

A few scattered bits of ancient theogonies persist in the Homeric poems. Achilles recalls that his mother, Thetis, called Hundred-Armed-Briareus to Olympus in order to defend Zeus against the revolted Hera, Poseidon, and Athena. Aged Nestor, long before coming to Troy, fought with the Lapiths against the Centaurs: men or men-horses all similarly born of trees whose parents are named Linden, Ash, Oak, or Fir. "Against them," says the old warrior, "no man of today would any longer be able to struggle." Similarly, Genesis 4:4 says that before the Flood there were giants on the Earth, the Israelites finding some of them yet in Canaan (Num. 12:33). *Hüne* in modern German still means "giant," revealing an ancient similarity between the Giants of the tales and the Huns of history (who were, moreover, smaller than the Germans). A similar euhemerism appears everywhere, but perhaps nowhere as actively and as knowingly as in Greece. A great many mythical figures have come to us completely humanized. If we come to discover religious archaisms in this romance of chivalry which is the *Iliad*, it is thanks to bits of tradition conserved elsewhere, thanks to the permanency of ritual, and finally, to comparisons with other religions. When we are told that Ulysses offered a temple to Poseidon, or that there exists an Athena Aiantis, we know that the explanation must come not from the god but from the *parèdre*. The latter, before being considered human,

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had a long religious existence of which there remain only some few vestiges. These figures which have come down to us rather altered can often shed light on one another. There is more than one relationship between the double Ajax, which will be the center of this study, and Palamedes and Philoctetes, the other two enemies of whom Ulysses disencumbers himself in the course of the expedition against Troy.

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None of the three is struck by him. He abandons Philoctetes at Lemnos; he causes the death of Palamedes; and he leads Ajax to kill himself. This is characteristic of the most ancient popular wariness. In Greece, Rome, and in ancient Germania, the children who were born deformed, that is, malevolent, were abandoned; they were not killed. Stoning, hurling from a great height, entombment, and crucifixion are punishments in which no one bears the responsibility for a decisive blow. The hemlock of Socrates is a compulsory suicide. When Loki, the Scandinavian "trickster," plots the death of Balder, he intrusts to a blind man the mistletoe which Frigg, thinking it harmless, had neglected to disarm; the blind man strikes Balder accidentally with the mistletoe branch. When responsibilities are shared to this point, each of the actors may think himself innocent: Ulysses proceeds as does Loki.

Philoctetes, Palamedes, and Ajax were long ago recognized as ancient *daimōnes* whose characteristics were unequally effaced through their insertion into epos. These characteristics reunite them with the first divine generations, the Titans and the Giants. To enumerate these traits is, at once, to get nearer to the idea that the Greeks had of the "trickster," the "culture hero," and the hero in revolt, three divergent notions but notions among which there are numerous links.

Titans and Giants are clearly distinguished in the theogonies but poorly so in current usage.

The Titans, sons of the Earth and of Uranus, are hidden by their father in the bosom of their mother, then freed by Zeus who makes allies of them. Later, however, war breaks out between the Titans, established on Othrys, and the Kronides, established on Olympus. There are twelve Titans, just as there are twelve Olympians, figures which are probably late, but significant. They became considered as *anti-gods*, although their names indicate nothing of the kind; some of these result seemingly from pure speculation, but

Thoia, Mnemosyne, Themis, and Dione exist in the cult. The Greeks affixed to the Titans the characteristics of the "culture hero" who braves the gods in order to aid men, two mutually reinforcing traits. The more important their inventions, the prouder and more inclined to excess they are, and this is symbolized by their association with the vault of the heavens.<sup>1</sup> Titanic characteristics appear in their extreme form in Iapetus and his sons, Atlas, Menoetius, and Prometheus, who are all finally punished: Atlas is exiled to the western limits of the world, Prometheus into the frozen solitude of the northeast, and Menoetius is sent to Erebus to watch over the flocks of Hades. Epimetheus is at Prometheus' side as his lesser double, the element of awkwardness which causes every *trickster* to sometimes be outwitted.

Titan, in the end, took on the meaning of presumptuousness, of rebelliousness (Hes., *Theog.*, 207-10). The word became a sort of adjective: designating Phaethon because he had desired to drive the chariot of the Sun, and Bellerophon because he had wished to scale the heavens.

The Giants are born of the bloody seed of Uranus which fell on the earth at the moment when Kronos castrated his father. These beings, born of the soil, have the scaly tail of a serpent for legs. Their weapons are boulders and the trunks of trees. They threaten neither men, nor, as do the Centaurs, their daughters, but rather they pursue the goddesses. Similarly, the Germanic Giants battle each other with stones and seek to carry off Freyja.<sup>2</sup> In the Germanic mythology, the Giants are *märchen*-figures. They fight with the heroes and thus resemble the Christian devil; but they are so often ridiculed by a malicious dwarf that they become more comic than menacing and in the end enjoy a rather *gemütlich* rapport with the human beings. The Greeks, on the other hand, gave them no grotesque characteristics. The Germanic Giants are ogres, a trait which in Greece is left to the Laestrygonians, to one or the other Cyclops. Either the Greek Giants were humanized and, like the Lapiths, became heroes; or they were raised to become enemies of the gods, comparable to the Titans with whom they have very often been confused.

<sup>1</sup> The gods become anxious when Ullikumis mounts the shoulders of Ubelluris, the Hittite Atlas, and rises to the point of attaining heaven (S. H. Hooke, *Middle Eastern Mythology* [1963], p. 96). In the judgment of the Jahwist, the Tower of Babel proves that man remains evil and will always seek to equal the gods (Gen. 8:3).

<sup>2</sup> The Vanir gods have no swords; Freyr will receive one only after he has been received among the Aesir (J. de Vries, *Altgerm. Religionsgesch.*, §§ 177, 469, 501, 534; and *The Problem of Loki*, *F.F.C.*, CX [1933], 80-82).

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No portrayal of the *Titanomachy* is known; the *Gigantomachy*, on the other hand, was one of the preferred subjects of the artists. They have nearly always given the Giants the same aspect, the same stature—the *gigas* is large and vigorous, but not to excess—and the same weapons as their divine adversaries.<sup>3</sup> The poets do likewise and do not speak either of rocks or of tree trunks. Hesiod (*Theog.*, 186) describes their long lances and their scintillating weaponry. Hence, they have the face of the heroes but the disposition of the Titans. Pindar (*Pyth.* VIII, 1–8) contrasts with Hesychia, daughter of the Justice, the *hybris* of Typhon and of Porphyryon, king of the Giants. Tantalus, Ixion, Capaneus, and Pentheus will be likened to them for having defied the gods. Their name, like that of the Titans, little by little lost its mythical effect to become charged with psychological values.

The struggle against them is led by Zeus and aided by all the gods, especially Athena and Heracles. The combatants are armed like those of Homer; however, the end of the struggle has less an epic than a theogonic coloration. The Giants are hurled to earth and buried beneath islands and mountains. Poseidon, pursuing Polybotes, detaches from his trident a bit of Cos which becomes Nisyros; Zeus throws Etna upon Typhon and Sipyle upon Tantalus; Athena buries Enceladus beneath Sicily. On the Isthmus was shown the boulder with which Aloyoneus had first smashed with a single blow twelve chariots and twenty-four men and which he had afterward launched against Heracles (schol. Pind., *Pyth.*, VIII, 17). Nonsense, say the critics, forgetting that Thor's weapon was a hammer which returned to him after each blow like a boomerang.<sup>4</sup>

The Germanic Ymir, the Phrygian Manes, and the Indian Manu have no exact counterpart in Greece. But one may wonder whether these legends which attach an island to a Giant are not an altered memory of an *Urriese*, whose dismemberment gave birth to the world, whether the islands covering a Giant were not at first islands created from the body of a Giant, a cosmogonic conception which would have intersected another, that of the island which marks the beginning of a world born through emersion.

Without tracing obscure origins we shall seek here to shed light upon the transformation of the Giant, first into a hero, then into

<sup>3</sup> F. Vian, *La guerre des Géants* (Paris, 1951). The Giants are ordinary warriors on the vases and on the frieze of the treasure of the Siphnians at Delphi (sixth century); however, on the frieze of Pergamos, about four centuries more recent, they possess the monstrous aspect of serpents and birds.

<sup>4</sup> J. de Vries, *Altgerm. Religionsg.*, § 670.

a hero in revolt, a notion which plays a characteristic role in Greek mythology. It is a pity that we do not know more about the Phlegyans in whom Homer sees simply *megálētores* warriors, but who appear elsewhere as a people of *hybris*; they attack Delphi and Apollo hurls them into Tartarus. The eponym, Phlegyas, is a titanic figure like Tantalus, like Ixion, and like Pirithous. Titanic figures are numerous and, as in every elaborated mythology, well differentiated, each having its own meaning.

