

GREEK CREATION MYTH - OUTLINE #3

I. Hesiod's Tale

A. Chaos – 1st element, shapeless mass of darkness and meaningless

B. Without explanation – Chaos creates the Primordial gods:

1. Nyx – goddess of night (more of a place than character)
2. Erebus – god of darkness (more of a place)
3. Tartarus – god of the lowest region of the world (place) prison-like cave, destination of evil souls
4. Eros – god of youth and desire
5. Gaea – goddess of Earth

II. Parentage – procreation – parthenogenetic birth – by one parent

III. Gaea gives birth:

A. Uranus (the sky) and he later becomes her mate; he is the first ruler; he feared his offspring except for the Titans

B. Pontus (the life-giving water) personification of the sea

C. With Uranus, they have the following offspring:

1. Cyclopes – wheel-eyed, large giants, three brothers: Arges, Brontes, and Steropes with weapons of thunder, lightning, and lightning bolt.
2. Hecatoncheires – 50 heads & 100 hands, 3 brothers, giants, ugly but strong, forced to live in Tartarus
3. Titans – the powerful ones or elder gods, 12 in total

IV. Titans:

A. Cronus – Personifies Father Time, scythe (sickle) is prominent, with the sickle he struck his father to overthrow him and release his brothers. It is foretold by Gaea that one of his own would overthrow him since he did not release the Cyclopes or Hecatoncheires. *He is usually portrayed as old and wise with the scythe at his side.*

1. From the blood of Uranus:
 - a. Aphrodite – blood that fell to the sea created goddess of love and beauty
 - b. Eriynes – Furies, blood that fell to earth (3 sisters) - they will torment sinners; snakes are thrown for punishment
 - c. Giants – large creatures in the form of Titans with serpent-like feet

Big Picture Question: Why would love and hate come from the blood of Uranus?

- B. Rhea – sister and becomes Cronus' wife, Titaness of fertility
- C. Oceanus – god of the water that encircles the earth
- D. Tethys – goddess who marries Oceanus and will create the sea nymphs or Oceanids – *the union of Oceanus and Tethys will produce Metis who later becomes the first spouse of Zeus and later a threat to his power.*
- E. Hyperion – Titan of light, father of the sun and dawn (*one of the four pillars that hold the heavens and the earth apart. He was the pillar of the north, while the other three pillars were personified by his brothers Coeus, Iapetus and Crius.*)
- F. Thea – wife of Hyperion
- G. Themis – goddess of justice, mother of the Fates and Seasons
- H. Iapetus – Father of Prometheus, Epimetheus, and Atlas
- I. Coeus – Titan of Intelligence; the god of inquisitive minds
- J. Mnemosyne – Titaness of memory and mother of the Muses
- K. Crius – god of heavenly constellations and stars, grandfather of Hecate
- L. Phoebe – Titaness of the Moon, married to Coeus

Big Questions: What words do you know may have their origins from the Greek creation myth? What comparisons can be made from the Greek version of creation and other religions?