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R. J. Tarrant
Editor

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XAOΣ AND THE HESIODIC COSMOGONY

ROBERT MONDI

THE fourteen-year-old Epicurus, so the story goes, upon hearing his tutor recite the opening sentence of the Hesiodic cosmogony—ἦτοι μὲν πρώτιστα χάος γένετο—precociously asked where χάος itself came from, if it was the first thing to come into being. Apparently unable to answer, the tutor excused himself from responsibility for such a question, claiming that it belonged more properly to the realm of the men called philosophers. Not to be put off, the boy duly sought them out; and thus, we are told, came about Epicurus' initiation into the company of those who "know the truth about things."¹

One cannot devote much time to the riddle posed by the Hesiodic χάος before beginning to feel some sympathy for the tutor's discomfiture. In fact, the irony of this anecdote, perhaps lost on those who report it, is that the philosophers themselves seem to have had no clear idea of what Hesiod understood by the word. Nor can they really be blamed. The few references to χάος in the *Theogony* are such as to leave arguable even the most basic categorical questions: it is far from obvious whether χάος is spatial or material, when and whence it came into being (if it did), and where it ultimately finds its place in the completed cosmos. The learned commentators of Antiquity did not so much interpret Hesiod's χάος as employ it, often with recourse to fanciful etymology, in the service of their own preconceived theories. Aristotle cites *Th.* 116 in support of his argument for the existence of place (τόπος) independent of material body, seeing in Hesiod's χάος the "room" in which subsequent entities came to be (χώραν τοῖς οὐσι).²

¹ The anecdote is related by Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. math.* 10.18–19) and Diogenes Laertius (10.2); the latter attributes it to "Apollodorus the Epicurean."

² *Phys.* 208b30; the same language is used at *De mel.* 976b18. Cf. also Plut. *Mor.* 374c, 678f.

Whether or not he himself based this interpretation on a supposed etymological connection between χάος and χώρα, it seems that at least some of his Peripatetic followers did.³ Stoic interpretation, on the other hand, took a more materialistic view of Hesiod's χάος, construing it as water and connecting the word derivationally with χέεσθαι and χύσις.⁴ The ultimate result of this process of materialization was the later and predominantly Roman notion of χάος as a confused and disordered cosmogonic reservoir supplying raw material for the foundation of the universe, Ovid's *discordia semina rerum*.⁵

Modern exegesis has divided along much the same lines. Many commentators have been inclined to follow the Peripatetics in explaining χάος essentially as "room," but have felt varying degrees of discomfort in attributing to Hesiod the pure abstraction of unoccupied space. H. Diller's assessment is characteristic in its hedging cautiousness: "Dürfen wir Hesiod gewiß nicht mit der abstrahierenden Anschauung des leeren Raumes belasten; daß aber hier als 'Allererstes' etwas postuliert wird, in das alles Kommende hineingestellt werden kann, ist unverkennbar."⁶ Two lines of interpretation are commonly adopted which have the effect of mitigating this abstraction. One is to

³ Their arguments are presented by Sextus at *Pyrrh. hyp.* 3.121 and *Adv. math.* 10.11–12.

⁴ Zeno frag. 103, 104 (von Arim); Cornutus, *De nat. deor.* 17. The latter further suggests an alternative interpretation of χάος as fire, καὶ αὐτὸ γὰρ κέχνται διὰ τὴν λεπτομέρειαν. Cf. also [Plut.] *Mor.* 955e; F. Börtzler, "Zu den antiken Chaoskopogonien," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 28 (1930) 254–259. Pherecydes may have earlier construed Hesiod's χάος as water, but the interpretation of the relevant text (7 B 1a DK) is highly problematical.

⁵ *Met.* 1.5–9; cf. also 2.299, Lucan 5.634, Sen. *Th.* 832, Stat. *Theb.* 3.484, Lact. *Inst.* 1.5, 2.9; Apion ap. Clem. Rom. *Hom.* 6.3.4, Rufin. *Recognit.* 10.30 (both excerpted by Kern, *Orph. frag.* fr. 55). See Börtzler (above, n. 4) 259–268.