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Of the three enemies of Ulysses, only Palamedes conserves Promethean characteristics. He invented letters, the game of dice, the ways to the precinct, the order of watches, and signaling by fire. He organizes good distribution of rations and leads to Troy the sisters Oenotropes, who change all that they touch into wine, oil, and grain. His titanism, less grandiose than that of Prometheus, is also revealed in his death: he is stoned or cast into a well by Ulysses and Diomedes.<sup>5</sup> A "culture hero" is always more or less a "trickster." This trait is reduced to very little in Palamedes—he reveals only the ruse of Ulysses, who feigns madness in order to escape to the Trojan expedition—but the *furberia* passed to his entourage. His brother, Oeax (whose name designates him, in the lack of specific information, as the inventor of the rudder), succeeds in warning his father, Nauplius, by letters engraved on a piece of flotsam that the Greeks have murdered Palamedes. Nauplius avenges his son by lighting braziers along the coasts in order to wreck the Greek ships on their return.

The death of Palamedes is caused by a *letter* and by *gold*. This is one of the rare Greek legends—perhaps the only one—in which the metal gold appears. Gold possesses a very high and ambivalent religious value. Objects of gold are precious, coveted, and malevolent: the lamb of Atreus, the Golden Fleece, and the necklace of Harmonia. As for writing, it does not appear in the legends save in the doing of evil; it is mentioned for the first time in the *Iliad* (VI, 168), "harmful, sinister signs" in reference to the message sent by Proetus in order to mislead Bellerophon; Phaedra's letter to Theseus is equally charged with a lethal lie. The *grammata* possess a less rich mythology than the runes. They must, nonetheless, have seemed a form of magic and participated in the very

<sup>5</sup> After Robert Graves, *Greek Myths*, § 162, 6. Ed. Phillips (*American Journal of Philology* [1967], p. 267) called attention to the fact that all the inventions with which Palamedes is credited (Aesch. fr. 182, 182A; Plato, *Rep.* VII, 622D) are of Minoan origin.

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characteristic inquietude which surrounds the "culture hero," who always works, if not against the gods, at least without them. The gods have granted man scarcely anything other than plants or animals: grain, the vine, the olive tree, and the horse; and when Hermes makes a zither, it is for him alone. As for the dice, another invention of Palamedes, they are everywhere unlucky. It is a dice game which in the *Mahābhārata* causes the war of the Pāndavas; it is for having killed a friend in a gambling argument that Patroclus is forced to seek refuge at the court of Peleus.

Even more than Palamedes, Philoctetes was disfigured by humanization. If he was ever a "culture hero," it was as inventor of the bow. All he retained of this characteristic were infallible arrows, a magic bow on which the fall of Troy hinges, and an exceptional skill which he teaches about him. His wound is caused by a serpent, an attribute of a Giant rather than a Titan. Several versions of it are given in which only one detail is constant, the name of Chryse, designating sometimes the nymph or goddess (Athena Chryse), near the altar of whom he was bitten, and sometimes the desert island near Lemnos to which he was banished. Now, one Chryse is, by Ares, mother of Phlegyas, eponym of the mysterious people of *hybris*. The banishment of Philoctetes is more moderate than that which afflicts the Titans, but perhaps of analogous effect. His sojourn at Lemnos acknowledges his likeness to Hephaistus: he remains there nine years, as long as Hephaistus remained with Thetis in order to acquire his art; and, like him, and like Völundr of the Edda, he is lame.<sup>6</sup>

Palamedes is a Titan dressed as a hero of chivalry; in Philoctetes there remain some traits of the Giant and others of the mutilated magician. The religious reality of Ajax is more difficult to seize upon because we apprehend the individual in elaborated works in which his humanization was stressed. If we disengage him from the epic texture which profoundly altered his primitive meaning, we find in him some characteristics of the Titan and, further, of the Giant.

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He comes to us halved into two dioscurie beings who should be studied jointly like the Aloades, or the Aetoriones or Moliones. The Aloades, who hold Ares confined in a jar of bronze, appear as still

<sup>6</sup> M. Dolcourt, *Héphaïstos ou la légende du magicien* (1957), pp. 121, 165, 176. Ulysses disfigures himself in order to penetrate Troy (*Od.* IV, 244) and returns to Ithaca unrecognizable: Might this also be a recollection of the "mutilated magician"?

mythical figures in the *Iliad*. But the Actoriones, who in the legend are a double monster with two heads, four arms, and four legs, become two warriors in Homer, each having his own name. Strangely enough, the Ajaxes have kept a single name, to an extent which prevented the biographers from making brothers of them. They are distinct and unequal, as are also Castor and Pollux. The first is a *pelōrios* of great stature, though not the only one to bear this name in the epic; he is formidable in hand-to-hand combat and protects himself with a great Mycenaean shield where two men are as behind a single bulwark. The other Ajax is an archer; he is characterized by his speed.<sup>7</sup>

Ajax II is the only one rooted in Greek soil. He was born at Naryka in Locris, son of Oeleus or Ileus. One tradition says that he had three hands; another that a tamed serpent accompanied him everywhere. This representation must have become current in the land, for the coins of Opus in Locris depict him with a serpent on his shield or at his feet. These characteristics are reminiscent of the monsters born of the Earth and the Giants with tails of serpents. Opus was considered to have been founded by this Ajax or again by Menoetius, son of Iapetus, brother of Prometheus.

Giants and Titans appear to have been particularly honored in this region.<sup>8</sup> The existence of a month of Gigantios is attested nowhere in Greece save at Amphissa, in Locris Ozolis, and on the other side of the gulf, at Triteia in Achaia. The other Locris facing Euboea possessed a cult of the Titans. Iapetus and his sons were honored in Opus which boasted of having seen the two survivors of the Deluge, two Titanides, Deucalion, son of Prometheus, and Pyrrha, daughter of Epimetheus, debark, and of possessing their tombs.

Ajax II has several traits characteristic of the Giants. He wishes to violate Cassandra who had sought refuge near the statue of Athena. Similarly, Otos had threatened Artemis; and Ephialtes and Porphyriion had threatened Hera, who, in another legend is raped by Eurymedon and gives birth to Prometheus.<sup>9</sup> Ajax is, henceforth, pursued by the wrath of Athena, the *Gigantoleteira*, the *Gigantophontis*, the primary aide of Zeus in the struggle against the Giants. When he sets sail to return to Locris she smashes his ship;

<sup>7</sup> Excellent study of Ajax of J. Vürtheim, *De Ajacis origine cultu et patria* (Leiden, 1907). On dioscureis inequality, cf. Angelo Brolich, *Gli eroi greci* (Rome, 1958), p. 326, n. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Sources *apud* Oldfather, s.v. "Lokris," *Real-Encz.* (1927), col. 1274.

<sup>9</sup> In my *Hephaistos*, pp. 38 and 183 n., I was wrong to see only a late innovation in this story. Cf. Uberto Pestalozza, "Hera Pelasga," *Studi etruschi*, XXXIV and XXXV (1956-57), 116, 161.

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Ajax escapes the shipwreck and takes refuge on the rocks of Gyra. Despite Athena, Poseidon would have saved him had Ajax not uttered an impious word (*Odyssey*, IV, 499). Poseidon then cleaves the boulder with his trident, and Ajax, thrown aside, drowns, perishing like Polybotes, like Typhon, and like that Capaneus whose shield bore a Giant, who declared that he would take Thebes whether Zeus willed it or not. (Aesch. *Sept.*, 411.) The ancients placed the rocks of Gyra near Myconos, the very island beneath which, it is said, rest the last Giants, stoned by Heracles.<sup>10</sup>

The one the *Iliad* calls the Greatest Ajax, the Pelórios, is, in the poem, a strangely solitary individual apart from his homonym and his brother, Teucer. He commands no one and fights alone. No god watches over him and he invokes none, although they never cease to intervene on behalf of Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, or Paris. He is called *Telamōnios*, which must originally have been an adjective but which was interpreted as a patronymic to the extent that Ajax, the *heimallos*, received for a father a Telamon honored at Salamis. The name of *Telamon* is closely united with those of *Atlas* and of *Tantalus*. The common name, *telamon*, is retained in Greek with the sense of *stèle*, of *support*. The Latins, says Vitruvius (VI, 7, 6), called *telamones* that which the Greeks named *atlantes*, the virile figures which support the *mutuli*, the corbels, or the crowns on a monument. The word was conserved in Magna Graecia and passed from there into Latin with a meaning unattested in the metropolis. Atlas supports the vault of the heavens. One legend says that Tantalus, his arms extended, did the same (schol. Eur. *Orestes*, 981). Nothing of this sort appears in the person of Telamon. On the other hand, Atlas is a marine god, "a being of mischievous spirit who knows all the sea's chasms" (*Odyssey*, I, 52). Analogous characteristics can be discovered in the figure of Telamon,<sup>11</sup> as well as several *titanic* vestiges, if not in his character at least in his entourage. His first wife and mother of Teucer was Hesione, the Trojan princess saved from the sea monster by Heracles: the legendary double of Andromeda. But Hesione is also an Oceanid, the mother or wife of Prometheus, or wife of Atlas (schol. Eur. *Phen.*, 1129). The mother of Ajax is named Eriboea or Periboea. In the *Odyssey* (VII, 57), Periboea is

<sup>10</sup> Strabo X, 5, 9, p. 487, reading *καταλευθέρτας* instead of *καταλυθέρτας*.

