

Ancient Greek Evil Attitudes To Females

Hesiod on females

Over many centuries, the writings of the ancient Greek poet Hesiod (lived 700's B.C.) had much influence on the beliefs and practices of multitudes of ancient Greeks. Most Greeks regarded the writings of Hesiod and the poet Homer as being inspired by their gods. In his "Works and Days", Hesiod wrote: "*But Zeus, concealed the secret, angry in his heart at being hoodwinked by Prometheus, and so he thought of painful cares for men. First he hid fire. But the son of Iapetos stole it from Zeus the Wise, concealed the flame in a fennel stalk, and fooled the Thunderer.*

Then, raging, spoke the Gatherer of Clouds: 'Prometheus, most crafty god of all, you stole the fire and tricked me, happily, you, plague on all mankind and on yourself. They'll pay for fire: I'll give another gift to men, an evil thing for their delight, and all will love this ruin in their hearts.' So spoke the father of men and gods, and laughed.

*He told Hephaistos quickly to mix earth and water, and to put in it a voice and human power to move, to make a face like an immortal goddess, and to shape the lovely figure of a virgin girl. Athene was to teach the girl to weave, and golden Aphrodite to pour charm upon her head, and painful, strong desire, and body-shattering cares. Zeus ordered, then, the killer of Argos, Hermes, to put in **sly manners, and the morals of a bitch**. The son of Kronos spoke, and was obeyed. The Lame God moulded earth as Zeus decreed into the image of a modest girl, grey-eyed Athene made her robes and belt, Divine Seduction and the Graces gave her golden necklaces, and for her head the Seasons wove spring flowers into a crown. Hermes the Messenger put in **her breast lies and persuasive words and cunning ways**; the herald of the gods then named the girl Pandora, for the gifts which all the gods had given her, **this ruin of mankind**.*

The deep and total trap was now complete; the Father sent the gods' fast messenger to bring the gift to Epimetheus. And Epimetheus forgot the words his brother said, to take no gift from Zeus, but send it back, lest it should injure men. He took the gift, and understood, too late.

*Before this time men lived upon the earth apart from sorrow and from painful work, free from disease, which brings the Death-gods in. **But now the woman opened up the cask, and scattered pains and evils among men**. Inside the cask's hard walls remained one thing, hope, only, which did not fly through the door. The lid stopped her, but all the others flew, thousands of troubles, wandering the earth. The earth is full of evils, and the sea. Diseases come to visit men by day and, uninvited, come again at night bringing their pains in silence, for they were deprived of speech by Zeus the Wise. And so there is no way to flee the mind of Zeus."*¹

Hesiod here taught that:

- a) the father of the Greek pagan gods, Zeus created females as a punishment.
- b) at Zeus' command, other lesser pagan gods gave human females various attributes. Hephaistos gave the first female a lovely figure of a virgin girl. The Greek goddess of love and sex gave the first female charms and painful strong desires. Divine Seduction had influence on her also. Hermes put in lies, persuasive words, cunning ways, sly manners and the morals of a bitch in the heart of the first female.
- c) prior to the creation of the first female, men lived happily on Earth without sorrow, painful work and disease.

¹ Hesiod, "Work and Days", 47-118.

d) the creation of women brought many evils, pain and diseases to men.

In his “Work and Days”, Hesiod also wrote the following suggestions to Greek men about women: “*Don’t let a woman, wriggling her behind, and flattering and coaxing, take you in; she wants your barn: woman is just a cheat.*”²

It is little wonder that Hesiod’s female-belittling writings were popular in ancient Greece during centuries when male homosexual paedophilia was tolerated and accepted in many parts of Greece.