⁶ H. Diller, "Hesiod und die Anfänge der griechischen Philosophie," *Antike und Abendland* 2 (1946) 144. See also T. Gomperz, *Griechische Denker* 1⁴ (Berlin 1922) 35; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Hesiodos Erga* (Berlin 1928) 156–157, *Der Glaube der Hellenen* 1 (Berlin 1931) 342; J. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*⁴ (London 1930) 7; H. Fränkel, "Drei Interpretationen aus Hesiod," *Festschrift R. Reitzenstein* (Leipzig 1931) 2–3, reprinted in *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens*³ (Munich 1968) 316–334; *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* (New York 1951) 142–143; O. Gigon, *Der Ursprung der griechischen Philosophie von Hesiod bis Parmenides* (Basel 1945) 23, 29–30; W. Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Eng. trans. Oxford 1947) 13; F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca 1949) 27. Where possible, subsequent references to these works will be by author's name only.

conceptualize χάος in slightly more concrete terms as a gap or cleft, e.g., “abîme” (Mazon), “Hohlraum” (Gigon), “yawning gap” (Cornford), or “chasm” (West).⁷ The other is to materialize it, generally by attributing to it the atmospheric substances of mist, wind, or fog: “luft- und nebelförmige Urmaterie” (Schoemann), “Urstoff des Nebels und der Finsternis” (Wasser), “lufterfüllten Raum” (Schwenn), or “Dunst- und Nebelmeer” (Karl).⁸ A few modern commentators have taken the further step of construing this primal expanse as the seminal stuff of creation;⁹ such interpretation comes tantalizingly close to Anaximander’s notion of the ἄπειρον, and more than one scholar has seen a Hesiodic legacy in the Milesian’s originative principle.¹⁰

The primary lesson to be drawn from two and a half millennia of exegesis is that it is all too easy to see in Hesiod’s χάος practically anything that one is predisposed to see, and the nature of the documentary evidence makes the reason for this variety of opinion readily apparent. Apart from its four occurrences in the *Theogony*, χάος is found nowhere else in the archaic hexameter corpus, and its relatively few post-Hesiodic occurrences are for the most part directly or indirectly dependent on Hesiod’s use of the word and contribute little to the clarification of his thought. The only aspect of χάος about which later writers display any substantial agreement is its temporal primacy: “aus

⁷ P. Mazon, *Hésiode* (Paris 1928) 36; Gigon 31; F. M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy* (London 1912) 66, and *Principium Sapientiae* (Cambridge 1952) 194–195; M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony* (Oxford 1966) 192 (henceforth “West”). Cf. also Fränkel, “Drei Interpretationen” 2; Burnet 7; Gomperz 35; G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*² (Cambridge 1983) 38. The relevant section of this last-named work was written by G. S. Kirk, and will subsequently be cited as “Kirk.”

⁸ G. F. Schoemann, *Die hesiodische Theogonie* (Berlin 1868) 84; O. Waser, *RE* 3² (1899) 2112 s.v. “Chaos”; F. Schwenn, *Die Theogonie des Hesiodos* (Heidelberg 1934) 107; W. Karl, *Chaos und Tartaros in Hesiods Theogonie* (diss. Erlangen-Nürnberg 1967) 17; Preller-Robert, *Griech. Myth.* 1.38–39; West 192; M. Stokes, “Hesiodic and Milesian Cosmogonies II,” *Phronesis* 8 (1963) 23.

⁹ E.g., H. Flach, *Das System der hesiodischen Kosmogonie* (Leipzig 1874) 11–12: “nicht bloße Luft . . . sondern ein zeugungsfähiger Stoff”; R. Eisler, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt* (Munich 1910) 397.