<sup>11</sup> See P. Girard, *Revue des Études Grecques*, Vol. XVIII (1905), and Erich Bethe, *Homer III, Die Sage vom Troischen Kriege*, p. 119. On the marine character of Telamon, cf. Vürtheim, *De Ajacis origine* . . . who perhaps draws unwarranted conclusions from the fact that the sacerdotal family of Poseidon Isthmius at Halicarnassus was descended from a Telamon, son of Poseidon.

the daughter of the audacious Eurymedon, king of the insolent Giants. These genealogies may be late, but they are significant. The *pelōrios* Ajax is armed with a lance and pike, but he willingly fights with stones like the *gēgeneis*. Moreover, he is invulnerable.

Invulnerability, which appears rarely in Greek mythology, may have several psychologically different values.<sup>12</sup> A spontaneous mythology may readily attribute to a great conqueror—Wallenstein, Charles XII, Frederick II of Prussia—an invulnerability either innate or due to some miraculous object, such as the nails from the true cross which Constantine carried under his helmet. Such a mythology fancies, with the help of different images, privileged heroes living, immortal, in some subterranean retreat: in the Germanic countries it was said of the Emperor Frederick II, then of his grandfather, Barbarossa, and also of William Tell, just as the Greeks said it of Amphiaraus and of the Lapith Caeneus.

Things go quite differently in the heroic legends. Here, invulnerability appears only in order to be crossed, that is, it is a romantic device destined to suspend interest, and, more profoundly, a means of marking the impassable limits of the human condition. The listener waits to discover what unforeseen but uneluctable peril threatens, either the "external soul"—the brand of Meleager, the hair of Nisus or Samson—or that one part of the body which is unprotected. When invulnerability is total, it is crossed all the same: Heracles smothered the lion of Nemea; Kaineus is entombed, upright, beneath the trunks of trees. The Germanic legends have invented a thousand ingenious variations on this theme; they all end with a lesson given the human being, promised to death from the very moment of his birth.<sup>13</sup>

To attain a religious perspective it is necessary to see the ways in which invulnerability was acquired. The bathing of Achilles in the Styx is not attested before Statius, but it adheres to the same mythical context as the ancient tradition by which Thetis seeks to render her son immortal by passing him through fire. She fails, nevertheless, just as Demeter when she undertakes to burn all that is human, that is, perishable, in Demophon. In order to render their sons, if not immortal, at least more stalwart, the kings Ahaz

<sup>12</sup> Otto Berthold, *Die Unverwundbarkeit in Sage u. Aberglauben* (Glosson, 1911), does not distinguish among them but gives useful texts.

<sup>13</sup> The death of Sinfjötill in the *Völsungasaga*, 10; that of King Sigtrug in the *Gesta Danorum* of Saxo (I, 17), etc. Don Quixote (II, 32) recounts that Roland was invulnerable except for the sole of his left foot, and that at Roncevaux Bernard de Carpio took him in his arms and suffocated him. One foresees another version in which he is wounded in the foot.

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and Manasseh had them passed over the fire, a practice that Jehovah held in horror (II Kings 18:3; 17:17; 21:6; Jer. 7:31; Ezek. 16:21).

The invulnerability of Ajax results from an entirely different method. Heracles, leaving for the first siege of Troy, comes to Salamis and wishes a courageous son for his ally, Telamon. Ajax is born the same night and Heracles wraps him in the skin of the lion of Nemea, the invulnerable beast he had suffocated in his powerful arms.<sup>14</sup> This recalls the fact that the city of Sardis was made impregnable by leading a lion about it (Herod. I, 84). It was taken nonetheless, not through any fault of the magic but because men simply could not think of everything.

Heracles renders Ajax similar to a lion. This suggests legends of young male initiation. The most characteristic is that of the Germanic *Berserkir*. "The men of Odin went without cuirasse, savage as dogs or wolves and strong as bears or oxen. They slaughtered men. Neither iron nor steel prevailed against them. This was called the rage of the Berserkir." So says the *Ynglingasaga* (6). G. Dumézil, citing this passage (*Mythes et dieux des Germains* [1930], p. 81) adds that the *berserkir* of Odin not only resemble wolves but, to a degree, actually are wolves.<sup>15</sup> One thinks of this description recalling that Ajax II wears no cuirasse but only a jerkin of linen, and seeing Ajax I charge and rout alone a Trojan battalion (VI, 5). Elsewhere, he is compared successively to a lion and an ass (XI, 548 and 558)—something which astonished the critics. Pliny counsels (XXVIII, 19) the swaddling of children in the skin of an ass in order to make them fearless. A rustic may wish, of course, that his son possess courage; but that of the ass suits him better than that of the lion.

The *Iliad* makes no mention of Ajax's invulnerability but seems to know of it, for he is never wounded. Moreover, it recounts that in a single battle he wounds Pandocus, Lysander, Pyrasus, and Pylartes (XI, 400), characters who appear with neither relatives nor home and who, all four, have *epicleses* of Hades as names. Death may be wounded but not killed. This enumeration resembles

<sup>14</sup> Tzetzes of Lyc., 455; schol. on *Iliad*, XXIII, 821. Pindar, *Isthm.*, 0, 35, has "spiritualized" the story: Heracles intrusts a prayer to Zeus' care, but magic requests an action and there is no transference without physical contact: In order to become fertile, Roman women had to be flogged at the time of the Lupercaliae.

<sup>15</sup> Book X of the *Iliad* is tinged curiously with a *berserkir* element. In it, Dolon dresses in the skin of a wolf and wears headgear made of a martin pelt. Louis Gernet sees in him an outlaw (*Mélanges Cumont* [1936], p. 189). Other animal disguises appear in connection with him. The chiefs go out as scouts, Agamemnon and Diomedes beneath a lion pelt and Menelaus in a panther skin. Details of this sort appear nowhere else in the poem.

a catalogue.<sup>16</sup> Does it conceal several tales in which an invulnerable Ajax got the better of a spirit of death?

Invulnerability is created to be crossed, and Ajax, in the end, will die. One version had it that, on the word of an oracle, the people of Troy had buried him beneath a load of clay and that in shaking himself he made two mounds of it.<sup>17</sup> He died there like Palamedes, like Kaineus, and like the crushed Giants. This suggests that, although the poets and the painters describe the Giants as able to be killed by spear and arrow, an old feeling did remain, half conscious of a kind of primitive invulnerability.

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The stoning of Ajax I was not treated in any poem that has been preserved. His suicide, on the contrary, recounted in the *Aethiopsis* and the *Ilias Parva*, and recalled in the *Odyssey* (XI, 543-563), is a legendary theme upon which the poets lingered. It is the microcosm in which the myth of the Giant and of the Titan in revolt is seen transformed into an attitude of man questioning himself regarding his destiny and his rapport with the gods.

Here is the tale of Sophocles. Achilles has just died; Ajax has seized his body from the Trojans. The Atrides, nonetheless, refuse him the weapons of the dead hero, making Ulysses a present of them. Ajax is then possessed by an anger which Athena pushes to the point of madness. Thinking to kill his enemies, he falls upon the flocks of the army and slaughters them along with their shepherds. Recovering his senses in the midst of the carnage, he considers himself dishonored and throws himself on his sword.

Pindar (*Nem.*, VII, 38; VIII, 39; and esp. *Isthm.*, IV, 53) recollects the suicide of Ajax without bothering to reconcile it with his invulnerability, which Sophocles ignores equally. Aeschylus, on the contrary, considers it in his tragedy of the *Thracian Women*. Unable to penetrate the flesh, the sword bends like a bow until a divine being, Athena, intervenes to point out the place on the body which the pelt of the lion had not touched. Ajax was thus able to deal himself a mortal wound. This is the *Märchenmotiv* of useless invulnerability.

The version of the suicide retained, as often happens, a few rudimentary details reminiscent of ancient stoning. Agamemnon

<sup>16</sup> Usener, *Kleine Schriften*, III, 440; J. Kroll, *Gott und Hölle*, p. 372.

<sup>17</sup> The comic poet Sophron, at the beginning of the fifth century, alludes to this, comparing the children who bombard the people with leaves and fruit during a feast, to the Trojans bombarding Ajax (Kaibel, fr. 32; cf. the argument of Sophocles *Ajax* and schol. on *Iliad*, XIV, 405).

forbids cremation of the body which was placed "without further ado beneath a pile of earth."<sup>18</sup> The mound is located near Cape Rhoeteum close to Troy, Rheotus being the name of a Giant struck down by Dionysus. In the drama of Sophocles, on the other hand, the Greeks threaten to crush Teucer, who comes too late to the aid of his brother, *beneath stones* (728).

