

**Many meanings, one formula, and the
myth of the Alodes**

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In 'The Structural Study of Myth'¹ Lévi-Strauss states that every myth (considered as the collection of all its variants) corresponds to a formula of the following type: $F_x(a):F_y(b) \sim F_x(b):F_{a^{-1}}(y)$, where two terms a and b and two functions x and y are given and where 'it is assumed that a relation of equivalence exists between two situations defined respectively by an inversion of *terms* and *relations*, under two conditions: (1) that one term be replaced by its opposite (in the above formula, a and a^{-1}); (2) that an inversion be made between the *function value* and the *term value* of two elements (above, y and a)' (1965:228). Lévi-Strauss concedes that his 'approximate formulation will certainly need to be made more accurate in the future'. Indeed, it has generated much confusion and commentary.

One modern interpreter of the formula, Eric Schwimmer, remarks (1976:185-86) that its final term 'stands for a quintessential traumatic counteraction brought about by the hero's act of mediation, such that his mediation fails in its full intended result but reduces the original contradiction. This quintessential counteraction usually has relevance in many spheres of life simultaneously ...'. Schwimmer's remark is consistent with Pierre Maranda's observation that the final result of a myth is 'not merely a cyclical return to the point of departure after the first hostile force has been nullified, but a helicoidal step, a new situation different from the initial one not only in that it nullifies it but also because it consists of a state which is more than a nullification of the initial' (1971:26). Susan Reid, in extending Meletinsky's narrative syntagm from fairytale to myth, observes that myth is a metastructure for the tale. Her analysis in part concerns the effects on the community of the departure and return of the individu-

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alized hero and how that hero through mediation empowers an originally 'powerless' society.²

The transformation on two dimensions which Lévi-Strauss, Maranda, Schwimmer, possibly Reid, and others have observed, is now expressed in simpler formal language:³

$$F(a):f^{-1}(b)::f(b):F^{-1}(a)$$

where F = a permanent state

F^{-1} = a permanent state and the inverse of F

f = an event, corresponding to F

f^{-1} = an event corresponding to F^{-1} and the inverse of f

a = beneficiary

b = mediating figure, who participates in f and f^{-1} (two opposed events).

The four terms of the formula are labeled 1–4. The distinction between event and state follows L. Doležel (1976:132), who defines event as the occurrence at a certain time-point of 'a change (transformation) of one (initial-) state into another (end-) state'. We think that such a transformation from event to state is what Lévi-Strauss intended by the second condition mentioned above. In the ensuing discussion we use this formula; we first examine its nature and then investigate its virtues and limitations in application. As our example we use the myth of the Aloades giants known to Homer (*Iliad* V. 382 and *Odyssey* XI. 305) and to Pindar (*Pythian* IV. 89) but recounted in its most complete form by the mythographer Apollodorus (*The Libraries* I. VII.4).⁴

In the Aloades myth Iphimedeia (probably once a Mycenaean earth-goddess,⁵ but here a mortal woman) is married to the mortal Aloeus but longs for Poseidon. Frequently she roams the seashore scooping water into her lap or womb. At length Poseidon intermingles with her. Otus and Ephialtes, born from this union but named the Aloades after their adoptive father,⁶ grow so rapidly that they become giants by the time they are nine years old. They perform several acts of rebellion against the gods, such as attempting to scale the heavens by piling mountain upon mountain, interchanging earth and sea, and wooing Artemis and Hera. Ultimately, Artemis disguises herself as a deer (or Apollo sends a deer between them) and tricks the twins into shooting each other with bow and arrow. Thereafter they are honoured as heroes, particularly for having founded certain cities and for having established the worship of the Muses.⁷

Applying the formula to several myths such as this one, we dis-

covered that the first and final, or outer, terms constituted a superstructure for the second and third, or inner, terms. This superstructure seemed to address 'basic existential problems, i.e., questions to which a totally satisfactory answer was possible only in thought.' (Schwimmer 1976:171). Such questions often reflected a society's construction of a perceived reality and, very often, of a counterreality cast either in the remote past or remote future time. The myth would indirectly address the contradiction between these two existential states via a model comprised of the inner terms.

