

TWO CASES OF THE GOLDEN AGE:
THE HESIODIC UTOPIA AND THE PLATONIC IDEAL STATE

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ABSTRACT

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This study was prepared to give information about the Golden Age myth, and in this regard, to illustrate for what purposes and in which ways the myth is used by Hesiod and Plato and the interaction and similarities between these thinkers. In the Golden Age, Cronus was the ruler and the order of the universe and human life are under the direct control of daemons. It is told that people of this time lived a blessed life in abundance and happiness; they were contented with what the land offers them and free from work, evils, war and unhappiness. The period ended with dethronement of Cronus by his son Zeus; after, as the order of the universe gradually deteriorated, humanity also became increasingly degenerate. The myth of the Golden Age, which Hesiod put forward as a utopic example for the solution of contemporary moral, social and political problems, also influenced Plato's political philosophy in the 4th century BC; guiding him through his search for the ideal state and the ideal ruler, and gained an important place in his dialogues. Firstly, in this thesis, the origins of the Golden Age myth, its appearances in the Ancient Greek and Roman cultures, the supporting and opposing views on the myth were explained. In the following chapter, the place of the Golden Age within the Five Ages myth of *Works and Days*, how it was utilized by Hesiod with ethical and political concerns and whether the narrative

belong originally to Hesiod were examined. Finally, the function of the exemplification of the myth in the *Statesman* and the *Laws* and its modelity in Plato's construction of the ideal state were investigated, and Hesiod's influence on Plato was discussed.

Keywords: Golden Age, Hesiod, *Works and Days*, Plato, The *Statesman*, The *Laws*.

ÖZ

ALTIN ÇAĞ'IN İKİ HALİ: HESİODİK ÜTOPYA VE PLATONİK İDEAL DEVLET

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Bu çalışma, Altın Çağ miti hakkında bilgilendirme yapmak, mitin Hesiodos ve Platon tarafından hangi şekillerde ve hangi amaçlarla kullanıldığını incelemek ve iki düşünürün bu husustaki etkileşim ve benzerlikleri göstermek üzere hazırlanmıştır. Yazılı olarak ilk kez Hesiodos'un *İşler ve Günler* eserinde karşılaşılan Altın Çağ miti pek çok farklı kültürde kendine yer edinmiş olmasına rağmen en güçlü görünümünü Yunan mitolojisinde bulmuştur. Tanrı Kronos'un egemen olduğu Altın Çağ'da evrenin düzeni ve insan hayatı tanrıların birebir kontrolündedir. Bu çağda insanların bolluk ve mutluluk içerisinde, toprağın verimlilikle kendilerine sundukları ile yetinerek, çalışmadan, kavgadan, savaş ve mutsuzluktan azade kutlu bir yaşam sürdükleri anlatılır. Dönem, Kronos'un yerine oğlu Zeus'un geçmesi ile son bulur ve sonrasında evrenin düzeni git gide bozulurken insanlar da yavaş yavaş yozlaşmaya başlarlar. Hesiodos'un güncel ahlaki, toplumsal ve siyasi problemlerin çözümü için ütöpik bir örnek olarak ileri sürdüğü Altın Çağ miti M.Ö. 4. Yüzyıl'da Platon'un siyaset felsefesini etkileyerek ideal devlet düzeni ve ideal yönetici arayışında yol gösterici olmuş ve diyaloglarında önemli bir yer edinmiştir. İlk olarak Altın Çağ mitinin kökeni, Antik Yunan ve Roma kültürlerindeki görünüşleri, mit üzerine sunulan olumlu ve olumsuz görüşlerin anlatıldığı bu tezin sonraki bölümünde,

öncelikle mitin *İşler ve Günler*'de bahsi geçen Beş Çağ miti içerisindeki yerinden söz edilmiş, sonrasında mitin Hesiodos tarafından etik ve politik kaygılarla ne şekilde kullanıldığı ve anlatının orijinalinde Hesiodos'a ait olup olmadığı incelenmiştir. Son olarak *Devlet Adamı* ve *Yasalar* diyaloglarında yer alan Altın Çağ anlatısının Platon'un ideal devlet kurgusu için oluşturduğu örneklik ve Hesiodos'un Platon üzerindeki etkisi tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Altın Çağ, Hesiodos, *İşler ve Günler*, Platon, *Devlet Adamı*, *Yasalar*.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Myths, which have a history as old as the history of humanity, are always been a fundamental element of life and they have had a very important role in the aspects of researching and finding the meaning of the universe, the ontology and epistemology of the reality beyond phenomena since ancient ages. Myths have offered both cosmogonies and cosmologies to the humanity, so they have helped people in the illumination of reality, in finding answers to questions on the real meaning and the aim of life and in forming and applying the first ethical, political and social forms.

In this regard, myths are also one of the main sources of philosophy. It is an inevitable fact that philosophy and myth have many aspects in common that trigger and nourish each other. Both myths and philosophy arise from the effort to understand and to interpret the world. Although philosophy takes a rational, logical path and maintains *logos* as the primary principle of research and explanation, it is not possible to deny the importance of myths in development of philosophy. Philosophy and myths are mutually influential. The role of myths in emergence of philosophy is great, and throughout history, contributions of philosophy to the formulation of myths are also undeniable. Myths help philosophical theories to be effective and acceptable. The usage of myths, of course, does not have the power to render an argument valid on its own. However, since the acceptance and the approval of a theory depends on how well the doctrine works, how coherent it is and how clearly it can explain what it is meant to convey; myths, as they are the elements which help to clarify and strengthen a discourse, are effective regarding validation of theories, if not directly, implicitly. Philosophy also sheds light on the myth and makes it acceptable and legitimate by detaching it from the perspective of mere

primitivity. Both philosophy and myths serve the purpose of understanding the universe and reality (Segal 2004: 36).

During the historical development of myths, some explanations have gained a more universal status, more acceptance and more interest than others. The Golden Age, which is one of the most important examples of creation myths, is one of them. Throughout the history of humanity, various stories which point to a time or space outside the current period or place are told about an organization under the sovereignty of divine rule, where the gods are directly involved in worldly matters, life is free from hardships, happy, blessed, in abundance with products that are spontaneously given by nature, peaceful and without wars and evil. This phantasmal time is usually known as the Golden Age (Baldry 1952: 83).

The Golden Age myth has had many different forms and versions in many different geographies from India to Middle East, from South America to North America, and it has become an inseparable element of literature, philosophy and religion. Especially in ancient Egyptian, Iranian and Indian cultures, there are many stories about a blissful past such as the Blessed Islands and the Elysian Plain, which are usually connected with heaven, that continue to be narrated, even if they were not transcribed.

In Ancient Greece, however, the history of the Golden Age myth can only be traced back to the works of Hesiod in the 8th century BC, not before. Hesiod's *Works and Days* is the first written work that the Golden Age myth is encountered with, which is a didactic poem where Hesiod calls his brother Perses and advises him a righteous and moral life and work equitably. In this poem, Hesiod introduces the Golden Age as the first part of the five ages that creates the universal cycle. This age is a blessed time in which the universe is under direct control of gods, people live in happiness and abundance without working hard, having and using the things and food provided for them by nature. Cronus is the king of this age (Hesiod 2006: 97). Hesiod places the Golden Age as an ideal model of life for people who live in his own time. According to him, in order to have unconditional happiness and to resurrect goodness in the universe again, it should be returned to the Golden Age.

Hesiod's account had outlined the chief characteristics of the Golden Age which took place in many philosophical and literary texts later (Dillon 1992: 24). For example, in Ancient Greece Pindar, Empedocles, Aristophanes, Aratus and Plutarch are among the thinkers who used myth in their works; in Ancient Rome Varro, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Ovid and Seneca are among those who also handled the Golden Age. However, among all these, Plato's dialogues are probably the most outstanding works where the myth appears in various times and has a very significant place.

While Hesiod often uses myths as ornaments to strengthen literary expression or to make a particular sense of ethics more powerful, Plato's myths are more faithful to the philosophical context, more rational and support the main issue, "the ideal" which the text wants to reveal. And the Golden Age myth is one of Plato's favorites which he used or referred in several dialogues; the *Statesman*, the *Laws*, the *Republic*, the *Cratylus*, the *Gorgias*, the *Hipparchus* and the *Epistles* (although, the authenticity of the last two dialogues is controversial) (O' Neill Gross 1945: 123). Despite the fact that Plato essentially preserved the characteristics drawn by Hesiod, he also attributed many different features to the Golden Age. The Golden Age has characteristics such as not having any political organization or properties, not taking wives or begetting children, emergence of people from earth not through sexual reproduction and human ability to talk with animals that are not included or not explicitly mentioned in the Hesiodic version of the myth, yet, appear in the Platonic dialogues. Even so, in Plato's works, the Golden Age represents an ideal organization, an ideal community, as in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.

It is told that humans have a natural inclination for associating the past with things and events that are positive, good and happy; thus, they usually have a longing for these "good old days" (O' Neill Gross 1945: 12). Perhaps this is the reason why the Golden Age myth is so widespread, common in many cultures and repeatedly used by multitudinous people. And perhaps this is also the reason why I chose this myth as the main theme of my thesis. My aim in preparing this study is to investigate the origins and the history of the Golden Age myth and to analyze the objectives and the implications of Hesiod's and Plato's idealizations of the Golden Age through scrutinizing the texts of *Works and Days*, the *Statesman* and the *Laws*.

Although there are several thinkers and writers dealt with the Golden Age myth, I will mainly concentrate on Hesiod and Plato because first, these two thinkers are the most outstanding users of the myth; second, Hesiod, despite not being the creator of the myth, is the first and the most influential representative of the Golden Age in Ancient Greek literature and third, Plato is the one who most strikingly used the myth in his several dialogues by perfectly customizing it, contributing to it and bringing in the most powerful political implications to the myth as it has never had before. And regarding Plato, I will review his two dialogues; the *Statesman* and the *Laws* because in these two, the Golden Age myth was included as a whole, while in the other dialogues like the *Republic*, the *Cratylus* and the *Gorgias* the myth was mentioned only partly or took place incidentally.

In the second chapter, initially, I will give information about the content of the Golden Age myth. I will examine the historical progress of the myth and explain some theories on the emergence of it which are; the Allegorical Theory, the Euhemeristic Theory, the Theological Theory, the Anthropological Theory, the Psychological Theory, the Agricultural Theory and the Ancestral Respect Theory. Later, I will move on to narrate the genealogies of gods in Greek and Roman mythologies and I will especially emphasize the stories of Cronus and Saturn which are the main characters of the Golden Age and the Saturnian Age respectively. Finally, by analyzing the place of the myth in ancient Greek and Roman cultures I will share the favoring and the opposing approaches to the myth. I will give information about the positive approaches of the Orphics, Empedocles, the Stoics, Plato, Aratus, the Cynics and Virgil who acknowledge the Golden Age as a utopia; then I will examine the historical approaches of the Comics, Democritus, Anaxagoras and Epicurus who qualify the Golden Age not as a “golden” epoch, but as a period of primitivity and sometimes even ridicule the attributions to the era.

The third chapter is on Hesiod and the Golden Age of *Works and Days*. I will start this chapter by introducing two works of Hesiod; *Theogony* and *Works and Days* and by briefly analyzing Hesiod’s construction of the universe on the interaction of opposite elements, especially femininity and masculinity, through these poems. Then, I will move on to elaborate the Hesiodic Five Ages myth with emphasizing the

controversial nature of the Heroic Age. I will address Frederick Paley's account on the Heroic Age which claims that it does not belong to Hesiod but was added by the Rhapsodists and Jean Pierre Vernant's theory of triple pairs that defends the Heroic Age not being a disruption in the course of the five ages. After, I will assess the originality of Hesiod as whether he is the inventor of the myth or not. While doing this, I will pay regard to Iranian and Indian traditions and inquire two narrations; the stories of Zarathustra's dream and Nebuchadnezzar's dream. I will conclude this chapter with an examination on Hesiod's aims considering morality, politics and economics for using the Golden Age myth in *Works and Days*.

In the fourth chapter, I will deal with Plato's account of the Golden Age through his two dialogues; the *Statesman* and the *Laws*. First, I will explain the place of mythology in Plato's philosophy and I will try to show the interdependency of the myth and the dialectic in the Platonic dialogues. Next, I will summarize the discourse of the *Statesman* and narrate the Golden Age myth as the way it takes place in the dialogue. I will underline the specific characteristics added to the myth which are peculiar to the dialogue. I will investigate the function of the myth, how it helps the interlocuters to find the definition of the statesperson and how it is used to set the ground for despising democracy. Later on, I will proceed to the *Laws*. I will outline the course and the theme of the dialogue and point out the passages where the Golden Age myth takes place. I will review the mission of the myth; in what ways Plato idealizes the Age of Cronus and how it serves regarding the issue of lawmaking. Then, I will argue the politicality of Plato and whether Plato utilizes the Golden Age as a basis for an anti-political state or a truly political organization. Afterwards, I will discuss the similarities and differences of the two dialogues in respect of their treatments of the Golden Age, where they stand in Plato's political thought and I will mention Plato's pessimistically changing attitude towards human nature. And lastly, I will examine Hesiod's influence on Plato within the framework of the Golden Age.

Finally, in the conclusion chapter, I will make a general overview of what was explained and hopefully concluded in this study and will evaluate whether I have

achieved my purpose to construe the idealization of the Golden Age in Hesiod's and Plato's works.

CHAPTER 2

THE GOLDEN AGE

2.1. The Myth

The Golden Age myth is one of the most important examples of creation myths. In ancient literature many passages can be found about a sacred time which is free from all the difficulties of life, away from human will and desire, granted by the generosity of nature. This land of joy always points out a time or space other than regular/everyday human existence; a far distance country not visible in the maps, a paradise that will be reached after death or an era that existed in past or will exist in future. This utopic happiness period is known as the Golden Age (Baldry 1952: 83).

In the Golden Age, people live in happiness and abundance. In this period, the universe is under the direct control of god and deities. All daily affairs and events related to human life occur with the direct influence of divine beings. There is no sexual activity and reproduction; people exist from soil. There is neither old age nor childhood; all people are at the age of maturity. Death is not an end, a bitter and worrying disappearance, but it is just a sleeping state. After death, people turn into protective deities who travel around the world and spread laws and rewards. Nature gives everything that people need spontaneously and abundantly. Plants grow on their own, trees give fruit without any maintenance. There is no sheltering problem. The climate is always warm and beautiful, so people sleep outside on straw beds without needing a house. Animals are also in harmony with people. Deities arrange the daily life, living and moving among the people. There are no diseases. People love and respect animals and nature. In fact, some philosophers and philosophical communities, such as Xenophanes, the late Orphics and the Pythagoreans, because of their belief in reincarnation, claimed that people were vegetarians at that time

(O'Neill Gross 1945: 7). Life is sacred in the Golden Age and it is not possible for someone to take someone else's life. Different regime forms or possession over women and children cannot be possible under god's ruling. There is no evil or war. People are loving and caring with a great clemency. Life is effortless in the presence of happiness and abundance.

For then the god began to rule and take care of the rotation itself as a whole, and as for the regions, in as their turn, it was just the same, the parts of the world-order having everywhere been divided up by gods ruling over them; moreover divine spirits had divided living things between them, like herdsmen, by kind and by herd, each by himself providing independently for all the needs of those he tended, so that none of them was savage, nor did they eat each other, and there was no war or internal dissent at all... men had no political constitutions, nor acquired wives and children, for all of them came back to life from the earth, remembering nothing of the past; but while they lacked things of this sort, they had an abundance of fruits from trees and many other plants, not growing through cultivation but because the earth sent them up of its own accord. For the most part they would feed outdoors, naked and without bedding; for the blend of the seasons was without painful extremes, and they had soft beds from abundant grass that sprang from the earth (Plato 1995: 271d-272a).

In different cultures, the myth of the Golden Age is frequently encountered, albeit in different ways. The myth took different names such as the Cronus Age and the Saturnian Age and was attributed to various geographies and time periods. However, the main theme of the myth which is an unconditionally happy life and the longing for it did not change. Usually, the myth is elaborated by narrating the following ages which degenerate gradually. From time to time this narrative is shaped in an annular lifecycle and it is used for revealing the belief that such a glorious era would happen again in the future. However, in some dystopic stories it is described as a period that happened in the past and will never be returned and renewed with an emphasis on the irreversible corruption of humanity (O'Neill Gross 1945: 7).

2.2. Theories About the Origins of the Golden Age

The Golden Age myth has been told since antiquity, which is why it is not possible to determine the first source, the first point of origin of the myth. The myth was encountered in writing for the first time in Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Although there is not a common opinion or an explicit knowledge on the origins of the myth, there is a consensus on the subject that it was not created by Hesiod, as a matter of fact the myth has a background way beyond Hesiod's time. In the historical process many

theories have been raised about how and when the myth emerged. As M. Agnes O'Neill Gross (1945) has presented, seven different theories can be referred.

The two significant theories which were presented before Christianity are the Allegorical Theory and the Euhemeristic¹ Theory. According to the Allegorical Theory, which was introduced by Theagenes of Rhegium, who lived in the 6th century BC, the Golden Age and the following ages Silver, Bronze and Iron are nothing else but allegories that show how humankind has worsened day by day. In 4th century BC Euhemerus asserted the Euhemeristic Theory which claims that the Golden Age is a story about a real-life ruler who actually lived before and taught her people about arts, agriculture, and crafts and established a happy and a rich civilization that lived in abundance.

After the entrance of Christianity into picture, the Theological Theory became dominant naturally. The myths that had been told before Christianity were distorted copies of the stories in the Bible according to this theory, and the Golden Age is basically a portrayal of paradise which found its origins in the Bible as well.

Andrew Lang, believes that myths flourished from the psychological conditions, the mindsets of primitive people. In his Anthropological Theory, he says that the human mind is prone to connect with the past with extreme passion and asserts that people who mentioned the Golden Age for the first time also suffer from such a tendency. Because of that, by covering the bad past experiences and making them insignificant they tried to highlight positive experiences and happy parts of the past as if there were no poor sides. This caused people to imagine the past as a golden age (O' Neill Gross 1945: 12).

According to Campbell Boner's Psychological Theory, many utopian myths such as the Golden Age, the Blessed Islands are just versions of a single primitive myth. Boner, who believes a psychological explanation lays behind this phenomenon states that;

¹ Euhemerus is a Greek mythographer from whom Euhemerism was named. According to Euhemeristic approach, mythological narrations and gods can be ascribed to real historical events or people of the past which were very significant and effective and thus adjusted and overstated over time.

...probably long before Hesiod, various Greek folk-sayings about a time when, or a place where, men lived a life of luxurious ease, with food and drink ever ready at hand, and untroubled by the incubus of toil and penury. The notion of this Utopia sprang directly from the fancy of the people (Boner, 1910, s.179).

The Golden Age is just a story of a longing for a far more ancient utopia.

W. Warde Fowler's Agricultural Theory slightly differs from the other theories, because it suggests that the origins of the myth can be found in the days of first agricultural production which began with the transition from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic Period.

I may just throw out the suggestion that this charming myth of the Golden Age represents ideally the earliest experiments in agriculture of a still pastoral people, in virgin soils, teeming with productive power, which afterwards became weakened by a natural process of decay (Fowler 1918: 70).

William Fox claims that the source of the myth is respect for ancestors. According to him, while the respect for the past generations leads to the belief that previous periods are golden, it also causes the ancient ages to be perceived not only as a period of convenience and happiness, but also as a period of heroism (Fox 1916: 47).

Since the answer to the question of how the myth is born is hidden in the depths of antiquity, it is not possible to provide a clear source and to give a clear evidence; therefore, it is inconceivable to say that one theory has superiority over another or that one refutes the other. However, even though the sources of the myth are not known clearly, it is possible to observe its development in the historical process.

2.3. Kings of the Golden Age: Cronus and Saturn

The myth of the Golden Age takes place in different mythologies of different cultures with different names. In Greek mythology, the period called the Golden Age is associated with the time when Cronus was the ruler of the universe. In Roman mythology, this period is known as the Saturnian Age. With the annexation of Greece in Roman territories, after 2nd century BC; cultural, political, social, literary and intellectual interactions have become inevitable and have been reflected in the mythology of these two cultures. Although the golden periods are under the reign of different rulers, the Golden Age myth in both mythologies are very akin to each other and the two great kings; Cronus and Saturn share very similar features.

2.3.1. Cronus the Greek God

Cronus, the descendant of the second generation of gods, is the last one of the 12 Titans which are children of Uranus and Gaia. Azra Erhat, in her dictionary, states that the name Cronus does not have a connection with the word *χρόνος* which means time, however according to the following legends and explanations, these two words are considered same and it is assumed that the god Cronus symbolizes the time, the time flow and the images of him are shown with a sickle in his hand (Erhat 1996: 182). Robert Graves states;

The later Greeks read "Cronus" as Chronos, "Father Time" with his relentless sickle. But he is pictured in the company of a crow, like Apollo, Asclepius, Saturn, and the early British god Bran; and *cronos* probably means "crow", like the Latin *cornix* and the Greek *corone*. The crow was an oracular bird, supposed to house the soul of a sacred king after his sacrifice (Graves 1960: 15).

Plato, in the *Cratylus*, gives a different explanation of the word asserting that *Κρόνον* means pure intellect (Plato 1980: 396b).

In the beginning everything was dark. Chaos was born out of the dark. The Mother Nature Gaia came out from Chaos. Gaia was a substance where all beings were sourced, a main principle, a cosmic being rather than a mere god. She first created the universe by forming an order in the disorder and shaping chaos; then she created the skies, the seas and the mountains. This process of creation was a parthenogenesis; that is, Gaia had no partner in the initial creation process. She, then created the God of Sky, Uranus to be an equal to herself which covered her completely. The 12 Titans (six women and six men), the hundred-handed Hecatoncheires and the one-eyed Cyclops were born from the intercourse of Gaia and Uranus. The children were not liked by their father Uranus, they were seen as rivals. For this reason, as soon as they were born Uranus buried them into depths of Gaia, into the Tartarus that was seven times below the Land of the Dead. Gaia was upset about the imprisonment of her children, so she asked the Titans for help to dethrone their father. While all the children feared, the last man of the Titans, Cronus, took on the task of killing his father. Gaia gave him a steel scythe. At night while Uranus was asleep, Cronus cut his phallus and threw it into the sea. The Three Erinyes (The Furies) from the dripping blood and Aphrodite from Uranus's sperms were born. After that, the Titans

rescued their siblings imprisoned under the ground and rewarded Cronus as the ruler of the universe. Thus, the period under Cronus' rule had begun (Graves 1960: 15). The inhabitants of this period were called the Golden Race by Hesiod. People in this age

...were the so-called golden race, subjects of Cronus, who lived without cares or labor, eating only acorns, wild fruit, and honey that dripped from the trees, drinking the milk of sheep and goats, never growing old, dancing, and laughing much; death, to them, was no more terrible than sleep (Graves 1960: 14).

However, Cronus, who feared to lose his sovereignty like his father, imprisoned his siblings; the Cyclops and the Hundred-Handed Hecatoncheires again in Tartarus. He married Rhea, one of the Titan siblings, the goddess of mountains and had six children from her; Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon and the last one Zeus (Estin 2002: 124). But the anxiety that he would lose his reign continued. He was frightened that his sons would kill him like he killed his own father. According to another account, Uranus had prophesized that one of Cronus' sons would one day murder and dethrone him (Graves 1960: 16). For this reason, Cronus began to swallow his children as soon as they were born. He first swallowed Hestia, then Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon. Rhea worried that Cronus would also do this to their last son Zeus, so she took him to his grandmother Gaia to hide him. She gave Cronus a swaddled stone, and he swallowed the stone instead of baby Zeus. Zeus was raised by fairies in a cave on Mount Ida, far from his parents. Yet, it did not take long for Cronus to understand the deceit and he began to look for Zeus everywhere.

When Zeus grew up, with help of his mother, Rhea, he made his father drink a magic potion. After Cronus drank it, he started to vomit the children he swallowed right away. Then, Zeus also saved the Cyclops and the Hecatoncheires that were imprisoned in the underground. His siblings asked Zeus for help to beat their father Cronus and the Titans who supported him. Thus, a great war began between the Titans leaded by Cronus and Zeus and his siblings. With the help of the Hecatoncheires Zeus defeated the Titans; he killed his father with a thunderbolt. Thereby, the period of Cronus ended and the time under Zeus' reign began (Estin 2002: 125).

2.3.2. Saturn the Roman God

Saturn, one of the oldest Roman gods, is said to be the god of sowing and seed (Daly 2003: 115). According to the story, Saturn, while he was the ruler of the universe, was dethroned by his son Jupiter who wanted to be the king and was expelled from Olympus. Afraid of being killed after being defeated and expelled by Jupiter, Saturn escaped by a ship and arrived in Italy, where Rome would later be established. There he was greeted by Janus, an older god. Saturn established a settlement here and named it Saturnia. Later on, the Romans built the Temple of Saturn at that place. In Saturnia, he taught agriculture, cultivation and gardening to the local people. By virtue of successful achievements in agriculture, Saturnia evolved into a rich center. This period of abundance and happiness, which began with the establishment of Saturnia by Saturn and his teachings of agriculture, was described as the Golden Age in Roman mythology. Saturn is regarded as the king who brought the Golden Age to Roman lands. In this period dominated by Saturn, people lived a healthy and peaceful life, free from wars and evil. Justice ruled all over the universe. In this age, people lived an ethical, a fair and a harmonious life not because they were in fear of laws and punishments, but because of their respect and love to their gods (Erhat 1996: 266).

During that period, Saturnalia began to be celebrated as a harvest festival; and as time passed by, it became a celebration of commemorating the King Saturn and the golden age under his reign. The festival, which starts on December 17th, lasts about seven days. During the festival, celebrations and feasts take place. Both the slaves and the lords, the rich and the poor sit on the same table; it is a gesture that shows that everyone is equal in front of Saturn. No discrimination is made between people during the festival; social classes disappear. As a sign of abundance and productivity, everyone gives gifts to each other. People use each other's belongings to show that property is not personal, everything belongs to everyone. During the festival, all daily and commercial work are set aside. It is free to gamble, drink and have fun freely. Saturnalia is the symbolic resurrection of the Golden Age, and the whole celebration is in an atmosphere of abundance and festivity. (O'Neill Gross 1945: 33).

The Age of Saturn identifies with the Greek Golden Age under the ruling of Cronus. In Roman mythology, Cronus was replaced by Saturn. There are different claims regarding the identification of Saturn with Cronus. For example, according to Thomas Dyer, this identification is related to temporality. Since Cronus and Saturn were the oldest gods in Greek and Roman mythologies, such an analogy took place (Dyer, 1883: 4). William Fox claims that the identity between the two gods is based on the wives. Both Cronus' wife Rhea and Saturn's wife Ops are the goddesses of fertility and earth. The similarity of these goddesses in two mythologies led to the identification of their spouses (Fox 1916: 292).

Although there are various theories about this subject, it is not possible to find out when and how the first analogy was done. Because of the intense interaction between Roman and Greek cultures, many gods in Greek mythology entered into Roman mythology under different names. In Roman mythology the ruler of Olympus Zeus changed into Jupiter, his wife Hera took place as Juno, Poseidon the god of the seas as Neptune, Hades the god of the underground and the dead as Pluto, goddess of love and beauty Aphrodite as Venus, the goddess of fertility Demeter as Ceres, the daughter of Demeter and Hades goddess Persephone as Proserpina, Athena the goddess of wisdom and war as Minerva, wine and vintage god Dionysus as Liber, and Ares the god of war as Mars (Estin 2002: 215).

2.4. The Development of the Golden Age in Greek and Roman Cultures and Several Approaches to the Myth

The myth of the Golden Age is a creation myth that has found its place in various cultures. Among them, the most important ones are Greek and Roman mythologies. In the historical process, several theories have been established on the myth of the Golden Age which has been dealt with in many different ways in many different works.

2.4.1. The Golden Age as a Utopia

Although it is not possible to determine the origins of the Golden Age myth, the first written work where the myth is found is Hesiod's *Works and Days*. There are several theories about how the Golden Age, the time of abundance and happiness under the

ruling of Cronus ended; however, in *Works and Days* the end was not clearly explained by Hesiod. This period is an age of bliss in which people are always young, food is abundant and spontaneous; there is no need to work, no evil and pain and death is just a sleeping state that at the end people reach the level of divinity. After then, the four ages consisting of the Silver, the Bronze, the Heroic and the Iron come, which are inferior to the Golden Age.