¹⁰ Diller 144; Gigon 34; G. Vlastos, *Gnomon* 27 (1955) 74–75; Stokes (above, n. 8) 30–34; R. Mondolfo, *L’Infinito nel pensiero dell’ antichità classica*² (Florence 1956) 277–278. F. Solmsen (“The Earliest Stages in the History of Hesiod’s Text,” *HSCP* 86 [1982] 15) has now called into question his earlier belief in the influence of Hesiod’s χάος on Anaximander, for which see “Chaos and ‘Apeiron,’” *SIFC* 24 (1950) 235–248.

Hesiods Epos übernahm man ohne Bedenken das Wort *Chaos* als ein Schlagwort, um dasjenige zu bezeichnen, was vor der Entstehung der Welt vorhanden gewesen wäre.”¹¹ Consequently, it is only with some circumspection that characteristics of *χάος* derived from later sources can be applied to the interpretation of Hesiod’s text. Conceptual parallels drawn from other Greek and non-Greek cosmological myth can help compensate for this lack of more direct evidence, but here too care must be exercised, in this case to avoid the circularity of reading into Hesiod’s primal state attributes derived from some other superficially similar notion, only to conclude in the end that the two bear such close resemblance to one another that there must be some historical relationship between them.¹² I would like first to re-examine a number of observations about Hesiod’s *χάος* which have undeservedly attained a status of near-orthodoxy, and then make a fresh start at producing an interpretation of Hesiod’s thought which places primary emphasis on his text and is as free from presupposition as possible.

I

In the poetic tradition to which Hesiod belongs, the notion of the totality of the universe is conceived of and commonly expressed as the sum of four regional constituents: sky, earth, sea, and the underworld. This idea is manifested in purely mythological form in the Homeric *δασμός* of the universe among the three male children of Kronos: Zeus is granted sovereignty over the sky, Poseidon over the sea, and Hades in the underworld, while the earth is to be held in common by all three (*Il.* 15.189–193). Hesiod has recourse to this catalogue of cosmic regions on a number of occasions in the *Theogony*, particularly when narrating events which he considers so awesome that their impact must have been felt throughout the entire cosmos (679–682, 839–841,

¹¹ Fränkel, “Drei Interpretationen” 2 n. 2; cf. also Gigon 28 and U. Hölscher, “Anaximander und die Anfänge der Philosophie (II),” *Hermes* 81 (1953) 399.

¹² As a representative example of the overvaluing of comparative data at the expense of Hesiod’s text, cf. J. Fontenrose’s discussion of the relationship among Hesiod’s first three cosmic principles (*Python* [Berkeley 1959] 223): “According to Hesiod, Chaos was born first, then Earth (Gaia) and Love (Eros). From the analogy of other theogonies, Greek and oriental, this means that Chaos was the parent of Earth and Eros, though Hesiod doesn’t expressly say so.” In the following analysis I shall argue that, in this case at any rate, Hesiod meant precisely what he said.

847–852; cf. also 736–737 = 807–808). In the poem's opening cosmogony these four massive regions are the first substantive entities to come into being, and subsequently undergo further subdivision and differentiation to produce the physical diversity of the perceptible universe.

But none of these regions has pride of place. Whatever the precise nature of Hesiod's χάος, it can at least be said with certainty that Hesiod thought of his primal essence as something distinct from any one of these great masses of empirical reality. In this, if in nothing else, his χάος is similar to Anaximander's ἄπειρον, and the resulting problem of expression (and consequently of interpretation) is much the same: in lying beyond the realm of human experience, any such notion inevitably proves difficult to conceptualize or describe in terms of familiar empirical categories.¹³ In this situation the mythopoeic imagination as well as the scientific one has little recourse but to make use of the familiar to express (or, for that matter, even to think about) the unfathomable; and one way of doing this is to give it expression through the figurative or metaphorical re-application of conventional words and ideas.¹⁴

We can better appreciate the challenge presented by the idea of χάος to both poet and interpreter if we digress for a moment to consider the difficulty experienced by even so sophisticated a thinker and writer as Plato when confronted by a similar problem: in his case, how to characterize the χαλεπὸν καὶ ἀμυδρὸν εἶδος which forms the metaphysical substratum underlying the cosmology of the *Timaeus*.