In theory, the existential superstructure or the outer terms $F(a)$ and $F^{-1}(a)$ could address multiple situations. A society might create a myth that looks backward from a present reality and *explains* how it had moved from an earlier posited reality to the present one. In this case, term 4 would depict the present reality, term 1 its reconstructed inverse. A society might also create a myth that looks forward from a present, usually negative, reality toward a future possibility, and suggests how it might be empowered, if only in thought, to actualize that possibility. In this second case, term 1 would depict the present reality, term 4 its posited inverse. Finally, and perhaps most commonly, a society viewing two contradictory present realities might construct a myth to resolve these. In that case, both term 1 and term 4 would be anchored in present reality. For all three types the two correlated inner events would mediate the outer-term oppositions.

Whatever the situation in an actual myth, the existential superstructure would both dominate and motivate a correlated pair of inner mediating events. These events would generally be imaginary, although historical events which lent themselves to communal benefits could also, perhaps in adapted form, constitute these inner terms.

The inner terms epitomize a longer syntagm in which the protagonist increases or decreases his power, status, or control over his situation. Participation in two opposing events in and of itself may create a change of this nature. The Christ myth, reduced to its simplest form, would exemplify an increase in power, the Oedipus myth an apparent decrease.⁸ In both types a community is transformed permanently from one state to another via a mediating figure's participation in two contradictory events. In both, that community might be mankind or some subdivision of mankind or the community of gods.⁹

The correlated inner pair of terms is homologous with the outer pair, and in this sense they form a paradigmatic set. However, the

inner terms are subjected to certain operations which differentiate them from the outer:

(a) basic existential problems are concretized and/or specified as events, so that the inner events are at a different level of concretion and specification from the outer;

(b) an implicative relation is established between the third and second term;

(c) the communal a of the outer becomes the individualized b , thus allowing the community to project its existential conflict onto an individual 'other', so that the subjective a becomes the objectified b ;

(d) by virtue of participating in two opposed events f and f^{-1} , the individualized and objectified b is distinguished from the collective community a by his possession of extraordinary qualities in contrast to their ordinary ones;

(e) the mediating figure b may or may not undergo the change of state which his actions imply for the community;

(f) focus on the individualized, objectified, differentiated mediating figure causing an intensification of concrete detail makes the inner pair more vivid and more explicit than the outer.

These differences force the inner and outer terms out of their homologous, paradigmatic relation and into a syntagmatic one, where the first term combines with the second and third to imply or effect the fourth, as follows:

$$F(a) + [f(b) \supset f^{-1}(b)] \rightarrow F^{-1}(a).$$

In the Christ myth, as an example, the initial mortality of a community combines with the successive inner events of crucifixion/resurrection to imply an ultimate, permanent state of immortality for the human community.

The belief that the final state *will* result rests on the credibility of the inner two events, of which the chronologically second can be designated as the turning point. Lévi-Strauss' fourth term, $f_{a-1}(V)$, appears to express this same idea: that the community's transformation depends on the existence of a state which in turn depends upon the occurrence of a specific event. The greater the probability of the occurrence of the inner-event sequence, the greater the credibility and hence comfort, explanatory power, or impact of the myth.

In applying the formula to actual Greek myths we rarely encountered examples that were univalent, i.e., wherein a mediating figure participated in a single paired event sequence, transforming the beneficiary within a single semantic realm. For example, in the Demeter/Persephone myth, not one but several states are mediated

both by Demeter disguised as a human and by Persephone who participates in death and partial return from death, in marriage and partial return to her mother, and in several other opposite events.¹⁰

In the case of the Aloades the existential situations that their actions might concern are not immediately apparent. As often with Greek myths, we have to reconstruct a context for the myth: we have no information about any existential problem either contained in the myth itself or accompanying its recitation. Without having more knowledge of such factors as when and under what circumstances the myth was told, or for what purposes it was communicated, it is hard to know what conflicts the Aloades myth would have mediated. But the well-attested posthumous worship of the twins does indicate their importance to several communities, which enter the myth and hence the formula as term *a*. Further, some of their actions themselves imply the existence of beneficiaries. For example, scaling heavens and confronting the gods might indirectly secure benefits for both human and divine communities.¹¹ Founding cities and introducing the worship of the Muses would bring gifts of culture to mankind. Their actions as culture-bearers resemble those of such other benefactors of mankind as Triptolemus, Prometheus, Cadmus, other giants, and other twins.

