: what is the section doing here and how well is it integrated within the rest of the poem? Hamilton and Kelly have offered useful structural analyses of the poem, incorporating the Days.<sup>45</sup> Lardinois, in a persuasive article, showed that the Days should be accepted not just because their authenticity cannot be conclusively *disproved*, but because they cohere with themes found elsewhere in the *Works and Days*.<sup>46</sup> He traces one particular overarching concern from earlier parts of the *Works and Days* to the Days: men in the Iron Age must live day-to-day.<sup>47</sup> Clay takes this argument one step further, showing that this theme has a dynamic aspect as it develops and intensifies over the course of the poem.<sup>48</sup> In support of the conclusions of Lardinois and Clay, then, I offer a further element of coherence: Hesiod's attitude to women. In Lardinois' list of the passages in the Days that resonate with earlier parts of the *Works and Days* he includes passages on marriage, and the verbal parallel between Pandora (78) and line 789 (which I address below).<sup>49</sup> However, the coherence with the rest of the poem in terms of Hesiod's attitude to women has not been fully addressed.

Different days are good for boys and for girls to be born.<sup>50</sup> As with the dysfunctional midsummer, the right time is different for men and for women. In keeping with Hesiod's androcentrism in the *Works and Days* (his explicit and implicit addressees are men, his advice is for the male farmer), while four different days are specified as good for a boy to be born, only one is specified for a girl. It is telling that on the middle fourth, the day specified for a girl to be born (794–5), sheep, oxen, dogs, and mules may be tamed (πρῆννεῖν ἐπὶ χεῖρα τιθείς, 'tame them having placed your hand on them'; 797): the connection

<sup>45</sup> Hamilton (n. 28), 78–84; A. Kelly, 'How to End an Orally-derived Epic Poem', *TAPhA* 137.2 (2007), 388.

<sup>46</sup> A. Lardinois, 'How the Days Fit the Works in Hesiod's *Works and Days*', *AJPPh* 119.3 (1998), 319–36.

<sup>47</sup> An analysis of the uses of ἡμᾶρ and ἡμέρη (both words for 'day') in earlier parts of *Works and Days* yields compelling results: they are always concerned with Iron Age toil and suffering, whether in the myths about the origin of the human condition (43, 102, 176) or throughout the agricultural calendar. The passages in which they are lacking are also revealing: as Lardinois (n. 46), 329, summarizes, 'Days throughout the poem are associated with work and work with days; when there is no work, as in the summer or in the Golden Age, there is no need to count the days either.'

<sup>48</sup> Clay (n. 7), and (n. 24).

<sup>49</sup> Lardinois (n. 46), 331.

<sup>50</sup> Good for ἀνδρογόνοσ ('a boy to be born') are the middle sixth (783), the first sixth (788), the tenth (794), and the twentieth (792–3).



suggests that the woman Hesiod prescribes for the ideal *oikos* must herself be kept under control.

However, there is one day on which the sexes coincide, and this grabs Hesiod's attention:

πρωτίστη δ' εἰνὰς παναπήμων ἀνθρώποισιν:  
 ἐσθλή μὲν γάρ θ' ἢ γε φυτευέμεν ἠδὲ γενέσθαι  
 ἀνέρι τ' ἠδὲ γυναικί: καὶ οὐ ποτε πάγκακον ἤμαρ.

*The first ninth is altogether harmless for men:  
 for it is good for begetting and giving birth,  
 either to a boy or a girl: nor is this day ever altogether evil.*

(*Works and Days*, 811–13)

The first ninth is propitious, and is emphasized as such. It is described as *παναπήμων* ('entirely harmless'; 811), then Hesiod coins a correspondingly emphatic negative term at line 813: οὐ ποτε πάγκακον ('never entirely evil'). The question is: what makes this day so good? At lines 782–3 Hesiod has already made a transition, both chronological and associative, from planting to childbearing: here again he slides between the two ideas, which are very close in his mind. Combined, then, the two examples in line 812 (φυτευέμεν ἠδὲ γενέσθαι, 'to be conceived and to be born') emphasize procreation; and procreation is emphasized here rather than, for example, at lines 783–801 (a longer excursus on childbearing) because, whereas there the sexes were imbalanced, on this day it is good for both a boy *and* a girl to be born. This is what makes the day so striking. The emphatic enjambment at lines 812–13 makes the point. On this day, one of Hesiod's persistent worries is resolved.

We might read another instance of harmonious gender relations at *Op.* 776–9:

ἡ δὲ δωδεκάτη τῆς ἑνδεκάτης μέγ' ἀμείνων:  
 τῇ γάρ τοι νῆ νήματ' ἀερσιπότητος ἀράχνης  
 ἤματος ἐκ πλείου, ὅτε τ' ἴδρις σωρὸν ἀμάται:  
 τῇ δ' ἴστον στήσαιτο γυνὴ προβόλοιτό τε ἔργον.