It was later proposed that cremation had been refused Ajax in punishment for his suicide, an idea influenced by Greek laws; several cities had indeed considered suicide an offense capable of carrying a certain indignity, such as an isolated tomb.<sup>19</sup> Now the Greeks always pictured their protecting heroes as simply buried. When Sparta sought the bones of Orestes at Tegea and Athens those of Theseus at Sicyos, the envoys discovered gigantic skeletons buried in coffins.<sup>20</sup> It was the same, when, after centuries, the sea laid bare the remains of Ajax at Cape Rhoeteum. This happened under Emperor Hadrian who had a sumptuous monument erected. There was not, therefore, anything unusual in the interment of Ajax except the lack of a coffin. This fact was very striking to men's minds because primitively, in fact, the earth covered not a corpse, but a living body.

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Ajax's suicide is a legendary singularity, the exceptional character of which appears to have gone unnoticed. But nevertheless, *in no mythology do the heroes put themselves to death*. Achilles and Ulysses may well think of such a thing in a moment of despondency, but they quickly reject this temptation as unworthy of them (*Il.*, XVIII, 32; *Od.*, X, 49).

Some apparent exceptions in fact conceal rites whose meaning was becoming obscured, to the point that the poets thought it necessary to add a psychological justification to the original,

<sup>18</sup> Eust., *ad Iliadem*, II, 557: *τεθῆναι οὖτως ἐν σαρῶ* which must be corrected to *σαρῶ*. Philostr., *Heroicus*, 188, 30, Kayser says, *ἰθαυαν αὐτὸν κατακείμενος εἰς τὴν γῆν τὸ σῶμα*. Interment without previous cremation admits no indignity. But the corpse should have been placed in a shroud (Penelope would shirk her duty in not weaving that of Laertes) and afterward into a coffin. A *σῶρος* and a *θήκη* are mentioned in all the well-known exhumations: that of Orestes [*Herod.*, I, 88], that of Theseus [*Plut. Thes.*, 36, 2]).

<sup>19</sup> Philostr., *ibid.*, *ἐγγυμένον κελύφας ὡς οὐχ εἶον νυκτὶ θάπτεισθαι οἱ αὐτοὺς ἀποκτείναντες*. On judgments concerning suicide, cf. notes 169-71 by Louis Gernet to his edition of Book IX of the *Laws* of Plato (873 C). R. Hirzel, "Selbstmord," *A.R.W.*, Vol. XI (1907): three articles, full of facts, but in which the author has not made the indispensable distinction between legend and history.

<sup>20</sup> The tragedies mention cremation but evoke only the image of a body stretched out in repose: Aesch. *Choeph.*, 894, 906, and especially, quite explicitly, Eur. *Alc.*, 305, with the image of husband and wife laid out side by side on the funeral couch.

purely religious intent. Sophocles says that Heracles mounts the pyre in order to curtail his suffering. The pyre, however, is still considered a symbol of deification in the funeral rituals of the Roman emperors. But the religious effect of fire—destruction of all that is human and perishable—was felt more and more sharply at the end of antiquity, probably under oriental influences.

Aged Aegaeus, says the legend, throws himself into the sea because he believes his son, Theseus, killed in his fight against the Minotaur. Among the Teutons and Celts (and the Greeks attribute the same custom to the Hyperboreans) the aged did not wait for death to come but, in order to arrive in the other world vigorous, killed themselves, generally by throwing themselves from a cliff into the sea. This was not simply to spare their families the stain of spilled blood: the plunge into the sea is a rite of regeneration. When this value ceased to be understood, the leap of Leucades was interpreted as a suicide.<sup>21</sup>

Later traditions invented a lot of suicides in order to explain place names. They are full of romantic suicides in which men are even seen to kill themselves in the desperation of love, something that women only do in older tales. They attribute all methods of suicide to any and everyone, although each one, primitively, had a psychological significance proper to it, which tradition generally does not make explicit.

In the older legends, suicide is reserved almost exclusively for women. The means they employ are meaningful on two different levels, the psychological and the religious.

The *leap into the sea* has a regenerating value which the legends translate by following it with deification: Ino becomes the goddess Leucothea. *Hanging* is more enigmatic. We conjecture for it, as a ritual substratum, an agrarian magic in which figurines were suspended from trees and balanced. On the portico at Delphi, Polygnotus thus depicts Phaedra in Hell (Paus., X, 20, 3). A desperate woman, crushed by shame for having undergone an outrage or committed a crime, whether voluntary or not, hangs herself: Phaedra and Jocasta do thus.

A widow follows her husband onto the *pyre*: Evadne lets herself be burned with Capaneus and Laodamia with the mannequin which represents Protesilas. In the *Volsungasaga*, Signy, sister of

<sup>21</sup> Grimm, *Rechtsaltertümer*, p. 486; Sid. Apoll., *Carmina*, II, 44; Pliny, *H.N.* IV, 89. A mysterious "law of Coos" prescribed, it appears, that sexagenarians put themselves to death (Strabo, X, 6, 6). On the horror of the Teutons regarding the "straw death" of J. de Vries, *Allgem. Religionsgesch.*, § 141; on the pseudo-suicides of Leucades cf. J. Hubaux, *Le Plongeon rituel* (1923), pp. 28 ff.

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Sigmund and mother, by him, of Sinfjötli, dies likewise with Siggeir, the husband she hates and whose death she caused. We divine the two superimposed values: the sacrifice of the *suttee*, property of the husband, and the hope of resurrection implied by the fire.

The great suicides of legend are rich in complex meanings, not equally explained by the poets. Dido stabs herself upon a pyre with a sword she received from Aeneas. Fire indicates an apotheosis which is, in effect, historical, for Dido was honored as goddess of Carthage (Justin, XVIII, 6, 8), a fact Virgil does not take into account. The *sword*, on the other hand, is a perfectly clear sexual symbol; it reappears in later histories, in which its archaic meanings are left intact.<sup>22</sup> The sword given by Aeneas is, in addition, a "fatal gift." Brynhild stabs herself for having caused the death of Sigurd, then burns herself beside the body (*Sigurdarkvida*, 47; *Volsungasaga*, 31) so that she may be his wife in the beyond, but Hel, a guardian of the underworld, bars her way because she aspires to follow a man who is not her husband (*Helreid Brynhildar*). Dido, moreover, is not a true *suttee*. Virgil gives her suicide the same vindicating value as Sophocles gives that of Ajax.

A hero does not normally kill himself, even if guilty—guilty of the greatest crime of all, parricide. Oedipus mutilates himself, Althaemenes kills his father, Catreus, by mistake (in the legends parricide always has the excuse of error); and at his prayer the earth swallows him up. Telegonos, the murderer of Ulysses, confines himself to lamentation.

Rare, even, are the *devotiones* in which the hero kills himself, as Menoeceus at the end of the *Phoenicians*, in order to save Thebes. Codrus, the last king of Athens, throws himself before death (Plato, *Banquet*, 208D) like Decius Mus in order to save Rome (T. Liv., VIII, 9, 10).

Ajax kills himself in order not to survive in dishonor.<sup>23</sup> Plato acknowledges suicide in cases of excessive suffering or of shame

<sup>22</sup> Pantolea butchers herself on the body of her husband (Xen. *Cyrop.*, VIII, 3, 14). Suicides by steel of Marpessa, Cleopatra, Polydora, of Polyxena enamored of Achilles (Philostr., *Heroicos*, XX, 18) and others. Seneca boldly validates the sexual symbolism of the sword when he has Phaedra killed with that of Hippolytes, in contempt of the old tradition, which has it that she hangs herself. Hanging, moreover, soon appeared as a *letum informe* (Virg. *Aen.*, XII, 603); already in the *Odyssey* (XXII, 462), when Ulysses hangs his guilty servants, it is in order to refuse them a *καθαρός θάνατος*. These aesthetic considerations altered the primitive apportionments.

<sup>23</sup> Don Quixote, after having similarly exterminated the sheep (I, 18), saves himself from ridicule by pretending that they were really knights transformed into sheep by an enchanter—his personal enemy.

which would render life intolerable (*Laws*, IX, 873CD). Theognis is not far from seeing sufficient justification in poverty (173, 101). Greek traditions, however, have conserved only very rare examples, all more or less historical, of suicide for prestige or for fidelity. Adrastus, a Phrygian, stabs himself over the body of Croesus' son, whom he killed involuntarily (Herod., I, 45). When Cimon conquered Elion on the Strymon, the Persian governor kills himself and his entire family (Her., VII, 107). Artapates, after Cunaxa, commits harakiri over the body of Cyrus (Xen. *Anab.*, I, 8). Greece can add to these examples only that of the last survivor of Thermopylae, who strangles himself in order not to survive his companions (Her., VII, 232). We may overlook the stories of prisoners who kill themselves to avoid a worse fate (Thuc., IV, 48; Xen., *Hell.*, VI, 2, 36). Suicides are equally rare in the Old Testament, where however, that of Saul is strangely reminiscent of that of Ajax;<sup>25</sup> but, insofar as we can judge, Saul's suicide does not carry the vindicating element.