The first version of the myth as in Hesiod's poem became a basis and a guide for the narratives that come after it. It can be said that, the different versions emerged after are always the various forms of this first written one. Around the 6th century BC, with the influence of the Pythagoreans and the Orphics, two elements; vegetarianism and reincarnation were emphasized as features of the Golden Age. In addition to this, the Orphics focused on the idea that the Golden Age is the lost paradise and drew attention to the fact that the myth is a narrative of the post-mortem life.

In the 5th century BC, Heraclitus and Empedocles had influences on the myth. Heraclitus' conception of the orbicular cycle was developed by Empedocles. According to Empedocles, the universe takes its source from the conflict between love and hate and repeatedly one transcends the other. This is a circular loop; neither the periods of love nor hate will last forever, and one will always replace the other in a transformation. Love and hate emerge as the forces that govern the universe periodically. Based on this doctrine, Empedocles described the ruler of the Golden Age as Cypris (love) instead of Cronus. Thus, in his view, the Golden Age is seen as a period that would reappear in the universe.

Towards the end of the 4th century BC, the Stoics also supported the notion of the cyclical time loop, which implies that the Golden Age is likely to happen again. The Stoics, who established a *magnus annus*² theory, argued that each cycle in the universe had had a golden period and all of these cycles had ended with an *ἐκπύρωσις* (a great fire), but the following time cycle also followed the same pattern and same events were repeated. Thus, in future, the same periods, including the Golden Age and the same events will be experienced again (Martin 1943: 67). In

² The Great Year. One cycle of years, usually a thousand, that begins with a Golden Age, steadily deteriorates, and ends with a universal catastrophe, either a fire or a flood.

addition to this, the Stoics also pointed out the ethical side of the myth. The Stoics, trying to reconcile Hesiod's understanding of decline of humanity with Epicurus' argument of human progress, claimed that humanity had entered a moral collapse despite its developments in civilization and technology. For them, the Golden Age represents the ethically ideal form of life. Humanity is morally excellent in itself; all beings has the closest contact with the spirit of the world, and in the Golden Age, essence of humankind is intact. According to Posidonius, one of the important names of the Middle Stoa, in the development of the universe, by following the directions of nature, humankind discovered language, fire and metals; thus, technology inevitably started to progress. In this progression, humanity morally declined, began to abuse technology and used the invented tools for its own private interests, for luxury and war. The rulers became tyrants increasingly, which led to corruption and fraud in law. In addition to these, the perception of divinity and human relationship with gods was spoiled and worshipping lost its true meaning and became a cultic, meaningless act. Technological developments led to a moral collapse. Posidonius, by saying that some primitive societies still live in an unspoiled, happy community life, identified this form of life with the life in the Golden Age (Reckford 1958: 80).

In the 4th century BC, Plato took Empedocles' circularity doctrine and placed it into his political philosophy (Havelock 1964: 42). According to his dialogues, the Age of Cronus (in the Platonic dialogues this period called not the Golden Age, but the Age of Cronus) is an example of ideal management; the people who lived in this age have witnessed such a happy time by virtue of the ideal ruling and the ideal king. Although, from time to time, he had a desperate attitude about the possibility of achieving the ideal order, Plato believed that one day the ideal state could be established. He implied that the Golden Age will be experienced again in the cycle of periods, and this era would host the ideal state with the ideal ruler.

According to the poet Aratus, who revised the Stoic approach in the 3rd century BC, the reason for the moral collapse that occurred over time was caused by the fact that the god of justice Dike left the world. While Dike was interacting with people in the Golden Age and organized life, she disengaged with people before the era was closed, and then, abandoned the world completely. The decline of humanity began

with Dike's departure, and this separation was the result of people's own misdemeanors, their faults. Moreover, Aratus asserted that production of the first war tools and resurgence of meat consumption as indicators of the collapse (O'Neill Gross 1945: 28).

The effect of the Cynics in the same century also stood out. According to them, civilization is a decay and it has taken humanity away from god. The happy life is to live in harmony with nature, free from technology and civilization. According to Diogenes, who can be called the pioneer of the Cynic philosophy, the aim of life is to reach *εὐδαιμονία* and this is only possible through living compatibly with nature. This can simply be expressed as living in an "animalistic" way, living like animals do; by instincts and by accepting the natural offerings of life itself. For him, being free from technology and civilization, accepting what is bestowed without making an effort for gaining more than deserved is the ideal life form which is similar to the life in the Golden Age. Civilization disrupts human nature and causes degeneration. People should return to the primitive form of life in the Golden Age by avoiding the so-called developments of civilized life. *Εὐδαιμονία* can only be reached in this way. First people lived a happy life only by contenting themselves with what earth provided them spontaneously; without houses, outfits, fire, writing etc. According to the Cynic approach, this primitive life is a happy and an ideal life, and the purpose of the Cynics is to return to the living state in the Golden Age (Singleton 1972: 158).

While the Golden Age and the following periods were entitled with metal names, which were mostly taken from Hesiod, towards the end of the Hellenistic Period, these ages began to be known with the names of four elements. After the Roman occupation, by the formation of the terminology under the influence of Roman culture, the ruler of the Golden Age, Cronus began to be identified with the Roman god Saturn.

With the annexation of Ancient Greece in the Republic of Rome in 146 BC and by renaming the Roman Empire as Achaea in 86 BC, the interaction between Roman and Greek cultures became inevitable. This interaction which has spread to all areas of society and culture, also affected mythology. Indirectly, changes in the myth of the Golden Age in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC have also been made.

The first Roman writer who mentioned the myth of the Golden Age is Varro. However, among the writers of the Roman Period, Virgil is one of the most important users of the myth. Unlike Hesiod, Virgil referred to two different ages, not five; which were the period ruled by Saturn and after, the Period of Jupiter. Virgil did not qualify the transition between periods as a complete corruption. According to him, the inception of the Age of Jupiter after the expiration of the Age of Saturn was not a punishment imposed by gods because of people's evil deeds; this was simply a challenge that was presented to people to confront the hardships of life on their own. Human beings must not get stuck with the life where they live in abundance and comfort; they must get up, struggle with the difficulties they face through their lives, improve themselves and move forward. In terms of Virgil's understanding, the Golden Age does not have to imply a discrete and remote life form. The Age of Saturn refers to a blessed and happy period, but such a period does not necessarily mean that it has only been experienced in the past. The Golden Age can actualize at the present time or, more precisely, can be actualized. By overcoming encountered challenges, by working remarkably, by endeavor and acting ethically one can reproduce a golden age by herself, one can be truly happy. Virgil presented the myth of the Golden Age as an example for the people of his time. There has been such a blessed life at past; this life is also possible at the present time and its conditions are to work and act ethically. In his works, Virgil used the myth with an ethical concern. It can be said that in Virgil, the myth was offered as a prototype of a moral society (Reckford 1958:84).

2.4.2. Opposing Remarks

Eric Alfred Havelock argues that two different explanations can be given on the development of cultures, thus, there are also two distinct approaches to the myth of the Golden Age. The first approach, which accepts the evolution of humanity from primitivity to modernity as a development and progress, claims that ethics and laws are products of this progress. This is the historical approach that takes the time mentioned in the Golden Age myth not as a “golden” period, but as a period of primitivity and an animal-like life. As for the second approach, human nature is the first principle and this essence is almost intact in primitive ages. This is the anti-

historical approach, which defines the Golden Age as a long-awaited and sought era, a lost paradise, an uncorrupted state of humankind, a time period where people were closest to divinity (Havelock 1964: 29). The attitudes mentioned earlier in this chapter have generally corresponded to the second. Here, it is worth mentioning the thinkers and writers who rejected the Golden Age myth by adopting the historical approach.

In the 5th century BC, by means of the ridicules of the Orphic adaptation of the Golden Age myth in Old Comedy³ works by the Comics, a different and a negative usage of the myth arose. For example, Telecleides mocked plants that grow spontaneously without any maintenance and talked about soup rivers and self-frying fish (Athenaeus 1854: 421), Crates made fun of the myth by saying that there were self-moving instruments in the Golden Age, thus there was no need for slaves (Baldry 1952: 86). In their works, the Comics began to see the Golden Age as a period of waste and hedonism, not a period of abundance and happiness (O'Neill Gross 1945: 23). Thereby, with the influence of the Comics, the myth developed a negative implication for the first time in history, which will eventually lead to the tradition of "Cockaigne", an imaginary place of extreme luxury and ease, in the Medieval Period (Dillon 1992: 34).

In late 5th century BC, Democritus presented a detailed antithesis to the idea that people of the Golden Age lived in an idyllic paradise. These people lived, according to him, a bestial life instead of a blessed and divine-convergent life; in fact, they were almost savages that cannot be called humans. This view was supported by Anaxagoras as well. Anaxagoras claimed that humans and animals were composed of the same seeds and they shared a common way of life in the early days of the formation. However, humans have been able to develop themselves with reasoning and ability to invent, and by these, they gained skills for dominance over other species, for establishing civilizations and living in societies. While they agreed that

³ One of the three drama genres* in the Ancient Greek Theater, comedy was designed to make the audience laugh and chronologically, it is divided into three periods as Old, Middle and New. The period between 486-404 BC is called Old Comedy. The most obvious features of the works of this period are the use of phallic elements for humor and making fun of politics and politicians. The most important representatives include Cratinus, Eupolis and Aristophanes (Duckworth 1994: 21).

* Other drama genres are Tragedy and Satire.

the first human being was an animal like creature; Democritus exhibited a different stance from Anaxagoras about the emergence of civilization. According to him, there are two stages. First, the disorderliness of the primitive life has aroused an imperative, inevitable orientation towards civilization. In the second stage, the facilities and opportunities brought by the civilization lead to the birth of art; thus, enabled it to become more developed and refined.

The idea that is common to both Anaxagoras and Democritus is that civilization is a gradual progress which separates human from animal. As Ludwig Edelstein said, “They emphasized the importance of civilization for the survival of mankind, they championed the superiority of civilized life to that of primitive peoples.” (Edelstein 1967: 29). Therefore, the people of the Golden Age are inferior to modern humans; they are close to an animalistic life. As it is, the Golden Age is not a period to be glorified, but just a period of primitiveness in which the skills of humanity have not yet developed (Singleton 1972: 155). In fact, according to Democritus, there has never been a golden age, moreover it is not even possible to be. For humanity, there is a process in which it proceeds from a primitive and savage level to a civilized order. This escalation of humankind is only possible by making inventions, developing humanity and making it suitable for social life (Reckford 1958: 79).

In the second half of the 4th century BC, the Greek philosopher Epicurus took a stand against the idea of “the good old times”. According to Epicurus, who denies Hesiod’s view, humanity is not declining, but rather on a moral rise in comparison with the ancient times. People were not better off in the ages where they were under the direct control of gods; on the contrary people who live in a time where gods preserve their divinity and reputability but are not direct rulers of humanity, who manage their own lives, do their own affairs, explain phenomena naturalistically rather than mythically are much more advanced and better than the primitive people of ancient times. Humanity has not been degenerated; it has progressed. Epicurus praised the endurance and austerity of the first people. For him, in conjunction with civilization, people have lost their thrift and endurance, they have become soften so to speak. Epicurus, however, indicates that this fact should be taken from a different angle. Although the first people were physically more resistant, they were not

morally developed; more precisely, they were deprived of moral values. The lack of evil, war and all negative elements in the Golden Age prevented people from developing a moral perception. They were pure and innocent, but that does not mean they were moral. In order to be moral, one must be responsible for her own deeds, keep her actions under her control, and act with her own will; in other words, one must act within a more autonomous space, not under god's direct control. Therefore, it is not possible to say that people of the Golden Age had moral values. Epicurus, who stipulated living a moral life for happiness, argued that the Cronians cannot be considered as happy. Happiness is only possible within an advanced civilization. Despite the fact that a civilized society is more difficult and more ruthless in terms of its physical offerings, it is the only place where morality can exist and thus, happiness is only possible there (Singleton 1972: 159).

Although the Golden Age myth gained different implications by changing cultural structures and needs over time, by the philosophers and writers who highlighted different concepts of the myth, it can be said that it has not lost its importance despite its fluxional form and content. It has been involved in new literary and philosophical systems and has been a supporter for various narratives. The elements which were not mentioned or emphasized when the myth was put down on paper for the first time by Hesiod -like vegetarianism, morality, laws, agricultural success of the age- were added to the myth in time. Nevertheless, the myth was discredited by contrary views; it was presented as a primitive state of life rather than a bright, happy age and its existence was totally rejected or ridiculed.

CHAPTER 3

HESIOD

THE FIVE AGES MYTH AND THE GOLDEN AGE IN *WORKS AND DAYS*

3.1. An Overview of Hesiod and His Works

Unlike other cultures, the understanding of theology in Ancient Greek is not based on the influence of religious people or saints, but on the poets and poetic narratives. Ancient Greek theology does not explain dogmas or religious teachings, but instead constructs theology on a mythical platform by telling stories about gods and heroes of the past. Hesiod, one of the greatest poets of Hellenistic literature, has undeniable contributions in the establishment and development of Greek theology. Hesiod was born in Boeotia and he lived in the 700s BC. He is the oldest known poet of Ancient Greece after Homer. He has two main works, *Works and Days* (ἔργα καὶ ἡμέραι) and *Theogony* (θεογονία) and several other pieces which are attributed to him. Hesiod mentions five different generations in *Works and Days* and praises agriculture, maritime and working; in addition to these he refers to how daily life should be. *Theogony* is his poem about the genealogy of gods where he tries to regulate and explain the world of the Hellenic gods. With this work, Hesiod contributes to cosmological fiction as well as making a mere arrangement.

Hesiod's universe is not a product of a purposeful creation which is generated by a creator; it is an *ex nihilo* formation. The cosmogony in his works is established with a purposeless purpose and a design that is not predetermined. In Hesiod, which presents Chaos as the first element of the universe, it is not used for referring to a pile of substances that have not yet been decomposed, but to a featureless void. How did Gaia (earth), Erebus (darkness) and Nyx (night) arise out of Chaos is not

described. The subsequent stages of creation are not process' that have been created by a single omnipotent creator; rather creation is simply a natural result of reproduction and generally acknowledge family as a prerequisite. Except for some parthenogenesis instances, all gods and goddesses are children that were born in consequence of intercourse of two gods. Parents give birth to new children as a result of a sexual reproduction. Since each one is immortal, the divine birth becomes a process of an increasing reproduction and diversification. The universe is the product of a divine fertility, not a creator; development depends on breeding, and it can be said that this reproduction and proliferation imply a humanly activity (Strauss Clay 2009: 14).

In order to comprehend Hesiod's universal structure accurately, his two books should be considered as a whole. In *Theogony*, Hesiod depicts the birth and development of the universe, the genealogy and the lives of gods from the time of Chaos until the time under the rule of Zeus in detail; in *Works and Days*, after giving a summary of the five ages up until his day, he speaks of mostly about everyday duties, people's lives and how a correct action should be. Hesiod's poems narrate both the divine and the humane worlds and draw the frameworks of these two worlds with mythical stories. The Hesiodic narration presents a holistic cosmology by giving information about the lives of both gods and humans, as well as the relationship between gods and people; neither gods nor mortals are excluded in this universe. The two works complement each other, forming a whole that explains the evolution of the universe from the beginning to the very end; from Chaos to the present. While *Theogony* describes the formation of the cosmos and gods, *Works and Days* tells how an ideal life should be in the universe which is ruled by Zeus and the conditions of a good life. These two artifacts, one depicts a divine universe and the other depicts a humane one, presents an entire cosmology when they come together.

When Hesiod's poems are handled together, they give the earliest and the most systematic and sustainable explanations of Greek culture to the still-continuing philosophical questions such as "What is the relationship between humans and God?", "Is the universe indifferent to human existence or does it have an effect on human life?", "How should people live?" etc. It can be said that Hesiod's view of

cosmology in his works is the first systematic presentation on the nature of divine and human universes, being and existence (Strauss Clay 2009: 2).

3.1.1. *Theogony*

Theogony, a poem of 1000 verses, begins with Hesiod's praise of the Muses. Hesiod said that he met with the Muses while he was shepherding on Mount Helicon. The Muses told him the life story of the gods. Hesiod does not forget to thank to the Muses while narrating that story poetically. After the thanking part, by gradually explaining the story of the formation of the universe and the birth of gods, he starts to create his cosmos. First Chaos, then Gaia has existed. Gaia creates Uranus through parthenogenesis. From her intercourse with Uranus the Cyclops, the Titans and the Hecatoncheires are born. When Cronus, one of the Titan siblings, grow up, he takes control of the universe by cutting off the testicles of his father who does not want him and his siblings. He marries Rhea and the reproduction continues. As breeding continues, the number of gods in the story also increases. In *Theogony*, hundreds of gods and goddesses are mentioned. The most substantial one is Cronus' son Zeus, who is named as the ruler of the universe and the father of gods. Cronus fears that his sons will kill and dethrone him, so he swallows his children alive when they are born. However, Zeus is saved by the help of his mother Rhea, and when he grows up, he poisons Cronus and seizes the kingdom just as Cronus did to his own father. With the prevalence of Zeus, the race of the Olympians begins (Woodard 2007: 86).

Theogony was written in an attempt to understand the universe and to draw a picture of a consistent and constant formation; the world, by extracting the divine family tree. For this reason, it shows a systematic progress; it is a systematic explanation of the origin of the gods. Although the work seems to draw a picture of a genealogy at first glance, it actually consists of two parts in itself. On the one hand, there is a systematic and objective narrative of the genealogy of the gods, and on the other, a mythical narrative of the events occurring since the first formation of the universe; more precisely, the significant incidents that cause the generation and development of the universe. The exact genealogy of the gods and the mythic parts that share divine stories, become a whole and constitute the poem. It is possible to formulate the work as "a chain of universal cycles formed by mythical stories plus the

genealogy of the gods". For example, while the gods that are born from the union of Gaia and Uranus are told in turn through the 125-155th verses; suddenly Uranus' story of captivating his children and being murdered by his son Cronus intervenes. This story continues until the 185th verse and then, the narrative returns to the genealogy again (Hesiod 2006: 19). In fact, as Leonard Muellner suggests, the parts about the gods and their births can be thought of as anecdotes for the preparation of the next chapter of the ongoing myth (Muellner 1996: 66). The myth also consists of three parts; the first period which began with Chaos and later the birth of Gaia, the second period under the rule of Cronus and the Age of the Olympians in which Zeus was the ruler. In the first period, with the birth gods of earth, sea, sky, sun, moon etc., the physical formation of the world and the existence of natural elements are completed. The gods of this early period are natural gods representing the concrete and physical elements in the generation of the universe. The gods of beauty, justice, abundance, wisdom etc., who are identified with abstract concepts and characterize moral actions as positive or negative begin to appear along with the Age of Cronus (Strauss Clay 2009: 21).

The interaction of the opposite elements in Hesiod's cosmos construct in *Theogony*, also has an important place. Feminine and masculine elements have an opposing positioning since the first birth. Although the Mother Earth Gaia creates Uranus as a partner for herself, she cannot tolerate imprisonment of her child and makes plans with her son Cronus to defeat him. Uranus, fearing that they will take away his sovereignty, hates his children and exiles them underground. Likewise, when Cronus becomes the king, he eats his children alive not to lose his throne, but mother Rhea cannot consent it and manages to hide his only son, Zeus, from Cronus. The masculine force wants to prevent change and maintain order, domination. It has no worries about the continuation of its breed because it is immortal. In contrast, feminine force is always in favor of birth and renewal. When Hesiod puts these two forces to oppose to each other, he cannot label one as worse than the other. Both sides are required; the cosmic order develops depending on the interaction and the tension between the feminine and the masculine. While the masculine force, by standing against change, provides stability and sovereignty, the feminine force promotes change and birth, thus stimulates progression by undermining order and

stableness (Strauss Clay 2009: 18). In addition to this, for Hesiod, everything in the development of the universe takes place with its antipole. After Chaos, Gaia, Darkness and Night come into existence. The Mother Earth Gaia creates Uranus, the God of Sky, as a partner and an opposite for herself. The Titans, the Cyclops and the Hecatoncheires are born from their marriage, and as the population increases, the birth of the new gods also increases. The universe gradually grows, slowly finalized. Darkness and Night unite and give birth in Brightness and Day. Eros, the God of Love, and Eris, the Goddess of Discord, hold the two main cosmic powers of the universe. The existence of opposites and reciprocal conflicts in Hesiod is one of the most important sources of the formation (Strauss Clay 2009: 19).

In *Theogony*, Hesiod describes the formation and the development of the universe, the life stories of the gods and their family ties by embellishing them with myths. The comprehensiveness of the poem which is supported by a deeply rooted genealogy, the integrity and the effort of universality; are the most characteristic features of *Theogony*, which collects many indigenous traditions and theogonies under a Panhellenic narrative.

3.1.2. *Works and Days*

Works and Days, Hesiod's poem where he addresses his brother Perses, also begins by calling out to the Muses as in *Theogony*. This time Hesiod does not praise the Muses but invites them to praise Zeus; “Muses, from Pieria, glorifying in songs, come here, tell in hymns of your father Zeus, through whom mortal men are unfamed and famed alike, and named and unnamed by the will of great Zeus.” (Hesiod 2006: 87). As the poem progresses, Hesiod begins to speak with Perses. The structure of the work is two-layered as in *Theogony*. While giving advice to his brother, Hesiod also intensifies narration by the help of myths. In this work, he also makes use of fables.

As the work progresses, it is understood that there is an inheritance dispute between Hesiod and his brother Perses. During the sharing of the goods from their fathers, Perses demanded much more, even though he had taken his part and applied to the court. Perses tried to bribe the judges to get a result from the court in favor of

himself, but Hesiod demanded a jury. Allegedly, *Works and Days* is Hesiod's pleading which he will read in front of the jury and the judges. (Strauss Clay 2009: 35).

Because of this disagreement with his brother, Hesiod in *Works and Days* calling Perses to give advice and to show him the right way. However, Perses is not the only addressee in the poem. The moral actions that Hesiod recommends are for both Perses and the indecent judges and kings who are the supporters of a corrupted order. Hesiod speaks to both his brother and the rulers. Beyond that, this dramatic monologue targets its reader as both an exhorted observer and a witness who has to learn a lesson (Strauss Clay 2009: 34). Although *Works and Days* seems to be Hesiod's call to his brother, his main purpose is to address both the reader and the kings and the men of justice of the era, to warn them not to deviate from the right way. The problem with Perses is not simply a problem of sharing goods; it is a problem of moral disagreement, a sought answer to the question of how to live.

Hesiod advises his brother to live rightfully and morally. The right life can be actualized by not using malicious and cunning ways, not deceiving anyone, not being unfair; by working honestly and being satisfied with what is deserved. There are two types of strives according to him; one is bad and the other is good. For example, if a person has an eye on another's property, if she pursues unfair gains, these are caused by bad strife. However, it is a good strife to admire people who are successful in their business and try to be like them, to work righteously and to deserve what was gained even if it is difficult. Life is hard, but what separates moral and immoral is the chosen manners for dealing with life. Hesiod advises his brother to work. It is essential to work for humans. He describes it with the myths of Prometheus and Pandora's Box (Woodard 2007: 106).

Prometheus is famous for making the first human from clay. He is Titan Iapetus and Themis' son. After the creation of the first human being, Zeus demands from people to make sacrifices for the gods. Prometheus deceives Zeus, offering him the bones and fat of an ox, while hiding its flesh and giving it to the people. Zeus gets very angry by this deception and hides fire from people. However, Prometheus gives fire back to people by stealing it back. Then, Zeus creates the first woman, Pandora, from

clay and gives her a box. In this box, there are so many evils and diseases. He sends the woman and the box to Prometheus. Afflicted by the beauty of Pandora, Prometheus opens the box, and with the opening, all the evil things are scattered out, causing the human race to suffer (Nardo 2002: 114). Afterwards, Prometheus is captured and enchained on a mountain, left to be eaten by eagles. Eagles eat the liver of Prometheus, but the liver restores itself every time. This is the eternal punishment of Prometheus. The punishment continues until Heracles unchains him (Hesiod 2006: 45). According to Hesiod's account, with Zeus hiding fire and sending Pandora's box to punish people, human beings are condemned to work to protect themselves from malice.

Hesiod, who advises his brother to work in order to be a moral person, presents a detailed chart of how to work in the second half of the poem. While the first half is about justice and morality, the second half is about family, social relations and work. Hesiod presents such a detailed narration that it is almost a farmer's calendar, an almanac. Many rules on neighborhood relations, the perfect ages for marriage, relations between rich and poor, how seeds should be planted, how to trim sheep etc. are explained. Narratives are both about praxis and ethics; almost like an applied ethics course.

Theogony is written with a more theological approach; it can be considered as a divine praise about gods. *Works and Days*, however, is a prayer, a guide for the return of the good days. While in *Theogony*, Hesiod serves the Muses in an obedient way, in *Works and Days* he becomes a deputy for the Muses, a messenger who conveys their advices. In *Theogony*, the authority is entirely in the hands of gods. But in *Works and Days*, the gods become somewhat out-of-focus and humanistic experiences came to the fore; the atmosphere of the work is not exhilarated or extravagant, but it is plain and realistic (Strauss Clay 2009: 79). In *Theogony*, the purpose is to explain the universe and the gods, and because of this reason it can be considered a more literal work. Nevertheless, *Works and Days* speaks of simple and daily tasks of life as they are. This time, Hesiod constitute his poem through human life, not through gods; his message is more practical and realistic, it concerns the human world (Woodard 2007: 105).

3.2. The Myth of the Five Ages in *Works and Days*

The Five Ages myth on the cosmological cycle of the universe is one of the most substantial parts of *Works and Days*. According to the narrative, there were five different eras; namely the Gold, the Silver, the Bronze, the Heroic and the Iron in the history of humanity.

The first one is the Golden Age, the period under the rule of Cronus. During this period, life is under the direct control of gods and free from toil and pain. People live in peace and happiness by benefiting from the spontaneous products of earth. Then comes the Silver Age where the human race is inferior to the people of the Golden Age. Childhood takes one hundred years, while adulthood is short and painful. People are disrespectful to each other, refuse to worship gods and sin. Zeus ends this period because of people's bad deeds. The next era is the Bronze Age. People of this age are fighters and barbarians. These terrible and brutal people attack each other and by constantly combatting they bring the end of their own race. The tools used in this age and the houses are all made of bronze. The fourth age, the Heroic Age, disrupts the order of ages that regularly corrupt, and it can be said that the most controversial part of the myth is this age. People of the Heroic Age are brave warriors with divine characteristics. They fought heroically in Theban and Trojan wars. Some of them died during the wars and the survivors were placed on the Blessed Islands by Zeus. They live happily on that island and spend a life like the Golden Age. The last period of the myth, the Iron Age, is the worst period according to Hesiod's narration. Hesiod, who also lives in this period, complains as "If only then I did not have to live among the fifth men, but could have either died first or been born afterwards!" (Hesiod 2006: 101) about the Iron Age. The people of this period live an immoral and selfish life and are disrespectful to gods and all living things. Evil and war are everywhere. According to Hesiod, when the time comes, Zeus will also annihilate the people of the Iron Age (Woodard 2007: 107).

3.2.1. The Heroic Age

Although it is not explicitly stated in *Works and Days*, theorists, claiming that there is an implication of degeneration that progresses regularly in the succession of ages,

agree that the Heroic Age disrupts the sequence of moral corruption. Yet, there are different ideas about why this age has been added to the poem by Hesiod.

Frederick A. Paley asserts that the part of the poem describing the Heroic Age was not added by Hesiod, but later, by the effect of epic poetry and reputation of *Iliad* and *Thebaid*, it was added by the Rhapsodists⁴ around 5th century BC (Paley 1883: 27). According to Paley's claim, the original text does not include the Heroic Age. However, the general belief about the Heroic Age that it was added by Hesiod himself. This chapter, which is considered to be added as a tribute to those who fought in Trojan and Theban, also reflects the emphasis on heroic elements felt in the literature of that period (Griffiths 1956: 109). For example, T. A. Sinclair alleges that the Heroic Age is a real historical event added to the myth. For him, this addition provides a transition from a mythical account of poetry to a literal historical narrative. This transition is ambiguous because it is ingeniously ingrained in the myth, thus it is not easy for the reader to realize that she is confronted with a real fragment of history. Sinclair remarks that by the narration of the Heroic Age, Hesiod conveys to his readers a true tradition, a real story about the Mycenaean Period⁵ in Greek history (Sinclair 1949: 68).