For this reason, then, the mother and Receptacle [ὑποδοχήν] of what has come to be visible and otherwise sensible must not be

¹³ In the case of the ἄπειρον we have direct testimony of at least one doxographer's frustration over Anaximander's failure to identify his primal essence with an empirical substance: ἀμαρτάνει δὲ οὗτος μὴ λέγων τί ἐστὶ τὸ ἄπειρον, πότερον αἴηρ ἐστὶν ἢ ὕδωρ ἢ γῆ ἢ ἄλλα τινὰ σώματα (1 2A 14 DK).

¹⁴ On this type of "utilitarian" metaphor, or catachresis, see W. B. Stanford, *Greek Metaphor* (Oxford 1936) 36–39; S. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key* (Cambridge, Mass. 1957) 210. G. E. R. Lloyd (*Polarity and Analogy* [Cambridge 1966]) has an extended discussion of the various analogical models employed in the mythic world view (172–209) as well as in the cosmological thought of the natural philosophers (210–383). The need to describe the unimaginable in terms of empirical categories is by no means exclusively characteristic of archaic thought, as such contemporary cosmological terms as "big bang" and "black hole" indicate.

called earth or air or fire or water, nor any of their compounds or components; but we shall not be deceived if we call it a nature invisible and characterless, all-receiving [πανδεχής], partaking in some very puzzling way of the intelligible and very hard to apprehend.¹⁵

Striving to name and elucidate an essence which is by nature without accidental properties, Plato draws first on the figurative use of a common verbal root. (In its earlier attestations the nominal form ὑποδοχή is used most often in a social sense, meaning “reception” or “entertainment.”) This is still rather vague and imprecise, and Plato gradually refines the concept further through the repeated use of metaphor (besides μητέρα in the passage quoted above he calls it τιθήνην in 49A and characterizes it finally as χώρα in 52B) and analogy: it is compared to gold which can be molded into various shapes (50A–B), the scentless base of a perfume (50E), and a winnowing sieve 52E–53A). But in spite of all these explanatory efforts (or perhaps because of them) there has nevertheless been the widest range of interpretation from Antiquity to the present concerning just what Plato conceived the ὑποδοχή to be.

The interpretation of Hesiod’s original essence presents the same difficulties, but is further hampered by two additional factors. The first is our ignorance about the previous — or even contemporary — use of the word χάος: not only do we lack independent documentation, but its etymological derivation is far less transparent than that of ὑποδοχή. The second factor is the lack of precise explanation on Hesiod’s part; in contrast to Plato, Hesiod makes no effort whatever to elaborate what he understands by the term χάος. This is partly, perhaps, because he could expect his audience to be already familiar with the use of the word in this sense, but partly because he is not a natural philosopher but a prophet, and the function of his song is not to explain but to reveal. Nevertheless, the only path open to us toward an understanding of what Hesiod imagined the primal state to be is to confront just these two questions: the etymological affiliations of the word χάος and the figurative sense in which it is used in the *Theogony*.

A prevalent modern opinion is that for Hesiod χάος was essentially synonymous with χάσμα, and that he thereby conceived of the primal

¹⁵ *Tim.* 51A–B, trans. F. M. Cornford, *Plato’s Cosmology* (London 1937) 186.

state of the universe as an immense chasm or gap. This consensus is based in great part on a generally accepted etymological connection between two groups of words: χάος / χαῦνος on the one hand, and χαίνω / χάσκω / χάσμα on the other.¹⁶ This etymology has long acted as something of a red herring, and its unquestioned acceptance automatically directs any new attempt at interpreting Hesiod's χάος down a predetermined and well-worn path. Two observations may help justify a re-evaluation.

