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Night and the creation of Pandora in *Works and Days*

A poem that refers to a thief simply as "day-sleeper" (*hêmerokoitos* WD 605) clearly takes very seriously the proper use of time—the day in particular. *Works and Days* gives extensive and detailed advice on how to regulate many different units of time, from the individual hour to whole seasons. In this paper, I address the role that night/ Night plays in shaping representations of temporality and the human condition within the poem. Night, I argue, is related (both genealogically and temporally) to the sufferings that are released into the world through Pandora's agency and that necessitate the careful ordering of days. In *Theogony*, Night is one of the original cosmic principles, born with Erebus from Chaos. They (Night and Erebus) in turn give birth to Day (*Theog.* 123-25); but, on her own, she creates a host of offspring, including Moros, Kêr, Thanatos, Hypnos, the Moirai and Eris (*Theog.* 211-225). This last child, Eris, functions as a link between the worlds of *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, for the latter begins by distinguishing between two types of Eris. But more fundamental for embedding *Works and Days* in Night, is, I suggest, the myth of Prometheus and Pandora.

The account of Prometheus' theft of fire and Zeus' rebuttal is given twice, but each version of the myth is tailored to serve the structural needs of *Theogony* and *Works and Days* respectively (Vernant 1974). In *Theogony*, Zeus' creation of Pandora as an *anti puros kakon* proves that he can outwit Prometheus at his own *technê*. Pandora functions as a sign of Zeus' superior and unrivalled craftsmanship. The same act of creation serves a different purpose in *Works and Days*. Here the focus shifts to Epimetheus' acceptance of Pandora on behalf of all mortals. Epimetheus' folly, or forgetfulness, effects a marked temporal juncture in the narrative: before this (*prin men* 90), human beings lived without toil or trouble. With the acceptance of Pandora, however, a new period of time—or time itself—may be said to begin for mortals. For Pandora, I suggest, is an embodiment of the sufferings associated with temporality. Before her creation, it was possible to reap from the bountiful earth goods to last a year, in a single day (WD 43-44). There was no need, then, to pay attention to the change of seasons, or to rise before dawn to set oxen to the yoke. The sufferings linked to Night (*kêras* *Theog.* 217 and WD 92) escape from the *pithos* (itself a double of the woman) opened by Pandora's hands (WD 94-95). And the diseases that roam the earth at night are described as *automatai* (WD 103), as if they had stolen the epithet itself that used to belong to the bountiful earth (the *aroura automatê* of the golden age, WD 118).

In short, the genealogical descendants of *Theogony's* Night are given a more bodily and acute form in *Works and Days*. And the poem itself provides a regimen for avoiding, as far as possible, the ills and misfortunes of this new world, subject to Night. If not for presence of death, diseases and *Apatê*, however, the poem would have no audience, for there would be no need to regulate one's days, or even to notice time at all.