Jean-Pierre Vernant, who asserts that the perception of time in Hesiod's universal structure is not chronological but linear, brings a different explanation to the Heroic Age. According to him, the Heroic Age is not a shift in the course of the myth, but rather a complementary element. He states that, while telling the myth of the Five Ages Hesiod has two different purposes; to propose claims both for the humankind's ever-increasing moral decline, and the afterlives of people who have lived in different periods. Although Vernant claims that Hesiod has these two objectives, considering the Heroic Age, the second one becomes the main purpose of myth, he says. According to him, the cosmic perception of Hesiod follows a circular loop. The ages do not follow a chronological sequence, they are arranged in a way to create a

⁴ The Rhapsodists are professional poetry readers thought to have lived around the 5th century BC. In their performances they mostly included heroic poems such as *Iliad*, satires and poems that praise wisdom.

⁵ In Ancient Greece the period between 1600-1100 BC is called the Mycenaean Period or the Mycenaean Civilization.

circular integrity by being affected by the dialectics of anomalies within the system. Although the ages seem to imply an increasing corruption, Hesiod does not provide such an explanation in *Works and Days*. The ages are independent, they have no effect on each other's beginnings and endings. In simple terms, a period is over and a new period begins (Vernant 2006: 29). The line “Zeus the father made another race of speech-endowed human beings, a third one, of bronze, not similar to the silver one at all” (Hesiod 2006: 99) in the poem supports this description.

When Hesiod wants to assert a value judgment, he compares ages and almost always uses a certain formula; he compares two ages with each other through opposite values of justice and arrogance, *δίκη* and *ὑβρις*. There is a contrast between the Golden, the Silver, the Bronze and the Heroic ages that can be determined in terms of comparing these values. Considering the value judgments; where the Golden Age stands for the Silver Age, the Heroic Age also stands for the Bronze. Vernant discusses Hesiod's Five Ages myth by dividing them in three pairs. The first group of the Golden and the Silver ages, the second of the Bronze and the Heroic ages and the last one of the Iron Age. These three pairs are composed of two components, two of which can be considered as opposites; the positive side and the negative side. The first group of the Silver and the Gold ages is compared in itself. The moral value that is dominant in the first group is justice, and Hesiod compares the Gold and the Silver ages in terms of justice and establishes one of them as positive side and the other as negative. Those who live in the Golden Age are more virtuous than the people of the Silver Age considering justice. The second pair of the Bronze and the Heroic ages is evaluated through hubris. Since the perception of justice in the Golden Age is stronger than the Silver Age's, the Golden Race constitutes the positive race of the first set. In the second set, the positive side is the Heroic Age because hubris, which is a negative feature, is rarely seen among the people who lived in this period.

By these dichotomous comparisons, Hesiod aims to find what is right and what is ethical. While trying to transfer the negative aspects of each era to the reader, he does this by comparing them with the age that is more virtuous. Each pair contains just and unjust parts within themselves, and at the same time the pairs are in contrast with each other too. This contrast among the pairs provides an explanation for the

differences in what happened after deaths of people living in those times. For people living in the first group of ages, death is just a quality change. After these people die, they do not disappear but become godlike beings, and so, mortals continue to worship and honor them. Of course, there is a difference of degree between the dead of the Golden and the Silver Age; the respect that people receive after death in the Silver Age is far below than the respect in the Golden Age; but this does not change the fact that they are worshiped by mortals. In the second set, after death, people do not become divine beings; they just die and become lifeless. In the Heroic Age, some warriors were rewarded by Zeus and sent to the Blessed Island, but even they do not reach a divine level, they live and die as mere humans. Those who die in these two ages or who live on the Blessed Islands are simply forgotten. Unlike the people of the Silver and the Golden Age, they are not memorialized or honored. Unlike those who have reached the level of divinity, the warriors of the Bronze and the Heroic ages have no influence or power over the living, and no one worships them (Vernant 2006: 30).

According to Vernant, this explanation may seem to exclude the Iron Age while the Heroic Age is included in the sequencing of the myth, but although the Iron Age does not form a pair with another age, it contains two different periods in itself. In *Works and Days* Hesiod talks about the Iron Age and another age after that he describes as;

...at their birth the hair on their temples will be quite gray... They will dishonor their aging parents at once; they will reproach them, addressing them with grievous words-cruel men, who do not know of the gods' retribution! -nor would they repay their aged parents for their rearing. Their hands will be their justice, and one man will destroy the other's city. Nor will there be any grace for the man who keeps his oath, nor for the just man or the good one, but they will give more honor to the doer of evil and the outrage man (Hesiod 2006: 103).

Now, there is both justice and hubris in the Iron Age as a mixture; there are bad people as well as good people and life is in a state of balance, but the future will be worse than all times. Here, the comparison is made between the present and the prophetic future, and values are again emphasized over this comparison (Vernant 2006: 31). In this case, the Iron Age accommodates two opposite periods in itself and forms a pair which coincides with Vernant's theory.

With the end of the second period of the Iron Age, Hesiod's circular construction is completed. In the Golden Age, everything is regular and pure justice prevails. At the end, in the Iron Age, especially in the oncoming second part of it, pure hubris will rule the universe. By beginning with pure justice and ending with pure hubris, the cycle becomes complete. The cycle of the ages does not hit the bottom through a regular degeneration; the ages oppose and balance each other within this loop. Both hubris and justice have equal shares, and the cycle of the universe, which starts with pure justice, ends with the dominance of pure hubris. Time does not open itself chronologically, it actualizes itself through dialectic interaction (Vernant 2006: 32).

Vernant's theory about the Heroic Age (and the myth of the Five Ages in general) can be considered as a reasonable and a comprehensive explanation by taking Hesiod's conception of circular time and the importance of interaction of opposites for his cosmological construction which was mentioned in section 3.1.1. into account. The Five Ages myth follows a threefold model of dichotomies, and above this threefold structure, is the tension created by opposites that dominate the myth. The opposition, the transposition and the loop between hubris and justice forms the structure of the myth; the interaction between similarities and differences regulates and even determines the myth and Hesiod's cosmos. For Vernant, the originality of Hesiod lies in this contradictory construction (Vernant 2006: 48).

3.2.2. Metallic Nomenclature

Another controversial issue about the myth is whether metallic nomenclature actually arises from the chronological order of metal usage or not. It can be said that there are various theories about the nomenclature of the ages of the myth with metal names.

The generally accepted theory is that the use of metal names, especially the naming of the Golden and the Silver ages, is purely metaphoric (Griffiths 1956: 109). One of these is Ludwig Preller's allegorical explanation. According to Preller, the metals used in naming have a certain allegorical importance. Gold and silver are the names of the first two ages which are considered the best of all periods, for being precious metals. Since gold was known as the metal of the gods and acknowledged for symbolizing good luck and blessing the Cronus Age was called the Golden Age.

Silver was used to characterize the period that came after the Golden Age, because it is also precious but not as solid, bright and radiant as gold. Bronze and iron are non-precious but practical value metals. Bronze is often used in war materials and weapons; thus, the name was given to the period that stands out with its combativeness. Iron is the hardest metal and the most difficult to process. Because of that, the age where people lived and worked in difficult conditions, the age which is the worst of all five, was called the Iron Age. (Griffiths 1956: 110).

H. C. Baldry claims that the naming is semi-metaphoric. According to Baldry's claim, the Bronze and Iron ages were named in this way because these metals were used at those times. However, the nomenclature of the Silver and the Golden ages is completely metaphoric. Baldry, who asserts that in *Works and Days* there is no explanation for the usage of gold and silver during those ages, further states that the people living in the Golden Age actually have no knowledge of gold (Baldry 1952: 87). According to him, the nomenclature of the Gold and the Silver ages was not made as a result of the actual use of metals; the naming, that is told in Plato's *Cratylus* dialogue as "I suppose that he means by the golden men, not men literally made of gold, but good and noble" (Plato 1980: 398a) is a metaphor that qualifies morality and the beauty of this era. The aim of Hesiod is to reveal the situation of human beings at that time and beyond this, to explain the necessity of working. According to Baldry, he attempted to build a story in order to answer the question of why the Iron Age came to be full of hardship and toil, whereas in old days humankind lived in abundance and happiness and did not have to work. Looking back at the time, Hesiod saw that iron and bronze were used respectively, thus he chose to use more precious metal names for the older ages which were superior to his time. In this way, he called the age under the dominance of Cronus golden, which is the metal associated with gods; and for the next period, he deemed appropriate the name silver, that is a little less valuable than gold (Baldry 1952: 91).

In contrast to the general assumption, Sir John Myres raised a claim that Hesiod's schema of ages is an archaeological scheme. According to Myres, Hesiod's order for the Gold, the Silver, the Bronze and the Iron ages is a standard archaeological scheme, and the naming was made by associating the metals with the periods in

which metal was known and used (Myres 1908: 128). In the case of the Golden Age, it is undeniable that the religious and mystical associations of gold had an effect on its denomination, but the primary reason why Hesiod chose “gold” and other metals after it, was related to their presence and usage in those periods. The metallic scheme of the Five Ages myth is chronological and is consistent with the archaeological findings obtained by researches that were done in many different geographies. The discovery sequence of metals in the historical process is consistent with the order of the myth. In addition, Myres underlines that Hesiod's specific choice of bronze and iron is not only a metaphorical use, but it also emphasizes a practical value. According to Myres, it is reasonable to think that the choice of names of bronze and iron instead of different metals is rooted in their order of discovery and usage rather than being just a symbolic narration. Hesiod also explicitly states in the poem that bronze was used by people of the Bronze Age (Hesiod 2006: 99) and iron coming after bronze suits the chronological order (Griffiths 1956: 113).

It can be said that Sir Myres's Archaeological Theory overlooks Hesiod's ethical and theological emphasis over the metallic nomenclature. However, while it is important to consider the ethical and metaphorical contexts during the naming process, it is not correct to claim that the metallic names consist of purely symbolic analogies which are completely separated from the historical process. So then, Myres's theory on the naming of the ages brings about a reasonable explanation that corresponds to the historical process (Griffiths 1956: 112).

3.3. On Originality of Hesiod

There are many different views on whether the myth of the Five Ages (and therefore the myth of the Golden Age) mentioned in *Works and Days*, is an authentic narrative created by Hesiod. The three main opinions on this matter are that the myth was entirely created by Hesiod, it was gathered from an old story and the myth was taken from somewhere else, but that it was modified by Hesiod.

Baldry thinks that the theme of “good old times” is ancient and traditional, but the first person to associate it with “gold” is Hesiod. In addition, Baldry claims that all the subsequent writers who talked about the Golden Age picked this concept from

Hesiod. The idea that a happy, blessed and prosperous era was experienced in the ancient times belongs to traditional narrations that emerged before Hesiod's time. Before Hesiod called the era the Golden Age, this period was known as the Age of Cronus or the Saturnian Age, and in the traditional scheme it has no associations with gold. Hesiod is the first one that referred the Age of Cronus as the Golden Age. Thus, even though the entire narrative has not been invented by Hesiod himself, the metallic nomenclature, especially the naming of the Golden Age, is exclusive to him (Baldry 1952: 83).

In Ancient Greek culture, long before Hesiod, there were stories about the existence of a period or place, which was blessed with happiness and abundance. For example, Martin P. Nilsson asserts that the concept of "Elysium" could be traced to the Minoan civilization that existed between 3600-1400 BC and even to Egypt (Nilsson 1950: 545). Elysium is a place like the Blessed Islands. While some people go to Hades after death; those who have respected the gods during their lives, who are close to them, and the heroes that were chosen by the gods rewarded with a life on Elysium. The chosen people are blessed by the gods and live a happy and hassle-free life there (Peck 1897: 588). It can be said that when it is compared with Hades; Hades represents hell, while Elysium represents heaven. A second example on this matter is the story of the God of Death Yama, described in the Indian Vedas. According to the Vedas, which goes back to the 1700s BC, Yama, the king of an age of happiness like the Golden Age, became the king of heaven after the end of that era and took the blessed spirits with him to heaven where they lived happily ever after (Baldry 1952: 85). For Baldry, these two examples and suchlike old stories prove that Hesiod did not invent the general concept of the Golden Age myth but acquired it from different narratives.

Baldry, who accepted that the idea of good old days does not belong to Hesiod, still argues that Hesiod made a unique contribution to the myth, which is the naming of the age as "golden". Baldry, who says that Plato also attributed metallic nomenclature to Hesiod in his works, suggests a piece from the *Republic* as a promoter to himself (Baldry 1952: 87). In section 546e of the dialogue the statement "And rulers chosen from them won't be guardians very apt at testing Hesiod's races

and yours -gold and silver and bronze and iron.” (Plato 1991: 546e) promises that the metal periods belong to Hesiod. The inhabitants of Ancient Greece were traditionally familiar with the image of a happy past which was free from the hardships and evils. The idea of that kind of a happy age existed long before Hesiod, and Cronus was known as the king of that era. However, by comparing the Cronus Age with his own time and in order to emphasize its superiority, Hesiod called it golden for the first time in history (Baldry 1952: 92).

Baldry's assertion is an important argument not to be ignored, but when different cultures and mythologies are examined, it is possible to see that regarding the metallic nomenclature, Hesiod was under the influence of some ancient stories that existed before him. Especially in Iranian and Indian cultures there are myths similar to the Golden Age and the Five Ages.

In the Book of Daniel, the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar is told. In his dream, the king saw a statue with a chest and arms of silver, abdomen and hips of bronze, legs of iron, feet of iron and clay. The King consults with many sages, wizards, astrologists to interpret his dream (Daniel, Chapter 2). As Griffiths (1956) stated, according to the interpretation, the golden head of the statue represents Nebuchadnezzar himself. The silver, bronze and iron parts respectively symbolize the inferior kingdoms that would come after Nebuchadnezzar, and each would be worse than the previous one. Finally, the feet made of iron and clay stand for a decayed kingdom; one part of this kingdom is symbolized with iron and the other part is symbolized with clay. As shown, the remaining sequence, except for the clay part, follows the same order as Hesiod's metallic scheme. In addition, the order of metals in Nebuchadnezzar's dream indicates a deterioration and a decline like Hesiod's Five Ages myth. It is not possible to miss the similarities between the narrative of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in The Book of Daniel and the narrative of the ages in Hesiod's *Works and Days* and the Five Ages myth is thought to have roots in this Mesopotamian story (Schlegel & Weinfield 2010: 93).

A second example is Zarathustra's dream, a story of Iranian origin. In Bahman Yasht, it is told that Zarathustra saw a four-branched tree in his dream. According to the interpretation the branches of this tree, respectively consists of gold, silver, steel-

like metal and an alloy of iron and some other metal, symbolize each of the oncoming ages. People will be in direct contact with god when the period symbolized by gold comes. The other branches which are symbolized by different metals point to different races, and the last branch of iron and another metal symbolizes an unhappy and a miserable race that is under the control of evil gods and demons (Griffiths 1956: 116). It is reasonable to say that even though the tree in Zarathustra's dream and the Five Ages of Hesiod are not exact copies of each other, they are originated from the same sources.

Additionally, there are similarities between the alloyed branch, the clay and iron feet of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the last era of the five ages; the Iron Age. In *Works and Days*, for the Iron Age, Hesiod says "...for these people too good things will be mingled with evil ones." (Hesiod 2006: 103). Besides, when Vernant's theory mentioned in chapter 3.2.1., which claims that the Iron Age consists of two parts, is taken into consideration, it will be possible to see that the Iron Age contains a mixture, a duality. Although the mixtures mentioned in the other two narratives point to a mixture of upper and lower social classes or a division of a civilization into two, not the blend of evil and good; due to the fact that the last age of both Hesiod's myth and the other stories is composed of a mixture, it can be said that there is an obvious similarity, even a one-to-one interaction between the myth of the Five Ages, the story of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the narration of Zarathustra's dream (Woodard 2007: 140).

Baldry argued that these two dreams, which are paralleled with the Five Ages myth, were mentioned in the works that were written after Hesiod's time, and opposed the claim that the myth had been completely derived from another narrative (Baldry 1952: 91). When it is considered that The Book of Daniel was written around 160 BC and Bahman Yasht was around 6th century BC, Baldry's opposition can be recognized. However, as Roger D. Woodard (2007) points out, although the corresponding stories about Nebuchadnezzar's and Zarathustra's dreams are later than Hesiod, their origins are much more ancient. Despite these two narrations are of Iranian origin, in their backgrounds, Indian culture is influential mainly.

The circularity of the cosmic turn and the understanding of the deteriorative ages in this cycle are told many times in the Vedas, one of the holy books of Hinduism. Different ages are associated with different social classes. In Rigveda, the first part of the Vedas, the story of Purusha is told. According to the narrative, at the beginning of time there was a cosmic giant Purusha. By sacrificing this giant, the gods created the universe from his body parts. These pieces also determined the social classes. From Purusha's mouth the highest class of clergymen and rulers, from his arms and chest the class of warrior, from his legs the laboring class and from his feet the slave class were originated. Manusmriti, which is an ancient text on laws, the same story is narrated in a more expanded way. The dismemberment of Purusha created social classes; moreover, each part of Purusha represents a different period, a "*yuga*"⁶ in universe, and each of these periods were associated with different colors and classes, "*varnas*"⁷ In the Indian Mahabharata Saga, it is told that the creative god Vishnu declared the clergy as her mouth, the warriors as her arms, the working people as her hips and the slaves as her feet (Woodard 2007: 130).

Table 1: Time Periods and Corresponding Colors, Classes, Body Parts in Indian Cosmology

Indian Cosmology and Social Classes			
<i>Purusha's body parts</i>	<i>Classes</i>	<i>Yuga colors</i>	<i>Yugas</i>
Mouth	Clergymen/rulers	White	Satya Yuga
Arms and Chest	Warriors	Red	Treta Yuga
Legs	Working class	Yellow	Dwapara Yuga
Feet	Slaves	Black	Kali Yuga

Referring to Table 1, similarities between Purusha's body parts and the parts of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream consisting of different metals seems to be clear.

⁶ The name given to each period of the fourfold cosmic cycle of Hinduism. There are four *yugas* in a complete cycle; Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali.

⁷ Means both class and colour in Sanskrit.

Like in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream which states that each metal piece stands for a decadent civilization, the social classes and *yugas* associated with Purusha's body parts also imply a continuous descent. While Satya Yuga, the first era of the universal cycle that started with Purusha's sacrifice, is the best and the most righteous of all times, the last period Kali Yuga, which is also called the Dark Age, is the worst era where evil and ignorance reign over and people are sinful and immoral (Yukteswar 1977: 58). As for the myth of Zarathustra, it is a metal-related modification of the colors, *yugas* and social classes in Indian tradition. The order of descendant classes in Indian cosmology, starting with the highest class of clergy and ending with slaves and the associated *yugas* highly resemble the branches of the tree in Zarathustra's dream, which represent the respectively corrupted races descendingly (Woodard 2007: 134). In this case, it would not be wrong to say that these two narratives which are thought to have Iranian origins are affected by some older narratives of Hinduism's holy writings. Obviously, these two narratives that emerged in Mesopotamia were under the influence of the interaction with Indian culture.

Thus, it is possible to say that Hesiod's Five Ages is not an authentic narrative. Although the stories of Nebuchadnezzar and Zarathustra's dreams, that are acknowledged being parallel to the myth, are attributed to later times than *Works and Days*, it would not be wrong to argue that these stories are based on much older manuscripts and narrations. It is very likely that Hesiod was influenced by narratives in Indian and Iranian cultures while establishing the myths of the Five Ages and the Golden Age. In this case, the discussion of whether the Golden Age was created by Hesiod has found an answer. However, Hesiod's authentic usage of the myth, the modifications he has made on the myth, and the details he added should never be overlooked. Even though the myth was gathered from different cultures or influenced by older narratives; its place in *Works and Days*, its intended purpose, its message, the ethical emphasis ascribed to the myth and idealization of the Golden Age as a role model for the modern life is authentic and unique. It must be pointed out that it is very important to value Hesiod's contributions to Greek mythology and cosmology.

3.4. Hesiod's Objectives for Utilizing the Golden Age Myth in *Works and Days*

There are different theories and debates about whether Hesiod is the creator of the Five Ages myth, and whether the metallic naming is metaphorical or historical, however the place and the purpose of usage of the myth in *Works and Days* are clear. In the poem, that Hesiod wrote as advice to his brother, Perses, the utilization of the Golden Age myth has moral, political and economic goals.

3.4.1. Morality

Works and Days answers the questions of how to act in everyday life, how to behave to be right and moral, how human relations should be by presenting the Golden Age and the people living in that period as a role model, by opposing it with the Iron Age, and mainly by taking this contrast as a center. Hesiod in his poems may appear as an ordinary farmer-poet who knows about the traditional stories and gives advice on daily life through these narratives, but actually, he is a thinker who can manage to convey his own thoughts in a mythical form (Baldry 1952: 91). As Werner Jaeger puts it "In Hesiod we find more than passive submission to an urge for mythical narration: when he resorts to telling the old myths, he has actual problems in mind which he feels he is now equipped to answer." (Jaeger 1948: 12). Although the Golden Age takes a short part in the poem, it creates the backbone of Hesiod's concern, of the actual message he wants to convey. The people of the Iron Age live a corrupted and immoral life. People are not honest with each other; lawlessness and fraud have been interfered with every aspect of social, political and legal relations. Self-interest, selfishness, evil has become the character of people. The spiritual wealth has been sacrificed for the sake of material wealth, and the gods are no more respected. Hesiod, suffering from living in these times, is longing for the good old days.

The tone of the whole poem is moralistic. Although the disagreement between him and Perses appears to be the initial point of poem, starting from this argument Hesiod wrote *Works and Days* as a guide to counter all kinds of corruption and immorality. For this reason, even if Hesiod seems to address Perses, the poem is in fact aimed at all humanity. Hesiod's circular construction of cosmos marks the possibility that the

Golden Age can be lived again, and the advice about the righteous experiences of everyday life in *Works and Days* is an indication of the struggle to return to the good old days, the desire to recreate those conditions. This desire can only be achieved by working and ethical action. Hesiod's emphasis (especially on the Golden Age) is to explain the importance of working to Perses. First, the story of Pandora is told and how and why Zeus hid means of living (like fire etc.) from people is explained. When Prometheus opened Pandora's jar sickness, death and many other unspecified evils were released into the world. There will no longer be a perfect life as in the Golden Age. The abundance, yield and prosperity coming from the soil were taken from humans. Thus, at the center of Hesiod's ethical program is the virtue of challenging difficult work. Only through work upon work can one acquire the prizes of prosperity, divine support and glory which were long lost ever since the Golden Age (Burstein, Donlan, Pomeroy & Roberts 2004: 72). From now on, one can reach those living standards only by working, by her own effort. In the Golden Age, the human being, who is free from work and hardship, now has to work in the Iron Age. Working righteously is the condition of a good life.

By using the myth, Hesiod presents the Golden Age as an ideal example and advices to work morally to achieve the happiness and prosperity of this period both to his brother Perses and his readers. In the following parts of the poem, this moral work and its conditions are elaborated (O'Neill Gross 1945: 44).

Robert C. Bartlett, who explains the cause of increasing corruption and changing moral structure with death awareness, says that Hesiod's Golden Age is revealed as a descriptive example of a fair and moral life. According to Bartlett, as time move from the Golden Age to the Iron Age, death awareness of people increases, which in turn pushes individuals to injustice and unethical actions.

In the Golden Age, people lived without aging and without suffering; for them, death is not a bitter end where everything is over, it is like a sleeping state. People don't disappear after they die, they become semi-gods. In such a period where death is the first step in the transition from humankind to semi-god, it is not possible for people to become aware of their mortality because, simply speaking, people are not mortal

like their progeny in the Iron Age. For this reason, they did not fear death at that time (Bartlett 2006: 187).

In the Silver Age, childhood takes a long time and passes happily, but after that there is a short period of adulthood. Although this period is compelling and painful, it lasts for a short time. After death, people become semi-gods who live underground. While life was not as smooth and happy as in the Golden Age, the people of the Silver Age were not aware of their mortality also. Despite the fact that death is caused by diseases etc. it is not a painful process. After death, people become semi-gods like the dead of the Golden Age, but unlike them, the people of the Silver Age continue to live underground. The inhabitants of the Gold and the Silver ages, who experienced death as a painless process and then continued their lives as semi-gods, did not reach death awareness (Bartlett 2006: 88).

The first people who are truly mortal are those who lived in the Bronze Age. Their death does not come from gods, people kill each other mercilessly with their own hands during wars. The people who brought death by themselves, experience “the black death” in this period and after death they disappear into the depths of Hades without leaving a trace in the world.

Although the inhabitants of the Heroic Age died during battles, unlike the people of the Bronze Age, some of them were rewarded and sent to the Blessed Islands where they continued to live a life like the Golden Age. Those awarded warriors are different from the ones who fought in the Bronze Age, because by contrast with the ones of the Bronze Age, they have fought for a moral value. It can be said that the war of these heroes is a noble war. For this reason, they were not punished with death (Bartlett 2006: 190).

In the Iron Age, the universe began to swell with pure hubris. The people of this period are doomed to live a long adult life and are always close to death. Increased awareness of death haunts them; this awareness is discouraging and damaging to the human ego. The person who always carries the fear from death and is aware of her mortality, as Hesiod stated, has started to behave unjust and has become impudent to gods (Hesiod 2006: 103). For people who are aware of their mortality and know that

they cannot prevent death, each day of life becomes more valuable and the afterlife becomes insignificant. The consciousness of annihilation after death damaged the notions of afterlife and people became indifferent to the punishments or the rewards that will be given by gods after death; in other words, became indifferent to the concepts of heaven and hell. What is important for these people is the actual time and the maximum benefit that can be achieved in that time. Decrease in faith and respect for the gods, the necessity of working and the difficulty of providing material benefits prompted to individualism and gave way to unjust acts, unethical gains, self-reflection, prudence and wrongfulness. It has become the primary goal of people to achieve the most profitable gains in a short life; the concepts of justice, respect, honor, etc. have lost their importance. With the idea that there is no punishment or reward after death, human actions have become free from any moral concern because no matter how the life is lived, no reward will be received. The concrete existence of death and the idea of total annihilation made morality meaningless. For this reason, the moral collapse of humankind has reached its highest level in the Iron Age, where the people face with the fact that they are mortal (Bartlett 2006: 191).

For Hesiod, who is obliged to live within this ethical corruption that has reached its maximum level in the Iron Age, the Golden Age represents the pinnacle of a fair, moral and righteous life. The Golden Age, which is yearned, sought and hoped to return, is added to the poem as a narrative which takes on a moral duty of being an aid to explain how an ideal social structure and ethical order should be. The myth of the Golden Age depicts a concrete picture of the true, happy and blessed life for Perses, for rulers, for judges, for readers, for everyone that Hesiod called in *Works and Days*.

Vernant explains this case, the Golden Age as an example to the Iron Age, by linking it to his theory of three pairs. According to Vernant, each pair of the Five Ages myth which he divided into three categories, corresponds to a different social structure. The first group consisting of the Golden and the Silver ages stands for the ruler class, the second group of the Bronze and the Heroic ages symbolize the warrior class, and the Iron Age represents the working class. While Hesiod's main concern in *Works and Days* is to remark the importance of “*dike*”, there are two different aspects and

two main recipients of the message that is given through the poem. Firstly, Hesiod, who addresses the public of the Iron Age through Perses, tries to explain to them the importance of working and fair earning. Secondly, he calls the kings, but to them he does not advise to work, because these people do not have to work like the general public. Kings are responsible for the order of society and they have to be fair in order to be moral rulers, thus Hesiod's advice to them is being just. Vernant states that Hesiod believes the actions of rulers have a direct impact on the public. According to this, a king's fair and virtuous action will have a positive impact on people and encourage them to fulfill their duty to work righteously, while an immoral king who acts unfairly to his subjects will also be like him and will live a morally corrupted life where they despise virtues and have no respect for each other. Thus, the first condition, the most important virtue of a righteous life is to be fair because justice, like a first principle, fills the universe by spreading to all people starting from the rulers. Justice are provided by rulers and the people who live in this world of equity would also be fair. The Golden Age, as it embraces pure justice, is the positive side of the first pair that Vernant attributed the ruling quality in Hesiod's cosmology. Therefore, for the Iron Age, which is associated with the working class, it stands as a symbol of justice, like the rulers for the public. The liberation of the Iron Age from immorality and corruption can only take place through the example of the Golden Age, by trying to reach it. Just like a fair ruler affects all people, the Golden Age; even if it does not exist, an image or a myth of the Golden Age, presents the required moral model to the world that begins to degenerate, for justice to dominate the universe again. In *Works and Days*, the Golden Age takes place as a guiding element, as an equilibrating and ruling factor of the cosmic cycle which balances the corruptness of the Iron Age (Vernant 2006: 49). At this point, Hesiod's aim in telling the myth of the Golden Age is to try to present an ideal and fair paradigm to the reader; the addition of myth to the poem has an ethical concern.