They are, on the other hand, quite numerous in the Germanic and Celtic antiquities. The Greek and Latin historians describe with astonishment the dark frenzy of the Cimbri killing themselves en masse after their defeat at Aix (Plut., *Marius*, 27); the German soldiers, who hang themselves if panic has made them break ranks (Tac., *Germ.*, 6); the Aeduan Sacrovir and the Treverian Florus killing themselves and their friends after being defeated by the generals of Tiberius (Tac., *Ann.*, III, 42, 46); and the Celtiberians refusing to survive that which they had sworn to defend (Val. Max., II, 6, 11). Caracalla disguises the suicide of a German as an execution in order to deprive him of his honor (Dio Cassius, LXXVIII, 20, 30). Despite this cult of the "point of honor," the Germanic legends have nevertheless no more heroes who destroy themselves than do the Greek.

In the completely isolated act of Ajax, philosophers and commentators have seen only a suicide of prestige. It has other significances, however, first of all that of the "fatal gift." After their duel, which began in the usual way and ended in rock-throwing, Hector and Ajax exchange gifts (VII, 200-300). Ajax receives the sword with which he will kill himself and gives away the purple sash with which Hector was caught up on the railing of his chariot just as Achilles wounded him.

"Since my hand received this gift from Hector my worst foe, to

<sup>25</sup> He throws himself on his sword after his defeat at Gelboe; his squire, who refused to kill him, follows him in death (1 Sam. 31:4).

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this hour I had no good from the Greeks. Yes, man's proverb is true: the gifts of enemies are no gifts and bring no good," says Sophocles' *Ajax* (660, trans. Jebb.). The gift is more than an object; the force with which it is charged passes on to the new owner and may work against him. Ajax, possessor of Hector's weapon, was regarded by the Greeks with hostility comparable to that which they felt against Hector.<sup>26</sup>

But there is more. The suicide of Ajax is essentially a suicide for vengeance. Sophocles wholly imagined another one; that of Haemon, who, discovering Antigone dead, pierces himself with his sword after having threatened his father with it. The vindictive intent is voiced here in an extremely expressive abridgment. Creon also sees his wife, Eurydice, kill herself against him, seemingly by sword thrust (*Soph. Ant.*, 1230, 1283-93). Ajax curses the Atrides and unleashes the Erinyes against them the moment his blood is shed. The blood serves first to conjure them up and then to excite them. The blood of Haemon and of Eurydice has a similar effect: an irreconcilable hatred charges them with a magic power.

Suicide for vengeance has two extreme forms; the bloody suicide and the "sitting dhārna," a tradition attested especially in India and medieval Ireland. The death of Mayor MacSwiney and the repeated fasts of Gandhi have proved its continuing vitality. It survives in the hunger strikes of the modern world. Where it appears in Greece, the suicide threat is directed against a god.

The Athenians, recounts Herodotus (VII, 141), sought in 480 to consult Delphi; at first the Pythia refuses any response, whereupon the consultants declare that receiving no advice they will let themselves die in the temple. She defers to them and counsels them to await the Persians behind the wall of wood. We note in this story the ingenuity of Themistocles' *Propaganda-Abteilung*.<sup>27</sup> If the story was accepted, however, it is because it reposed upon

<sup>26</sup> Sophocles modifies somewhat the Homeric version of the death of Hector, in which the sash plays no role. He indicates so explicitly the magic power of the "fatal gift" that one wonders how Hector and Ajax could accept their reciprocal gifts when their duel had simply been interrupted. Glaucus and Diomedes exchange their weapons, but they have already renounced fighting, after having discovered that they were guest-friends (*xenoi*). The exchange of gifts between Hector and Ajax astonished the so-called Dares the Phrygian more than it did the modern philologists. He very happily removed the oddity by making Ajax son of Hesione, sister of Priam, consequently cousin of Hector, and here too they renounce fighting. The medieval writers told the same story, and so also did Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida* (IV, 5).

<sup>27</sup> M. Delcourt, "Le Suicide par vengeance dans la Grèce ancienne," *Revue d'histoire des religions*, CXIX (1939), pp. 154-71; *L'Oracle de Delphes* (1956), p. 129. Roland Crahay, *La Littérature oraculaire chez Hérodote* (1956), p. 295.

authentic belief. Orestes exercises an analogous constraint over Apollo (Eur., *Iph. T.*, 973). Heracles, after having killed his children, threatens to kill himself: a suicide of prestige, analogous to that of Adrastus the Phrygian; but, at the same time, a suicide of vindication—and directed against Zeus. Theseus responds on two levels successively: "Do you believe that your challenge can upset the gods?"; and "Die, do as an ordinary man?" The double challenge is strong in the mind of Euripides (*Her. Fur.*, 1240). Translating it into current speech, suicide for vengeance is always a revenge upon one stronger and otherwise inaccessible. The hero kills himself only in opposing a god.

Ajax kills himself, calling the Erinyes to devour the entire Greek people (835). But it is Athena, much more than the Greeks, who is the agent of his loss, Gorgōpis, the Enchantress who misguided her reason. Ajax does not acknowledge her, nor does he even name her, but his final invocation to the Sun, the pure element par excellence, implies recourse to arbitration. A single detail of the version of the suicide before Sophocles is known to us; it figures in the *Aethiopis* and in Pindar (*Isthm.*, IV, 58 and schol.), stressing curiously that it occurred *at daybreak*. This is the solemn moment reserved for religious and judiciary functions, the one which opened the ecclesia and the Roman assemblies. In ancient Germania all judgments had to be pronounced *bei Sonnenschein*, the propitious hour coming anytime until noon. Until the twelfth century, in certain cities in Germany and the Netherlands, no arrest might be made after this moment. The Christian church placed at dawn, a sacred moment, the mass commemorating the Lord's Supper, although it had taken place in the evening.<sup>28</sup>

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Athena's ruse leads Ajax to kill animals which he takes to be men. This too is unique in legend. The inverse, on the other hand, is quite common where a human being is killed because he is taken for an animal. Agave rends Pentheus, thinking to kill a lion; transposition of a sacramental act in which an animal representing the god is broken. Several legends of the same type figure in the cycle of Dionysus.

The slaughter of the cattle evokes several images from which the rudimentary remains of a Giant tale may be divined. The Giants are great devourers: ogres in Germany, *polyphagoi* in Greece. Aloyoneus, Geryon, Cacus, and the Cyclops are great owners or

<sup>28</sup> H. Usener, *Götternamen*, p. 187.

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thieves of cattle. The flocks of Hades are watched over by Menoe-tius, the disgraced brother of Prometheus. Might the slaughter of the cattle be an archaic feature relating to a Giant Ajax?

Athena saves the Greeks by interposing animals between them and the furious hero. This stratagem suggests another. When the Aloades attack Artemis, Apollo starts a stag between them; overtaken by their hunting instinct, they seize their javelins and kill each other (Hyginus, *Fable* 28). Jason obtains the same result by casting a stone between the Giants who have issued forth from the Earth (*ibid.*, 22). Grimm's Valiant Little Tailor does likewise (20)—a mischievous dwarf at grips with stupid giants. Germanic mythology makes better account of the antithesis than does the Greek. Yet it must be remembered that Heracles, greatest enemy of the Giants, is sometimes designated *βραχύς* and compared with the Dactyls,<sup>29</sup> the ingenious metallurgists who correspond rather well to certain Germanic dwarfs. The above mentioned ruses differ from the one of which Ajax is victim; but how can we not note that all are directed against Giants, and that in the history of the Aloades an animal victim is substituted for a goddess?

The hostility of Ajax is specifically directed toward the Greeks; it reaches Athena behind them—the protectress of the Greeks and also destroyer of the Giants.

Athena's hatred for Ajax I, the Pelōrios, is perfectly gratuitous. The Ancients say the goddess had a grudge against Ajax II, the Swift, for having pursued Cassandra into her temple. This is to forget a curious passage in the *Iliad* in which her hostility appears well before the attempt against Cassandra. Without abandoning the epic tone, the poet attributes to the goddess a cunning trick, at best appropriate for a popular tale. During the course of the games in honor of Patroclus, Ajax II is on the verge of winning a race with Ulysses; Ulysses beseeches Athena, who causes Ajax to slip and fall in the dung of the cattle immolated in sacrifice, thus assuring victory for her protégé.<sup>30</sup> Here too, we divine a ruse of the mischievous dwarf against a less astute giant.

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<sup>29</sup> Pind. *Isthm.*, IV, 90; A. Brelich, *Gli eroi greci*, p. 233; M. Delcourt, *Héphaïstos*, p. 166.