In this light, the Aloades myth indeed involves the double transformation characteristic of myth; i.e., both the twins as mediating figures (because they participate in two opposed events) and the various worshipping communities¹² (via that participation) undergo change. Our question then is: what *made* the twins objects of worship, or what changes *could* an ancient community have imagined based on the events in which the twins participated?

As mediating figures the Aloades took part in at least six distinct pairs of events:

(1) As earth-born creatures (either autochthonous or, more commonly, born from the union of an earth-goddess and chthonic male deity)¹³ they grow excessively like overfertilized crops, and mutually harvest and are harvested by one another.¹⁴

(2) As hunters they simultaneously attack the phantom deer at the same instant that they are attacked in the deer's stead — each at once predator and prey.

(3) As murderers they unknowingly commit fratricide at the same instant that they are victims of fratricide, at once violating social order and being victims of that violation.

(4) As giants they commit hubristic criminal acts against the gods and suffer punishment in the form of annihilation for this transgression of the religious order.

(5) As disturbers of cosmic order, they try to undo the order established by cosmogony and suffer punishment, again by annihilation, for this 'cosmoclasm'.

(6) As sacrificers and sacrificial victims their simultaneous participation in both aspects of the sacrificial act precludes any legacy of guilt; they overcompensate for their disrespect to Artemis (4) by giving up their whole selves to her rather than the appropriate and usual lock of hair at puberty.¹⁵

These six pairs of events comprise the inner terms of the formula as applied to the Aloades myth. In order to complete the formula it is necessary to reconstruct the existential states, problems, and conflicts which the Aloades myth would possibly address and mediate and which would constitute the outer terms. Due to the already mentioned lack of context for the myth, much of our attempt to discover such existential states derives from intuition and common sense,¹⁶ or conjectures based on our knowledge from other sources about what problems – either technical or philosophical – were significant to the Greeks of Mycenaean and subsequent times.

Given these limitations, we nevertheless hypothesize that the inner events of the Aloades myth might address basic practical problems of everyday life. Thus the giants' participation in being prey and predator (2) may have addressed a once actual concern about the potential extermination of species through over-hunting and about the ancillary concern for distinguishing proper prey.¹⁷ The twins' actions as murderers/ murdered (3) may have been felt to effect some social equilibrium, a balance between excessive, disorderly license and stringent, tyrannical constraint. Compare in this connection the Prometheus myth, in which the Titan's rebellion against the established order of Zeus has similar social implications. Social order, like hunting, is a practical concern. Another such concern, the need for predictable and balanced fertility, may be addressed directly by the giants' action as harvesters and harvested crops (1) and indirectly by their actions as sacrificers and sacrificial victims (6).

Existential problems of a more philosophical, moral, or cognitive nature might be mediated by the inner events as well. For example, the Aloades' actions as sacrificers and sacrificial victims (6) may have helped resolve a conflict that sacrifice by its very nature incurs – the guilt and implied need for punishment of the sacrificer.¹⁸ This same pair of events could also mediate a society's concern with the proper relationship to the gods: a balance between being excessively distant and excessively near. Their role as giants who attack and ultimately

are vanquished by the gods (nos. 4 and 5) may address a conflict between nature and culture, between a disordered cosmos and an ordered one.¹⁹

If that is the case, the Aloades myth resembles other ancient Greek myths, notably the Gigantomachy, the Typhonomachy, and other myths of earth-born giants or monsters struggling with and ultimately defeated by the established gods.²⁰ All of these may utilize similar paired events to address the same existential concerns. In the Aloades myth, by exchanging the sea and mountains and piling mountains upon one another, the twins completely disrupt the established order. By wooing Artemis and Hera they blur a distinction already made between gods and men.²¹ By imprisoning Ares they exhibit an excess of power that causes a disequilibrium between gods and men.²² When all of these instances of disruption result in utter defeat for the twins, cosmic order is restored. Thus one complex existential concern the Aloades myth clearly addresses is either the need for a permanent restoration of cosmic order (projected into the future as a desired state and expressed in the formula as term 4) or an explanation for an already extant cosmic balance (with its negative opposite projected into the past as term 1).²³