3.4.2. Politics and Economy

Hesiod's other concern that arises among the lines of *Works and Days* is on politics and economy and therefore on social order. And these considerations are not detached from his emphasis on morality. He is determined to find a way out of the

corruptness of the Iron Age; thus, along with his concern about moral order, he also attends to the political and economic issues.

Hesiod's standpoint on morality, politics and economics can be called anti-historical. In contrast with the historical view, which acknowledges morality, laws and economics as a posteriori formations that are not innate for humans naturally, but came into existence and developed through time and experience. For Hesiod (and later for Plato) these conceptions are a priori; they rest upon the nature of humanity itself (Havelock 1964: 30). "...man has an unchanging spiritual nature which is either itself the source, or is created by the source, of a moral law both timeless and complete." (Havelock 1964: 29). Thus, the first stage of humanity (which is represented as the Golden Age in *Works and Days*), where this spiritual nature was the least depraved, is the purest stage of all and has the most solid perception of morality and laws; therefore the Golden Age is the ideal symbolization of the perfect political and economic environment.

This is the reason why Hesiod is concerned about the political and economic conditions of his own day and uses the Golden Age myth as an ideal example for economy and polity as he did in the matter of morality. As indicated by his formula, there is no history, legitimately, of civilization, no developmental advance in politics and ethics. One thinks back to a golden age presently lost, in which humanity in its pristine nature lived in close company with divine beings, in a Greek rendition of Eden. The present degeneration could be dropped and the Golden Age could return; but this could only be achieved through human effort, by regulating laws, economy and social order under the standards of the Golden Age (Havelock 1964: 31).

Besides the moral elements in the narration of the Golden Age, Hesiod draws attention to two more subjects; first, politics through the example of the perfect government in the Golden Age and second, economics and social order by the emphasis on co-operation and regulation of means of living.

In *Works and Days* there are several lines referring to the divine kingship as an ideal ruling. The verses 109-111 "Golden was the race... They lived at the time of Cronus, when he was king in the sky; just like gods they spent their lives" (Hesiod 2006: 97),

and 120-126 "...since the earth covered up this race, by the plans of great Zeus they are fine spirits upon the earth, guardians of mortal human beings: they watch over judgments and cruel deeds, clad in invisibility, walking everywhere upon the earth." (Hesiod 2006: 97) are about the divine ruling and its glory in the Golden Age. In 173a "Among these Cronus is king." (Hesiod 2006: 101) is told about the Heroic Age, about the dwellers of the Blessed Islands who lived a happy and bounteous life like in the Golden Age. In these times governing and therefore justice is under the control of gods or divine creatures; thus, the dwellers are living in a lawful and in all respects a just environment. This authority is related to the intelligence practiced by a compassionate ruler whose methods adjust to those precise and immortal types of legislative science as the ruler Cronus is the divine king and his practices are the ideal form of governing (Havelock 1964: 41). However, when the Iron Age came, this atmosphere is long gone, it no longer exists. Because the justice "will be in their hands, and reverence will not exist, but the bad man will harm the superior one, speaking with crooked discourses, and he will swear an oath upon them." (Hesiod 2006: 103). After these verses Hesiod, by addressing the kings, tells the story of the hawk and the nightingale as an elaboration of the virtueless and unjust rulers of the Iron Age.

As it was mentioned in the section above, the problem of justice has an important place in Hesiod's morality. However, it also plays an essential role in his concern on politics which presents itself especially between the verses 202 and 298. It is stated through the lines 221 to 225, there is a disorder at whatever unrighteous people drag "Dike" about by passing unjust decisions, and she pursues to the city and homesteads of people as she shouts out, conveying malice to those who drive her out and abuse her (Hesiod 2006: 105). In verses 223, 224 and 225 Hesiod also advocates that, a whole city will be punished or perish in consequence of the violations and wanton activities of a single wicked person; suggesting that unjustness can ruin not just the person that acts upon it, but an entire society, a whole city. Justice, conversely, guarantees every single beneficial thing, political as well as moral, not only for the just but for the whole population and the city of the just people will flourish. (Bartlett 2006: 193).

This understanding of “one person's actions can affect others” become more important when it comes to the rulers. Starting with the line 248 Hesiod addresses directly to the kings. On the subject of justice again, he states that;

There is a maiden, Dike, born of Zeus, celebrated and revered by the gods who dwell on Olympus, and whenever someone harms her by crookedly scorning her, she sits down at once beside her father Zeus, Cronus' son, and proclaims the unjust mind of human beings, so that he will take vengeance upon the people for the wickedness of their kings, who think baneful thoughts and bend judgments to one side by pronouncing them crookedly (Hesiod 2006: 109).

It can be clearly seen that Hesiod believes that the worse the king is, the worse the people. Under the ruling of an unjust, an evil ruler, the public will also be unjust. Moreover, it can be said that the unjust actions of the ruler can destroy a community independently of community's actions; Dike could punish them without discriminating who executed the bad deeds. Hesiod warns his reader that it is the people who will pay for the iniquity of kings (Bartlett 2006: 194). Thus, the rulers must be more responsible in their actions and behave justly to protect their people from the punishment of gods as well as themselves.

Vernant's theory of triple pairs, which is elaborated in the previous section, also substantiates Hesiod's emphasis on political justice and the notion of how one's actions can affect others. As Vernant states, each couple of the five ages refers to a different social class. While the couple of the Golden and the Silver ages stands for the ruler class, the group, which consists of two stages of the Iron Age, stands for the common people. The first pair made of the Gold and Silver is particularly concerned with the exercise of justice. By supporting Hesiod's idea that the actions of rulers have a direct impact on common people, he concludes that like the Golden Age, which is referred as the ruler class, it sets an example of an ideal life to the Iron Age, the working class; kings must be the perfect example for their subjects if they want a just and happy community, city (Vernant 2006: 31). As corruption increased through the ages, the corruption in politics also escalated. Kings became despots progressively, which prompted degeneration and extortion in laws and politics as well as in social life. At this point, in *Works and Days*, the narration of the Golden Age, besides being a moral example, sets a just example for the political states of today's governments and kings. For the reason that in the Golden Age the dominant

power was pure justice, the ideal form of political order must be organized under the example of the pure form of the concept, under the example of the government of the Golden Age. This can be further analyzed as kings must emulate to the kings of the good old times, primarily to the Golden Age and then to the Heroic Age; by being just, rightful and compassionate in political matters, in governmental issues, rulers must try to approach the standards of the king Cronus, which means to act almost in a divine-like state.

“The *Works and Days* emphatically teaches the necessity of the devotion to justice, if there is to be a healthy political life.” (Bartlett 2006: 204). Thus, Hesiod thought it worthwhile to give one's best shot to promote justice not only for a good communal life, but also for a sound political environment. And because the actions of the rulers affect their subjects immediately, they must follow justice more thoughtfully in order to execute a just and descent organization. Current cities are not governed by gods as in the Golden Age, thus it is not possible to avoid troubles and defects totally; what has to be done is to use every skill in humankind's power to mimic that ideal life of the time of Cronus in social and political life and administer the cities accordingly.

In respect of his financial concerns Hesiod lays emphasis on co-operation and distribution of goods and household economics.

About the Cronians, in lines 119-120 of *Works and Days*, it is told that;

ἐσθλά δὲ πάντα τοῖσιν ἔην καρπὸν δ' ἔφερε ζείδωρος ἄρουρα αὐτομάτη πολλόν τε καὶ ἄφθονον· οἱ δ' ἐθελήμοι ἥσυχαι ἔργ' ἐνέμοντο σὺν ἐσθλοῖσιν πολέεσσιν.

(They had all good things: the grain-giving field bore crops of its own accord, much and unstinting, and they themselves, willing, mild-mannered, shared out the fruits of their labors together with many good things, wealthy in sheep, dear to the blessed gods.) (Hesiod 2006: 96-97).

The word ἔργον, although is usually translated as “the fruit of labors, goods”, also means “work”. So, while Hesiod was writing these verses, he did not mention an equal and volunteer sharing of foods only, but also the sharing of the workload. An objection can be made considering people did not have to work in the Golden Age, so it is not possible to mention willing work or work sharing. This objection can be valid if work is taken by its very basic meaning; however, it will be far more meaningful to say that Hesiod here, used the word not to indicate an actual, physical

activity, but to refer to co-operative relations among people, to a collectiveness. Havelock analyze these lines into two subjects: First, the Cronians enjoyed a distribution of works and second, this distribution of works was willing and gentle. In these lines, he says, something different is included; a veiled challenge against economic competition and war, a longing for a utopia where co-operative relations would be instinctive *per se* (Havelock 1964: 37). Thus, it is safe to assume that, while idealizing the life in the Golden Age, Hesiod had a life of equality in his mind, regarding both division of labor and the products of work. For him, the Golden Age displays the divine and perfect sort of government, a peaceful utopia of distributed functions willfully performed with co-operation and equality in contrast to the inequal, material, hard and imperfect conditions of the Iron Age; that is why he sets it as an ideal example over and over again for the major areas of life of the Iron Age like morality, social matters, politics and economy.

In addition, Hesiod is also a good economist. Barry Gordon states “Perhaps the clearest Greek assessment of the economic problem as it is widely understood by many economists at present, is to be found in the pre-Aristotelian manuscript by Hesiod.” (Gordon 2005: 396) about him and his poem *Works and Days*.

Hesiod underlines the problem of obligation to work. People have to work, because the means of life are not as bounteous as in the old times. This scarcity of goods is explained by two stories: Zeus hid the means of life due to Prometheus’ disobedience and after Prometheus stole fire back, he sent Pandora’s Box full of evils and hardships; thus, life, therefore the *βίος*, was corrupted through the five ages. In both cases, the means were diminished and became hard to gain. Thus, it is needed to adjust wants to the available resources. Fortunately, these resources are not rigidly limited; they can be enhanced and work is the way to increase the resources of means of life. Work is an obligation for balancing and strengthening economy.

Human presence is commanded by ends, which are condensed as the fulfillment of "ease and peace" as existed in the Golden Age when means were abundant and life was harmonious and easy, free from hardships and evils. However, as the ages changed, these conditions have totally reversed. In the present day, the people of the Iron Age “...will not cease from toil and distress by day, nor from being worn out by

suffering at night, and the gods will give them grievous cares.” (Hesiod 2006: 103). The reason for this change, according to Hesiod, is that gods hide the means of life as a penalty for humankind and this led to scarcity of resources, ends-means contradiction. For this reason, he invokes help from gods along with indicating earthly and just methods for an economic regulation to solve the contradiction and to overcome unequal distribution of goods and work.

Although Hesiod calls for a constitution of a general code of social equity to ensure the welfare of the poor against the arbitrary use of power by the rich, he mainly pays attention to domestic economy. His world is a rural village, a small-scale farm in Boeotia, thus his view is mostly limited to a micro-economic level (Gordon 1975: 3). He sees the essential reality of the neediness of humankind and pursues the ramifications of that primordial actuality into all its consequences in the life of a farmer. *Works and Days* includes a well-designed analysis of issues of scarcity, distribution of assets and at the micro-economic level and tries to underline the importance of these issues for human prosperity (Singer 1958: 33). Hence, although the words *οἰκονομία* and *οἰκονομος* do not take place in *Works and Days* (as the word *οἰκονομία* first appeared in the writings of the 4th century BC), it will be more accurate to say that Hesiod’s concern is about *οἰκονομία*, which indicates activities of management, or organization of people and goods belonging to an *οἶκος*; a house, a family household, a dwelling place or a homeland (Liddell & Scott 1996: 1204). The issue in his mind is how to counterbalance human needs and household requirements with given or acquired resources.

At this point The Golden Age, again, presents as a model of equality and the ideal life of satisfactory resources for the people of the Iron Age, where the limitation of goods emerged. Although it is not possible to speak of an economic order or *οἰκονομία* in this age, because under the direct management of gods a humane system for regulating household finances or balancing means and ends is not needed; the Golden Age pictures a clockwork order of life as a whole, the aforesaid fulfillment of ease and peace, it provides a guideway in matters of economics and alleviation of the means-ends contradiction. Hesiod refers to and also inspects the Golden Age to see how to maintain a self-sufficient life, how to organize *οἰκονομία*

at its best, how to enhance resources or to be content with the gained goods and how not to be crushed under the force of the land owning aristocrats which is totally opposite of the state of equality in the Golden Age. And through the poem, he gives advice and almanacs for a life where the work is mandatory, but the issues of *οἰκονομία* and problems caused by scarcity of *βίος* can be reduced.

Hereby, Hesiod's agenda for using the Golden Age myth in *Works and Days* has three fundamental purposes. The first is the foundation of a moral order and harmony in society. The second is the establishment of a just political state. And the third is structuring an economic system which promotes co-operation, reduces the means-ends contradiction and eliminates unequal distribution of product and work. For him, the Golden Age represents the culmination of these three subjects he has in mind and he uses it as an ideal example to look and to imitate for enhancing the degenerated circumstances of the Iron Age.

There are two primary reasons, which clarify Hesiod's significance for the historical backdrop of thought. Firstly, because his intense emphasis on adverseness, he provides a basis for the issue which will later become one of the most focal problems in moral philosophy; there is or there should be a decent society and it has specific qualities. The tradition of attributing certain measures and ideal boundaries to the political and social order began with him. Secondly, he is the starting point for the anti-historical view which acknowledges that the social norms are a priori and everlasting, yet have been lost impermanently, because of his drastic dismissal of the current system and his powerful endeavor to picture these principles by reflecting them into the past (Havelock 1964: 40). This retrospective view of favoring the past as ideal and recognition of certain social, moral and political characteristics received a grandiose endorsement from Plato. While supporting the Hesiodic attitude, Plato also improved his approach in the contexts of politics and social classes.

CHAPTER 4

PLATO

THE GOLDEN AGE MYTH IN THE *STATESMAN* AND THE *LAWS*

4.1. The Platonic Myths

Mythology is an indispensable part of Plato's philosophy. His myths and his dialectic are complementary and interdependent. Reflection on the utilizations and place of myth in Plato is in fact fundamental for understanding his origination of theory and its techniques. Although it can be said that his early works are myth-free, his later dialogues are abundant in mythological tales. Beginning with his middle period, myths appear to have a solid and important place in the Platonic universe.

There are several views regarding the Platonic myths. Hegel, for example, asserts that myths are fitting just for the early ages of humanity; when reason has grown up and has developed, they become outdated. The ancient rationalists also found myths worthless for acquiring knowledge; thus, they condemned Plato for resurrecting the old superstitions. In response to this attitude, Neo-Platonist defended that myths in the dialogues were allegorical and they had intrinsic philosophical value. For Kantians, the Platonic myths operate as instruments for human reason to point the intellect at appropriate fields which can be understood through reason, by regulating the impenetrable sphere of the transcendental. For Romanticism, mythical fantasizing in the dialogues is a way to approach the higher truth of divinity. Pragmatists considered myths as gadgets, by which Plato expected to trigger activeness in people. No matter how different these views are, they come to an agreement at the point that Plato used myths as a bridge between reason and imagination, between reality and

understanding; through the myths, he tried to establish a link between the irrational nature of humankind and its rational part (Edelstein 1949: 464).

Plato does not approve the literal or allegorical interpretation of myth in Classic Greek. He thinks that this kind of approach to the myth is not an effective way for gaining knowledge. To illustrate his attitude on this matter, an example from the *Phaedrus* can be given. In the dialogue, Phaedrus brings up the story of Oreithuia and Boreas, and talks about how the clearness of the water of Ilissus River was caused by Boreas' abduction of Oreithuia. Then he asks Socrates if he believe this story to be true or not. Socrates' answer implies a cynicism. He says "...although I find these kinds of interpretations fascinating, they are the work of someone who is too clever for his own good." (Plato 2002: 229d) and states that this kind of knowledge is rustic, which is inconclusive and fruitless, and it can scarcely ever be brought to completion. So then; it can be clearly said that even though Plato finds mythical stories amusing and charming, he is against the idea of acknowledging them as real causes of worldly events, literal explanations of physical phenomena. Instead, he wants to establish a new kind of mythology. His myth is a story combined with *logos*, a tale which is reasonable and not mere fiction. The myth, to him, is a story formed at will. Thus, it does not oppose with reason. Mythological tales, in his grasp, is genuinely an instrument of the human rationality (Edelstein 1949: 466). Regarding this explanation, in the *Gorgias*, before telling the story about Tartarus Socrates states that "...seems just a legendary tale to you but is fact to me; what I am going to tell you I tell you as the truth." (Plato 2004: 523a). Plato aims to escape from transmitting or establishing an erroneous image of humanity and world. He definitely does not throw away the classical mythology or find it somehow valueless and empty; but he tries to provide philosophically correct versions of these stories. Hence, he renders *logos* an indispensable part of mythology.

It is said before that in Plato, myth and dialectic are coexisting and interdependent. In the Platonic dialogues, from one viewpoint, it is moved more than once from the portrayal of a myth to an investigation of its significance, and then again, the serious development of logical *diairesis* over and over leads into a story. The two types of discourse are fundamental in light of the fact that, albeit each one is indisputably

unique in relation to the next, in any case each offers a subsidiary access to truth. In Plato's writings, without *logos* there would not be any confirmation, examination, verifiability, nor reasonability; however, without *muthos* there would not be any depiction, any conviction and any enthusiastic inspiration to stimulate people. The two parties are essential for both discouraging individuals from settling on wrong life decisions and pulling in them to make the correct ones. This can only be achieved through blending myth and the dialogue together. Thus; the Platonic writings can be identified as forms of *muthologia* (Most 2012: 23). Plato does not consider myths as mere fabricated stories. He believes that the mythical tales are "...as a whole, false, though there are true things in them too." (Plato 1991: 377a). Because of this, by highlighting the *logos* part of the myths, he tries to enhance them as the sources of legitimate knowledge and as valid instruments for educational purposes.

In the light of these explanations about Plato's approach to myths, it can be said that the myth does not have an allegorical value as in the Neo-Platonistic perception because Plato himself refused this by referring to knowledge acquired through allegorical interpretation as "rustic". Nor it has a deeper divine meaning or knowledge like the Romanticists said, due to the fact that in the Platonic thought reason is always superior to mythology; myths just serve for reason (Edelstein 1949: 467). For Plato, myths are instruments for both conveying values and inherited traditional explanations and conveying some kind of truth or knowledge about the world and humanity itself. Thus, they are not gibberish stories at all; in fact, they are very valuable and indispensable for intellectual investigations and analysis. At this juncture, it can be said that Plato fixes the meaning, the connotations of the word "myth". However, when compared to another discursive practice, which is philosophy; they are considered subservient (Brisson 1998: 7).

Now then, what can be classified as a myth in dialogues? What are the characteristics of the Platonic myths? The complexity of this issue has driven many researchers to look for some single and explicit basis that would enable them to distinguish those pieces of Plato's writings which could be viewed as myths. For example, in consecutive centuries, Louis Couturat and Robert Zaslavsky submitted that the existence of the word *muthos* can be the sufficient criterion for the search of the

presence of a myth, which failed drastically because there are passages in the dialogues where the word *muthos* takes place but are not myths; on the contrary, there are some significant Platonic myths which Plato does not refer as *muthos*. Alfred Croiset asserted length and the uninterruptedness of speeches as a criterion, but it was also not efficient because there are several passages in the dialogues which meet this criterion yet are not mythical narrations (Most 2012: 15). When those one-dimensional criteria dependent on form or content failed to cover Plato's mythical approach, a new and more interpretative analysis of myths was started to be searched. In Glenn Most's (2002) essay on the Platonic esoteric myths, it is stated that from Konrad Gaiser's and Luc Brisson's substantial attempts on this matter, eight criteria were derived. First, the Platonic myths are generally monological. Second, they are always narrative or descriptive; are never structured dialectically. Third, the Platonic myths either takes place in the beginning or at the end of a logical analysis. Fourth, they are not about recent events; they stem from a cultural, traditional recollection of past that are transmitted orally through generations in time (Brisson 1998: 17). Fifth, their authority comes from their traditional background and generality. Sixth, myths in dialogues are necessarily told by an old age narrator to a young age listener. Plato believes that younger people receive myths better than the older; he identifies recipient of a myth as a *παῖς* or a *παιδίον* (Brisson 1998: 62). Seventh, the communication of myths arouses amusement, pleasure and inspiration (Brisson 1998: 75). And last, the Platonic myths are not verifiable or falsifiable. For Plato, *logos* represents the falsifiable discourse; whereas *muthos* does not, because the referents in mythological stories are unattainable for both perception and reason (Brisson 1998: 137). These criteria, when applied appropriately, are effective for determining most, if not all, of the Platonic myths in dialogues.

Regarding the characterization of the Platonic myth, two types of myths can be elaborated: the myths about the creation and the history of humanity which can be said more scientific and are naturalistic and historical, and the myths about the life of the soul before and after life that consider mostly ethics.

The first type of creational, historical myths is related to Plato's epistemology. For Plato, only the ideas, the eternal and unchangeable forms can be understood by

reason. The ideas, although they are the source of genuine and universal knowledge, cannot give information about the changeable individual. Thus, for understanding becoming itself, the changeable history of humanity, mythical stories, which can imitate and represent change, are essential. This kind of mythology is the pursuit of history of creation and humanity (Edelstein 1949: 467). However, by their own changing nature, these stories cannot be grasped by reason either; so, they, at best, can be assumptions, probabilities.

Plato already had some presuppositions that he considers indubitably true, such as there are eternal ideas and God created the universe under the example of them etc. In that case, why are these stories told at all? Why didn't he just basically say that "God created the universe and then people" if this is all that can be known and the rest of it is just opinions, guessworks and approximations? Four reasons can be accounted on this matter. First, in the *Statesman* by saying "...we shall put it to use in order to see how great our mistake was when we gave our account of the expert in kingship and statesmanship in our preceding argument." (Plato 1995: 274e) Plato accredits the myth for clarification of logical difficulties and correction of logical mistakes. Second, again in 268e in the same dialogue, by likening the myth to a *παιδιή*, he refers to the amusement effect of the myth as a usefulness. Third, the myth is also useful for the education of pupils, because young minds are more open to mythical tales; therefore, delivering thoughts to reside in pupils' souls and engaging them in dialogue are more effective through using myths (Edelstein 1949: 470). Lastly, as Plato mentioned in the *Timaeus* that searching for knowledge is an activity both approaching and cherishing divinity (Plato 2008: 90c), it can be derived from there that philosophizing over mythical tales is also a way to cherish, to celebrate divinity. As things stand, although Plato does not find myths totally credible, he appreciates them as being entertaining and engaging stories that are likely to be true.

The second type of myths are about the soul's fate before and after life, depicting the possible punishments and rewards. These myths are postulated in the dialogues with an ethical attitude. With respect to morality and virtue Plato's stand can be referred as moral intellectualism; that is, for him, to know is to do. The individual who knows about the ethical concepts, about virtue, about justice etc. should automatically act

according to them; the soul which remembers the ideal forms of moral notions better, would act more ethically than the others that does not remember. Thus, in morality, at that point, the case stands in contrast to natural science and history. The reason can grasp the field of ethics; in this way, ethics can provide knowledge. The first type of myths about natural science and history of humanity, steps in when the human knowledge comes short with explaining the creation of the universe and humanity, because these issues are bygone; they are not present at the current moment, and not attainable through experience and reason. So that these myths cannot produce genuine knowledge; they are at best probable estimations. The explanations told by these myths do not provide knowledge, they substitute knowledge. However, unlike these types of myths, instead of substituting the place of knowledge, the ethical myths provide additions to rational knowledge as they talk about ethical concepts (Edelstein 1949: 473). Still, there is another aspect of the ethical myth that transcends knowledge when it talks about the realms of before and after life which are not possible to know at all. At this point, like the natural myths, the ethical myths too replace knowledge; by making assumptions about the fate of the soul, the life before humanity, the rewards and punishments coming from gods, these myths soothe human anxiety even though the narrations are only approximate predictions that are not possible to verify or falsify. Providing knowledge or not, the ethical myth has various purposes in the Platonic dialogues. First of all, by depicting the rewards and punishments of afterlife, the myth stimulates the soul of the reader/the listener and while encouraging virtuous actions they also help discourage immoral behaviors. As it is stated in the *Phaedo* “One should repeat such things to oneself like a spell.” (Plato 2002: 114d). The moral myth talks to humanly passions. It satisfies expectations, excites and enhances spirit and if it is necessary, enforces fear and through these it strengthens moral understanding of people. These depictions of rewards and punishments, pleasure and pain in the ethical myths can also influence intellect and help people to make up their minds by providing a clarification about ethical issues (Edelstein 1949: 474).

Neither the ethical nor the cosmological and historical myths can be cut off from Plato’s philosophy because he aims to induce and care both the rational and the

irrational parts of the soul. And the main objective of the Platonic myths is to reconcile both the rational and the irrational parts of the human nature.

The myth, shaped in accordance with reason, brings to the realm of the passions the light of the intellect; it instigates man to act with hope and confidence toward the goal which reason has set before him. Through the myth the inner core of man's existence receives the commands of the intellect in terms that are adequate to its irrational nature (Edelstein 1949: 477).

In short, it would be accurate to say that the Platonic myth is the conscious appropriation of traditional stories for philosophical goals. It does not belong to the actual reality, but it obtains components from it and tradition. Plato acknowledges myth as a poetic device, but in dialogues he operates on it by grounding it also in knowledge. Thus, the myths of the Platonic dialogues are poetic, mimetic elements modified and improved to be philosophical images which are founded on knowledge (Collobert 2012:87). And these images are used for mainly two purposes; explaining the now-unattainable field of creation and history of humanity and extending the ethical knowledge and moral perception.

4.2. The Golden Age in the *Statesman*

The myth of the Golden Age, as it has an important stand in both literature and philosophy, also found itself a place in Plato's thought. By being a mourner of the ideal order especially in political issues, Plato makes use of the myth in his various dialogues both explicitly and implicitly. The *Statesman* and the *Laws* are the two dialogues in which Plato uses the Golden Age myth outstandingly.

The *Statesman* dialogue, as it can be derived from its name, was written in the search for the definition of the true statesperson, the royal ruler. The dialogue mainly has two parties; the Young Socrates and the Stranger from Elea, where Socrates is mostly the listener and the Stranger is the leader of the discourse. The Golden Age myth, which takes part in the opening sequence of the dialogue, has a significant role in the course of events in discussion and is indeed great in scope, detailing the two epochs, the Age of Cronus and the Age of Zeus, of the universe and origins and conditions of life in both cases.

4.2.1. The Myth

The *Statesman* is one of the most distinctive instances of the Platonic *diairesis* method. Starting the inquiry of defining the statesperson, first, two types of episteme are determined which are practical and gnostic. The gnostic knowledge is founded to be more suitable for the royal science, which is the knowledge a king should have. Then, the gnostic knowledge of political science is divided into two as discriminative and injunctive. Injunctive gnoscics are fitting better; from there another dissection is made in the search of the appropriate subject of this injunctive gnostic knowledge, which turns out to be that ensouled animals are the proper candidates over the soulless objects. In order to narrow down the proper group that is subject to injunctive political knowledge, successive dichotomies are made. Finally, it is found that the statesperson who has the injunctive cognitive knowledge of the royal science is the caretaker of human beings who are ensouled land herds, consist of pedestrial, hornless, private-generating, two-footed, not-winged individuals. However, at this point, the Stranger notices that they made a mistake. He realizes that there are other people who can be considered as caretakers of this specified herd of humans; such as physicians, merchants, foodmakers. He asks;

Then our fears a little earlier were right, when we suspected that we should prove in fact to be describing some kingly figure, but not yet accurately to have finished the statesman off, until we remove those who crowd round him, pretending to share his herding function with him, and having separated him from them, we reveal him on his own, uncontaminated with anyone else? (Plato 1995: 268c).

From there, in order to find a correction for the mistake they made, he starts telling the myth about the movements of the universe and the Age of Cronus by stating that "...it will be a filling contribution towards our exposition of the king." (Plato 1995: 269c).