<sup>30</sup> XVIII, 750 ff. In this episode the two Ajaxes are humiliated systematically. Ajax II abuses Idomeneus, who calls him *νείκος ἔπιπρε*. Ajax is furious, but Achilles forces him to be silent (473). Ajax I battles Ulysses, who strikes him a guileful blow without being able to vanquish him; they finish *ex aequo* (708). The fight in arms between Ajax and Diomedes ends in the same way, but a premium is awarded the latter (802). At the discus throw, Ajax I is defeated by Polybootes (831). His brother, Teucer, the fine archer, is beaten with the bow by Merion (850).

Ajax in Homer is a warrior who may be depended upon, nothing more. Sophocles' genius rediscovered, beneath the hero of the great shield, the essential character of the Giant, of the Titan who defies the gods. He gives this revolt a content totally alien to the ancient cosmogonies, and quite different, even, from the spirit of Aeschylus.

In making war against the Olympian community, the Titans and Giants are resolved simply to overthrow it. The feasts of Kronos, last born of the Titans, were similarly an overturning of the established order. Likewise it was in the Thessalian Pelōria, where the prisoners were unbound and where the slaves ate at the table, served by their masters. They were dedicated to a *Zeus pelōrios*, who had supplanted an old *daimōn*, Pelōros. This name, which Ajax bears in the *Iliad* by election, is also that of a Giant (one of the Spartoi, born of the serpent's teeth sown by Cadmus), and of the cape of Faro facing Messina. The Thessalian Pelōros had come, once upon a time, to announce to King Pelasgus that an earthquake had opened the way to the Peneus, permitting the waters to flow, making of Thessaly the most fertile plain. The news was followed by a great feast. A Giant is not made in order to be a simple messenger. In a more ancient version, he was surely the artisan of the breach.<sup>31</sup> A Giant appears here at the service of humanity, something which is rather exceptional. Hesiod and, even more boldly, Aeschylus have established a solidarity between a Titan and the whole of humanity and made Prometheus the representative of men's aspirations and primordial needs. Sophocles finds in tradition a completely humanized Ajax, who is nevertheless deprived of all individual character, if not completely negative. And he makes of the warrior without troops and without allies among the gods a perfectly isolated man, a man conscious of his solitude and resolved to be sufficient unto himself, since his break with his own group forces him, at the same time, to break with the gods of that group.

At their moment of parting, his father, Telamon, said to him: "My son, seek victory in arms, but seek it ever with the help of heaven." Then haughtily and foolishly he answered: "Father, with the help of gods even a man of nought might win the mastery; but I, even without their aid, trust to bring that glory within my grasp." So proud was his vaunt. Then once again, in answer to

<sup>31</sup> Athenaeus, XIV, 639C. On the feasts of the type of the Saturnalia, cf. M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste von religiöser Bedeutung* (1900), pp. 35 ff. On the Thessalian Pelōros, cf. Ziehen, s.v. "Peloria" *apud R.E.* (1938); and Paula Philippson, *Thessalische Mythologie*, p. 39.

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divine Athena, when she was urging him onward and bidding him turn a deadly hand upon his foes, in that hour he uttered a speech too dread for mortal lips: "Queen, stand thou beside the other Greeks; where Ajax stands, battle will never break our line." By such words he brought upon him the appalling anger of the goddess, since his thoughts were too great for a man (*Ajax*, 764, trans. Jebb).

His awakening after his outburst of folly is that of a man resolved to ignore the divinity which has cruelly used him. As Teemessa importunes the gods, he answers her impatiently: "Nay, thou vexed me over much; knowest thou not that I no longer owe aught of service to the gods?" (589).

Athena boasts of having led the unfortunate astray: "While the man raved in the throes of frenzy, I still urged him, hurled him into the toils of doom" (59).

Before his frightening protectress, Ulysses no longer feels anything but pity for his beaten enemy, a pity that he will quickly feel for himself upon determining the poor condition of men opposite the gods: "I see that we are but phantoms, all we who live, or fleeting shadows," to which she answers: "Therefore, beholding such things, look that thine own lips never speak a haughty word against the gods and assume no swelling port if thou prevailst above another in prowess or by store of ample wealth. For a day can humble all human things" (125 ff.).

Sophocles had dedicated a tragedy to the other Ajax, the Locrian. Only about one verse of it remains:

*'Ανθρωπός ἐστι πνεῦμα καὶ σκιὰ μόνον* (fr. 13).

In a universe in which man alone exists, conscious that his reason opposes him to the rest of creation, it is impossible to give him a definition which better specifies the undoing of man after that of the Giants. Here, Camus would have seen a foreboding of his own conception of the absurd. But in a book whose subject is, he says, "the rapport between the absurd and suicide" (*Mythe de Sisyphe*, p. 19), Camus saw in suicide only a pure negation and a double admission: first, that one has been passed up by life, and second, that one does not comprehend life. The positive aspect of suicide escaped him. Ajax never avers himself more vigorously than at the moment he spills his blood in order to raise against his enemies the Erinyes of his vengeance. Thereby he sets himself off from the Sisyphus of Camus, who accepts the absurd and "rises above his fate by contempt", "teaching the superior loyalty

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which denies the gods and lifts up boulders" (p. 168). Ajax does not deny the gods. By the most compelling of all acts, he intrusts his vengeance to their care, and in such a way that they may no longer cheat. With him we pass from the universe of the absurd into that of the *homme révolté*, a fitting end for a Giant.

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Ajax the Locrian attacked Cassandra in the temple of Athena Iliia: heroified version of a Giant's aggression. The Greeks were at the point of stoning him: heroified version of a Giant's punishment. He escapes death by taking refuge in the temple. Thanks to this third episode the entire legend appears as the *aition* of one of the best known and perhaps most inextricable rites of all antiquity.

For centuries, the Locrians were obliged to send a tribute of two maidens, chosen from among the hundred families that composed their nobility, to the temple of Athena Iliia in the Troad (Polyb., XII, 5). They debarked at the foot of Rhoeteum, that is, near the tomb of Ajax. They were pursued at once with rocks, swords, and branches. They took refuge in the temple where they passed their lives, barefoot and sordidly dressed, serving the goddess and never venturing forth into the light of day. When one of them died, she was burned on a funeral pyre of wild, sterile wood. Her ashes were thrown into the sea from the heights of Mount Traron. Another victim would then come to replace her.

The sending of the maidens, which lasted a thousand years, was felt to atone for Ajax's attempt. The pursuit, holocaust, and ashes thrown to the sea recall the expulsion of a *pharmakos* laden with the impurities of a collectivity. But the "emissaries" were usually poor devils. They were not taken from noble families. The pursuit, moreover, appears to have been fictional, like that which was practiced in the Agrionia of Orchomenos. None of the maidens was ever killed. Simulaorum substituted for a true execution?<sup>32</sup>

The problem is grafted to another. Troy and Phycos in Locris both possessed a cult of Athena Iliia or Ilias. The second is

<sup>32</sup> Polybius, XII, 5. Add to the sources compiled by Vürtheim, *De Ajacis Origine*, an inscription dating from approximately 260 B.C. coming from the temple of Athena Ilias of Phycos in Locris. It shares the obligation; the Locrians are jointly responsible for the consignment, but the maidens are chosen from among the Alanteioi and the people of Naryka (Ad. Wilhelm, *Die lokr. Mädcheninschr.* in *Jahresh. des österr. arch. Inst.*, XIV [1911]). Must we postulate with Ad. Reinach (*R.H.R.*, Vols. LXIX and LXX [1914]) that there were pariahs among the Alanteioi, imprisoned at Naryka as in a ghetto? Cf. Erich Bethe, *Sage vom Troischen Kriege*, pp. 127-32.

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practically unknown. That of the Troad benefited from the prestige of the epic. Xerxes and Alexander offered sacrifices there. Augustus rebuilt the temple which, until under the empire, conserved one of the most archaic of rituals: a cow was slaughtered in such a way that the blood spurted out upon the goddess. Namesakes shared among the Greeks and Trojans are numerous. One of the most striking is that the father of Ajax II, Oileus or Ileus, carries the same name as *Ilus*, son of Trōs, one of the eponyms of the famous city, whose tomb, says the epic, was located on the plain between the city and the coast. Aeacus, a demon, chthonian and infernal, honored at Aegina, is given as the grandfather of Ajax I. In a parallel way, Ileus is son of *Leodokos*, which is a name for Death, or of *Hodoidokos*, whose name appears to mean *he who lies in wait by the road* and is equivalent to *highwayman*. In the epic Ileus is only a warrior, *πολιπορθος*, but we may conjecture from the names of his father that he was a former deity who required maidens in a sacrifice which was later weakened to a consecration of hierodules. Athena supplanted Ileus whose name became an *epiclesis* of the goddess. Similarly, at Megara she usurped an early cult of Ajax and was named Athena Aiantis. In such cases legend always introduces a hostile relationship between the ancient *daimōn* and the usurping deity. As far as concerns the rapports between Athena on the one hand and Ajax and Ileus on the other, the hostility was strengthened by the tradition of Athena the Giant killer. She owes one of her most famous names to the Giant Pallas whom she flayed in order to dress in his skin. One version makes Pallas her own father who wanted to violate her.<sup>32</sup> Athena's adversary is elsewhere a female being, Gorgō, omitted by the Earth to come to the aid of the Giants (Eur., *Ion.*, 897). Her skin became the aegis which protected the Gorgōpis.

