

I. Background of Hesiod

- A. Eighth c. B.C.E., before Homer
- B. *Theogony* has some original names for characters in its stories, but is based upon 13th c. Hittite myth and 11th c. Babylonian myth. See Campbell, *Occidental Mythology*.

II. Character of book

Focused, unlike Homer's poetry (which concerned the "foreground of human life...what particular men and women did and suffered), on the larger order on the basis of which individual lives and experiences are possible. Primarily concerned with the origins of the world.

Notable features of Hesiod's account of these origins:

1) idea of a primal state of unity, in which heaven and earth are completely intertwined, whose disruption led to the creation of Chaos (the no-man's land between them), and the generation of the current world order. Notice similarity to myths of the fall from grace.

2) the history of the world order is the history of the birth and development of the gods, but these gods, while anthropomorphic in many respects, clearly represent natural forces (Ocean, Night, Heaven, Earth) as well.

The diff betw Hesiod and more mythopoetic thinkers: diff betw a myth whereby a god makes fire, water, earth and air, out of which the world is born, and a myth whereby there are four Gods, fire, water, earth and air, which interact to produce the world. It is an easy step to explanations that take earth, air, fire and water as basic elements, without treating them as gods.

3) parts of the world order constrain even the gods (see pg. 12 on the apportionment of the world among the sons of Cronus (Zeus, Poseidon, Hades)

5) The forces out of which the world order develops are often all-too-human: quarrels, rivalries, affairs, killings. Esp. castration of Heaven by son Kronos at Earth's instigation because he hated their offspring and hid them in her.

III. Type of world this depicts—underlying assumptions

- A. Ruled by gods, some order but not available to humans and not totally predictable.
- B. Gods sometimes propitiated by sacrifices, sometimes not.
- C. Gods petty and human, anthropomorphized. Hesiod doesn't make them magical but like us.

IV. Types of order imposed

- A. Genealogical: Descent of gods from Zeus helps frame the world order.
- B. Physical explanations and ordering: Night, Day, mountains, sea, ocean are created, are accounted for as legitimate parts of universe with divine origin
- C. Ordering for Humans; p. 9, Night bears Doom, Fate, Death, etc. These are parts of universe that bear on human life, are divinely created, and we are subject to them and can't escape.

Also note W & D skills in responding to physical world, planning to be success (see bk.). But it's not more than a craft, not science.

V. Implications for philosophy

- A. Can you do what we call phil. with this theoretical framework?
 - 1. Assumes some order, but not laws: by gods'decision.
 - 2. W & D says we can figure out how to be successful farmers, know to use metals to fashion weapons, etc. But we can't provide a physical basis for our knowledge.
 - 3. Cannot propitiate gods all the time; sacrifice may or may not be acceptable.

I. Review

- A. Hesiod's world mythological, but he established 3 kinds of order in the world: gods' genealogy, physical order (personified abstractions, forces), and human (what we're subject to).
- B. Orderly, but no deeper explanation; just accept it and live. Rules for farming, etc.

Next logical step:

III. Presocratics

See approx. pg. ?? in Cohen for contrast between Phusikoi and Nonphusikoi

IV. Three basic contributions of Presocratics

A. Idea of science and philosophy

1. World is rational & ordered
2. World is explicable, intelligible
3. World not randomly determined by will of gods.
4. Explanations of world they gave were in NATURAL terms, not supernatural. Exp. are
 - a. Internal: univ. in terms of its own features
 - b. Systematic: whole univ. in same terms & methods, general principles.
 - c. Economical: few principles

B. Invented good concepts

1. Cosmos, or universe itself (first use of totality of all things. Ordering, cosmetic.)
2. Phusis: nature. Phusis vs. techne, or natural vs. artificial. Natural things have a nature, a way of being- innate.
3. Arche: first principle (as origin or beginning). Also ruling principle. What growth starts from, or universe. What ONE thing does everything come from?
4. Logos: account, argument, reason, statement. To give a thing's logos is to give an account of it, explanation.

C. Emphasis on reason, rationality.

1. Arguments are the giving of reasons, and that this is the way to make one's point. Saying it's so isn't enough.
2. Structure of Greek helps; inferential particles.

ARGUMENTS HANDOUT