Starting at line 269c the myth is told by the Stranger. Once upon a time god ruled the universe himself, regulating and guiding its movements and life in it. But when the circuits were completed and the time assigned to the universe was over, god let the universe go on its own. It started to turn to the opposite way because its movement had to change after god's release due to the fact that only god is unchangeable and permanent; and the only possible change for the universe is the rotation of its

movement because it is not possible for the place and the way of its movement to undergo a change. The universe, as being autonomous, kept its order by remembering the time under the rule of god for a while. However, as the memory became weak after a while, the order in the universe began to deteriorate. Most of the population could not adapt and died because of the backwards movement. The ones that did not die, without the help of god who took care of them, became helpless and vulnerable. They had to find new ways to survive and organize their lives accordingly. Although life became a little easier with the gifts given by some gods (fire from Prometheus, arts from Hephaestus etc.) who felt sorry for them, their lives had changed radically. As the forgetfulness and irregularity of the universe ascended, the goodness decreased and the evils began to increase, life became more and more immoral. These are the conditions of the current life according to the myth. The time before that great change was the Age of Cronus, the Golden Age as the Stranger states. About the Cronians he says;

... none of them was savage, nor did they cat each other, and there was no war or internal dissent at all ... A god tended them, taking charge of them himself, just as now human beings, themselves a kind of living creature, but different and more divine, pasture other kinds of living creatures more lowly than themselves; and given his tendance, they had no political constitutions, nor acquired wives and children, for all of them came back to life from the earth, remembering nothing of the past; but while they lacked things of this sort, they had an abundance of fruits from trees and many other plants, not growing through cultivation but because the earth sent them up of its own accord...What I describe, then, Socrates, is the life of those who lived in the time Kronos; as for this one, which they say is in the time of Zeus, the present one, you are familiar with it from personal experience (Plato 1995: 271e-272b).

The myth here has the function of clarifying the two phases of the universe and how the current life is different from the Golden Age's. Through the myth, it is understood by the interlocutors that two mistakes were made in the search of the definition of the statesperson. First, the statesperson which is looked for in the discourse, is a human and therefore god Cronus, the divine shepherd, is not an equal to it, but it is the highest form of it. The myth which has a criterion role here, warns against angelism, which could lead to mistake divine for human statespeople, the Age of Cronus with the current cycle (Vidal-Naquet 1978: 136). And second, the art of ruling must be called herd-caring like Cronus did in the Golden Age by dealing with every aspect of life and people directly, not herd-rearing as it was done before this point.

After this point, the true king is distinguished from tyrants and for clarifying the act of kingship the weaving analogy is made. It is found that the art of ruling belongs to the art of measurement part of weaving, which does not measure numbers but measures through means. The question that who can have this kind of knowledge is asked. By searching the five types of regimes -monarchy, aristocracy, tyranny, oligarchy and democracy-, it is determined that a state must be ruled by only one or two people because the greater the number of people in government, the less likely it is to attain genuine knowledge of kingship. Then it is discussed that a true king does not always have to obey the law; because laws are fixed, but the areas in which they apply are always open to change. Laws can fall short in comprehending and encapsulating the everchanging individuals and states. The rules are established because the whole needs regulations, but a genuine ruler does not have to follow laws word by word all the time, she should act according to her insights if needed (Horn 2012: 414). And it is stated that the justness of the king also determines the justness of laws and the society. Approaching the end of the discussion, the statesperson is separated from rhetoricians because they do not educate people, they persuade them by telling stories and the statesperson must be an educator; from generals because a king must know how to reach a decision in case of a war, but generals are subordinates who just take orders from the king; and from judges because they only enforce laws that are set by the statesperson. In line 305e, the first explicit definition about the statesperson is given as "...the one that controls all of these, and the laws, and cares for every aspect of things in the city, and weaves everything together in the most correct way." (Plato 1995: 305e). Finally, the sought out statesperson is determined as the one who has the gnostic injunctive knowledge of kingship, cares for the human flock, enforces laws but is also insightful about laws and conducting individuals, is an educator, is just and brings together the inconsistent parts of the community and the city peacefully while eliminates the harmful components mercilessly. By referring to the weaving allegory again and emphasizing the integrative role of the true ruler, the discourse is ended. The dialogue is completed by reaching the searched definition of the statesperson.

4.2.2. The Function of the Golden Age Myth in the *Statesman*

The myth is supposed to enlighten the definition of the true ruler and clarify why the explanation of the statesperson as the shepherd of people has turned out to be unusable in the present age. The narration can fulfil this aim in a conceivable manner only if it is constructed as an antithesis between a current and a previous age (Horn 2012: 405). This cosmic myth is postulated to present the divine and perfect type of administration in contrast to the current mortal and imperfect state, to judge the present by referring to a long-gone Golden Age (Havelock 1964: 42).

Plato's account of the Golden Age in the *Statesman* has some definite characteristics. First of all, the two epochs of the universe are in an infinite loop. One age ends and the other age begins. The Age of Zeus will eventually end; due to the inevitable corruption in the current cycle god will take back the authority and restores the stability of life, thus it will be followed by the next era of Cronus, and so on for perpetuity (White 2007: 50). There is a strong emphasis on the recurrence of the Golden Age. Second, because at the onset of each cycle severe destructions and catastrophes happen, survivors have to make a fresh start of civilization. Hence, both in the beginnings of the Golden Age and the Age of Zeus there are no acquaintances with technology, metals and tools. In the Age of Zeus, people have to make a fresh start of civilization and make discoveries and inventions all over again, because the universe is left alone and god is not helping them. However, in the recurrent epochs of Cronus, there is no need for technology as God and several deities are there to regulate life directly; people have everything they need already spontaneously. For this reason, there are no tools or weapons invented. Third, without the need for discovering metals there is no gold or silver or any kind of metal that can be used as money. It is also mentioned that ownership does not exist in the Age of Cronus. Hence, there is no poverty or richness; people are socially equal. Fourth, the lack of metals, tools, weapons, gold, money and property and the abundance of natural products and food ensure a peaceful environment because people do not have subjects to fight about. Fifth, there is no urbanized life, no laws, no political order; besides these are not even needed. In the presented Golden Age, people are good,

simple and innocent. All these features constitute an organization that can be referred as primitive perfection (Havelock 1964: 45-47).

By looking at the narration of the Golden Age and its characteristics in the *Statesman*, it is hard to miss that for Plato, this period under the ruling of Cronus depicts an ideal picture of how a governance should be. And, as it is stated by the Stranger himself as “It’s a hard thing, my fine friend, to demonstrate any of the greater subjects without using models.” (Plato 1995: 277d), Plato needed a mechanical model of a great organization that can be referred through the dialogue. Thus, the Golden Age here clearly presents the required model and it seems to be a detailed account of political science. (Vidal-Naquet 1978: 137). Like in *Works and Days* Hesiod presents the Golden Age as a model of an ideal life, Plato uses the myth as the picture of the administration he idealized to find the ruler that suits to it.

In addition to this, through the lines 297c-d, it is indicated that;

...we must look for that one constitution, the correct one, in relation to a small element in the population, few in number, or even one, and that we must put down the other constitutions as imitations, just as was said a little earlier, some of them imitating this one for the better, the others for the worse (Plato 1995, 297c).

In here too, it can be said that, the Golden Age being the most genuine and truest of all, under the ruling of a divine king, is the correct one which all other organizations and governances are good or bad imitations of it (Horn 2012: 404). The Golden Age again represents the required model; in the small-scale, the model for the sake of the dialogue, and in the large-scale, the model for the earthly regimes to mimic.

This account of imitation is accurate both for the organizations and the rulers. In 300d, the Eleatic Stranger asserts that;

Well then, if they were to do such a thing without having expert knowledge, they would be undertaking to imitate what is true, but would imitate it altogether badly; but if they did it on the basis of expertise, this is no longer imitation but that very thing that is most truly what it sets out to be? (Plato 1995: 300e).

If a regime mimics the model properly it is because it has an artful ruler who has an expertise knowledge of kingship, but if the imitation is bad it means that its governor is also incapable and bad. The Golden Age is the regime that is under the ruling of the divine ruler which is the highest and perfect form of ruling; therefore, it is the

perfect form of organization. When all these notions are gathered it points to the fact that Plato's usage of the Golden Age in the dialogue has a bidirectional objective; it stands as a bilateral model. First, it presents the highest form of government for earthly regimes to look up and derive their laws and sociopolitical orders and second, having the divine shepherd, the divine ruler as its king, it sets a model for the human king, who should at least approach to the expert knowledge of kingship to be an artful ruler, to establish a good community (Horn 2012:414). "The stranger's comprehensive myth prepares the way for a precise account of political science" (Benardete 1984: 111.95).

In relation to this, in the *Statesman*, coherently with Plato's understanding of knowledge, there is a major and constant emphasis on moral intellectualism. The one who knows the science of kingship is the true statesperson (Horn 2012: 396). This notion of the true statesperson who knows the royal science best is multilayered and indicates Cronus. The highest form of knowledge is possessed by god, which in the case of the Golden Age is Cronus. The human shepherd must have the best possible image of the royal knowledge for being entitled to be the ruler, "the one" and the way to it is through imitating the perfect ruler. Thus, again, Cronus represents the ideal ruler who has the divine knowledge of kingship that the earthly king should refer and copy.

It is stated in the narration of the myth that the Golden Age lacks political organization. However, this does not create any problems because the age has a great king who directly controls and organizes life. Political organization is not needed after all, as the divine king substitutes for it. After the myth, it is understood that the human king should not be confused with this great ruler. The rulers of the current time are not in control of life directly like Cronus, they are not divine, thus not perfect (Plato 1995: 275c). In a divine providence like the Golden Age a political organization is not necessary. Yet, in the present day due to the fact that, the rulers are not perfect and could come short in looking after their herds because they will be ruling a herd of humans which are of their own kind and they would not have that much leverage on them like a divine ruler who naturally has a higher existence, a political organization and laws that are essential to keep things in order. Through the

first epoch of the universe people lived in a paradise-like time of Cronus; they are guided by the divine shepherd. When the second epoch came, humans started to live in the troublesome Age of Zeus. Without the divine guidance, people need to look after themselves and have to establish a political structure (Horn 2012: 406). The myth here has the function of uncovering the necessity for a decent and effective political order by exhibiting the conditions of the Golden Age which would have to be fulfilled in order for political science to be superfluous (Benardete 1984: 111.96).

Correspondingly, a political organization is required in the current epoch to regulate life, because the present order is not as decent as in the Golden Age. It is mentioned in several passages of the dialogue that in the Golden Age the cosmos has a great deal of good and little evil which is caused by the material content of the universe, however in the Age of Zeus there is little good left while the cosmos shows a greater degree of evil (White 2007: 55). While in the Golden Age the divine shepherding is enough to keep a straight order, in the Age of Zeus it is needed to establish a political organization and laws alongside the greater effort of the human king. It appears that, in the *Statesman*, the need for laws and political order is explained and justified with reference to the Golden Age.

Finally, the Golden Age myth is used to establish the ground for Plato's despise of democracy and to support his yearning for monarchy which, later on in the dialogue, will be explained more in detail. The forms of governance in the dialogue, in terms of their capability of imitating the ideal regime, are ranked from the best to the worst as monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy (or government of the rich without laws), democracy and tyranny (Mara 1981: 360). It is remarked that a city must be governed with an expert knowledge of political science, of *πολιτική*, but not a mass of people can have this knowledge thus it is plausible to look for the one true statesperson who can expertise in the art of government (Plato 1995: 292e). For this reason, monarchy is supported, and democracy is despised by Plato firstly because the fact that the government being in the hands of the majority reduces the likelihood that the state will be governed with an expert knowledge of politics. Secondly, the accomplishment of political wisdom relies on intellectual blessings as opposed to material assets. The standard of democracy, nonetheless, is the case that there are no

essential inequalities between people. Monarchy and aristocracy are progressively open to the principle of the ruling of the wise than democracy (Mara 1981: 360). Thirdly, democracy is unable to do anything great as the Stranger explains;

...while that of the mass, in its turn, we may suppose to be as weak in all respects and capable of nothing of any importance either for good or for bad as judged in relation to the others, because of the fact that under it offices are distributed in small portions among many people. For this reason, if all the types of constitution are law abiding, it turns out to be the worst of them (Plato 1995: 303a).

Plato conforms to a regressive philosophy of history which defines humans' ideal condition in the past and acknowledges civilization as corruption. Here, a new item is added to this understanding; in the past, the government were authoritarian.

The city, by contrast, is polymorphic in constitution and behavior; the note of metaphysical disapproval is unmistakable. This is precisely the charge that Plato levels elsewhere against all democracies. *Per contra*, he looks back nostalgically to the patriarchal authority of the head of the clan, the king as the proper prototype of government (Havelock 1964: 50).

Hence, the narration of the Golden Age, representing the ideal regime under the ruling of Cronus, who has the genuine *πολιτική* by all means, promotes Plato's preference of monarchy over other types of regimes, especially over democracy, and presents the required model for the current city-states and the statespeople.

In the light of these remarks, it can be concluded that in the *Statesman*, Plato uses the myth of the Golden Age as an ideal model for the current regimes and rulers by contrasting the past and the present. He sees the past as a standard and a reference point for a legitimate political order (Horn 2012: 415). He aims to draw a concrete picture of an ideal state and an ideal ruler which can be envied, looked at, imitated and intended to be reached both by the statespeople and the states in every aspect.

It may be noticed that in the *Statesman*, there is a more distinct emphasis on the features of the true ruler, which is totally expected as the aim of the dialogue is to find the correct definition of the statesperson. The search for the true regime is important too but secondarily because at that time, Plato's understanding of history as regress is somehow a little softer than his lattermost dialogues. He believes that the past is better, more ethical and more decent in so many ways than the present, but he does not throw the current order away completely, by giving some credit to the

technological developments and their benefits for the human life. He is a bit more prone to allow a kind of compromise between metaphysics and naturalism. However, his stance becomes even more rigid as he comes to the *Laws*. At the time of the *Laws*, any compromise has become impossible. Humanity has fallen and the lost good old days haunts Plato's fantasies even more. The Golden Age, which was described as a primitive perfectness turns into a courageous, disciplined and moral paradise in every aspect in the sense that the current corrupted era is not (Havelock 1964: 49). Hence, the emphasis on the Golden Age and the idealness of it in every political respect is more prominent in the *Laws* dialogue.

4.3. The Golden Age in the *Laws*

The *Laws* is Plato's last and the longest dialogue which consists of twelve books. The dialogue is on political philosophy and takes place between three interlocutors; the Athenian, Megillus from Sparta and Clinias from Crete. Through the conversation the participants try to determine the ideal political structure and laws of Magnesia, a prospective Cretan city. The discourse is in great detail; it combines political philosophy with application of laws and also concerns with the issues regarding ethics, metaphysics, epistemology and theology. Numerous mythical stories are told during the conversation and the narration of the Golden Age, which is alluded in several passages but mainly appears in the Book Four, is one of the most substantial myths of the dialogue.

4.3.1. The Myth

The first two books of the *Laws* search for the ideal objective of laws which is determined as the virtuousness of the residents. The discussion is supported with assessments about moral psychology and education, which are considered helpful for the citizens to comprehend how a state could achieve this goal. The third book goes to an investigation of the sources and the changes of political systems. Traces of real governments like Athens, Crete and Sparta are used as examples for achieving a better understanding of lawmaking and revealing the dos and don'ts. The factors which cause a city to flourish or perish are investigated. It is decided that a lawgiver must be a wise and temperate person and laws should enable a society which have

freedom, amity and understanding. Later, the discussion turns out to have a practical goal, which is to determine the regime and the laws of Magnesia.

While the origins of legislation are searched, an organization, which resembles the community of the Golden Age and from where all the present states, cities, technologies and laws were gathered is mentioned. Here, Plato's understanding of moral regression through time presents itself again. In this period, after the big flood, there were few people and animals left. Because most of the population was dead, all technologies and inventions were destroyed by the catastrophe, the survivors had to make a fresh start for civilization. They were mountain dwellers and lived in solitude, thus they became philanthropic due to the fact that it was hard to encounter another human being in these times. Also, there was a lot of food gained from animals and lots of shelter, clothes and beds; so, in the absence of scarcity, people were gentle and loving. There was no gold or silver, thus no poor or rich people. An emphasis on equality is made here once more. People of this period were unimproved regarding technology and civilization, but they were morally superior than the people of the current ages. It is asserted that a society like this is the cradle of sterling characters because there is no poverty or richness, therefore no envy or rivalry. In parallel with the *Statesman* dialogue, here too, it is stated that laws and lawgivers were not needed in this community; moreover an organization of legislation was not possible to emerge back then as people lived in happiness, understanding and harmony, there were no conflicts or fights among them to provoke a need for a political organization (Plato 1969: 679a-c). After people came down to the lowlands, got engaged with agriculture, got possession of properties and lands and the population started to increase, the need for laws and politics occurred. This is a correlative representation of the Golden Age, and it is impossible to overlook the similarities between this primitive community and the life in the Age of Cronus which is narrated in the *Statesman*.

Later on, in the fourth book, it is mentioned that legal regulations must take virtue into consideration as a whole; which means the four cardinal virtues described in the *Republic*, wisdom, braveness, temperance and fairness must be adopted by both the rulers and the laws. The ideal regime for Magnesia is searched and the Athenian

suggests autocracy, because under the ruling of an autocrat the state and the society transform to righteous and moral organizations faster than being under the ruling of different regimes like democracy and oligarchy; laws and customs can easily be altered since authority is located in one individual. There is a clear emphasis on the recognition that a ruler's actions affect people, the personal guidance of a lawgiver is extremely important to change laws and the structure of a community which is consistent with the attitude of the *Statesman*. The Athenian says "...when supreme power is combined in one person with wisdom and temperance, then, and on no other conditions conceivable, nature gives birth to the best constitutions with the best of laws." (Plato 1969: 712a). However, by calling this statement as "oracular remarks", the extreme rarity and impossibility of the combination of power and moral eminence in one person is implied. The best regime for Magnesia would be an autocracy with a virtuous and wise ruler, but this cannot be found in the actual world; the only thing to do is to copy the divine autocracy at its best and build the political system of the city on laws that are compatible with the ruling of god. For this reason, the Athenian starts to tell the myth of the Golden Age as the depiction of the ideal regime in need to imitate. Through the lines 713-714 the Golden Age is narrated.

...in that age of bliss, all life needs was provided in abundance and unsought, and the reason, we are told, was this. Cronus was of course aware that, as we have explained, no human being is competent to wield an irresponsible control over mankind without becoming swollen with pride and unrighteousness. Being alive to this he gave our communities as their kings and magistrates, not men but spirits, beings of diviner and superior kind, just as we still do the same with our flocks of sheep... he set over us this superior race of spirits who took care of us, providing us with peace and mercy, sound law and unscanted justice, and endowing the families of mankind with internal concord and happiness. So the story teaches us to-day, and teaches us truly, that when a community is ruled not by God but by man, its members have no refuge from evil and misery; we should do our utmost to reproduce the life of 'the Age of Cronus', and therefore should order our private households and our public societies alike in obedience to the immortal element within us, giving the name of law to the appointment of understanding (Plato 1969: 713c-714a).

The myth here functions as a model of a constitution created by a great ruler which is sought by the interlocutors to create an example for the city of Magnesia. Additionally, the myth helps to emphasize the significant connection between law, reason and divinity which is an essential issue for the dialogue. The divine ruler of the Golden Age rules by considering the welfare of the whole community without making any discrimination. The divine law is holistic and just, thus the current laws

must be like them. Any law that does not serve the interests of the whole city is defective. Likewise, the autocrat, which is found suitable for the administration of Magnesia, must be both domineering and liberating in a moderate way to encompass all aspects of the community. For laws to be successful and to have a functional political organization, consent of the citizens is also important. Laws that are followed voluntarily, not by force become more successful and long-lasting. The autocrat, therefore, should pay regard to the compliance of society to a certain extent and laws should involve preludes to have more explanatory power and to persuade the citizens better. The fifth book deals with the content of a prospective prelude which can be the prolog of all laws. The prelude must refer to the ethical and general duties of the citizens and explain how a virtuous life leads to pleasure and a virtueless life leads to pain. In the sixth book, the offices and elections of Magnesia are handled. It is decided that elections must be done through both voting and lots. The nominees should be written on a board open to public; with names of the nominees who have the most votes another list should be created and from this list lots would be drawn to determine who gets the office. The concept of lots here has an emphasis on the issue of equality; by lots there cannot be any prejudice against any candidate. And the importance of a moderate combination of different elements, in this case political ones, is highlighted again (Plato 1969: 757a). In books seven and eight laws about music, poetry, mathematics and gymnastics are discussed. Book nine deals with the willingness and unwillingness of actions. A debate about whether an action can be voluntary and unjust at the same time is held. According to the Athenian voluntary actions cannot be unjust, but harm is possible through both voluntary and involuntary act. He concluded that, if someone knows what is good and bad and is not under the influence of any kind of pleasure or pain, she would not do harm; thus, while the punishments are given, the mental state of the offender should be taken into consideration besides the performed harm. In the tenth book three types of impiety (not believing gods, believing they are indifferent to humanity, believing that they can be tricked through bribes) (Plato 1969: 884a-885a) are tackled as they are believed to be harmful for the political and ethical order of the state and it is concluded that these impious people must be convinced to leave their beliefs and if they won't they must be punished by the ruler. The eleventh and

twelfth books mention several laws on property, commerce, family, interstate relations, foreign visitors, taxes, bribery, theft, burial procedures and constitution of jurisdiction in general. A group called the Auditors, similar to the ephors of Sparta, is proposed to oversee the officers of the city (Plato 1969: 945c). The dialogue ends with a discussion about the Nocturnal Council mostly consisting of elderly people who have the four cardinal virtues and act through reason (Plato 1969: 961a-c), whose duties are reviving and updating laws, studying the moral elements in laws and to examine the applications of these theoretical and philosophical principles to laws. Hereby, the investigation on the required laws and foundations of the political organization of Magnesia is finalized.

4.3.2. The Function of the Golden Age Myth in the *Laws*

As it was mentioned in the previous section, in the *Laws*, Plato's belief that a righteous and a virtuous life, an ideal political organization in a state can be achieved, was impaired and his frustration reached its maximum level while he talks through the words of the Athenian. The necessity to act moderately according to virtue and in the direction of reason, which he prerequisites for all people in general and for the lawgivers in particular, no longer seems to be something accessible. In the *Laws*, it is no more possible to find a proper candidate for the true king, which is searched in the *Statesman*. In fact, Plato's disappointment extends over to asserting that people are naturally prone to immorality; they are arrogant, unreliable and usually look for their own self-interest rather than majority's. This issue is uttered in several passages through the dialogue as in 712a when the ruler is defined as someone who should have the supreme power combined with wisdom and temperance, but after, calling these remarks as mere oracles and in 875a when the Athenian says;

There is no man whose natural endowments will ensure that he shall both discern what is good for mankind as a community and invariably be both able and willing to put the good into practice when he has perceived it... such insight is nowhere to be met with (Plato 1969: 875a).

Especially in the fourth book of the *Laws*, Plato repeats his regressive perspective on history, which implies that the good old days are left behind with an unignorable certainty (Havelock 1964: 44). Thus, differing from the *Statesman* dialogue and by

disclosing Plato's obvious frustration, in the *Laws*, there is an inevitable emphasis on imitating the ideal, on the realization of the second best (Plato 1969: 875d); which then leads the way to exemplification of the Golden Age as a model to look to. Even when the Athenian is talking about the Golden Age, it is mentioned that human beings are incompatible to rule their own kind (Plato 1969: 713c) which is also missing when the narration took place in the *Statesman*. This pessimistic atmosphere has taken over the whole dialogue.

The dialogue opens with the question about the source of laws, whether it is god or humans. In Book Four the Athenian told that "Now it is God who is, for you and me, of a truth the 'measure of all things', much more truly then, as they say 'man'." (Plato 1969: 716c), referring to Protagoras. And by taking this as a given, he conveniently derives that god is the measure of the proper law as well, the genuine source of it (Mayhew 2011: 312). However, he does not assert this in its actual sense that god handed laws to humankind. What does "god is the source of laws" mean then? The Golden Age has an explanatory value regarding this matter. There was a time of bliss and abundance under the ruling of Cronus. Cronus knew that humans were not capable of conducting their own kind without drowning in hubris and injustice; so, he assigned a superior race of daemons to manage and regulate humanely affairs which provided peace, sound laws and justice for humans. Cronus has two reason to do that: first, as it is said above, people are naturally inclined to arrogance and unrighteousness and second, it is not proper to charge a human as the ruler because her dominance would not be sufficient over her own kind as they rank equally. But in the actual world, as there are no daemon rulers in sight, people are obliged to be ruled by someone mortal from their herd, and unfortunately "...that when a community is ruled not by a god but by man, its members have no refuge from evil and misery" (Plato 1969: 713e). Thus, there are two things to be done; to imitate the divine order, the life of the Golden Age publicly and privately in the best way possible and to obey the reason which partakes in divinity and enacting the appointments of reason as laws. Therefore, Plato trusts the possibility of a proper law for humans if they can imitate Cronos' rule over humans and use reason to meditate between divine ruling and human life and create laws correspondingly (Mayhew 2011: 316).

Under the divine ruling of the Golden Age, laws are not necessitated; and if there was a human ruler which has a divine dispensation like the philosopher-king of the *Republic* who has virtue and knowledge of true politics (Plato 1991: 473d) that aims the best of everyone, not individuals, laws would not be necessary for the current organization either because the reason of a rightful king is always stronger than laws (Mayhew 2011: 317). The rule of the one who has the genuine knowledge of polity, would be the exact copy of the divine ruling. Yet, in the *Laws*, only gods could have the true art of governance, like Cronus, and no mortal one is believed to be capable enough either to possess this kind of knowledge or to handle imitation adequately because wisdom, temperance and power to control cannot be found in one person all together at once. Hence, the rule of laws, as being the second best type of ruling, is required. The rule of laws is better than the rule of mortals because humans base their ruling on desires and personal benefits (Plato 1969: 714a). As it can be seen, Plato establishes a hierarchy among ruling types: the rule of god is the best, the rule of law is the second best and the rule of humans are the worst. Ruling by the law is a better approximation to the divine ruling than the ruling of people, because laws are seen as the application of the divine reason (Mayhew 2011: 318), which can be interpreted as the application of Cronos's ruling depending on the fact that in the *Cratylus* Plato asserts that Cronus is a mighty intellect; his name *Κρόνον* suggest *κόρον νοῦ*, in the sense of pure, thus signifying pure reason (Plato 1980: 396b). This interpretation is seconded by Seth Benardete as he states "The Age of Cronus stands for the rule of reason." (Benardete 2000: 135) and is also accepted by Christopher Rowe (Rowe 2010b: 30). This, actually, is the main issue of the *Laws*; how should be the laws of Magnesia to be closest to the divine ruling. If that is the only thing that can be done, then, laws must be created in a way that best imitates the rule of god. For this, laws must be based on reason first and second, some other means as permanence, making use of traditional religion and myths must be employed to make them as if they came directly from gods (Mayhew 2011: 319).

The exemplification of the Golden Age arises in terms of the scope of laws and the inadequacies of the legislators to regulate it. In the Golden Age, although it lacks a political order, there is an ideal organization of life with the divine ruler Cronus in charge and the daemons regulating the affairs of life directly. In the actual world,

however, people are left on their own with a ruler of their own kind, who sometimes remains incapable because it is not adequate to have a human shepherd for the human herd as “...we do not set oxen to manage oxen, or goats to manage goats” (Plato 1969: 713d). Thus, some higher and solid laws are needed. In the *Statesman*, it is asserted that because laws are made with majority in mind that they may not operate in some specific cases, where at those points, the ruler should step in and intuitively intervene. Nevertheless, when the frustration about the lawgivers, who are said to have no intuitive ability, is encountered in the text, laws, that are claimed to have a divine source and referred as the immortal element within humanity, becomes the only option for providing a basis for a solid political order. In that case, the only thing that can be done now, by looking at the model drawn by the Golden Age and through imitating this perspective, arranging laws that are accepted to partake in divinity by being based on reason, is to achieve the second best political organization, if not the ideal (Miller 2013: 16). This notion of lawmaking through imitation and through reason, the divine element in humanity, and establishing the regime of the city in the most similar and the best possible way also suggests a hint on Plato’s Theory of Forms. The rule of Cronus, which laws partake in through the divine element of reason, is something rather like the Platonic form of the state (Dillon 1992: 32).