In this context the hubris of the twins is by no means an incidental characteristic. It seems specifically designed, along with their gigantic size, to enhance the impact and import of their defeat; hubris, like huge size, indicates potential and/or actual power.²⁴ The more hubristic the adversary, the more power-enhancing his defeat – since hubris, although a negative attribute, seems to have a force in mythic thought that can be channeled (long after the hubristic individuals are slain) in a positive way. Those who defeat hubristic creatures acquire power in two distinct ways: (1) an actual, literal power gain from the victory itself (a proof of the superiority of the winner) and (2) a symbolic power gain from contact with the defeated.

Belief in the latter may be based on a possible mythic notion that any proximity between individuals allows a transfer or exchange of traits. Thus sexual intercourse, conversation, or engagement in battle would each enable such a symbolic transfer of power to occur. Further, when power is transferred through such contact, it may be used for constructive or destructive purposes. When, for example, a defier's hubris is used to consolidate man's role within the cosmos and to strengthen the unity of that cosmos, there is a constructive harnessing of power; when, on the other hand, a god's love for a mortal causes that mortal's destruction, the energy is negatively used. One might conjecture that the raw energy generating hubris,

eros, sophia, etc., was felt as neutral and amoral, so that its application and value would depend solely on the circumstances of its use. By this line of reasoning, hubris, in our example from the Aloades myth, would become a positive force channeled or harnessed by the gods to accomplish the permanent restoration of cosmic order.

The explicit inner terms dealing with permanent restoration of cosmic order are of two types. Some are in the same semantic category²⁵ as the outer terms they signify. For example, changing the land and the sea and piling mountain upon mountain would fall into the semantic category of cosmoclasm, which is related in a literal way to the outer terms in so far as they address cosmic equilibrium. Some inner terms are in different semantic categories from their outer terms. For example, wooing Artemis and Hera would fall into the semantic category of sacrilege, to which questions of cosmic equilibrium do not literally belong. In the first type there is a literal and direct relation between inner and outer terms, in the second a symbolic, nonliteral, indirect relation.

The polyvalency of symbols and symbolic acts allows some inner terms simultaneously to address a multitude of outer-term concerns, among them cosmic order. Of these concerns, some are technical and others more philosophical. Questions revolving around hunting and harvesting are of a primarily technical nature, while the relations between men and gods, or between chaos and order, nature and culture, etc., are primarily philosophical. Technical problems that fill the outer slots can be correlated with inner events from their same semantic category or from different, metaphorically related categories. Philosophical questions too can be so addressed, whether they be moral dilemmas (such as how to avoid hubris in interacting with the gods) or cognitive ones (such as how to account for the foundation of a city or the introduction of worship of the Muses, of agriculture, or of the use of fire). And so we find $F(a)$ and $F(a^{-1})$ filled by concerns which (1) are at various levels of specificity and practicality and (2) relate to the inner two terms either directly by being in the same semantic category or indirectly and suggestively by being in different semantic categories that have no overt literal connection.

It is of interest that from the moment of their autochthonous or superfertile birth²⁶ the Aloades engage in successive activities that all culminate at the moment of their mutual fratricide. In numbers 1, 2, 3, and 6 both of the inner paired events occur simultaneously at that instant: harvesting/being harvested, hunting/being hunted, murdering/being murdered, and sacrificing/being sacrificed. In numbers 4 and 5, however, where the Aloades suffer punishment for

two kinds of transgression, only the chronologically second event occurs at that moment.

Because as twins the Aloades are barely distinguishable, duplicating each other in nearly every respect, their mutual fratricide might be seen to involve some form of destruction of self – or *autoctony*. As implied in its etymology [*autoktonos* ‘self-slaying’, ‘slaying one another’, from *auto* ‘self’, ‘mutual’, and *ktonein* ‘to slay’ (LSJ)] autoctony could also involve any form of mutual or simultaneous slaughter and the destruction not only of the self, but also of a related other. Thus it could include suicide and destruction by one’s own creatures or pets, such as Actaeon’s by his own hounds, or by one’s own parent, such as Pentheus’ by Agave, as well as killing of one’s own sibling(s). The mutual fratricide of the twin Aloades is multiply autoctonous because it involves a simultaneous and mutual destruction of two beings, and the destruction of not only a related other, but an almost identical other, who is hence almost a replica of the self.