The first is that the presumed lines of derivation are not as certain as is usually claimed. We can with some confidence suppose a stem χαF- (IE *ghēu-) underlying the noun χάος (<χαF-ος) and the adjective χαῦνος (<χαF-νος).¹⁷ The precise etymology of the group χαίνω / χάσκω / χάσμα is less clear. Chantraine derives all three words from the weak grade of an IE *ghen-, appearing in Greek as χαν- before a vowel and χα- before a consonant: χάσκω < *ghn̥-sko (aor. ἔ-χαν-ον), χαίνω < *ghn̥-io, and χάσμα < *ghn̥-smn̥; the formation of the pair χάσκω / χαίνω would then be parallel to that of βάσκω / βαίνω from the zero-grade of the IE root *g^Wem-.¹⁸ Alternatively, it is possible that these words are built on a Greek stem χα-, a reflex of the weak grade of IE *ghē(i)- (cf. Lat. *hiāre*, OE *ginan* "yawn"). In this case the pair χαίνω / χάσμα could be compared with φαίνω / φάσμα (<IE *bheə-) and ὑφαίνω / ὑφάσματα (<*webh-).¹⁹ However this may be, it appears that we have in χάος / χαῦνος and χαίνω / χάσκω / χάσμα two groups of words which are either to be derived from different roots, or whose relationship is in any case not an immediate one; both Chantraine and Pokorny list them under separate cross-referenced entries. Frisk is equally circumspect: "es kann sich aber dabei nur um eine entfernte Verwandtschaft handeln."²⁰

¹⁶ Karl (above, n. 8) 11 is a rare exception; his etymological discussion of these words, for which he acknowledges the assistance of B. Forssmann, is essentially the same as the one presented here. I in turn would like to express my indebtedness to C. Watkins for looking over the following etymological remarks.

¹⁷ For the IE root *ghēu- see J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern 1948–1969) 449.

¹⁸ P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris 1968–1980) 1239–1240.

¹⁹ Pokorny assigns χαίνω to the nasal root *ghan- (411) and χάσκω / χάσμα to *ghēi- (419).

²⁰ H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg 1961–1972) 1073.

Second, and more importantly, even if all these words can be derived ultimately from a single Indo-European root, this fact alone would by no means compel us to think that for Hesiod $\chi\acute{\alpha}\omicron\varsigma$ meant the same thing as $\chi\acute{\alpha}\omicron\sigma\mu\alpha$ —that is, that he imagined it concretely as a gap or chasm—unless there is some contextual reason to think so. But by what act of intuition or imagination would it be supposed that the first entity in the universe was a gap? Those skeptical of this interpretation of Hesiod's $\chi\acute{\alpha}\omicron\varsigma$ have on occasion raised the question of what could possibly have constituted the boundaries of such a gap, if nothing else yet existed.²¹ Asked in this form, the question is perhaps an unfair one: we should after all not expect to find strict logic and consistency of image in the Western world's first preserved attempt at systematic cosmogony. The more relevant question is not so much one of logic as of conception: not how *could* a gap logically have existed before anything else, but rather why *should* the notion of a gap have suggested itself as an analogical expression for the beginning of the cosmos?²²

²¹ E.g., Karl (above, n. 8) 10–11; Vlastos (above, n. 10) 75; Hölscher (above, n. 11) 399; R. A. Prier, "Archaic Structuralism and Dynamics in Hesiod's *Theogony*," *Apeiron* 8.2 (1974) 2; D. Bremer, *Licht und Dunkel in der frühgriechischen Dichtung* (Bonn 1976) 171; J. Bussanich, "A Theoretical Interpretation of Hesiod's Chaos," *CP* 78 (1983) 216.