Another issue that is related to the Golden Age myth is the attainment of *ἀρετή*. In the beginning of the first book of the *Laws*, *ἀρετή* is associated with victory over self, because as Clinias reported in every person, there is an internal warfare is going on between honorable and shameful parts of the soul, and this strife is also extended to the public relations among people; even families and cities can exhibit disputes of that kind (Plato 1969: 626c). If a person could show resistance to fears, pains and pleasures of her own and not be enslaved by them, then that person has won a victory over oneself; and those who can rule themselves, who are good, are the virtuous ones. *ἀρετή* is the ability to rule over oneself; “...who can command themselves are good, and those who cannot, bad.” (Plato 1969: 644b). Furthermore, a hierarchy of the goods of soul is made for clarifying the recognition of virtue as victory over self; the divine goods which are the best and the humane goods following them. The humane goods are health, beauty, strength and wealth while the divine goods are

wisdom, temperance, justice and courage respectively (Plato 1969: 631b-d). The divine good should overcome in the soul for someone to be a virtuous agent and this is a feature which must be found in the legislator to call her a true lawgiver. This understanding of *ἀρετή* and the hierarchy of goods in soul has a significance both philosophically and politically in Plato's thought. And in the *Laws*, the Golden Age myth helps to establish this hierarchy of higher and lower goods, which consequently leads the way to *ἀρετή*, to the virtuous life (Metcalf 2013: 119). In the myth, Cronus assigns deities, beings of diviner and superior kind, as the caretakers of the humankind based on his knowledge about the incapability of humans to rule themselves without being swollen by hubris and injustice. By placing divinity higher than humanity, he finds a solution to the problem of inadequate self-governance of humans and in this manner, people are taken care of and their cities flourish with happiness and justice, being free from evils and wars. The importance of the myth lies in the fact that it shows when divine is placed over the humane, both in private and public affairs, it provides peace, happiness, good order and justice. In the large scale, the Golden Age demonstrates that when a divine ruling is placed on the rule of humans, it leads to a city of virtue and a just environment and for the private life it points out that what one should honor about oneself is that which is superior and should deploy mastery in the soul above that which is weaker and should subserve. So, the hierarchy of goods should be preserved in both political organizations and in personal lives in order to achieve a righteous life. The Golden Age is the best example which proves Plato's rightness in suggesting that winning victory over the self by valuing the superior divine goods above the inferior human ones is the definition of a virtuous life, the way leads to *ἀρετή*. The conditions of the Golden Age cannot be reached by current states because now people have to rule over themselves without the help of daemons, nevertheless anything that can be done to imitate the life in the Cronus Age must be done in accordance with reason. The gods may not be ruling the people currently, yet as Robert Metcalf epitomized splendidly;

The gods help us manage our own affairs by offering a model to which we can look, and in becoming like them to the extent possible, achieve the victory that is *ἀρετή*. We are enjoined to imitate however we can the happy life that was provided for us in the age of Cronus, which I take to mean that we may think of arete and the 'ruling ourselves' conceived as *ἀρετή* in the mythopoetic terms of being ruled by beings higher than ourselves (Metcalf 2013: 120).

In connection with this matter, but less significantly, the myth also lays the groundwork for the prelude of the Book Five which once again underlines the importance of dignifying the better side of self over the weaker, subservient side, foregrounds the appropriate relations among divine beings and people, among soul and body, the goods of the spirit and the earthly goods of the body (Metcalf 2013: 124).

In the *Laws*, Plato takes a big step towards pessimism holding the belief that humans are irredeemably corruptible and incompetent to rule over humanity temperately and justly. Thus, he seeks a new, adequate master for the prospective political order he has in mind. The Golden Age myth, located in contrast with the current cities, by revealing the perfect organization under the ruling of Cronus, promotes his assertion about incapability of humans. Thus, a solution is suggested to reconcile the divine and the humane; laws, which are made through reason and partakes form the divine element in humans and by imitating and reproducing the life of the Golden Age in the best way possible, should substitute the ruling of god. This kind of governance will not be the best, because the best is the ruling of god, but it will be the second best and that is all that can be get in the present time. And where the law is the ruler and the rulers are the slaves of the law, a certain kind of theocracy will be established. This state of theocracy may not be governed by god but will be governed by the divine within humanity which is reason. In this way,

The story of the rule of Cronus, will have been a story of a time when reason was imposed on humankind from outside. By contrast, in our era, we are left to work out our own salvation, from within our own resources. Yet at the same time, the set of arrangements – the ‘disposition’, or *dianome*—that our reason is aiming at, or ‘imitating’, is actually what a god would have put in place if he had been available to do the job for us... Indeed, in so far as it succeeds at all in imitating, that is, in reproducing, the putative divine model or original, the law will be divine, and attributable to the gods (Rowe 2010b: 30).

In the absence of the divine ruling, the rule of laws take the place of god. This is why the Athenian defends that the cities where laws are masters, will be bestowed upon with goods from gods, however the cities with ineffective laws are doomed to ruin (Plato 1969: 716b).

Herewith, the Golden Age myth in the *Laws*, represents the ideal conditions of life which is happy, peaceful, perfectly ordered and has *ἀρετή* under the ruling of god and

it functions as a model for humans who left their own and need to design their laws imitating this model through reason in order to achieve the best possible regime (which can only come second in comparison with divine ruling). Indeed, this exemplary function was already clarified in the dialogue by the Athenian as;

we should do our utmost -this is the moral- to reproduce the life of ‘the Age of Cronus’, and therefore should order our private households and our public societies alike in obedience to the immortal element within us, giving the name of law to the appointment of understanding (Plato 1969: 714a).

Thereby, when the dialogue comes to an end, the opening question is answered; the source of laws is god. Laws should be made through reason, which is the divine element in humans, and reason participates in god, as a matter of fact the reason is god (Rowe 2010b: 39); therefore, the initial source is god.

4.4. On Politicality of Plato and Modelity of the Golden Age

There are many different approaches to Plato’s politic philosophy, many views and oppositions about whether he actually concerns with politics or not. Handling Plato’s political philosophy as an example of totalitarianism and acknowledging it not political at all are the two extremes on this matter. On one hand, Karl Popper in his substantial work *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), attacks Plato for being a totalitarian. He criticizes Plato for denigrating change and being hostile to progress as his philosophical attitude is anti-historical. In brief, for Popper,

“Plato was longing for the lost unity of tribal life.” Inspired by his "hatred of the society in which he was living," Plato elaborated a political program which "far from being morally superior to totalitarianism, is fundamentally identical with it." Plato then "libels his great teacher" by putting into the mouth of Socrates the elaborate scheme of trickery by which the rulers of a Platonic Republic or any other dictatorship of race or class can manage to keep human masses under subjection. Inspired by his hatred of the democratic tendencies of his native land, Plato was "led to defend lying, political miracles, tabooistic superstition, the suppression of truth, and ultimately, brutal violence." "The theory of the Inquisition, more especially, can be described as purely Platonic." The evil influence of Plato, according to our genial author, gave backbone to "medieval authoritarianism" (Cohen 1951: 1444).

On the other hand, for instance, Wayne A. R. Leys, by objecting Popper’s interpretation, defends that Plato’s political philosophy is in fact non-political, even anti-political because he does not handle any kind of conflict and disagreement, does

not make a distinction between enemies and friends which constitutes the basis of politics. He states;

Plato has an incomplete political philosophy for the reason that he avoids approving any institutions that are specifically intended to deal with political problems, that is, with problems of action in the face of conflict and disagreement. His ideal state and his second-best state are pictures of societies that have no political problems. Organized oppositions are prevented from arising by education (in *The Republic*) and by wise legislation (in *The Laws*). Hence, there are no distinctively political institutions to reconcile with the scientific, economic, and morale-maintaining beliefs (Leys 1965: 275).

This debate is beyond the scope of this study. However, related to this issue, a question can be asked about the modelity of the Golden Age in the Platonic writings, whether Plato idealizes the Golden Age as a basis for an anti-political state or by contradicting it with the present conditions of life, although the Golden Age lacks political order, he uses the myth as a model to clarify what has changed since and why a settled political organization and laws are required currently.

The argument on anti-politicality of Plato can be faced by scrutinizing the passages in the dialogues. In the *Statesman*, for example, there is a huge emphasis on weaving the different and opposed elements of society together. The true ruler must intertwine all aspects of society like weaving a fabric; this is one of the main characteristics of the statesperson in search. The Stranger says;

For this is the single and complete task of kingly weaving-together, never to allow moderate dispositions to stand away from the courageous, but by working them closely into each other as if with a shuttle, through sharing of opinions, through honours, dishonour, esteem, and the giving of pledges to one another, drawing together a smooth and 'fine-woven' fabric out of them, as the expression is, always to entrust offices in cities to these in common (Plato 1995: 310e).

Thus, if politicism passes through allowing opposing parties and attitudes exist, it is provided in the *Statesman* as it is stated that instead of suppressing and destroying different tendencies in society, the true ruler has to ensure that they exist together in harmony; moreover, institutions related to this matter must be established. Also, in the 4th book of the *Laws* it is mentioned again that the ruler must both provide order and be liberating by giving space to opposite tendencies of her community. And in Book 6, the emphasis on ensuring equality by constituting mediums between both management styles and individuals (Plato 1969: 757a-e), the electoral processes as a

whole and choosing winners by lots at final stages of elections to avoid any prejudice against any candidate again indicate that Plato does not have an anti-political stance (Sparshott 1967: 218).

Additionally, Francis E. Sparshott argues that what is found anti-political in Plato's philosophy by Leys is mainly Plato's moral intellectualism. Plato believes that there should not be social conflicts caused by divergent ideas/ideals as ideals are determined by the "Forms" and thus, there can only be one true and valid idea and the discrepancies among people are basically caused by wrong opinions or lack of knowledge. Differences of ideals are actually differences of opinions which can be removed by genuine knowledge of debated issues. Hence, he is prone to solve political divergences through upgrading the social contexts. He also believes that even if there are disagreements, it is not effective to solve them by pacts or treaties because people are naturally inclined to seek and prioritizes their own interests, therefore they usually comply with treaties as long as they serve their purposes or not follow them at all. At that point, there are two things to be done; made people keep to the agreements by compulsion or educate them to not to infringe. Sticking with the latter option, for Plato, political problems caused by social divergences turn into educational problems. He wants to eliminate issues through education before they become greater conflicts. However, for cases where disputes cannot be eliminated, he also offers political advices on the management of civil wars which conform Leys' definition of political (Sparshott 1967: 217).

Philosophy, for Plato, is exclusively concerned with knowledge and its applications. The philosopher as such can therefore have nothing to contribute to situations where knowledge is not available: specifically, he can make no useful contribution to practical politics (Sparshott 1967: 219).

Thus, he may come short in dealing with actual application of politics in his dialogues, but this does not mean that he is an anti-political thinker; his methodical elaborations on politics make unignorable contributions to political philosophy.

Now then, it is more plausible to think that Plato modelizes the Golden Age not to establish an anti-political state or society but uses the myth as a counterexample of the present states to legitimize current need for political organizations and laws. Furthermore, although the Golden Age lacks a political organization in actual sense,

it has a stabilized order which can be called politic, because the Golden Age has a ruler, Cronus, who conducts affairs of state and humans and daemons that attain these affairs directly and actively, and this divine ruler and this act of divine ruling are what Plato mainly looks up and idealizes for current political establishments. As it is stated before, Plato places the rule of a wise king, monarchy, above all other regimes and initially searches for the features of this ruler, for the possibility of finding her among the present conditions and community up to the point where he realizes such a ruler cannot be found, then he postulates the rule of law as the second best. Even though in the *Laws* he acknowledges that humans are incapable of ruling their own kind without swollen with hubris and injustice and it is not possible for a mortal ruler to have the genuine knowledge of kingship, he still yearns for the one, the true monarch who is wise, virtuous, insightful and skillful. The Golden Age here also sets a model for the human ruler as it represents the highest form of monarchy, the highest form of governor; the divine ruler Cronus. And this emphasis of Plato on the single great mind as the king could be the reason that leads some thinkers to treat him as a totalitarian because he is in favor of the one-person regime who withholds all aspects of the political life and some others to acknowledge him as a non-political philosopher by assuming that under the ruling of a monarch communal variations would be suppressed, eliminated or overlooked which means demolition of politicality.

4.5. A Brief Comparison of the *Statesman* and the *Laws*

It is a common belief in the *Laws*, Plato is rethinking and turning back to themes and ideas he has already held in his previous dialogues; a lot of recurrent notions are remarked. Thus, conveniently, the *Statesman* and the *Laws*, have many elements in common regarding both their approach to the ideal political order and their expression and interpretation of the myth of the Golden Age. First of all, both dialogues agree that autocracy is the best regime for a state (and the *Republic* also seconds that agreement as the philosopher-king is postulated for the master of the state). Second, the characteristics of this autocrat in sought are similar in both discourses. The definition of the statesperson given in the *Statesman*, someone who knows the art of ruling, enforces laws but also is insightful about individualistic

issues, is an educator and a caretaker, is inclusive and just, is also suitable for the autocrat of the *Laws*. The union of political power with wisdom is especially stands out in both works. Moreover, both dialogues value the wise ruler above laws, because reason is always superior to laws (Rowe 2010b: 38). Both dialogues emphasize the fact that a true ruler with temperance, courage and a godlike reason, would be able to save states from corrupting; however, under the management of an insufficient, unreasonable and indecent ruler cities are doom to fail (Rowe 2010b: 42). As in the *Statesman*, in the *Laws* human shepherd is found insufficient and incapable to rule the human herd too (Miller 2013: 15).

In addition to these, the Golden Age of the *Laws* has many intertextual references to the Golden Age of the *Statesman*, although in the *Statesman* the myth is presented in a greater length. Both dialogues contrast the Golden Age myth with current states. Both Golden Ages imply a happy and a blessed life of abundance, do not have political organizations, are under the domination of the perfect divine ruling, are superior to the present day and precede the period in which people are left on their own, bereft of direct divine rule. Most importantly, both dialogues draw the same conclusions from the myth; the Age of Cronus represents the ideal ruling and people have to imitate its aspects in every possible way (Rowe 2010b: 40).

However, as it was mentioned several times before, in the *Laws*, Plato takes a big step towards pessimism about the flawed nature of humankind and by taking this issue further, he detaches from the stance of the *Statesman*.

In the *Statesman*, the insightfulness of the statesperson about individual cases where the law is insufficient or too general and the duty of integration of different ends are emphasized. A statesperson, ruling through reason, is seen as the main element for ensuring the political order, because reason is considered being superior to laws. The superiority of reason is also accepted in the *Laws* as it is mentioned above; however, Plato's progressive pessimism reversed his attitude towards the rulers. The wise and insightful ruler of the *Statesman* became impossible to find among mortals; thus, the only basis that can be relied upon to ensure the order is laws, laws that are established by copying the ruling of the Golden Age. In the *Statesman*;

...the Eleatic embeds his criticism of law's directedness to the average within the context of endorsing its usefulness to the true or knowing statesman, the Athenian undermines this whole argument by his bottom-line declaration that "such understanding, genuine and really free to be itself, . . . in the present day does not exist anywhere at all, except in fragment." Thus, the Athenian declares as a basic truth what the Eleatic instead credits to the ruled, the subjects of contemporary democracy and oligarchy alike, namely, the deep and pervasive suspicion that their rulers do not possess true knowledge of the ruling art and instead pursue their own interests. Accordingly, where the Eleatic, though hardly confident, nonetheless himself remains open to the possibility that a knowing statesman may appear, the Athenian is closed to it and concludes, without qualification, that "for this reason one must choose the second-best, ordinance and law." (Miller 2013: 16).

In this manner, in the *Laws*, coherent with Plato's bitterness, the importance of the Golden Age as an ideal model also increased.

There is another implication connected with this issue. In the *Statesman*, laws are treated as a lower substitute to a true ruler, criticized to be inflexible, unchangeable, too general, unequipped for reacting to individual variety as a wise and expert statesperson can do. To put it simply, ruler precedes laws both in existential ranking and in functionality as laws are made by her and are subservient of her (Schofield 2003: 10). In the *Laws*, however, Plato stands against this understanding over his disbelief that this virtuous, true ruler can be found.

Lastly, another expansion of the Golden Age in the *Laws* is made on the issue of happiness which is also relevant to Plato's pessimism. In the *Statesman*, the question of happiness of the Cronians left open-ended, as the Stranger only asserts;

...if the nurslings of Kronos used all these advantages to do philosophy, talking both with animals and with each other, and inquiring from all kinds of creatures whether any one of them had some capacity of its own that enabled it to see better in some way than the rest with respect to the gathering together of wisdom, the judgement is easy, that those who lived then were far, far more happy than those who live now (Plato 1995: 272c)

implying that we cannot know it. However, in the *Laws*, the Athenian expresses with poignancy that the people of the Golden Age are happy. Through several passages as 713b "...in the age of Cronus, there was a much earlier form of settled government, and a very happy one, which is reflected in the best of our present-day communities." (Plato 1969: 713b) or 713e

Well, the god, in his kindness to man, did the same; he set over us this superior race of spirits who took charge of us with no less ease to themselves than convenience to

us, providing us with peace and mercy, sound law and unscanted justice, and endowing the families of mankind with internal concord and happiness (Plato 1969: 713e)

the question of happiness is answered.

Whatever may be the differences, the *Statesman* and the *Laws* establishes partnership and integrity and together with the *Republic*, they outline the political philosophy of Plato. And the myth of the Golden Age has taken a significant place in both of these dialogues, and although not explicitly narrated, it is implicitly mentioned in the *Republic* also. Therefore, it is safe to induce that the myth has an unignorable effect on both conveying and forming Plato's political thought by serving as the model of a perfect organization to imitate and resurrect, the idea of the state.

4.6. Hesiod's Influence on Plato

It is incontestable that Hesiod has a great influence on Plato's thought and his works. Even in the dialogues, Plato himself refer to Hesiod or cites from his poems many times (Most 2010: 60)⁸. Correspondingly, the Hesiodic motifs of the Golden Age affected Plato's depiction of Age of Cronus substantially. Although Plato made several contributions to the characteristics of the myth, it would not be wrong to say that he derived the main frame of his Golden Age from Hesiod's narration in *Works and Days*; moreover, the purposes of both in using the myth intersect in many points.

There are numerous similarities between Hesiod's and Plato's narrations of the Golden Age. For the Platonic Golden Age;

Life in that age has an obvious correspondence with Hesiod's account, even to such details as the retention of vital vigour until painless death supervenes. The earth, for Plato as for Hesiod, was in its ideal condition a spontaneous provider. Still more striking, Hesiod's hint of a peaceful social utopia of distributed functions voluntarily performed is repeated (Havelock 1964: 43).

The main features of the Golden Age uttered in *Works and Days*; blissfulness of the era, Cronus being the king, direct control of life by god and daemons, spontaneous bounty of earth, being free from evils and toils, from wars and fights, all these features are also presented in the Platonic versions of the myth which are obviously gathered from Hesiod. Moreover, as it is cited from Havelock above equal

⁸ For a detailed account of Hesiodic references in Plato's dialogues see Ibid. pp. 57-60.

distribution of products and affairs are also common in both; yet while Hesiod deals with it implicitly, Plato advances the issue openly by referring to lack of ownership and lack of acquirement of wives and children (Plato 1995: 272a).

However, Plato takes Hesiod's story a step further by adding some more characteristics to the myth. The first important addition of him is on the essence of humanity and on the possibility of morality and happiness at the Golden Age. The Cronians in Plato's narration do not live a divine like life as in Hesiod's but almost like animals, as it is stated both in the *Statesman* and the *Laws*, shepherded by Cronus and daemons (El Murr 2010: 290). Thus, there is a main difference between the dwellers of the Hesiodic and the Platonic Golden Age; where in the former people live like gods and after death they become deities and serve as the protectors of the living humans (Hesiod 2006: 97), in the latter they are subjects of the divine shepherd Cronus and herded by him and daemons (Plato 1995: 271d-272) as they need a higher being for their governance because they are not suitable to herd their own kind (Plato 1969: 713c-d). Plato sees the people of the Golden Age more inferior than Hesiod do. This difference in qualification of the Cronians leads to the question of morality and happiness in Plato. Morality does not create an issue for Hesiod as he approaches the people of the Golden Age as god-like beings and he presumptively acknowledges that they have the moral high ground in comparison to the people of the other ages. The moral superiority of the Golden Age comes from the moral superiority of the people as well as ideal the conditions of the period. However, for Plato the people of the Golden Age are decent and innocent, but that does not automatically mean that they are virtuous and moral. Unlike that of Hesiod, for him, those who lived in the Golden Age were not divine like beings, but rather have primitive pureness (Havelock 1964: 49). Therefore, while he also accepts the moral superiority of the Golden Age, the reason for this superiority is not the people themselves but that the people are ruled directly by god. Morality stems straight from divinity. For this reason, the possibility of morality and, accordingly, of happiness emerges as issues in Plato's narrative of the Golden Age.

The second essential addition to the myth by Plato is the non-existence of politics. In the *Statesman*, Plato suggests that the Golden Age does not have any political

constitutions (Plato 1995: 271e). In consequence of laying a great emphasis on politics in his philosophy, Plato, as it was mentioned in the section 4.4, although reckoning the Golden Age non-political, he uses the myth as a model for justifying the current requirement of a political order and laws.

Thirdly, Plato extends the Hesiodic concept of *βίος αὐτόματος* to humanity. Hesiod mentions spontaneous givings of earth in the Golden Age; abundance of fruits and meat without receiving any maintenance from humans. In the Platonic version of the myth in the *Statesman*, people do not emerge as a result of reproduction; they, as well as plants and animals, born from earth automatically.

...the ‘automatic’ aspect of life does not concern plants and trees alone, nor the production of food in general; it concerns people too, who are born from earth. In Hesiod, it is the gods who make the successive races of men, whereas in Plato, men arise spontaneously from the earth. Just as the human flock seems closer to animals than gods, so too the generation of men, in the Platonic Golden Age, has more to do with the growing of plants than with any divine creation (El Murr 2010: 291).

A fourth addition can be listed, although it would not be an original contribution of Plato to the myth; it is rather a readjustment among the features that Hesiod attributes to the Golden Age. The concept of grey-hairedness which Hesiod uses for the babies of the second decay of the Iron Age, is attributed to the people of the Golden Age by Plato (Rowe 2010a: 299). In the myth of the *Statesman*, the Cronians emerge from earth spontaneously as adults with grey hair and as time passes, they grow backwards to childhood, become younger and younger up to the point that eventually they disappear into the earth again. This alteration is connected to Plato’s extension of the Hesiodic *βίος αὐτόματος* (El Murr 2010: 291). In the Golden Age, when humans emerged spontaneously from earth, like plants, the fact that newborns are gray-haired adults can be considered necessary as for the notion of their constant rejuvenation and their vanishment by dwindling away as well as for the very survival of human beings.

In addition to the formalism of the Golden Age, Hesiod influenced Plato on the utilization of the myth in his dialogues. Hesiod’s and Plato’s useage of the Golden Age have many similarities. Most importantly, Hesiod’s positioning the Golden Age in contrast with the current era sets an example for Plato, thus, he also uses the myth as a counterexample for the present political and social conditions. Like Hesiod,

Plato is aware of the excessive corruptness of his time and in his writings, the myth usually helps to clearly expose the wickedness and depravedness of both political and social order through depicting a completely opposite, an ideal form of life.

However, this negative view of the present time does not lead neither Plato nor Hesiod to pessimism. Again like Hesiod, Plato believes that the Golden Age will be experienced again in the future as it is stated evidently in the myth of the *Statesman* that the cosmic rotation between the Era of Cronus and the Era of Zeus are eternally circular (Plato 1995: 273d-e). Even if the Golden Age does not come back again, at least it can be resurrected in this world by human effort. Hence, with influence of Hesiod, Plato benefited from the myth to motivate people to a more ethical life and to justify the necessity of establishing a more accurate political organization, because the Golden Age can be revived if these conditions can be created. It will not be wrong to address the moral and political modelity of the Golden Age as a legacy from Hesiod to Plato (Havelock 1964: 40).

Ordering life, economy and politics under the frame of the Golden Age is a tendency Plato gathers from Hesiod; yet while Hesiod deals with the issue in a smaller scale, Plato's approach is broader. Hesiod "...does not enter like Plato and Aristotle into the erection of ideal city structures embodying their principles of justice, in order to solve the difficulty. Rather he turns to concentrate on the ordering of life of a small isolated farm" (Gordon 2005: 397). And he uses the Golden Age myth as a model usually for regulating the village life; works related to this, human relationships among neighbors and family members and *οἰκονομία*. But Plato, as being a city dweller, concerns with morality, economics and especially with politics through a wider perspective. In the Platonic dialogues, the Golden Age myth serves as a model for the establishment of a decent political organization, for preparing laws by looking up to it, for identifying the characteristics of the long-sought true ruler, and overall for the constitution of the ideal city of Plato's phantasies.

Hesiod is the pioneer of the custom of determining ideal norms of political and social life and by attributing them to the past he become "...the father of all thinkers who said: 'Social standards are indeed divine, have always existed, but have been temporarily lost.'" (Havelock 1964: 40). Thus, his influence on Plato is undeniable.

Additionally, with the impact of the Hesiodic heritage and the common disposition of the Ancient Greek culture to acknowledge ethics and law in a priori terms, the Golden Age, as representing the actualization of both morality and law in an ideal form, under the ruling of a divine king, become one of the most essential elements of Plato's dialogues and philosophy.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, I tried to shed light on the origins and the history of the Golden Age myth and I examined the place of the myth in Hesiod's and Plato's thoughts and in their works *Works and Days*, the *Statesman* and the *Laws*.

After making an introduction, in the second chapter, I investigated the sources of the Golden Age myth and on this matter, I elaborated seven theories; the Allegorical Theory claiming that the Golden Age and the following four ages are allegories that show how humankind has worsened, the Euhemeristic Theory claiming that the Golden Age is a story about a real-life ruler who was very virtuous and talented and mastered a blissful community, the Theological Theory stating that the Golden Age is a portrayal of heaven and it was originated in the Bible, the Anthropological Theory asserting that humans are inclined to associate the past with positivity which cause them to treat the past as a "golden" period, the Psychological Theory asserting that many utopian myths are modifications of a single ancient primitive myth, the Agricultural Theory suggesting that the Golden Age is related to first agricultural activities and William Fox's theory alleging that the origin of the myth comes from respect for ancestors.

Then, I investigated the representations of the Golden Age in Greek and Roman mythologies and I mentioned the two gods which are attributed as the rulers of the Golden Age; Cronus and Saturn. This investigation allowed a general comparison of the two mythologies. I showed that in Roman mythology Saturn is identified with Cronus; thus, The Age of Saturn identifies with the Greek Golden Age by referring to Thomas Dyer's theory claiming that this analogy was made due to the fact that Cronus and Saturn are the oldest gods in Greek and Roman mythologies and to

William Fox's assertion that the identification was made through the wives of these gods as they are both goddesses of fertility.

After, I addressed two opposite approaches to the Golden Age; which on the one hand, acknowledges the period as bright, happy and morally superior and on the other hand, despises the Golden Age by claiming that the Cronians were primitive and bestial. The Orphics, Empedocles, the Stoics, Plato, Aratus, the Cynics and Virgil falls under the first group. Empedocles believed that the conflict between love and hate is the driving source of the universe. He associated the Golden Age with the dominant period of love and as these forces repeatedly transcends one another, he admitted the possibility of the recurrence of the Golden Age. The Stoics asserted that humanity is in a moral collapse and the Golden Age stands for the most ethical form of life as the essence of humanity was pristine back then. By referring to the *magnus annus*, they also believed that the Golden Age will be resurrected in future. For Plato, the Golden Age represented the ideal form of life both politically and ethically. Plato's attitude towards the Golden Age was analyzed in-depth through the fourth chapter. Aratus asserted that the moral corruption of humanity began with Dike's separation from the universe which was caused by the wicked actions of people. The Cynics defended that the civilization is the main reason of moral degeneration; in order to reach *εὐδαιμονία* people should return to the primitive life in the Golden Age. The Roman poet Virgil acknowledged the Golden Age as a challenge to test people's endurance and moral devotion. The ones who can overcome the hardships of life and act ethically can acquire the standards of the Golden Age in their own lives. For Virgil, the Golden Age is the model of a truly ethical life. The Comics, Democritus, Anaxagoras and Epicurus, however, thought that the Golden Age is a sham. The Comics regularly mocked the Golden Age in their works. Democritus and Anaxagoras accused the Cronians for being primitive and savage, inferior to the modern people. According to them, the only way for human development is through civilization. Epicurus claimed that the Golden Age was deprived of moral values and humanity is morally on the rise, asserting that the modern times, where people's lives are under their own control, are the only period where morality can emerge. Despite all these negative views, I inferred that even if the narration and the characteristics of the Golden Age has changed and updated, it has not lost its significance.