Hesiod also taught: “*First, get a house, a woman, and an ox for ploughing – let the woman be a slave, unmarried, who can help you in the fields.*”³

More foolish comments by Hesiod

In his work “Theogony”, Hesiod also stated that Zeus, the pagan Greek father of the gods deliberately created women as evil and a punishment for men after Prometheus, one of the Titans – descendants of the god Uranus (Heaven) and Ge (Earth) – climbed the heavens and stole fire from the Sun in order to give life to male humans. Prometheus was supposedly the son of Iapetos, a titan. Hesiod wrote: “*...the good son of Iapetos deceived him (Zeus) and stole the far-seen gleam of unwearied fire in a hollow fennel stalk, and strung to the depths the heart of Zeus who thundereth on high, and angered his dear heart when he beheld among men the far-shining gleam of fire. **And straightway for fire he (Zeus) devised evil for men.** The glorious Lame One fashioned of earth the likeness of a modest maiden as the Son of Kronos devised. And the goddess grey-eyed Arthene girdled her and arrayed her in shining raiment: and over her head she cast with her hands a cunningly-fashioned veil, a marvel to behold; and about her head Pallas Athene set lovely garlands, even wreaths of fresh grass and green. And about her head she set a diadem of gold, which the glorious Lame God wrought himself and fashioned with his hands, doing pleasure unto Father Zeus. Now when he had fashioned the beautiful bane in the place of a blessing, he led her forth where were the other gods and men, glorying in the bravery of the grey-eyed daughter of a mighty sire. And amazement held immortal gods and mortal men, when they beheld the sheer delusion unescapeable for men.*

*For from her cometh the race of woman-kind. Yea, of her is the deadly race and the tribes of women. A great bane are they to dwell among mortal men, no help-meet for ruinous poverty, but for abundance. And as in roofed hives bees feed the drones which are conversant with the deeds of evil: all day long unto the going down of the sun the bees busy them in the daytime, and store the white honeycomb, while the drones abide within the roofed hives and gather the labour of others into their own bellies; **even so Zeus, who thundereth on high, made women to be the bane of men, to be conversant with the deeds of evil: and in place of a good thing he gave them a second evil.** Whoso fleeth marriage and the woeful works of women, and willeth not to marry, and cometh unto deadly eld with lack of one to tend his old age, he hath no lack, of livelihood while he liveth: but when he dieth, his kinsmen divide his possessions. **But whoso partaketh of the lot of marriage, and getteth a good wife congenial to his mind, for him evermore evil contendeth with good.** For whosoever hath gotten an evil family, he hath unabating grief within his breast in heart and soul while he liveth; and it is an evil thing beyond remede.”⁴*

Hesiod claimed:

² Ibid, 376-377.

³ Ibid, 406-407.

⁴ Hesiod, “Theogony”, 565-612 in “Hesiod – His Poems and Fragments” translated by A.W. Mair, At the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1908, pages 52-53.

1. The creation of women was a result of Zeus' anger against men.
2. The goddess Athene made women very attractive to men.
3. women are "a deadly race".
4. Men are liked hardworking bees and women like lazy drones who take from the bees but give nothing in return.
5. women are helpmeets or helpful companions only to men who are rich.
6. women are the bane or poison or cause of ruin to men. This attitude is evident in the words: "*even so Zeus, who thundereth on high, made women to be the bane of men, to be conversant with the deeds of evil...*"
7. women are conversant or well acquainted with evil actions.
8. it is better to not marry women. Men who do not marry are more prosperous financially. Also men who marry experience evils much more than unmarried men.

The Penguin edition of Hesiod's "Theogony" translates some of his above words as saying the following about the first woman: "*From her comes all the race of womankind, the deadly female race and tribe of wives who live with mortal men and bring them harm, women are bad for men, and they conspire in wrong, and Zeus the Thunderer made it so.*"⁵

Euripides on females and marriage

In his play "Hippolytus", the Greek dramatist Euripides (485-406 B.C.) had his main male character Hippolytus say the following evil comments about females and marriage: "*Why hast thou given a home beneath the sun, Zeus, unto woman, specious **curse to man**? For, were thy will to raise a mortal seed, this ought they not of women to have gotten, but in thy temples should they lay its price, or gold, or iron, or a weight of bronze, and so buy seed of children, every man after the worth of that his gift, and dwell free in free homes unvexed of womankind. But now – soon as we go about to bring this bane to the home, we hurl to earth its weal. Hereby is woman proved a grievous bane – he, who begat and reared her, banishes, yea, adds a dower, to rid him of his bane; while he which taketh home the noisome weed rejoices, decks with goodly bravery the loathly image, and tricks out with robes – filching away, poor wretch! his household's wealth...Curse ye! My woman-hate shall ne'er be sated, not though one say that this is all my theme: for they be ever strangely steeped in sin. Let some one now stand forth and prove them chaste, or leave me free to trample on them ever.*"⁶

Hesiod and Euripides' female-hating attitudes were probably one reason why so many ancient Greek men turned to having sex with boys and other men.