²² Proponents of the interpretation of $\chi\acute{\alpha}\omicron\varsigma$ as a primeval gap frequently compare it with the Norse Ginnungagap, a comparison made already by Jacob Grimm (*Deutsche Mythologie* 14 [Berlin 1875] 525; cf. also Jaeger 13). But closer examination of the nature of the Ginnungagap should, if anything, discourage us from trying to explain Hesiod's $\chi\acute{\alpha}\omicron\varsigma$ in a similar way. The concept underlying the Norse creation myth is that life originated in a temperate region brought into being by the mutually moderating effects of two uninhabitable extremes: Niflheim in the north, a frozen waste of ice and frost, and in the south a torrid region of unceasing fire called Muspell. Between these two, and bounded by them, was a valley known as Ginnungagap, "as mild as windless air, and where the soft air of the heat met the frost so that it thawed and dripped, then, by the might of that which sent the heat, life appeared in the drops of running fluid and grew into the likeness of a man" (*Prose Edda*, trans. J. I. Young [Cambridge 1954] 33). Far from being a primal waste, this valley essentially fulfills the cosmogonic role played by Gaia rather than $\chi\acute{\alpha}\omicron\varsigma$ in Greek myth, providing the germinal source of all subsequent life: "Die Verneinung der geordneten Welt, der Uranfang, da weder Sand war noch Wasser, weder Erde noch Himmel, war nicht ein leeres Nichts, sondern eine schöpferische Kraft, die die Bedingung jedweden Lebens ist. Als Eis und Funken sich hier zusammentrafen, fand diese Urkraft den Stoff, aus dem die Welt gebildet werden konnte" (J. de Vries, "Ginnungagap," *Acta Philologica Scandinavica* 5 [1930] 66). Although any effort to be more precise than this about the nature of the Ginnungagap runs into difficulties similar to those encountered in the interpretation of $\chi\acute{\alpha}\omicron\varsigma$, it can at least be said that it fulfills the role of a gap in separating things; or, to put it in another way, given the Norse conception

There is one passage in the *Theogony* which hints at a connection between the *cosmological* χάος and a chasm. In Greek thought, as commonly elsewhere, the infernal regions of the developed cosmos are occasionally imagined to consist of or contain an immense pit or abyss, and the word χάσμα is sometimes used to designate this cavity.²³ So it is not surprising to find the following passage in Hesiod's description of the nether world (*Th.* 740–743):

χάσμα μέγ', οὐδέ κε πάντα τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν
οὐδ' αὖς ἵκοιτ', εἰ πρῶτα πυλέων ἔντοσθε γένοιτο,
ἀλλὰ κεν ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα φέροι πρὸ θύελλα θυέλλης
ἀργαλήη· δεινὸν δὲ καὶ ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι.

The lines immediately preceding this passage (736–739) are repeated verbatim at 807–810, where they are followed by a reference to χάος in 814; this has been taken by some as proof of the identity of χάος and χάσμα.²⁴ One important respect in which the words clearly differ is in their level of generality: χάσμα can be used of anything with the physical configuration of a pit or cavity, whereas χάος is primarily a cosmic term; there are, in other words, many χάσματα, but there is only one χάος.²⁵ Nevertheless it is possible that χάσμα is here being used as a

of the beginning of the world as resulting from mediation between two primal extremes, it is not difficult to see how the analogical notion of a primordial gap imposed itself on the imagination. (This inexactness in the parallelism between the Norse and Greek conceptions is pointed out by Kirk 38–39; in order to save the interpretation of Hesiodic χάος as a bounded chasm, however, he concludes that “this certainly does not invalidate the supposition that χάος implies primarily a region of vast size, but secondarily and implicitly its boundaries.”) It is of course always possible that a common Indo-European mythic idea could ultimately be attested in different areas in strikingly different forms, some of which may distort the original significance of the myth beyond recognition by anyone but the comparatist. In this case, however, the obvious relationship between the myth of the Ginnungagap and northern European (particularly Icelandic) geography suggests that its origin is not of Indo-European date.