In the third chapter, I examined Hesiod's works, who is one of the most significant users of the Golden Age myth. To be able to understand the Golden Age myth correctly, Hesiod's cosmology should be comprehended first. As for that, I handled his poems *Theogony* and *Works and Days* together. While in his first work, Hesiod narrates the genealogy of gods and presents a cosmogony, in *Works and Days*, instead of gods, he concentrates on humanity, tells the history of humankind and offers advices about daily life. *Works and Days* concerns about ethics more than *Theogony* does. Here, Hesiod, who gives advice on what to do for a righteous and moral life, with regard to his farming experiences, also offers an almanac about the daily duties that are needed to be done. When *Theogony* and *Works and Days* are held as a whole, they properly present the cosmology of Hesiod. Hesiod's universe is an *ex-nihilo* entity and the interaction of opposites has a great importance on establishing the cosmic equilibrium from the very first formations of universe and ensuring the development of cosmos. The conflict between masculine and feminine forces, the discordance between Eros and Eris, the birth of gods from sky and earth - from Gaia and Uranus-; all of these are the fundamental elements of the cosmic construction and the main origins of existence in the Hesiodic universe. Additionally, the Hesiodic construction of the universe follows a circular turn. When this circularity is of concern, the Five Ages myth and its subbranch, the Golden Age step in. Hesiod mentions five different time periods through the myth of the Five Ages. These are listed as the Golden Age, then the Silver, the Bronze, the Heroic and the Iron ages. The best and the happiest of all times is the Golden Age; in this time under the sovereignty of Cronus pure justice prevails. The last era, the Iron Age, is the period where humanity is in its most degenerated state and the universe is filled with evil under the influence of pure hubris. By explaining his understanding of the cyclical turn and his universal construction, I demonstrated that Hesiod is an optimist who believes that the Golden Age will be experienced again. His words in *Works and Days* "If only then I did not have to live among the fifth men, but could have either died first or been born afterwards!" (Hesiod 2006: 101) are supportive of his optimistic attitude about the possibility of returning to the good old days.

In the following subchapter, the Five Ages myth was examined step by step. There is a so-called problematic period in the course of the myth, the Heroic Age. It is found

contradictory for describing a morally superior age of war heroes in the worsening periods and disrupting the integrity of the myth. There are several allegations regarding the Heroic Age. For instance, Frederick Paley alleges that the Heroic Age is not authentically Hesiod's, it was added by the Rhapsodists around 5th century BC who were influenced by epic poems such as *Illiad* and *Thebaid*. As a solution to this issue, I presented Jean Pierre Vernant's theory of threefold pairs. Vernant handles Hesiod's Five Ages myth by dividing them into three pairs; first pair of the Golden and the Silver ages, second pair of the Bronze and the Heroic ages and the third pair consisting the two phases of the Iron Age. He states that each pair has both superior and inferior parts regarding justice; for example, the Golden Age in the first pair represents pure justice, while the Silver Age is inferior to it because in this period justice and injustice are mingled together. While a comparison is made between the couples, another one is made among them. In this manner, the Heroic Age, as being the superior party of the second group of the Bronze and the Heroic ages, does not create a contradiction, but rather is a complementary element in the course of the myth.

The naming of the ages is another controversial topic. Firstly, I argued that whether the metallic names of the five ages are denotative or metaphorical. I compared H. C. Baldry's theory of half-metaphorical nomenclature which claims that the Bronze and the Iron ages were named in this way because these metals were used at those ages, but the naming of the Silver and the Golden ages is metaphorical with Sir John Myres' Archeological Theory. I expounded the suitability of Myres' theory, which claims that the metallic nomenclature was made in accordance with the metals used in those ages because the sequence of the myth and the genuine historical sequence of metals are consistent with each other; especially Hesiod's choice of bronze and iron lies in their discovery order and their usage in those times.

Later on, I discussed the authenticity of Hesiod's five ages through the opposing views of Baldry and Gwyn Griffiths. By means of the comparison between Baldry, who claims that metallic naming and the emphasis on "gold" are authentic to Hesiod, and Griffiths, who alleges that the myth was gathered from other old narratives such as the stories of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Zarathustra's dreams, I indicated that

Hesiod was most likely influenced by Iranian and Indian narrations. However, through emphasizing its ethical and political idealizations and its exemplification a perfect life, I also remarked the individuality of the Golden Age in *Works and Days*

At the end of the third chapter, I analyzed Hesiod's aim for using the Golden Age myth in *Works and Days* in detail. I found out that he mainly underlines two issues; morality and politics and economy. Regarding morality, Hesiod, with the help of the Golden Age myth, depicts both his cosmological construct and the importance of a just and an ethical life. The myth of the Golden Age is a holistic answer to the question of how an ideal life should be. In addition, Hesiod's comparison of the current society with the community of the Golden Age helps for a better understanding of the value and the supremacy of the circumstances in the Golden Age by contrasting the ideal and the corrupted times. Robert Bartlett asserts that the Five Ages myth lays emphasis on the death awareness. According to him, as the ages changed, people became more aware of their mortality and that caused them to act immorally to gain as much as possible in their short lives. This is the main reason of moral corruption during the ages. And at this point, the Golden Age represents the highest form of moral life which Hesiod yearns. Moreover, Hesiod shows that a righteous life is possible in this world, and this life can only be established by human effort. The stories of Pandora's Box and Prometheus are told in the poem to explain the current need for working. Prometheus, who steal fire to give it back to people, was punished by Zeus. Zeus first gave Prometheus Pandora's Box from where all evil things and diseases were scattered out, causing the human race to suffer; then, he left him in chains on top of a mountain for birds to eat. After Pandora's Box was opened, life is no longer the same for humans. Wickedness and hardships are everywhere. People have to work hard to reach the conditions of the life in their happy old days. This is why, Hesiod says, we are obliged to work; life was easy and effortlessly happy back then, but now we have to work, and work righteously and fairly to find that kind of convenience in our lives. He uses the picture of the Golden Age both to show people that such a life is possible through fair and hard work and, thus, to motivate them to work so. The Golden Age is used for justifying the necessity of work. Hesiod implicitly states that there are some moral norms, some rules and tasks that are needed to be followed; when these are fulfilled, the Golden

Age will no longer be a dream and would be resurrected. Vernant explains the significance of the Golden Age in *Works and Days* by referring to his own theory of pairs. He claims that the first pair of the Golden and the Silver ages represents the ruler class, while the Iron Age stands for the working class. The superior part of the first group is the Golden Age, which presents pure justice, sets an example for the Iron Age, which is the time of pure hubris, as a ruler sets an example to her people. Hesiod believes that the actions of rulers directly affect the actions of the subjects; thus, the rulers must set good examples to their people if they want to establish a successful and rightful organization. By referring to Hesiod's understanding, Vernant states that the Golden Age in *Works and Days* functions like a virtuous ruler which guides people, in this case the Ironians, towards a just and an ethical life. Overall, *Works and Days* has a moralistic tone and in this, the Golden Age stands as the example of the ideal social structure and ethical order people should try to resurrect.

Regarding politics and economy, Hesiod again uses the Golden Age myth as a model, but this time a model of ideal ruling, ideal ruler and ideal economic order. He emphasizes the importance of justice over and over through his characterization of rulers and his construction of the necessitated political order of cities. As I mentioned, for Hesiod, the actions of rulers directly affect the actions of the common people; thus, the lawgivers must be virtuous and just like Cronus. And the regime of the city must resemble the divine ruling of the Golden Age as it is the most superior, the most righteous and the fairest of all regimes. Vernant's triple pairs theory is viable on this account too; the Golden Age, by representing both the purest form of justice and the ruler class, sets a model for the Iron Age. Hesiod shows the necessity of commitment to justice if there is to be a righteous and healthy political order. He also underlines the importance of co-operation and equal distribution of work and goods. The Golden Age does not have an economic organization which could lead to equal distribution or co-operation because people did not have to work back then, however, as Eric Alfred Havelock states, these notions made through the Golden Age imply the importance of collectivity rather than a literal co-operative work life. He claims that Hesiod highlights the concepts of equality and voluntariness through the example of the Golden Age. In addition, Hesiod mainly deals with the household economics, with *οἰκονομία* by referring to the issue of obligation for work again.

Humanity is commanded by ends, he states, which is mainly the fulfillment of ease and peace as in the Golden Age. However, as the ages changed, life has become more difficult and it takes a lot of effort and work to reach the standards of the Golden Age. Both the rulers and the people should be just and virtuous and should work righteously to live a good life. The Golden Age depicts the perfect organization where the means-ends contradiction is eliminated and it gives a guideway for financial issues and mitigation of the problems caused by the inequality between incomes and expenses.

In the light of these inferences, I drew the conclusion that Hesiod's aim for using the Golden Age myth in *Works and Days* first, is the establishment of an ethical society; second, is the establishment of a just political order and third, is the establishment of a financial order based on co-operation, reduction of the means-ends contradiction, an equal distribution of products and a fair division of labor.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, I handled Plato's interpretation of the Golden Age through the dialogues of the *Statesman* and the *Laws*. First, I gave general information about the concept of myth in Plato's philosophy and expressed the coexistence and interdependency of myths and dialectic in his dialogues. I held that Plato is against the understanding of myths as literal or allegorical theories as in the classical period. For him, myths are not just fictional stories; they partake in *logos*. Thus, in the dialogues, he uses myths as genuine sources of knowledge and education; they function as conductors of values and inherited traditional explanations and conductors of knowledge about the world and humanity. I investigated the characteristics of the Platonic myths and referred Konrad Gaiser's and Luc Brisson's criteria for determining the mythical passages of the dialogues. I enumerated eight criteria which are; myths are generally monological, they are always narrative or descriptive, they either take place in the beginning or at the end of a logical analysis, they are not about recent events but are traditional recollection of past, their authority depends on the tradition, they are usually told by an old age narrator, they arouse amusement and inspiration and they are not verifiable because it is not possible to examine them through experience or reason. I also represented the two types of the Platonic myths, which are the historical myths about the history of

creation and humanity and the ethical myths about soul's fate, about before and after life.

Thereafter, I moved on to the significance of the Golden Age myth in the *Statesman*. I gave a brief outline of the discourse and narrated the myth as it took place in the dialogue. Then, by intimately analyzing the text and the myth, first, I found out that in the *Statesman*, Plato needs an ideal model to refer through the dialogue; thus, he presents and uses the Golden Age myth as this model, the ideal form of ruling for current cities to derive their laws and sociopolitical orders. Second, I pointed out that, Plato recurrently emphasizes the notion of "to know is to do". A ruler must have the genuine knowledge of kingship to be the true statesperson in search and this can be done by imitating the ruler of the Golden Age who has the knowledge of the highest form of ruling, the divine knowledge. Thus, the statespeople of the current age must look up and copy the expertise of this divine ruler in order to establish a blissful political organization. Third, it is told in the dialogue that the interlocutors made a mistake by considering the human shepherd equal to the divine shepherd. While in the Golden Age divine shepherding is enough to keep a straight order because the ruler is omnipotent and has the expert knowledge of ruling, but in the current age, laws and a political organization are needed as the human shepherd is not competent and wise enough to rule by her own and also cannot be in control of every single situation. Hence, the Golden Age myth helped the interlocutors by showing why a political organization and laws are required in the present age. And fourth, I remarked that the Golden Age is used to pave the way for the contempt of democracy, which later in the dialogue legitimizes Plato's yearning for monarchy. For Plato, the best regime is the one which can imitate the ideal regime of divine ruling the best. This imitation must be done by a wisdom ruler who knows the expertise knowledge of political science, otherwise it would not lead a successful regime. However, it is very unlikely for the democratic majority to have such knowledge. Thus, democracy cannot be an ideal regime; the best fit would be monarchy.

I proceeded to the *Laws* by summarizing the dialogue and mentioning the passages where the Golden Age myth took place. In the *Laws*, Plato's belief that a virtuous and

wise ruler can be found among people is shaken. It is told through the myth that humans are not capable of ruling their own kind without arrogance and injustice; for this reason, laws are necessitated to regulate both political and social life. As a result of this pessimist attitude of Plato, the search in the *Laws* turns into a search for the second best form of government that can approach the ideal. The myth of the Golden Age gains importance at this point. Where there is no truly competent ruler and an ideal political organization cannot be found, there are two things left to do; the first is to imitate the divine rule of the Golden Age in the possible best way, and the second is to derive laws from this divine regime through reason which is the divine element of human essence. The Golden Age depicts the perfect divine ruling under the dominion of Cronus. In fact, the words of the Athenian "...we should do our utmost to reproduce the life of 'the Age of Cronus'" (Plato 1969: 713e), reveal the function of myth in the dialogue.

The dialogue shows a clear hierarchy of forms of governance. In this hierarchy, where the best regime is the rule of god, the second is the administration of a competent ruler, such as the philosopher king of the *Republic*, and the third is the rule of laws. However, as it was mentioned, because Plato no longer believes that this true ruler can be found among the people, the best possible, the second best regime that can be used in the state administration is positioned as the rule of laws. The issue of the requirement of a political organization in the current state while it was not needed in the Golden Age which is addressed while mentioning the *Statesman* dialogue, is uttered in the *Laws* too. Laws are needed, and these laws should be established by imitating the divine rule through reason. This is the best possible thing to do in the present age. Here, it can be said that this attitude is the opposite of the *Statesman*. While in the *Statesman*, because they are made with consideration of majority, laws are insufficient in subjective situations and therefore an intervention from a farsighted, wise governor is needed, in the *Laws* this wise rule is no longer in the picture, so laws remain the only basis that can be relied upon to maintain political order. And these laws should be able to copy and transfer the regime of the Golden Age, the divine rule; otherwise a successful regime cannot be established. The modelity and the importance of the Golden Age in the *Laws* essentially lies here.

The second issue that can be associated with the myth is the concept of *ἀρετή*. In the *Laws*, it is stated that there is an ongoing conflict within every human being. The person who comes out of this quarrel between the honorable and shameful sides of the soul by glorifying the honorable parts and suppressing the bad ones is considered as a victorious, virtuous and possessive of *ἀρετή*. There is also a distinction between values of soul as divine and humane. The person who can put the divine values of wisdom, temperance, justice and courage in front of human values of health, strength, beauty and wealth is a virtuous person. And a governor must win the war against herself to actually deserve the position of being a ruler. Here, the myth of the Golden Age becomes the example of the virtuous life, the life of *ἀρετή*. The fact that the divine king of the Golden Age is fully equipped with these divine values, and that Cronus has also chosen and charged divine beings, daemons for the administration of people, but not mortals illustrates how life can be when the divine side is glorified and the divine values become the primary principle. The importance of the myth lies in the demonstration of how peace, happiness, justice and a decent political order can be achieved through the divine side dominating the human side in both private and public relations. Therefore, it is concluded that the hierarchy established among the values of soul must be preserved in both political organizations and in personal lives in order to achieve a virtuous and a righteous life. The Golden Age becomes an example proving Plato right for claiming that the person who places the divine values on the human values has won the war against herself and has become a person of *ἀρετή*. On the way to *ἀρετή*, the Golden Age myth, firstly, functions as an assistant, as a model for people to look up, to imitate for regulating and upgrading themselves accordingly, and secondly, through the mythical narration of the Golden Age where people are governed by the providential rule, the necessity of the divine part of the soul to command the humane is once again explained.

Ultimately, the opening question of the dialogue, whether the source of laws is god or humans, is answered as the best possible regime is presented as the rule of laws and these laws should be derived from the Golden Age through reason by imitating the divine ruling of Cronus. Since laws are prepared through reason, the divine element in humans and reason partakes in god, the first and the fundamental source of laws is god.

Then, I briefly mentioned Karl Popper's approach to Plato's political philosophy which he accuses Plato for being a totalitarian and Wayne A. R. Leys's argument contrary to Popper's which states that Plato is actually an anti-political philosopher because he does not allow different attitudes or opinions to exist in his state nor there are no institutions dealing with these differences. to the argument on the politicality of Plato. Since this discussion goes beyond the scope of this thesis, I did not examine it in depth. However, I used the anti-politicality argument as a basis for discussing the modelity of the Golden Age in the Platonic dialogues. By pointing out several passages from the dialogues and referring to Francis E. Sparshott's views on this topic I inferred that Plato is not an anti-political thinker; his vision of the ideal state comprises a decent political organization and laws, and he uses the Golden Age myth as the form of the ideal regime and as a descriptive instance for why a political order and laws are required in the current circumstances.

Afterwards, I made a brief comparison between the *Statesman* and the *Laws* and showed that Plato has a more pessimistic attitude in the *Laws*; therefore, while in the *Statesman* the main emphasis is on the definition of the true ruler and the Golden Age mainly helps to find the characteristics of the statesperson, in the *Laws* Plato deals with the issue of lawmaking and how laws should be made by looking at the ideal ruling of the Golden Age because he no longer has faith in humanity for finding a true ruler among it. Yet, I remarked that although they have their differences, the *Statesman* and the *Laws*, together with the *Republic*, are building blocks of Plato's political thought and the Golden Age myth, which takes place in all three of these dialogues, is an important element which serves Plato significantly when he needs an idealization to contrast with the current conditions of life and politics.

At last, I investigated Hesiod's influence on Plato mainly through the perspective of the Golden Age myth. Plato accepts the main features of the Hesiodic Golden Age, however he also makes some contributions to the myth. In addition to Hesiod, he mentions the morality and happiness of the Cronians, the non-existence of a political organization in the age, the spontaneous emergence of humans from earth in his version of the myth. Moreover, while Hesiod talks about the grey-haired babies of the second half of the Iron Age, Plato reverses this feature and attributes the grey-

hairedness to the earth-born adults of the Golden Age. I showed that both these thinkers benefited from the myth in similar ways. They used the Golden Age as a model for regulating life, economy and politics which can be resurrected in the present world. I inferred that Hesiod's legacy has a great influence on Plato's thought.

To summarize, in this thesis, I tried to outline the general features of the Golden Age by reviewing the origins and the history of the myth; then, with the help of this outline and through the detailed examination of *Works and Days*, the *Statesman* and the *Laws* I concluded that both Hesiod and Plato benefited from the Golden Age as a model by contrasting it with the present situation, however, while Hesiod used the myth with moral and political concerns mostly, Plato's approach was almost purely political and he engaged with the Golden Age as an idealization in his search of the perfect regime and the true ruler. I hope I achieved my aim in preparing this study and it would be a useful source for its reader.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

İnsanlık tarihi kadar eski bir tarihe sahip olan mitler, tarih ncesi ağlardan gnmze uzanan srenin ierisinde deėiřip dnřerek, kltrden kltre coėrafiyadan coėrafiyaya yayılarak insan hayatının bir parası, yařamdan ayrılamaz bir unsuru haline gelmiřtir. Mitlerin ilk kaynaėının, ilk ıkıř noktasının nerede ve nasıl olduėunun tespiti mmkn olmasa da Tař Devri ve Neandertallere kadar uzayan bir gemiři vardır. Mitler insanların hayatı, grnenin tesinde aradıkları gerekliėi anlamlandırma; evrene ve yařama dair sordukları sorulara cevap olma aısından hayatın bir uzantısı, vazgeilmez bir yardımcısı olmuřtur. Mitler insanlıėa hem kozmogoniler hem de kozmolojiler sunarak gerekliėin aydınlatılmasında, yařamın gerek anlamı ve amacı ile ilgili sorulara cevap bulmakta ve ilk etik, politik ve sosyal formları oluřturmak ve uygulamakta yardımcı olmuřtur.

Antik ağlardan bu yana evrenin anlamlandırılması, grnenin arkasındaki gerekliėin ontolojisi ve epistemolojisinin arařtırılması ve bulunması abasında mitlerin rol byktr. zellikle yaradılıř mitlerinin insan-tanrı-evren iliřkisini aık etme ve anlamlandırma konusundaki nemi yadsınamaz. Mitler, insanoėluna hem bir kozmogoni hem de bir kozmoloji sunarak realitenin aydınlatılmasında, hayatın anlamının ve amacının ne olduėu sorularının cevaplanmasında, ilk etik normların dzenlenip uygulanmasında yardımcı olmuřtur. Mitin verdiėi aıklamaların artık gerekliėi aıklamak konusunda eksik kaldıėı, yetmediėi noktada ise felsefe bař gsterir.

Bu baėlamda, mitler aynı zamanda felsefenin ana kaynaklarından biridir. Felsefenin ve mitin, birbirlerini tetikleyen ve besleyen ortak ynleri olduėu yadsınamaz bir

gerçektir. Hem mitler hem de felsefe, dünyayı anlama ve yorumlama çabasından doğar. Her ne kadar felsefe rasyonel, mantıklı bir yol izlese ve araştırma ve açıklamada ana ilke olarak *logos'u* temel alsa da mitlerin felsefenin gelişimindeki önemini göz ardı etmek mümkün değildir. Felsefe ve mitler karşılıklı etkileşim içindedir. Mitlerin felsefenin ortaya çıkışındaki rolü büyüktür ve tarih boyunca, felsefenin mitlerin oluşumuna katkıları da inkâr edilemez. Mitler, felsefi teorilerin daha etkili ve kabul edilebilir olmasına yardımcı olur. Mitler elbette kendi başlarına bir argümanı geçerli kılma gücüne sahip değildir. Yine de bir teorinin kabulü ve onaylanması doktrininin ne kadar iyi işlediğine, ne kadar tutarlı olduğuna, ve iletmek istediği anlamı ne açıklıkla ifade edebilmesine bağlı olduğundan; mitler, bir söylemin netleştirilmesine ve güçlendirilmesine yardımcı olan unsurlar olduklarında, doğrudan olmasa bile, teorilerin onaylanmasında etkilidirler. Felsefe de aynı şekilde mite ışık tutar ve onu salt ilkelik çerçevesinden çıkartarak kabul edilebilir hale getirir ve meşrulaştırır. Hem felsefe hem de mit evreni ve gerçekliği anlama amacına hizmet eder.

Mitlerin tarihsel gelişimi sırasında, bazı açıklamalar diğerlerinden daha evrensel bir statü kazanmış, daha fazla kabul ve daha fazla ilgi görmüştür. Yaratılış mitlerinin en önemli örneklerinden olan Altın Çağ miti de bunlardan biridir. Tarih boyunca, mevcut dönemin ya da mekânın dışındaki bir zamana ya da yere işaret eden, tanrıların doğrudan dünya meseleleriyle ilgilendiği, yaşamın zorluklardan arınmış, mutlu, doğanın kendiliğinden verdiği ürünlerle bolluk içerisinde, savaşların ve kötülüklerin olmadığı barışçıl bir yaşamla ilgili pek çok hikâye anlatılmıştır. İşte bu hayali dönem genellikle Altın Çağ olarak bilinir.

Hindistan'dan Orta Doğu'ya, Güney Amerika'dan Kuzey Amerika'ya kadar birçok farklı coğrafyada Altın Çağ mitinin farklı form ve versiyonlar ile karşılaşılmıştır ve mit edebiyatın, felsefenin ve dinin ayrılmaz birer parçası haline gelmiştir. Özellikle eski Mısır, İran ve Hint kültürlerinde, tamamen birbirinin aynı olmasa bile, genellikle cennetle benzerlik kurulan Kutsal Adalar ve Elysion Ovaları gibi mutlu bir geçmişe ait birçok hikâye vardır.

Antik Yunan'da ise, Altın Çağ mitinin izleri en erken M.Ö. 8. yüzyılda Hesiodos'un eserlerinde bulunmaktadır. Yunan kültüründe, Altın Çağ mitinin yazılı olarak

karşımıza çıktığı ilk eser olan *İşler ve Günler* Hesiodos'un, kardeşi Perses'e hitap ederek ona eşitlikçi, doğru ve ahlaklı yaşamayı, çalışmayı öğütlediği didaktik bir şiirdir. Bu manzum eserinde Hesiodos, Altın Çağ'ı, evrensel döngüyü yaratan beş çağın ilk parçası olarak tanıtmaktadır. Bu dönem, evrenin doğrudan tanrıların kontrolü altında olduğu, insanların çalışmadan, doğanın onlara sağladığı ürünleri ve yiyecekleri tüketerek, mutluluk ve bolluk içinde yaşadıkları, kutsanmış bir zamandır. Bu çağın kralı ise Kronos'tur. Hesiodos, Altın Çağ'ı, kendi zamanında yaşayanlar için ideal bir yaşam modeli olarak görmektedir. Ona göre, koşulsuz mutluluğa sahip olmak ve evrendeki iyiliği yeniden diriltmek için, Altın Çağ'a geri dönülmelidir.

Hesiodos'un *İşler ve Günler*'deki betimi, daha sonraları birçok felsefi ve edebi metinde yer alan Altın Çağ'ın ana özelliklerini belirlemiştir. Örneğin, Antik Yunanistan'da Pindar, Empedokles, Aristofanes, Aratus ve Plutarhos eserlerinde miti kullanan düşünürler arasındadırlar; Antik Roma'da ise Varro, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Ovidius ve Seneca Altın Çağ'ı ele almış yazarlardandırlar. Ancak, bunların arasında Platon'un diyalogları, mite pek çok kereler değinilmesi ve mitin önemli bir yere konulması sebebiyle Altın Çağ hakkında öne çıkan eserler olmuşlardır.

Hesiodos çoğu zaman mitleri edebi ifadeyi veya belirli bir etik duygusunu güçlendirmek için şiirsel süslemeler olarak kullanırken, Platon'un mitleri, felsefi bağlama daha sadık, daha rasyonel ve ana konuyu, metnin ortaya çıkarmak istediği "ideali", daha çok destekler niteliktedir. Ve Altın Çağ miti, Platon'un *Devlet Adamı*, *Yasalar*, *Devlet*, *Gorgias*, *Kratylos*, *Hipparchus* ve *Mektuplar* (son iki diyalogun gerçekliği tartışmalı olsa da) diyaloglarında kullandığı favori mitlerinden biridir. Platon esas olarak Hesiodos tarafından çizilen Altın Çağ'ın özelliklerini korumuş, ama aynı zamanda mite farklı özellikler de atfetmiştir. Herhangi bir siyasi organizasyon ya da mülkiyetin olmaması, eş almama ya da çocuk sahibi olmama, canlıların üremeye değil topraktan doğması ve insanların hayvanlarla konuşma yetisinin olması gibi özellikler mitin Hesiodik versiyonunda bulunmazken, Platon'un diyaloglarında görülmektedir. Buna rağmen Platon'un eserlerinde de Altın Çağ, Hesiodos'un *İşler ve Günler*'inde olduğu gibi ideal bir organizasyonu, ideal bir topluluğu temsil etmektedir.

Ben bu çalışmada, işte bu meşhur Altın Çağ mitinin kökenlerine ve tarihine ışık tutmaya çalışarak mitin Hesiodos'un ve Platon'un düşüncelerindeki ve *İşler ve Günler*, *Devlet Adamı* ve *Yasalar* eserlerinde yerini ve önemini inceledim. Her ne kadar Altın Çağ mitini ele alan pek düşünür ve yazar varsa da Hesiodos ve Platon'a yoğunlaşmayı daha uygun buldum. Bunun üç sebebi var. Birincisi, bu iki düşünür felsefe tarihi içerisinde mitin en öne çıkan, en önemli kullanıcıları olmuşlardır. İkincisi, Hesiodos mitin yaratıcısı olmamasına rağmen, Antik Yunan edebiyatında Altın Çağ'ın ilk ve en etkili temsilcisi olmuştur. Ve üçüncüsü, Platon, pek çok diyalogunda miti kusursuz bir şekilde özelleştirip modifiye ederek çarpıcı bir şekilde kullanmış ve mite daha önce hiç olmadığı kadar güçlü bir siyasi içerik katmıştır. Platon üzerine inceleme yaparken mitin kısmen ya da salt ima olarak geçtiği *Devlet*, *Kratylos* gibi diyaloglar yerine anlatının bir bütün olarak yer aldığı *Devlet Adamı* ve *Yasalar* diyaloglarını ele almayı tercih ettim.

Girişten sonra, ikinci bölümde, Altın Çağ mitinin kaynaklarını araştırdım ve bu konudaki yedi teori üzerinde ayrıntılı olarak durdum. Altın Çağ ve sonraki dört çağın insanlığın nasıl kötüleştiğini gösteren alegoriler olduğunu iddia eden Alegorik Teori'yi, Altın Çağ'ın gerçekten yaşamış ve zamanında mutlu bir topluluk kurmuş olan erdemli bir yönetici hakkında anlatılan bir hikaye olduğunu eden Ehumerosçu Teori'yi, Altın Çağ'ın cennetin bir tasviri olduğunu ve kökenini İncil'den aldığını belirten Teolojik Teori'yi, insanların geçmişi anarken pozitif bir yaklaşım sergilediklerini ve bunun söz konusu dönemi “altın” bir çağ olarak görmelerine neden olduğunu iddia eden Antropolojik Teori'yi, birçok ütopyik mitin tek bir antik ilkel mitin modifikasyonları olduğunu iddia eden Psikolojik Teori'yi, Altın Çağ'ın ilk tarımsal faaliyetlerle ilgili olduğunu öne süren Tarım Teorisi'ni ve William Fox'un mitin kökeninin atalara karşı duyulan saygıdan geldiğini iddia eden teorisini sırasıyla anlattım.