The offering of the maidens perhaps obscures an ancient hierogamy analogous to that of Hesione, delivered to the sea monster on the promontory of *Agamias* bordering that of Traron whence the ashes of the Locrion priestesses were thrown to the sea—*Agamias*, where, says Hesychus (*s.v.*), *the maidens were abandoned*, as if Hesione had had mates. Primitively, several of them were perhaps offered together or successively. Hesione, the only one to whom a name remains, was later given to Telamon by Heracles, her liberator. Telamon later married Periboea. A Periboea is one of the first Locrion maidens selected by lot for the Trojan atone-

<sup>32</sup> Sources *apud* Max. Mayer, *Die Giganten u. Titanen in der antiken Sage u. Kunst* (Berlin, 1887), p. 190.

ment, another figures among the girls offered to the Minotaur who were set free by Theseus. Several names of hierogamic significance figure thus in the cycle of Ajax. When a feminine deity replaced the older *daimōn*, the rite lost its hierogamic meaning and the Locrian maidens became *pharmakoi*. Note that sacred prostitution, that is, the desacralization of the virgins in a temple, is attested in the historical epoch in the Locrian colony of Magna Graecia, the Epizephyrian Locris. This implies that it existed in the metropolis. Athenaeus in mentioning this custom explains it, there and everywhere it appears, as a remnant of the expiation of an ancient *hybris*. Lycophron (1128–41) makes Cassandra promise that the virgins of Daunia who embrace his image will be able to: *παρθένειον ἐκφυγείν ζυγόν, ἄλλακ μάλιστα κτώμεναι νυμφευμάτων*. That might well mean that they will escape, not from the marriage, but from sacred prostitution. There would then be a rapport between the nuptial custom of the Locrians and the hieroduly of Athena Ilia, the archaic hierogamy.<sup>34</sup> Cassandra is an eminently hierogamic character, loved by a god, pursued *into a temple* by a Giant, and married to a hero, himself a former god.

There exists a second version of the death of Ajax II (Philostratus, *Heroikos*, p. 707, XI, 3). Agamemnon declares that Athena, angered by the attempt upon Cassandra, will cause the entire army to perish if the guilty person is not promptly destroyed. Instructed by the death of Palamedes, Ajax leaves Troy by night and drowns himself near the rocks of Gyra. Thetis then buries him at Myconos (schol. *Il.*, XXIII, 66). The Greeks, feeling a deep regret for what has happened, make a funeral pyre of the boat, heaping upon it slaughtered black victims, setting it ablaze, and putting it to sea at the foot of Mount Ida.

This legend is the *aition* of an old Locrian rite. The entire land went into mourning at the news of Ajax's death. Each year a boat with black sails, rudderless, was loaded with an offering of immolated black victims. It was kept moored until the wind blew out to sea. Then at daybreak it was set afire and launched. The Thessalians had an analogous custom in honor of Achilles.<sup>35</sup>

These liturgies—without the funeral coloration—are similar to a rite of Isis known to Apulius, which has been confirmed by an inscription of the first century of our era preserved at Istanbul.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Such runs the interesting hypothesis of J. Vürtheim, *De Ajacis origine . . .*, p. 118. No attempt will be made here to explain the installation of the Locrians and their goddess in the Troad.

<sup>35</sup> Schol. Tzetzes on *Lyc.* 365–68, which must be completed by Philostr., *Heroikos*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> L. Deubner, *Ath. Mitteil.*, XXXVII (1912), 180.

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The inscription gives the name of *Ploiaphesia* to the feast. In the early days of March when navigation was again begun on the Bosphorus and in the Aegean, a boat laden with offerings was launched out to sea, a sacrifice intended to gain the favor of Isis. Here, Isis should be substituted for some marine deity. Perhaps it is the same for Achilles and Ajax.

Moreover, the affinities between the two Ajaxes and the sea, are not surprising in Giants. I pointed already to the fact that a lot of capes, promontories and channels are named after Giants.<sup>37</sup> The epic poems are aware of them. When the Trojans attack their ships, it is the Pelōrios who defends them and prevents Hector from burning them. All the sanctuaries relating to the Ajaxes are near a coast; the tomb of one is at Rhoeteum (the Rhoeteum which bears the name of another Giant); that of the other, at Myconos in the middle of the Aegean, was raised up by Thetis, the sea goddess also associated with naval ceremonies in honor of Achilles. There was an Athena Aiantis at Megara, an Aiantoion on a Thessalian promontory, and another at Salamis. The same name designates a small desert island between Chersonesus and Samothrace, a cape on the Thessalian peninsula of Magnesia, and a point on the coast near Byzantium.<sup>38</sup> The rapports between the Giants on the one hand and islands and capes on the other are surely not due to chance—vestiges perhaps of a cosmogonic thought of which only fleeting images remain. On the other hand, when the Greek fleet was awaiting the attack of Xerxes, the Athenians offered public prayers to call Ajax and Telamon to their aid and sent a boat to Aegina to bring back the other Aeacides (Her. VIII, 64; Plut. *Them.*, 16). They yielded to the invitation, for phantoms were seen by the soldiers, their hands raised to protect the Greek ships. In this epoch a genealogy had been established which made Telamon the son of Aeacus, honored by the people of Aegina, who considered him their first king. Aeacus, an old chthonian god, corresponds exactly to Leodokos-Hodoidokes, grandfather of Ajax II.

Athens removed Salamis from Megara towards 595, made an Attic deme of it, annexed Ajax and invented sons, Eurysaces and Philaeus, for him. The verses of the Iliad (II, 555) which make him a kind of vassal of the Athenian, Menestheus, were considered from antiquity to be a tendentious interpolation, introduced to lend

<sup>37</sup> F. Vian, "Les Géants de la Mer," *Revue Archéologique*, XXII (1944), p. 70.

<sup>38</sup> Peter von der Mühl, *Der Grosse Aias*, Rektoratsprogramm Bâle (1936), p. 30.

support to the claims of Solon and Pisistrates regarding Salamis. For Homer, the Giant become hero has no country, let alone a brother. The Athenians had but to develop the traditions implanted on the island during the time it was dependent upon Megara. That city had a cult of Athena Aiantis and Salamis had a temple of Ajax (Paus., I, 42, 4; 35, 3). The *Aianteia* of Salamis took place in the spring, the sixteenth of Munychia and, consequently, unrelated to the famous battle. They served, perhaps, like the *Ploiaphesia*, to propitiate the sea deities at the time when navigation was resumed. Besides a boat race in which the Athenian *ephebi* took part, they included a ceremony which remains enigmatic to us: a boat sailed around the island in silence; then an armed man descended from it onto Cape Skiradion and cried out loudly. It was claimed that this commemorated a ruse which had permitted Solon to seize the island (Plut., *Sol.*, 9, 6). Let us say that this stratagem was invented to account for a rite which was certainly more ancient. The creation in Athens of an *Aiantis* tribe, the *lectisternium* in which the *clinē* of the hero was adorned with weapons, all this is dependent on political history, not religious antiquities.

Like the Dioscuri, the Ajaxes are henceforth protector-heroes, capable of fighting brute force. Ajax I went to the aid of Athens in 480. The Loorians, when they ranged themselves in battle, left empty the place of Ajax II, who, invisible, struck redoubtable blows. In a war against Croton, an adversary attempted to charge into the breach and was cruelly wounded (Paus., III, 19, 12; Conon, 18) —the last incarnation of the Giant become warrior; the last remnant too, perhaps, of the solidarity of the Titan with humanity.

Nevertheless, while local tradition made the Loorian the good spirit of the town, the literature stressed his *satanic* character. The Titans, expelled from Olympus, resemble fallen angels. The Ajax II of Virgil suffers a death of the damned, transfixed by the thunderbolt of Pallas, vomiting flames, and pinned to the point of a rock (*Aen.*, I, 41). Pliny (XXXV, 9) saw a tableau which represented him similarly, *fulmine incensum*; and Quintus of Smyrna (XIV, 548) depicts him after his shipwreck, swimming ἀκαμάτω Τετῆνι βίην ὑπέροπλον ἐοικώς.