²³ E.g., Eur. *Ph.* 1605, Plato *Phaedo* 111E–112A, *Rep.* 614C–D, Plut. *Mor.* 167a, Lucian *Lucr.* 2.

²⁴ E.g., West 192, Hölscher (above, n. 11) 400, Solmsen 61–62, Kirk 40.

²⁵ Cf. Hölscher (above, n. 11) 399: “Chaos war nicht wie Chasma ein in der Sprache frei verfügbarer Begriff, sondern immer das der Theogonien.” Even on those occasions in post-classical texts when χάος appears to be used in the sense of χάσμα, it is doubtful that the cosmic connotations of the word are completely absent. They are certainly salient in both occurrences of χάος in the Septuagint (Mi. 1.6, Zech. 14.4), and are prob-

descriptive designation for the cosmological χάος, perhaps under the influence of a perceived etymological connection between the two words. But even if, as West claims, the χάος of 116 is “in fact the same as that space between Earth and Tartaros which is called a χάσμα in 740,” I would argue that it could be called a χάσμα in the latter passage because of its situation rather than by nature. That is, the fact that the cosmological χάος, now bounded by the elements of the evolved cosmos, can be viewed as, or as being in, a chasm, would not necessarily imply that the cosmogonic χάος, existing alone before the genesis of any other entity, should or could be so viewed.²⁶

The wish to find something for such a primeval gap *originally* to have separated has bred the notion that χάος is to be imagined at all times as the region between the earth and the sky.²⁷ There are two obstacles in the way of this interpretation: (1) As I hope to demonstrate presently, the locating of χάος in the evolved cosmos between sky and earth runs counter to the thrust of the textual evidence. It requires special pleading to find any support in the *Theogony* for such a notion, and

ably to be felt in Oppian's highly metaphorical and idiosyncratic application of the word to the unfillable belly of a voracious sea monster (*Hal.* 5.52) and the gaping jaws of a crocodile or an attacking lion (*Cyneg.* 3.414, 4.161); in a less startling metaphor Euripides had used χάσμα of the jaws of a wolf (*Rh.* 209) and those of a lion (*Herc.* 363). We might compare the English *firmament*, the use of which similarly generates a cosmic resonance whatever its immediate context.

²⁶ Cf. Bussanich (above, n. 21) 216: “The shift from cosmogonic to cosmographic perspective accounts for the location of Chaos in the nether regions of the cosmos. It is still only a barely articulated nothing; but hereafter it is seen and described from the viewpoint of the differentiated world above.” In the cosmogony of the Orphic *Rhapsodies* there is a pair αἰθήρ and χάσμα descended from a primal χρόνος (fr. 66a, 72 Kern), but the preserved fragments do not provide a clear idea of the concepts involved. The verbal similarities in fr. 66a and *Theogony* 740–742 suggest that here as elsewhere χάσμα refers to the nether world; if that be the case, then the first two components of the Orphic cosmos to come into being after Time would be the very uppermost and lowermost regions. In later (mostly neo-Platonist) paraphrase and interpretation of the *Rhapsodies* this χάσμα is consistently referred to as χάος, although it clearly no longer serves the same conceptual function as Hesiod's original essence (cf. fr. 60, 65, 66, 76, 79).

²⁷ Jaeger 13; Gigon 29; Gomperz 35; Wilamowitz *Glaube* 343; Cornford *Princ. Sap.* (above, n. 7) 194–195; Kirk 37–41; Mazon (above, n. 7) 36; Karl (above, n. 8) 9–20; Schwenn (above, n. 8) 106–107. Arguing for the opposite position, that χάος is located underground, are West 192–193; Hölscher (above, n. 11) 399–400; Vlastos (above, n. 10) 74–75; Bussanich (above, n. 21) 216; Solmsen, “Chaos and ‘Apeiron’” (above, n. 10) 239, 247 n. 1; and M. H. Miller, “La Logique implicite de la cosmogonie d' Hésiode,” *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 82 (1977) 436–441.