Further, autoctony seems logically and statistically correlated with autochthony. The latter involves birth from the earth [*autochthōn* ‘sprung from the land itself’, from *auto* ‘self’ and *chthōn* ‘earth’ (LSJ)], and its *auto-* prefix came to mean ‘alone’ or ‘with minimal male help’.²⁷ Thus like autoctony it involves an emphasis on self and on a minimal presence of other: it is the self acting upon the self to create,²⁸ as in autoctony the self acts upon the self to destroy. Autoctony is peculiarly appropriate to myths that begin with autochthony and often provides closure for such myths. Hence its presence is particularly fitting here in the myth of the Aloades.

Not only is the autoctony an appropriate conclusion in view of the autochthonous or autochthonoid origin of the Aloades, but it also serves aesthetically to unify the myth. In four of the pairs of opposed events the passive and active aspects of autoctony allow two paired acts having different significance to occur in a single moment. At that moment multiple narrative events and existential states coalesce. At the moment of autoctony there is a juncture between all the narrative syntagms, and a rich texture is experienced.

It is this simultaneous multiplicity of meanings, a sort of polyphony of events and states, that the formula as a linear mode of expression does not fully capture. This very linearity is incongruent with the notion of a rich texture; the formula is by its nature reductionist, whereas myth, with its polyvalences, is not. However, despite this shortcoming, the formula is still useful for sorting out events and states, focusing attention on who gains from the events

expressed by the inner terms, showing a syntagmatic logical relation between the inner and outer terms, depicting the inner terms as modeled on the outer ones, and separating the direct from the suggestive, metaphoric, relations and the more technical from the more philosophical concerns. And once the formula has been so used, it becomes easier to grasp the polyvalent nature of mythic symbols²⁹ and the rich textures and meanings they create.

Thus we conclude that the formula is indeed useful so long as one heeds the advice given by Eidothea to Menelaus in John Barth's 'Menelaid', and does not mistake the key for the treasure.

Notes

1. Lévi-Strauss 1965: 228. This is a considerably revised version of the essay originally in *Anthropologie Structurale* (Paris: Plon, 1958) chapter 11; original English text in T. A. Sebeok ed., *Myth: A Symposium* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1958).
2. See Reid 1974, especially p. 161ff.
3. The authors are grateful to Paul Rubin for this formulation. We do not intend this formula to be an exact reduplication of Lévi-Strauss'; rather, it is meant to express his notion of double transformation.
4. For a review of ancient accounts of the myth see Roscher, s.v. 'Aloadai'.
5. Iphimedeia's name appears on Linear B Pylos Tn. 316, which lists a number of Mycenaean deities and records gifts to them of gold bowls and cups, men and women. Vermeule, p. 294, comments that 'Iphimedeia becomes a mere heroine later, a lover of Poseidon, a mother of giants'.
6. The paternity of the twins is variously attributed to Aloeus and Poseidon. Cf. Hankoff's discussion (1977:313) about ancient theories of the origin of twins by divine impregnation or by 'superfetation' – where two fathers are believed to have impregnated the mother, one of them usually divine.
7. Cf. Roscher, and the ancient sources cited *ad hoc*, p. 254: in Thessaly either they themselves or their human parent Aloeus founded Alos; on Mt. Helikon they built Ascra and introduced the worship of the Muses (Melete, Mneme, and Aoide); in Anthedon their grave is found; on the island of Naxos (Strongyle) there is a sacred grove in their honor; the grave of Otus is sometimes located in Crete; and Iphimedeia was honoured in Mylasa in Caria.
8. Christ's crucifixion would constitute a loss of power and control, his subsequent resurrection a gain. Oedipus' patricide, defeat of the sphinx, and acquisition of the kingdom and Jocasta would together constitute a gain in power and control, his subsequent self-blinding and deprivation of wife and throne and native land, a loss. We do not concern ourselves here with the interesting issue of apparent versus actual gain and loss, or with the irony which the discrepancy between the two brings to the Oedipus myth, at least in its Sophoclean telling.
9. There can even be, in theory, an *a* within the myth and a second *a* extrinsic to it, the two existing in a paradigmatic relation. E.g., Athens as a Mycenaean community within the Oresteia myth benefits from Orestes' crime

and punishment (paired inner events), while fifth century Athenian audience experiencing Aeschylus' *Oresteia* likewise benefits (like the audience of any tragedy) by identifying with the hospitable Mycenaean Athens within the text.