In his play "Andromache", Euripides had one of his female characters say that females are driven by sexual desires more than men but females cover this up better: "*If so, you would have clearly branded all women with insatiable lust. This is a disgraceful thing. We women suffer worse from this disease than men, but we do well to veil it decently from sight.*"⁷ This type of unbiblical comment led to all types of other evil ideas such as:

1. women are driven more by their bodily desires and less by their supposedly higher reason than men.

⁵ Hesiod, 600-601 in "Hesiod_Theogony, Works and Days; Theognis-Elegies", translated and with introductions by Dorothea Wender, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, page 42.

⁶ Euripides, "Hippolytus", 616-633 and 664-668.

⁷ Euripides, "Andromache", 218-221.

2. women are driven continually by their wombs to crave sex so they can have children and suffer hysteria if these desires are not fulfilled.
3. many women, despite pretending to be uninterested in sex, really desired to be sexually seduced and even in some cases raped.

In ancient times and during the Middle Ages, many men held the above evil attitudes to women.

Socrates' wrong attitudes to women

In his writing "The Dinner Party", the Greek philosopher Xenophon (approx. 430-354 B.C.) recorded that the Greek philosopher Socrates (approx. 469-399 B.C.) taught the following about women: "*Socrates said, 'It's evident from this girl's display, gentlemen, as well as on many other grounds, that women have no less natural ability than men; they only lack judgement and physical strength.'*"⁸

This false concept that women "*lack judgement*" compared to men was passed down in Europe for centuries. This foolish idea was used to prevent women from going to university and from entering the professions of law and medicine.

Plato's comments on women

In his writing "Timaeus", the pagan Greek philosopher Plato taught his theory on how women, birds, animals, reptiles and fish began: "***The differences between the sexes; creation of women, birds, animals, reptiles and fish.***

I think we may now claim that our original programme – to tell the story of the universe till the creation of man – is pretty well complete. The origin of the other animals can be dealt with quite shortly, and there is no need to say much about it; a brief account on the following lines seems more in keeping with the subject.

*The men of the first generation who lived cowardly or immoral lives were, it is reasonable to suppose, reborn in the second generation as women; and it was therefore at that point of time that the gods produced sexual love, constructing in us and in women, a living creature itself instinct with life. This is how they did it. What we drink makes its way through the lung into the kidneys and thence to the bladder from which it is expelled by air pressure. From this channel they pieced a hole into the column of marrow which extends from the head down through the neck along the spine and which we have already referred to as 'seed'; this marrow, being instinct with life, completed the process and finding an outlet caused there a vital appetite for emission, the desire for sexual reproduction. So a man's genitals are naturally disobedient and self-willed, like a creature that will not listen to reason, and will do anything in their mad lust for possession. Much the same is true of the matrix or womb in women, which is a living creature within them which longs to bear children. And if it is left unfertilised long beyond the normal time, it causes extreme unrest, strays about the body, blocks the channels of the breath and causes in consequence acute distress and disorders of all kinds. This goes on until the woman's longing and the man's desire meet and pick the fruit from the tree, as it were, sowing the ploughland of the womb with seeds as yet unformed and too small to be seen, which take shape and grow big within until they are born into the light of day as a complete living creature."*⁹

⁸ Xenophon, "The Dinner Party", 2.

⁹ Plato, "Timaeus", Section 49, 90-91.

In the 1700's to early 1900's, most male doctors in Britain, the U.S. and many of the nations of Europe used the above Greek nonsense to convince many other people in their countries that women were inferior to men and therefore should not become medical doctors.