*But the twelfth is much better than the eleventh:  
 For on that day the high-soaring spider spins her web  
 in the middle of the day, when the expert gathers its heap:  
 And on that day a woman should set up her loom and start on her work.*

The spider's natural sphere of activity coincides with a woman's proper role: weaving. Indeed, it looks forward to line 779 in which a woman

performs this very task, and the connection is emphasized by a twofold juxtaposition of verb and noun from the same root: at line 777 the spider νῆ νήματ' ('spins its web'); at line 779 the woman ἰστόν στήσαιτο ('sets up her loom'). The weaving woman is a common trope in archaic poetry: in fact, most of Homer's female characters weave at some point or other.<sup>51</sup> In the *Iliad*, Hector sets up the activity of weaving as a foil for warfare when he commands Andromache:

ἀλλ' εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε,  
 ἰστόν τ' ἠλακάτην τε, καὶ ἀμφιπόλοισι κέλευε  
 ἔργον ἐποίχεσθαι· πόλεμος δ' ἄνδρεςσι μελήσει

*But go back to our house, and take up your own work,  
 the loom and the distaff, and make sure that your handmaidens  
 get on with their work too; but the men must see to the fighting.*

(*Iliad* 6.490–2)

Telemachus gives the very same instruction to his mother, Penelope, at *Odyssey* 1.356–8 and 21.350–3; and at *Odyssey* 6.52–5 Arete is differentiated from her husband, Alcinous, by her sitting at the hearth spinning yarn. Weaving, then, delineates gender roles and symbolizes domestic stability. As the spider looks ahead to the woman weaving, perhaps the ἴδρις (the 'knowing one') marks the other side of the gender divide: just like these Homeric examples, Hesiod may be differentiating between gendered roles. The absolute use of ἴδρις as a noun is unparalleled and prompts us to wonder who or what this 'expert' is. From the scholia, Tzetzes and Moschopulus, to most modern scholarship, ἴδρις has been interpreted as a kenning for the ant.<sup>52</sup> The ant was proverbial for wisdom, and the association of the spider and the ant is an Indo-European motif.<sup>53</sup> But what is it doing here? The use of two animal markers in such quick succession is striking. It seems to me that the

<sup>51</sup> E.g. Helen (Hom. *Il.* 3), Andromache (*Il.* 22), Calypso (*Od.* 5), Circe (*Od.* 10), Penelope throughout the *Odyssey*. On weaving in Homer see in particular J. M. Snyder, 'The Web of Song: Weaving Imagery in Homer and the Lyric Poets', *CJ* 76.3 (1981), 193–6; M. C. Pantelia, 'Spinning and Weaving: Ideas of Domestic Order in Homer', *AJPh* 114.4 (1993), 493–501; B. Clayton, *A Penelopean Poetics. Reweaving the Feminine in Homer's Odyssey* (Lanham, MD, 2004); M. Mueller, 'Penelope and the Poetics of Remembering', *Arethusa* 40.3 (2007), 337–62; M. Mueller, 'Helen's Hands: Weaving for *Kleos* in the *Odyssey*', *Helios* 37.1 (2010), 1–21.

<sup>52</sup> Exceptions include Beall (n. 17), 166–7.

<sup>53</sup> For the ant as proverbial for wisdom cf. e.g. Hor. *Sat.* 1.1.33–8; Verg. *G.* 1.186. For the Indo-European root of the motif see F. Bader, *La langue des dieux, ou, l'hermétisme des poètes indo-européens* (Pisa, 1989), 181–2. The ant is also connected with weather (predicting rain) at Theophr. *De signis* 22; Aratus 956.

juxtaposition marks a division of labour between the sexes: the spider is the woman weaving, the ant the man making stores. No wonder the twelfth is such a good day: men and women are working harmoniously in their respective, productive, gender roles.

Just as in earlier parts of the *Works and Days*, in the Days women are accepted when they perform a low-risk function – and yet suspicion persists. At line 776 the spider is portrayed as ἀερσιπότητος ('high-soaring'), an unusual and striking compound as it is made up of two verbal elements.<sup>54</sup> It suggests that the spider, though performing her proper role, is unruly and difficult to control. Line 779 describes the day on which a woman sets up her loom and begins her work (τῇ δ' ἰστὸν στήσαιτο γυνὴ προβάλοιτό τε ἔργον). Unlike most other appearances of a woman in the *Works and Days*, this line does not seem to be heavily charged. This is because here she is doing a woman's ἔργον, weaving: not only is she firmly located in the domestic sphere, but she is also fulfilling a contributory role rather than posing a threat to productivity. However, here we come full circle to the Pandora myth. The line suggests a parallel with lines 63–4, in which Athena is to teach Pandora ἔργα, specified as πολυδαίδαλον ἰστὸν ὑφαίνειν ('to weave a much-worked web'): as Pandora created problems, so every woman upholds her legacy. This suspicion of the weaving woman is embedded in the early hexameter tradition. Just as weaving symbolizes domestic stability, so its interruption represents the disruption of the household. At *Iliad* 6.456 Hector fears that after the fall of Troy Andromache will be taken away to work at another man's loom: that transferral of Andromache and her weaving will symbolize the end of Hector's household. At *Iliad* 22.448, when Andromache hears lamentation from the walls, 'the shuttle dropped from her hand to the ground' (χαμαὶ δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε κερκίς): the dropping of the weaving shuttle signifies impending domestic upheaval. Furthermore, Homeric women often use weaving to take for themselves some agency, some control over events – an uncomfortable prospect for their menfolk. For example, Penelope controls her own destiny by refusing to complete her weaving; and by weaving the events unfolding on the battlefield Helen steps on the toes of the poet himself. No wonder Hesiod remains a little unsettled.

The striking combination between acceptance of women and suspicion of them reflects the intractable Iron Age condition. Through

<sup>54</sup> It occurs in epic only here and at [Sc.] 316.

self-sufficiency, through working hard, and through thinking for oneself, it can be managed: but it cannot be resolved. Never, it seems, are all the problems resolved in one fell swoop. The woman weaving resolves the problem of labour: in the very moment that she works, she does not threaten the *oikos* but contributes to it. However, as a woman she is still (from Hesiod's androcentric point of view) on the wrong side of what is right. She is subtly linked with Pandora, and so continues to threaten as a *καλὸν κακόν*. And, come summer, she will once again clash with her Iron Age man's all-important cycle of labour.

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