10. See Arthur (1977:11) for a catalogue of the polarities which are resolved in this hymn: male–female, Olympian–Titan, Divine–Human, Immortal–Mortal, Young–Old, Marriage (Sexuality)–Virginity, Joy–Sorrow. We further examine these oppositions in Rubin and Deal (in press).
11. Culture-bearers that scale the heavens may suggest that they expect to obtain something there for mankind. Cf. Tantalus' theft of nectar and ambrosia for mortals when he is feasting on Olympus with the gods.
12. As enumerated in note 7 above.
13. According to Eratosthenes the twins were autochthonous; by other sources they were born of Iphimedeia and Poseidon, or Iphimedeia and Aloeus (see Roscher). For Poseidon as a probable husband of earth and male fertility spirit, see CAH³ II.2, p. 900 and Tripp, s.v. 'Poseidon'. Poseidon as god of rivers penetrates the earth and often fathers giants, twins, and creatures designated elsewhere as autochthonous.

In the myth as recounted by Apollodorus Iphimedeia's scooping of water into her lap symbolically anticipates her actual sexual union with the god. Note how actively she irrigates herself and how it is she who seeks out Poseidon, not vice versa.

14. For examples of the analogy between earth-born creatures and crops see Guthrie, *In the Beginning*, pp. 21-22. His opening chapter is particularly useful for its citations of ancient mentions of autochthony, and for a general discussion of its meanings in ancient times.
15. For a description of this rite see Nilsson, p. 180: 'ephebes consecrated their hair to her (Artemis) in Athens, as elsewhere to the river-gods, at the time of their entry into manhood' (authors' trans.). The account in *Odyssey* XI emphasizes the Aloades' pre-puberty state. In the Greek text the suggestive language, especially vv. 317-320, makes this emphasis particularly clear. Therefore we have included the Greek along with our own translation:

καί νύ κεν ἐξέτελεισσαν, εἰ ἦβης μέτρον ἴκοντο
 ἀλλ' ὄλεσεν Διὸς υἱός, ὃν ἠύκομος τέκε Λητώ,
 ἀμφοτέρω, πρὶν σφωὶν ὑπὸ κροτάφοισιν ἰούλους
 320 ἀνθῆσαι πυκάσαι τε γένυς ἐναυθεί λάχνη.

'And they would indeed have succeeded if the measure of their youth had come, but the son of Zeus whom lovely Leto bore caused both to perish before the down blossomed beneath their temples and covered their cheeks thickly with flowering fuzz.'

Thus the usual metonymic sacrifice of a lock of hair was not available to the twins. Instead, because they were excessively, hubristically close to the gods – in particular to Artemis and Hera – a correspondingly excessive sacrifice was exacted from them. The presence of Artemis and of the deer and emphasis in the *Odyssey* on their premature death underscore this sacrificial aspect of the myth.

16. We are particularly reminded of the difficulties in reconstructing the contexts by some recent work reported by Joel Sherzer on the Cuna Ka Kwento narrative. Sherzer has presented this as an 'open text ... told or chanted

in a number of different contexts and for different purposes'. (Semiotic Society of America Abstracts, Denver 1977.)