In his writing "Timaeus", Plato wrote the following foolish nonsense about the pagan Greek gods creating male and female humans: "*So speaking, he (Zeus, the father of Greek gods) turned again to the same bowl in which he had mixed the soul of the universe and poured into it what was left of the former ingredients, mixing them in much the same fashion as before, only not quite so pure, but in a second and third degree. And when he had compounded the whole, he divided it up into as many souls as there are stars, and allotted each soul to a star. And mounting them on their stars, as if on chariots, he showed them the nature of the universe and told them the laws of their destiny. To ensure fair treatment for each at his hands, the first incarnation would be one and the same for all and each would be sown in its appropriate instrument of time and be born as the most god-fearing of living things; and human-kind being of two sexes, **the better of the two was that which in future would be called man.** After this necessary incarnation, their body would be subject to physical gain and loss, and they would all inevitably be endowed with the same faculty of sensation dependent on external stimulation, as well as with desire and its mixture of pain and pleasure, and fear and anger with the accompanying feelings and their opposites; mastery of these would lead to a good life, subjection to them to a wicked life. And anyone who lived well for his appointed time would return home to his native star and live an appropriately happy life; but anyone who failed to do so would be changed into a woman at his second birth. And if he still did not refrain from wrong, he would be changed into some animal suitable to his particular kind of wrongdoing, and would have no respite from change and suffering until he allowed the motion of the Same and uniform in himself to subdue all that multitude of riotous and irrational feelings which have clung to it since its association with fire, water, air and earth, and with reason thus in control returned once more to his first and best form. Having laid down all these ordinances for them, to avoid being responsible for their subsequent wickednesses he sowed some of them in the earth, some in the moon and some in all the other instruments of time; and what remained to be done after the sowing he left to the newly made gods, who were to fashion mortal bodies and, for the rest, to devise the necessary additions to the human soul and their consequences, and so far as they could control and guide the mortal creature for the best, except, that is, in so far as it became a cause of evil to itself."*¹⁰

Note here that Plato said when comparing men to women; "*and human-kind being of two sexes, the better of the two was that which in future would be called man.*"

Aristotle taught females are inferior and incapacitated compared to males

In his writing "The Generation of Animals", the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) taught that among humans, females are inferior and incapacitated when compared to males. He wrote: "*Now a boy is like a woman in form, and the woman is as it were an impotent male, for it is through a certain incapacity that the female is female.*"¹¹

Aristotle also wrote the following about supposed male human superiority and female inferiority: "*The fact is, the nature of man is the most rounded off and complete, and consequently in man the qualities above referred to are found most clearly. Hence woman is more compassionate than man, more easily moved to tears, at the same time is more jealous, more querulous, more apt to scold and to strike. She is, furthermore, more prone to despondency and less hopeful than the man, more void of*

¹⁰ Ibid, Section 10, 41-42.

¹¹ Aristotle, "Generation of Animals", Book 1, 20, 728a: 16-18.

shame, more false of speech, more deceptive, and of more retentive memory. She is also more wakeful, more shrinking, more difficult to rouse to action, and requires a smaller quantity of nutriment.”¹²

Aristotle also stated: “If, then, the male stands for the effective and active, and the female for the passive.”¹³

In his “Generation of Animals”, Aristotle also said: “If then the male is a principle and a cause, and the male is such in virtue of a certain capacity and the female is such in virtue of an incapacity...”¹⁴

Aristotle taught the below about males being superior, better and more divine than females: “Again, as the first efficient or moving cause, to which belong the definition and the form, is **better and more divine** in its nature than the material on which it works, it is better that the superior principle should be separated from the inferior. Therefore, wherever it is possible and so far as it is possible, the male is separated from the female. For the first principle of the movement, whereby that which comes into being is male, is **better and more divine**, and the female is the matter. The male, however, comes together and mingles with the female for the work of generation...”¹⁵

The Greek dramatist Menander’s women-hating philosophy

In his writing “Affairs of the Heart”, Pseudo-Lucian recorded the women-hating attitude of the Greek dramatist Menabder (approx. 342-291 B.C.): “Then are not painters right when they depict Prometheus nailed to rocks? With brand of fire but naught else good can he be credited. But all the gods, methinks, hate what he did, in fashioning **females, a cursed brood**, I swear it by the honoured gods above. Suppose a man her weds and taketh her to wife, she’ll spend her time in evil furtive lusts thenceforth and lovers who luxuriate on nuptial couch, and poisonings and spite, that bane and plague most terrible wherewith a woman all her lifetime doth consort.”¹⁶