Daha sonra, Altın Çağ'ın Yunan ve Roma mitolojilerindeki temsillerini (örneklerini) araştırdım ve Altın Çağ'ın hükümdarı olarak nitelendirilen iki tanrıdan, Kronos ve Satürn'den bahsettim. Bu araştırma, bu iki mitoloji arasında genel bir karşılaştırma yapmamı da sağladı. Roma mitolojisinde Satürn'nün Kronos ile özdeşleştirildiğini bundan dolayı Satürn Çağı'nın Yunan Altın Çağ'ı ile eşdeğer

olduğunu Thomas Dyer'in analoginin Kronos ve Satürn'ün tarihin en eski tanrıları olmasından kaynaklandığını söyleyen savı ile Fox'un eşleştirmenin ikisi de verimlilik tanrıçası olan eşleri vesilesiyle yapıldığını iddia eden teorisi üzerinden tartışarak belirledim.

Sonrasında, Altın Çağ'a yönelik iki zıt yaklaşıma değindim. Bir yanda dönemi aydınlık, mutlu ve ahlaki açıdan üstün gören, diğer yanda ise Altın Çağ'da yaşayanların ilkel ve hayvansı olduklarını iddia ederek Altın Çağ'ı horlayan düşünür ve yazarlara değindim. Bunların içerisinde Orfikler, Empedokles, Stoacılar, Platon, Aratus, Kinikler ve Virgil birinci grupta yer almaktadır. Empedokles, sevgi ve nefret arasındaki çatışmanın evrenin itici kaynağı olduğuna inanmıştır; Altın Çağ'ı sevginin baskın olduğu dönem ile özdeşleştirmekte ve bu güçlerin sırasıyla birbirinin yerini alması/alacak olması nedeniyle Altın Çağ'ın tekrar yaşanabileceği ihtimalini kabul etmiştir. Stoacılar, insanlığın ahlaki bir çöküş içinde olduğunu, sadece Altın Çağ'da insanlık özü henüz bozulmamış halde olduğundan bu dönemin yaşamın en etik biçimini temsil ettiğini iddia etmişlerdir. Kendi *magnus annus* inançlarına atıfta bulunarak Altın Çağ'ın gelecekte yeniden dirileceğine inanmışlardır. Platon'a göre, Altın Çağ hem politik hem de etik olarak en ideal yaşam biçimini temsil etmektedir. Platon'un Altın Çağ'a yönelik tutumu çalışmamın dördüncü bölümde derinlemesine analiz ettim. Aratus, insanlığın ahlaki çöküşünün, Dike'nin, insanların kötü davranışlarından kaynaklanan sorunlar yüzünden evrenden ayrılmasıyla başladığını ileri sürmüştür. Kinikler ise medeniyetin ahlaki yozlaşmanın temel nedeni olduğunu, mutluluğa ulaşmak için Altın Çağ'daki ilkel yaşam haline geri dönüşmesi gerektiğini savunmuşlardır. Romalı şair Virgil, Altın Çağ'ı insanların dayanıklılık ve ahlaki bağlılıklarını test etmek için bir sınav olarak kabul etmiştir. Yaşamın zorluklarını aşabilen ve ahlaki eyleyenler, Altın Çağ'ın standartlarına kendi yaşamlarında da erişebilmektedirler. Virgil'e göre Altın Çağ, hakiki bir ahlaklı hayatın modelini oluşturmaktadır. Lakin, bu olumlu düşüncelere zıt bir şekilde Komikler, Demokritos, Anaksagoras ve Epikür, Altın Çağ'ın bir yalan olduğunu savunmuşlardır. Komikler eserlerinde düzenli olarak Altın Çağ ile alay etmişlerdir. Demokritos ve Anaksagoras, Altın Çağ sakinlerini modern insana göre ilkel ve vahşi olmakla suçlamışlardır. Onlara göre, insani gelişmenin tek yolu medeniyetten geçmektedir. Epikür, Altın Çağ'ın

ahlaki değerlerden ve insanlıktan yoksun olduğunu, insanlığın medeniyetle birlikte ahlaki bir yükselişe girdiğini ve ahlakın ancak yaşamın insanların kendi kontrolleri altında olduğu modern çağda ortaya çıkabileceğini savunmuştur. Ben yine de, bütün bu olumsuz görüşlere rağmen, Altın Çağ anlatısı ve dönemin özellikleri az çok değişmiş ve güncellenmiş olsa bile, mitin önemini yitirmemiş olduğu sonucunu çıkardım.

Üçüncü bölümde, Altın Çağ efsanesinin en önemli kullanıcılarından biri olan Hesiodos'un çalışmalarını inceledim. Altın Çağ efsanesini doğru anlayabilmek için önce Hesiodos'un kozmolojisinin anlaşılması gerekir. Bunun için de *Teogoni* ve *İşler ve Günler* birlikte ele alınmalıdır. Hesiodos, ilk şiirde tanrıların şeceresini anlatıp bir kozmogoni sunarken, *İşler ve Günler*'de, insanlığa yoğunlaşmaktadır. *İşler ve Günler*'de, ahlak meselesi üzerinde daha çok durulmaktadır. Burada, doğru ve ahlaki bir yaşam için neler yapılması gerektiğinde dair tavsiyelerde bulunan Hesiodos mekanik olarak yapılması gereken günlük işler konusunda da bir almanak da sunmaktadır. *Teogoni* ve *İşler ve Günler* bir bütün olarak ele alındığında, Hesiodos'un kozmolojisini bir bütün olarak sunmaktadırlar. Hesiodos'un evreni *ex-nihilo* bir oluşumdur ve karşıtların etkileşimi, evrenin ilk oluşumundan itibaren kozmik dengenin kurulmasında ve kozmosun gelişmesinde büyük önem taşımaktadır. Eril ve dişil kuvvetler arasındaki çatışmalar, Eros ve Eris arasındaki çekişme, tanrıların gökten ve yeryüzünden -Gaia ve Uranüs'ün birlikteliğinden-doğması; bunların hepsi kozmik yapının temel unsurları ve Hesiodik evrendeki varoluşun temel kökenleridir. Ek olarak, Hesiodos'un evren kurgusu dairesel bir döngüyü izlemektedir. Bu döngüsellik söz konusu olduğunda, Beş Çağ miti ve bu mitin alt dalı olan Altın Çağ devreye girmektedir. Hesiodos, Beş Çağ efsanesi boyunca beş farklı zaman diliminden bahsetmektedir. Bunlar Altın Çağ, ardından Gümüş, Bronz, Kahramanlık ve Demir çağları olarak sıralanmaktadırlar. Tüm zamanların en iyisi ve en mutlusu Altın Çağ'dır; bu dönemde Kronos'un egemenliği altında saf adalet hüküm sürmektedir. Son çağ olan Demir Çağ, insanlığın en yoz olduğu ve evrenin saf kibrin etkisi altında türlü kötülüklerle dolu olduğu dönemdir. Ben de Hesiodos'un bu dairesel döngü ve evren inşası hakkındaki anlayışını açıklayarak, onun, Altın Çağ'ın tekrar yaşanacağına inanan bir iyimser olduğunu gösterdim.

Takip eden alt bölümde, Beş Çağ efsanesini adım adım inceledim. Beş Çağ'ın içerisinde mitin akışı bozduğu iddia edilen Kahramanlık Çağı adında, sözde problemli bir dönem vardır. Bu dönem, ahlaki açıdan üstün bazı savaş kahramanlarının yaşadığı bir zaman dilimi olarak anlatıldığında, mit boyunca imlenen dönemler geçtikçe artan ahlaki çöküş düşüncesini ve dolayısıyla mitin tutarlılığını bozduğu iddia edilerek çelişkili olarak addedilebilmektedir. Bu konuda, ben bir çözüm olarak Jean Pierre Vernant'ın üç çift teorisini sundum. Vernant bu görüşünde, Hesiodos'un Beş Çağ efsanesini üç çifte bölerek ele almaktadır; bu çiftler Altın ve Gümüş çağlardan oluşan ilk çift, Bronz ve Kahramanlık çağlarından oluşan ikinci çift ve Demir Çağı'nın iki evresini içeren üçüncü çifttir. Vernant, her bir çiftin adalete ilişkin hem üstün hem de aşağı kısımlara sahip olduğunu belirtmektedir; örneğin, ilk çiftteki Altın Çağ saf adaleti temsil ederken, Gümüş Çağ buna göre daha düşük seviyededir çünkü bu dönemde adalet ve adaletsizlik birbirine karışmaktadır. Teoride çiftler arasında bir karşılaştırma yapılırken çiftler içerisinde de bir karşılaştırma yapılmaktadır. Bu şekilde, Kahramanlık Çağı, ikinci grubunun üstün tarafı olarak bir çelişki yaratmadığı gibi esasında miti tamamlayıcı bir unsur olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Çağların isimlendirilmesi tartışmalı bir başka konudur. Bu noktada ben ilk olarak, bu beş dönemin metalik adlarının düz anlamlı mı yoksa mecazi mi olduğunu tartıştım ve Bronz ve Demir çağlarının bu dönemlerde kullanılan metallere atıfta bulunularak isimlendirildiğini ancak Altın ve Gümüş çağların adlandırılmasının tamamen metaforik iddia eden H.C. Baldry'nin teorisi ile Sir John Myres'in Arkeolojik Teori'sini karşılaştırdım. Sonrasında metallerin keşif tarihleri ile dönemlere verilen isimler arasında tutarlılık olduğunu göstererek metalik terminolojinin bu çağlarda kullanılan metallere uygun olarak yapıldığını iddia eden Myres'in teorisinin makuliyetini açıkladım.

Daha sonra, Baldry ve Gwyn Griffiths'in görüşleri üzerinden Hesiodos'un Beş Çağ anlatısının özgünlüğünü tartıştım. Metalik ismin ve “altın” vurgusunun Hesiodos'a özgü olduğunu söyleyen Baldry ile efsanenin Nebuchadnezzar'ın rüyası ve Zarathustra'nın rüyası gibi diğer eski anlatılardan devşirildiğini iddia eden Griffiths arasında yaptığım karşılaştırma sayesinde, Hesiodos'un yüksek ihtimalle İran ve

Hindistan kültürlerindeki mitlerden etkilenmiş olabileceğini belirttim. Bununla birlikte, bir yandan da mitin *İşler ve Günler*'deki etik ve politik idealizasyonunu ve mükemmel bir yaşam konusundaki örnekliğini vurgulayarak Altın Çağ'ın şiirdeki orijinalliği ve biricikliğine de işaret ettim.

Üçüncü bölümün sonunda, Hesiodos'un *İşler ve Günler*'de Altın Çağ mitini kullanma amacını ayrıntılı olarak analiz ettim ve temelde iki sorunun, ahlakın ve politika ile ekonominin, altının çizildiğine dikkat çektim. Ahlak bağlamında Hesiodos, Altın Çağ mitinin yardımıyla hem kendi kozmolojik kurgusunu hem de adil ve etik bir yaşamın önemini tasvir etmektedir. Mit, ideal yaşamın nasıl olması gerektiği sorusuna bütüncül bir cevap olmaktadır. Ek olarak, Hesiodos'un içerisinde yaşadığı toplumu Altın Çağ insanlarıyla karşılaştırması, ideal ve yozlaşmışın karşı karşıya konulmasıyla Altın Çağ'daki koşulların değerini ve üstünlüğünü daha iyi anlatmakta yardımcı olmaktadır. Robert Bartlett, şiirde miti değerlendirirken Beş Çağ anlatısının ölüm farkındalığını imlediğini iddia etmektedir. Ona göre, çağlar değiştikçe, insanlar ölümlerinin daha fazla farkına varmışlardır ve bu insanların kısa ömürleri içerisinde mümkün olan en fazla kazancı elde etmek amacıyla ahlaksızca davranmalarına neden olmuştur. İşte bu, çağlar boyunca ahlaki bozulmaların ana nedenidir. Ve bu noktada Altın Çağ, Hesiodos'un özlediği en yüksek ahlaki yaşam biçimini temsil etmektedir. Dahası, Hesiodos bu dönemde de doğru bir yaşantının mümkün olduğunu ve bu yaşamın ancak insan çabasıyla kurulabileceğini göstermektedir. Şiirde Pandora'nın Kutusu ve Promete'nin hikayeleri çalışmanın zorunluluğunu gerekçelendirmek amacıyla kullanılmıştır. Ateşi, insanlara geri vermek için çalan Promete, Zeus tarafından cezalandırılmıştır. Zeus, Promete'ye önce tüm kötülüklerin ve hastalıkların kaynağı olup insan ırkının acı çekmesine neden olan Pandora'nın Kutusu'nu göndermiş; sonra da kuşların yemesi için onu bir dağın tepesine zincirlemiştir. Pandora'nın Kutusu açıldıktan sonra hayat artık insanlar için aynı değildir; kötülük ve sıkıntılar hayatın her alanına yayılmıştır. Ve bundan sonra insanlar, eski mutlu günlerindeki yaşam koşullarına ulaşmak için çok çalışmak zorundadırlar. Hesiodos, işte bu sebeple çalışmak zorunda olduğumuzu söylemektedir; eskiden hayat kolay ve zahmetsizce mutluydu, ama şimdi yaşamlarımızda bu tür bir rahatlığı bulmak için çalışmak, doğru ve adil bir biçimde çalışmak zorundayızdır. O, Altın Çağ resmini,

insanlara adil ve sıkı çalışmayla böylesi bir hayatın mümkün olduğunu göstermek ve böylece onları çalışmaya motive etmek için kullanmaktadır. Altın Çağ, çalışmanın zorunluluğunu gerekçelendirmek için kullanılmıştır. Hesiodos dolaylı olarak, bazı ahlaki normlar, uyulması gereken bazı kurallar ve görevler olduğunu belirtmektedir; bunlar gerçekleştirildiğinde Altın Çağ artık bir hayal olmaktan çıkıp diriltilebilecektir. Vernant, Altın Çağ'ın *İşler ve Günler*'deki önemini kendi çiftler teorisinin altında açıklamakta ve bununla ilişkili olarak Altın ve Gümüş çağlar çiftinin yönetici sınıfını, Demir Çağ'ın ise işçi sınıfını temsil ettiğini iddia etmektedir. Birinci grubun üstün kısmı, saf adaleti temsil eden Altın Çağ, saf kibrin hüküm sürdüğü Demir Çağ'a bir yöneticinin halkı için örnek teşkil etmesi gibi örnek olmaktadır. Hesiodos, yöneticilerin eylemlerinin halkın eylemlerini doğrudan etkilediğine inanmaktadır; bu nedenle, başarılı ve erdemli bir toplum kurmak istiyorlarsa yöneticiler halklarına iyi örnek olmalıdırlar demektir. Hesiodos'un bu anlayışına değinen Vernant, *İşler ve Günler*'de Altın Çağ'ın, insanları adil ve ahlaki bir yaşama yönlendiren erdemli bir yönetici gibi Demir Çağ'a işlediğini ifade etmektedir. Genel olarak, *İşler ve Günler*'in ahlaki bir tonu vardır ve bu noktada Altın Çağ, insanların yeniden diriltmeye çalışmaları gereken ideal sosyal yapının ve etik düzenin modelini temsil etmektedir.

Politika ve ekonomi ile ilgili olarak, Hesiodos Altın Çağ mitini yine bir model olarak kullanmaktadır, ancak bu kez ideal yönetimim, ideal yöneticinin ve ideal ekonomik düzenin modeli olarak. Şiirde adaletin önemini yöneticilerin karakterizasyonu ve şehirler için gerekli olarak addettiği politik düzen üzerinden tekrar tekrar vurgulamaktadır. Daha önce bahsettiğim gibi, Hesiodos yönetenlerin eylemlerinin doğrudan halkın eylemlerini etkilediğine inanmaktadır; bu nedenle baştakiler, iyi bir rejim kurmak istiyorlarsa Kronos gibi erdemli ve adil olmalıdırlar. Ve bu rejimler Altın Çağ'ın ilahi yönetimine benzemelidir, çünkü tüm yönetim şekillerinin en üstünü ve en adili ilahi yönetimdir. Vernant'ın çiftler teorisi bu hususta da geçerlilik kazanmaktadır; Altın Çağ hem en saf adalet biçimini hem de yönetici sınıfı temsil ederek, Demir Çağ için bir model oluşturmaktadır. Hesiodos, doğru ve sağlıklı bir siyasi düzenin kurulabilmesi için adalete bağlılığın gerekliliğini göstermektedir. O, şiirinde ayrıca, iş birliğinin, işin ve kaynakların/ürünlerin eşit dağıtılmasının önemine de dikkat çekmektedir. Altın

Çağ'ın eşit bir dağılıma ya da iş birliğine yol açabilecek bir ekonomik örgütü yoktur, çünkü o zamanlar insanlar çalışmak zorunda değildiler, Eric Alfred Havelock'un belirttiği gibi, Altın Çağ üzerinden değinilen bu kavramlar düz anlamıyla bir kooperatif çalışma hayatından ziyade kolektivitinin önemine işaret etmektedir. Havelock'a göre Hesiodos, eşitlik ve gönüllülük kavramlarının altını Altın Çağ yolu ile çizmektedir. Ek olarak, Hesiodos, yine çalışmanın zorunluluğuna değinerek temelde ev ekonomisi ile ilgilenmektedir. İnsanlar sonuç odaklıdır, onları güdüleyen amaçlardır de bu amaç temelde Altın Çağ'dakine benzer bir rahatlık ve barış ortamına sahip olmaktır demektir. Ancak, dönemler değiştikçe, yaşam daha da zorlaşmıştır ve Altın Çağ standartlarına ulaşmak için daha çok çaba ve çalışmak gerekmektedir. Hem yöneticiler hem de halklar adil ve erdemli olmalı ve iyi bir yaşam sürmek için hakkaniyetli bir şekilde çalışmalıdırlar. Altın Çağ, amaçlar-araçlar çelişkisinin elimine edildiği kusursuz bir yapının tasviri olması bakımından gelir ve giderler arasındaki eşitsizlikten kaynaklanan sorunların azaltılması ve genel finansal konular için bir yol gösterici olmaktadır.

Bu çıkarımların ışığında, Hesiodos'un Altın Çağ mitini *İşler ve Günler*'de kullanırkenki amaçlarının ilk olarak etik bir toplumun kurulması, ikinci olarak adil bir siyasi düzenin oluşturulması ve üçüncü olarak iş birliğine, amaç-araç çelişkilerinin azaltılmasına, ürünlerin eşit dağılımına ve adil bir iş bölümüne dayalı bir mali düzenin inşa edilmesi olduğu sonucuna vardım.

Son olarak, dördüncü bölümde Platon'un Altın Çağ yorumunu *Devlet Adamı* ve *Yasalar* diyaloglarıyla ele aldım. İlk önce Platon'un felsefesindeki mit kavramı hakkında genel bilgi vererek diyaloglarda, mitlerin ve diyalektiğin bir aradalığından ve birbirlerine bağlılığından bahsettim. Platon'un, mitlerin klasik dönemdeki gibi düz anlamlı veya alegorik teoriler olarak anlaşılmasına karşı olduğuna değindim. Onun için, mitler sadece kurgusal hikayeler değildir, *logostan* da pay alır. Böylece Platon, diyaloglarda mitleri, gerçek bilgi ve eğitim kaynakları olarak kullanır; mitler, hem birtakım değerlerin ve gelenekselci açıklamaların hem de dünyaya ve insanlığa dair bilginin iletkeni olarak işlev görür. Ben de bu bağlamda Platonik mitlerin özelliklerini araştırarak Konrad Gaiser ve Luc Brisson'un diyaloglardaki mitik bölümleri belirleme kriterlerine başvurdum. Bu sekiz kriteri mitler genellikle

monolojiktir, her zaman anlatıcı veya açıklayıcıdır, mantıksal bir analizin başında ya da sonunda yer alır, yeni olaylar hakkında değil geçmişin gelenekselci bir bakışla hatırlanması üzerinedir, güçlerini gelenekten alır, genellikle yaşlı bir anlatıcı tarafından anlatılır, eğlence ve ilham kaynağıdır ve mitleri tecrübe ya da akıl yolu ile test etmek mümkün olmadığı için doğrulanabilir hikayeler değildir olarak sıraladım. Aynı zamanda, yaratılış ve insanlık tarihi hakkındaki tarihsel mitler ve ruhun kaderi ve önceki-sonraki yaşam hakkındaki etik mitler olmak üzere iki tür Platonik mit türünü açıkladım.

Arkasından, *Devlet Adamı*'nda Altın Çağ mitinin önemine geçtim. Söylemin kısa bir özetini vererek diyalogda geçtiği haliyle miti efsaneyi anlattım. Sonra, metni ve Altın Çağ mitini yakından inceleyerek, ilkin *Devlet Adamı*'nda Platon'un diyalog boyunca başvurmak için ideal bir modele ihtiyaç duyduğunu, böylece, Altın Çağ mitini bu aranan model, mevcut şehirlerinin kendi yasalarını ve sosyopolitik düzenlerini devşirecekleri ideal olarak sunduğunu ve kullandığını gösterdim. İkinci olarak, diyalogda, Platon'un “bilmek, yapmaktır” diyen etik entelektüelizm inancını tekrar tekrar vurguladığına işaret ettim. Buna göre, bir yönetici, *Devlet Adamı*'nda aranan gerçek devlet insanı olabilmek için hakiki krallık bilgisine sahip olmalıdır ve bunu ancak en yüksek yönetim şekli olan ilahi yönetimin başındaki kralı taklit ederek yapabilir. Bu nedenle, şu andaki yöneticilerin mutlu ve huzurlu bir siyasi örgütlenme oluşturmaları için bu ilahi kralın uzmanlığını araştırmaları ve kopyalamaları gerekmektedir. Üçüncü olarak, diyalogda, tarafların insan çobanı ilahi çobanla eşit tutarak bir hata yaptıklarına değinilmektedir. Altın Çağ'da ilahi çoban tek başına düzeni sürdürebilmektedir çünkü bu yönetici her şeye gücü yeten ve yönetimin en üst düzey bilgisine sahip olan bir tanrıdır; ancak çağımızda, insan çoban kendi başına hükmetmek ve olası her durumu kontrol altına alamamak konusunda yetersiz kaldığı için yasalara ve politik bir organizasyona ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu noktada, Altın Çağ miti diyalogun konuşmacılarına, bugünkü siyasi organizasyon ve yasaların neden gerekli olduğunu göstererek yardımcı olduğunu belirttim. Dördüncü olarak ise, Altın Çağ'ın, diyalogun ilerleyen bölümlerinde Platon'un monarşi arzusunu meşrulaştıracak olan, demokrasinin yetersizliğinin gösterilmesi için kullanıldığını belirttim. Platon'a göre en iyi rejim, ilahi yönetimi en iyi taklit edebilen rejimdir. Bu taklit, siyaset biliminin bilgisine

uzmanca sahip olan bilge bir yönetici tarafından yapılmalıdır, aksi takdirde başarılı bir rejime ulaşılamaz. Ancak, demokratik çoğunluğun sıradan insanları arasından böyle özel ve üst düzey bir bilgiye sahip olan birinin çıkması çok düşük bir ihtimaldir. Dolayısıyla Platon'a göre demokrasi ideal bir rejim olamaz; ilahi yönetime denk düşebilecek en uygun rejim monarşidir.

Devlet Adamı'ndan sonra *Yasalar* diyaloguna geçtim. Diyalogu kısaca özetleyip Altın Çağ mitinin yer aldığı pasajlara değindim. *Yasalar*'da Altın Çağ miti anlatısı içerisinde, insanların kibre düşmeden ve haksızlık yapmadan kendi türlerini yönetme yetenekleri olmadığı söylenmektedir; bu nedenle hem siyasi hem de sosyal yaşamı düzenlemek için yasalara ihtiyaç duyulur. Bu yasalar, akıl yolu ile ilahi hükmü taklit ederek türetilmelidir. Altın Çağ, metinde, Kronos'un egemenliği altındaki bu mükemmel ilahi yönetimi resmeder. Dönem, Tanrı'nın egemenliği altında, en mutlu, en adil, en barışçıl, en kusursuz rejim olarak idealize edilir ve *Devlet Adamı*'nda olduğu gibi, *Yasalar*'da da insanların dünyada mümkün olan en iyi rejimi sağlamak için rasyonel bir şekilde yasalarını devşirmeleri gereken bir model işlevi görür.

Arkasından, Karl Popper'in totaliter olmakla suçladığı Platon'un politik felsefesine yaklaşımını ve Wayne A.R. Leys'in, Popper'a karşı çıkıp Platon'un aslında anti-politik bir filozof olduğunu belirten savından kısaca bahsettim. Bu tartışmayı, tezin kapsamının ötesine geçtiği için, derinlemesine incelemedim. Ancak, politiklik karşıtı argümanı Platonik diyaloglarda Altın Çağ'ın modelliğini tartışmak için temel olarak kullandım. Diyaloglardan birkaç bölüme dikkat çekerek ve Francis E. Sparshott'un bu konudaki görüşlerine atıfta bulunarak Platon'u anti-politik bir düşünür olarak addetmenin pek de doğru olmayacağı sonucuna vardım. Gösterdim ki Platonik ideal devlet vizyonu, iyi bir siyasi örgütlenme ve yasa düzenlemesini içermektedir ve Platon, Altın Çağ mitini de bu noktada ideal rejimin bir formu ve mevcut şartlarda neden siyasi bir düzene ve yasalara ihtiyaç duyulduğu konusunda açıklayıcı bir örnek olarak kullanmaktadır.

Sonrasında, *Devlet Adamı* ile *Yasalar* diyalogları arasında kısa bir karşılaştırma yaptım ve Platon'un *Yasalar*'da daha karamsar bir tutum sergilediğinden bahsettim. Bu pesimist tutum nedeniyle, *Devlet Adamı*'nda temel vurgu gerçek yöneticinin

tanımı üzerindeyken ve Altın Çağ esasen tanımı aranan devlet insanının özelliklerini bulma konusunda konuşmacılara yardımcı olurken, *Yasalar*'a gelindiğinde Platon, bu yöneticinin bulunabileceğine dair inancını yitirdiği için, genel olarak yasa koyma ve bu yasaların Altın Çağ'ın ideal hükmüne bakılarak nasıl yapılması gerektiği konularına yoğunlaşmaktadır. Yine de farklılıklarına rağmen, *Devlet Adamı* ve *Yasalar*, *Devlet* ile birlikte, Platon'un politik düşüncesinin yapı taşlarını oluşturmaktadır ve bu üç diyalogda da yer alan Altın Çağ miti, Platon'a, mevcut yaşam ve siyaset koşullarıyla çeliştirmek için ideal bir modele ihtiyaç duyduğunda önemi yadsınamaz biçimde hizmet eden bir unsur olmuştur.

Son olarak, Hesiodos'un Platon üzerindeki etkisini Altın Çağ mitini temel alarak araştırdım. Platon, Hesiodik Altın Çağ'ın temel özelliklerini kabul etse de mite bazı katkılarda da bulunmaktadır. Hesiodos'a ek olarak, Altın Çağ'da yaşayanların ahlaklılığı ve mutluluğuna, çağda siyasal bir organizasyonun bulunmamasına, insanların topraktan kendiliğinden ortaya çıkmalarını da değinmektedir. Ayrıca Hesiodos, Demir Çağı'nın ikinci yarısında görülecek olan gri saçlı bebeklerden bahsederken, Platon bu özelliği tersine çevirerek gri saçlılığı Altın Çağ'ın topraktan yetişkin halde doğan bireylerine atfetmektedir. Bunların yanında, her iki düşünürün de mitten benzer şekillerde faydalandıklarını gösterdim. İkisi de Altın Çağ'ı, bugünün dünyasında yeniden canlanabilecek ve hayatı, ekonomiyi ve siyaseti düzenlemek için örnek olabilecek bir model olarak kullanmaktadırlar. Bu bilgilerin ışığında nihai olarak, Hesiodos'un Platon'un düşüncesi üzerinde büyük bir etkisi olduğu sonucuna vardım.

Özetlemek gerekirse, bu tezde, Altın Çağ'ın genel özelliklerini, mitin tarihini ve kökenini inceleyerek anlatmaya çalıştım; daha sonra, bu çerçevenin *altında İşler ve Günler*, *Devlet Adamı* ve *Yasalar*'ın ayrıntılı incelemesiyle, hem Hesiodos'un hem de Platon'un Altın Çağ'dan, mevcut durumlarla zıtlık oluşturan bir model olarak yararlandıklarını, ancak Hesiodos miti çoğunlukla ahlaki ve zaman zaman politik kaygılarla kullanırken, Platon'un yaklaşımının neredeyse tamamen politik olduğu ve Altın Çağ'ın, diyaloglarda, mükemmel rejim ve gerçek yönetici arayışında bir idealizasyon olarak yer aldığı sonucuna ulaştım.

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