17. See Smith's (1975) discussion of the problem of over-hunting. Though distinguishing proper prey does not appear to be a central concept of hunting cultures, it is used symbolically in the Aloades myth to indicate both their moral and their cognitive failings. Interestingly, the term *eustochēsai* 'hit the mark', from *stochos* 'aim', 'shot', is listed by LSJ as the opposite of *hamartanō* 'miss the mark'. The text reads: 'wanting to hit the beast they speared one another'. Here their missing of the mark or target (the deer) is a literal accident, but – especially in view of the meaning *hamartia* assumes in Greek tragedy (often mis-translated as 'tragic flaw') – their missing of the target suggestively echoes their earlier *intentional* hubristic acts, their previous moral and cognitive misfires regarding the various gods. If the beast is the goddess Artemis in disguise, their hubris in attacking it increases.
18. Of numerous studies pertaining to sacrifice in ancient Greece see Burkert (1966) on the close identity between sacrificer and victim and the community's need to make the victim responsible for his own death (e.g., p. 109: 'the goat ... has gnawed the vine, and must therefore die'); cf. also Guepin (1968:100ff) on the various typical ways of shifting the burden of responsibility for the sacrifice and terminating the chain of retribution generated by a sacrificial act. For a review of the anthropological literature on sacrifice (not however taking into account either Burkert or Guepin), see the opening chapter of Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*.
19. Cf. Hankoff's (1977) view of twins as outside nature, and as having a 'marvelous ability ... to reverse or negate nature' and to alter fertility.
20. Both giants and monsters acquire much of their power from close proximity (whether by birth or by continual contact) to the Earth. Both engage in actions that challenge authority; for both their eventual defeat consolidates that authority. For a fuller comparison of giants and monsters see Fontenrose (1959), Theme 7G in Index.
21. The Aloades, in wooing Artemis and Hera, ignore a well established distinction between the race of gods and the race of men (cf. Pindar, *Nemean 6* and Hesiod, *Myth of the Five Races* in the *Works and Days*): in attempting the bed of a goddess they resemble Ixion, Porphyryon, and (by one account) Endymion, all of whom attempted the bed of Hera, as well as the giant Orion, who (in at least one version) tried to seduce Artemis. All of these violators of sexual boundaries were either cast into Hades or instantly killed. Note that by Hyginus' account (*fab.* 28) the Aloades were bound back to back against a pillar in the underworld, with serpents as fastenings and an owl perched on the pillar.
22. The symbolic implications of this act need further examination. For various conflicting views see Farnell (1896 vol. V, p. 407), Schol. *Iliad* V, 385ff, and J. G. Frazer (1888). One possible interpretation is that Ares is a fertility god, like Dionysus, and that to bind him is to imprison and thereby control the harvest. See Farnell (vol. V, pp. 300-407) on the controversial view of the Thracian Ares as a fertility god.
23. Vernant (1975) discusses similar conflicts between monsters and gods in which the product of the victory of the sovereign god is order. The conflict itself, Vernant points out, explicitly evokes the return of the universe to an original state of indistinction and disorder. See Vernant, pp. 100-118.

24. The actual power of the twins is not fully indicated by their deeds. Homer emphasizes an ever greater potential power when he states that 'they would indeed have succeeded (in defeating the gods) if the measure of their youth had come' *Odyssey* XI. 305-320).
25. Cf. a discussion of the problems in delineating semantic categories in Eco, 1976:80.
26. For the Aloades their twinning, their giantness, and the circumstances of their birth (see note 13) indicate superfertility. Cf. Hankoff's characterization of twins as 'the living evidence of exuberant or supernatural procreative powers' (1977:314) and 'the living indication of increased or altered fertility' (1977:316).
27. In autochthony the male element is sometimes completely absent (parthenogenesis) but more usually it is present but deemphasized or disguised; cf. the dragon's teeth in the Spartoi myth, the urine of three gods in Orion's birth tale, and the sperm ejaculated on the thigh of an unwilling Athene which fell to the earth and caused the autochthonoid birth of Erichthonius.
28. In this sense autochthony shares a characteristic with incest. In both, a minimal of 'other' is mingled with the 'self'; incest is a kind of self-propagation to the degree that a relative (child, sibling, etc.) is an extension of the self. Incest, like autochthony, is correlated with autoctony, as in the Oedipus myth where the sons of Oedipus and Jocasta, like the Aloades, commit mutual and simultaneous fratricide.
The birth of the Aloades doubly illustrates this characteristic of self acting upon the self as a kind of self-breeding: Iphimedeia's proleptic scooping of water into her lap makes Poseidon the passive or nearly absent partner and her actual union with Poseidon is incestuous since he is her maternal grandfather.
29. See Sperber's interesting book, reviewed in *Semiotica* 19 (1977), for a discussion of the various matrices of the symbol.

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