Pseudo-Lucian’s words on women

In his “The Cynic”, the ancient writer Pseudo-Lucian expressed the typical pagan Greek attitude to women when he said: “But, so that you may learn more exactly what is involved in having few needs, and what in having many, reflect that children have more needs than adults, women than men, invalids than healthy people, and, in general, the inferior everywhere has more needs than the superior.”¹⁷

Plutarch on Greek wives being silent in public

In his “Advice to Bride and Groom”, the Greek historian and philosopher Plutarch (approx. 46-120 A.D.) wrote a popular ancient Greek attitude to women: “Pheidias made the Aphrodite of the Eleans with one foot on a tortoise, to typify for womankind keeping at home and keeping silence. For a woman ought to do her talking either to her husband or through her husband, and she

¹² Aristotle, “History of Animals”, Book 9, 608b: 6-13.

¹³ Aristotle, “Generation of Animals”, Book 1, 20, 729a: 29-30.

¹⁴ Ibid, 766a: 30-31.

¹⁵ Ibid, Book 2, 732a, 3-10.

¹⁶ Pseudo-Lucian, “Affairs of the Heart”, 43.

¹⁷ Pseudo-Lucian, “The Cynic”, 12.

*should not feel aggrieved if, like the flute-player, she makes a more impressive sound through a tongue not her own.”*¹⁸

Hippocrates' views

Hippocrates, the so-called “Father of modern medicine” was another who taught that females were inferior to males. For example in his writing “The Seed”, he called sperm which would produce males “stronger sperm” and females “weaker sperm”.¹⁹

Hippocrates also said: *“The reason why a male embryo starts to move earlier is its greater strength; moreover, the male is compacted earlier, since the seed from which it comes is stronger and thicker.”*²⁰

Soranus' teachings on males and females

The famous Roman physician and gynaecologist Soranus (born probably late 1st century A.D.) also quoted the foolish pagan view of the Greek philosophers Aristotle and Zenon the Epicurean that the nature of males is perfect and of females is imperfect: *“Furthermore, the female is by nature different from the male, so much so that Aristotle and Zenon the Epicurean say that the female is imperfect, the male, however, perfect.”*²¹

Soranus did not criticise or qualify this view at all. Because so many people in Europe and Britain in the Middle Ages treated Aristotle's and Soranus' writings almost like the Bible, various forms of this wicked pagan view of males and females were popularised in these places right up until the 1900's. Many university lecturers, teachers, kings, politicians, medical doctors, lawyers and ordinary people throughout the Middle Ages and from the 1600's to 1800's clung to these evil ancient pagan Greek philosophies about male and female humans.

The medical physician Galen's teachings

In his writing “De usu partium” or “On the usefulness of the part” (Book 14), the famous Roman physician and surgeon Galen (130-200 A.D.) wrote how males are superior to females: *“Now just as mankind is the most perfect of all animals, so **within mankind the man is more perfect than the woman**, and the reason for his perfection is his excess of heat, for heat is Nature's primary instrument. Hence in those animals that have less of it, her workmanship is necessarily more imperfect...For the (generative) parts were formed within her when she was still a fetus, but could not because of the defect in the heat emerge and project on the outside, and this, though making the animal itself that was being formed less perfect than one that is complete in all respects, provided no small advantage...for the race; for there needs must be a female. Indeed, you ought not to think that our Creator would purposely make half the whole race imperfect and, as it were, mutilated, unless there was to be some great advantage in such a mutilation.”*²²

¹⁸ Plutarch, “Advice to Bride and Groom”, 32 in “Moralia” 142D.

¹⁹ Hippocrates, “The Seed”, 7 and 8.

²⁰ Hippocrates, “The Nature of the Child”, 21.

²¹ Soranus, “Gynaecology”, Book 3, 3.

²² Galen, “De Usu Partium” (On the Usefulness of the Parts), Book 14 translated by Margaret Tallmadge May, Volume 2, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y., 1968, page 630.

Galen was the medical physician of the Roman Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus and other prominent Romans. For many centuries, after his time, his writings were used in medical schools and universities as medical textbooks.