Creation Stories: Part II

Compare Hesiod and Ovid's tales of creation:

**Similarities:** both epic poetry in hexameters; creation as the end of chaos > order; age evolution: loss of primeval bliss and moral degeneration; humans descendants of a trickster deity; woman as punishment for men's arrogance; **violence** theme.

**Differences:** Hesiod in Greek, from 8th century BCE, while Ovid is in Latin, from late 1st cent. BCE. Ovid has a demiurge (intelligent designer?); Ovid has four ages, Hesiod five; there is no succession story in Ovid; etc.

**HESIOD (Th. = Theogony; WD = Works and Days):**

1. *Th:* World evolution > Zeus > deities > heroes
2. *WD:* Humanity's decline: Five ages: Pandora > downward spiral
3. Pandora subverts male values: order, independence, dominion
4. *Th >* dynamic change (violence) + unending conflict
5. *WD* change *is* decline; conflicts persists > **strife** > human society deteriorates
6. Prometheus
   a. Tricks Zeus on sacrifice
      i. "At Mekone it was decided what is a god and what is a man."
   b. Steals fire hiding it in a hollow fennel stalk
   c. Chained to a crag; eagle rips his flesh; entrails grow back
7. Pandora
   a. *Th:* Un-named. Hephaistos and Athena fashion her
   b. *WD:
      i. Named.
      ii. Hephaistos, Athena, Aphrodite, Graces, Seasons, Persuasion fashion/adorn her.
      iii. Hermes gives her 'a bitchy mind and a cheating heart.'
      iv. Jar contains evils: **What is hope?**
8. Woman breaks divine-human connection
9. Price of civilization is humanity's alienation from nature
10. Strife: War is inescapable
    a. Ages: No account of man's creation!
       i. Gold: no war; these men have become protective *daimones*; honored in death
       ii. Silver men engage in bloody war, are witlessness and foolish; less honored in death
       iii. Bronze men dwell in Hades, nameless and unsung
       iv. Heroes: live happily on Isles of the Blest
       v. Iron: petty kings exploit impoverished farmers
Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.1-451 (line numbers follow the Latin text; pp. follow Martin's translation)

a. Proem 1-4, p. 15
b. Creation 5-88, pp. 15-18
   i. Chaos and disarray > note how we are told what the world not yet was
   ii. Instability of land and sea; shape-shifting; fusion of opposites
   iii. Demiurge: 'some god or kinder nature = melior natura = better nature
   iv. Creation is separation of elements from Chaos > end of lack of distinction > cosmos (order)
c. Four ages 89-150, pp. 19-21
   i. Gold 89-114, p. 19
   ii. Silver 115-24, p. 19-20
   iii. Bronze 125-7, p. 20
   iv. Iron 127-50, pp. 20-1
d. Gigantomachy 151-62; Giant (= Gr. gigās = born from Gē) = Earthborn; Gr. machē = battle
e. Lycaon 163-243, pp. 21-5
   i. Jove (= Zeus) was upset and his anger makes Ovid recall another event which upset Jove
   ii. Milky Way is the exclusive abode of upper-class gods; plebeian gods live elsewhere (> Palatine vs. plebeian neighborhoods in Augustan Rome)
   iii. Gods have marble council chamber, like the senators in Rome
   iv. Jove's speech Part I:
      i. Human race must perish; why? Iron is the culprit, extracted from the depth of Stygian gloom. Demigods (are these the plebeians gods who can't afford million-dollar houses on the Milky Way?) need protection on earth since they have not been honored with residence in heaven: Is Ovid referring to contemporary social issues at Rome?
      ii. Protection against people like Lycaon (= wolf-like)
      iii. Gods tremble, confremuere omnes (this line echoes in sound the first line of Book Two of the Aeneid, (conticuere omnes) in which Dido and the Carthaginians fall silent to listen to the tale of Aeneas' escape from burning Troy > Ovid compares gods in uproar to Rome in riot after Caesar was murdered upon his entering the Curia on the Ides of March of 44 BCE
   v. Jove's speech Part II:
      Jove tells the gods of Lycaon. Jove had gone down to earth among humans to find out really how bad they had been. Disbeliever Lycaon attempts to murder Jove to find out whether he was truly immortal. Lykaon turns into a wolf.
f. Flood 244-312, pp. 25-7
g. Deucalion and Pyrrha, 313-415
h. Second Creation 416-37
i. Apollo 437-51