\* \* \*

Teucer appeared beside Ajax as an alternative Dioscur, a "Dioscur in reserve," who took on importance when the Locrian and the Salaminian, definitively affixed to different regions, separated. Dioscuri are always unequal. In the *Iliad* Teucer is only

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Ajax's second, who shelters him behind his celebrated shield—and when Salamis coined money she placed there the shield of Ajax—but he is his brother, by father and mother. The inequality is accentuated in the following: Teucer becomes a bastard, despised by his father, who cruelly reproaches him for not having been able to save Ajax, and who expels him from Salamis. Teucer leaves for Cyprus, where, conforming to the best tradition of the fairy-tales, he marries a princess. One of his sons, Ajax the Younger, later founds Olba in Cilicia. Thus it was explained, that in the historical epoch Olba had had a sacerdotal dynasty in which regularly appear the names of Teucer and Ajax, priest-kings of Zeus or of some local god identified with Zeus. The first name, which would have involved the second, perhaps results from a hellenizing interpretation of a radical *Tark* or *Trok*, frequent in the onomastic of the land. The primitive population of Cyprus, which participated in the Mycenaean culture, appears to have been Cilician. An analogous confusion may have implanted Teucer in Cyprus when the Greeks established themselves and the indigenous kinglets desired to make themselves part of a prestigious legend. An ancient Giant became a hero in revolt; Ajax perhaps owes his last incarnation as a priest-king to simple homonymy.<sup>39</sup>

Salamis of Cyprus possessed a temple in which an archaic rite was practiced until the reign of Hadrian. A man was led—that is to say, apparently pursued—by the *ephebi* of the city three times around the altar, after which the priest killed him with a lance thrust *kata tou stomachou*. He was sacrificed to Agraulos, the daughter of Ceorops, who died for having violated an order of Athena who had a temple in the same precinct. It is only under the Empire that the man was replaced by an ox. At Troy, Athena Ilia was offered a cow, whose blood was supposed to flow out upon the statue—probably a substitute for a human sacrifice.

Now, in Sophocles' Ajax, there appears furtively an image which seems to be the exact *aition* of the Cypriot rite: a desperate Ajax wishes that, "all the host, with swords uplifted in both hands,

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *R.E.*, s.v. "Olbo" (W. Rüge, 1936) and J. G. Frazer, *Adonis*, index, s.v. "Ajax" and notes. The most ancient attestation of the dynasty is from the third century B.C. (Michel, *Recueil d'inscr. gr.*, no. 1230). The name of *Teuceri* was probably imported to the Troad from Cilicia, causing the invention of another Teucer, son of the stream Scamander and founder of the royal dynasty. Strangely enough, the designation of the Trojans as *Toucri*—a designation unknown to Homer, which first appears, to our knowledge, in Callinus (beginning of the seventh century, Strabo, XIII, 1, 48, p. 604)—becomes more and more current after that.

would strike me dead" (408, trans. Jebb). The bloody suicide of Ajax is as exceptional in the legend as the human sacrifice is at Salamis at this late epoch.<sup>40</sup>

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What archaic element or elements may persist in Ulysses, the common enemy of Palamedes, Philoctetes, and Ajax?

He is a "trickster," and like all "tricksters," it may happen that he encounters one more cunning than himself. Thus it is, that Palamedes foils one of his ruses before becoming its victim. The trickster in primitive religions often possesses an aspect of the culture hero and is often halved into twins.<sup>41</sup> These two characteristics are acknowledged in Prometheus, the astute Titan of whom Epimetheus represents the awkward side—that which Jung calls the shadow. In the *Odyssey*, Eurylochus, well intentioned and ill inspired, is like Ulysses' shadow.

As Loki, Ulysses is more a trickster than a culture hero. Nevertheless, Loki invents the net, which represents something for a people who live off the sea. Ulysses' epithet, *polymētis*, must originally have signified something more than *fertile in ruses*. He bears the *pilos* like his enemy Philoctetes, like the Cabeiri, artisan gods, and like Hephaestus of *the wise thoughts*. He blinds the Cyclops by a proceeding which, in the tale, utilizes fire, but which, in reality, gives rise to it. Nevertheless, if some slight traces of a culture hero remain in him, it is in a domain entirely different—that of horse-raising. On the acropolis of Pheneus in Arcadia there stood a bronze statue of Poseidon Hippios and a temple to Artemis Heurippa. They were founded by Ulysses after he had recovered the mares for which he had been searching throughout the land. Pausanias (VIII, 14, 5; he alleges in passing that the casting of the statues was unknown at the time of the Trojan war) saw, on the pedestal, a rule (*πρόσταγμα*) composed by Ulysses for use by his grooms. At Sparta there was a *heroon* near the sanctuary of the Leucippides, daughters of a horseman-hero. In Greece, the horse was harnessed before being mounted; and in the *Iliad* the only man astride a horse is Ulysses, when he steals the horses of Rhesus (X, 525). Near Asaea, in Arcadia still, Pausanias (VIII, 44, 4) saw the ruins of an old temple founded in honor of Athena

<sup>40</sup> Porphyry, *De abstinentia*, II, 54; Lactantius, *Div. Inst.*, I, 21. What, exactly, does *κατὰ τὸν στομάχου* mean? In the colloquial speech of the second century, probably in the stomach, which does not correspond to any ritual execution. In Homer, the word means "throat," but in this case they say *ἀποδέμειν τὸν στομάχου*, and the expression implies here a blow dealt from top to bottom.

<sup>41</sup> J. de Vries, *The Problem of Loki*, p. 254; on Ulysses, *s.v.* article of Ernst Wüst in *R.E.* (1936); Erich Bothe, *Die Sage vom troischen Kriege*, pp. 168 ff.

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Sôteira and Poseidon by Ulysses on his return from Troy. Athena may come from the literary tradition, but the association with Poseidon must be ancient: Poseidon, who gave the horse to Attica. Poseidon's hostility toward Ulysses, which the *Odyssey* explains by the misadventure of Polyphemus, son of the god, would be one aspect of that hostility which every usurping god feels toward an old, ousted *daimôn*.

Ulysses, said a mischievous but meaningful tradition, was but the putative son of Laërtes. His father was Sisyphus, of whom it was said that he managed to enchain Thanatos when the latter came to carry him to the other world—so that on earth, people ceased to die. Obligated by Zeus to release his prisoner, he had to descend into Hell, but only after having forbidden his wife to carry out the funeral rites. He succeeded in arousing the anger of Hades, who authorized him to return to earth in order to exact his due. Sisyphus was thus able to achieve the most advanced age. The *märchen* of this genre belong to the folklore of Outwitted Death, in which *Gevatter Tod* meets his match. Nonetheless, this trickster of the popular tale comes to an end similar to that of the great *révoltés*. Ulysses finds Sisyphus in Hell, rolling his boulder beside the *pelōrios* Orion, beside Tityus, "son of the Earth, whose body covers ninety feet"—Tityus, who desired to violate Leda; and beside Tantalus, a titanic figure, who, in the legend, upheld the sky. We recall, then, that Sisyphus had brothers, a Porphyriion and a Mimas, two Giants' names.

We know that in the adventures of Ulysses during his return, there is a series of ordeals in which he overcomes victoriously the universe of death. He saves himself on his own account and engineers no one's escape. Indeed, his companions serve to ransom him. This distinguishes him from the culture hero, who attacks the principle of death itself. Prometheus prevents Zeus from destroying men and flinging them into Hades. Being unable to suppress death, he "delivers men from the obsession of death, instilling in them blind hope." In having him speak so, Aeschylus (*Prom.*, 230-50) transposes the mythical theme onto the psychological plane without the Titan's ceasing to appear as a *révolté*. The culture hero who struggles against death in a concrete way is Asclepius. He is thunderstruck by Zeus in punishment for having brought Hippolytus back to life.<sup>42</sup> Heracles returns Alcestis to life, but before she

<sup>42</sup> In the tale *Gevatter Tod* (Grimm, 44), the father who gives his son Death as a godfather begins by refusing the offer made by the devil, because he is evil, and that of God, for, says he, God distributes good and evil unjustly, while Death strikes everyone equitably—curious response of a man in revolt.

had entered the infernal domain. And it is after a descent into Hell that he kills his sons, as if Hades had exacted a ransom.

Ulysses risks himself in the kingdom of death and succeeds in returning alive. He, unlike so many characters of the tales, brings back no *eau de la vie*, no talisman capable of prolonging another existence.<sup>43</sup> In Slavic and Germanic folklore, the mortal who confronts an ogre is often a man who ignores fear and deliberately searches out danger. Ulysses encounters death searching for something else: the return to Ithaca, the return to the maternal bosom.

We must here avoid a mistake. If the passage beyond death appears to us not to correspond to any finality, it is because the latter is assumed by the entire poem. Circe tells Ulysses that if he wishes to return to his home he should first evoke Tiresias in order to ask counsel as to the route, the distances, and the road to follow. Ulysses bursts into sobs, rolls on the ground in desperation, but obeys. Tiresias gives him no counsel but predicts the worst difficulties for him should he slaughter the cows of the Sun. Ulysses asks no more; advice concerning navigation will be given him by Circe herself. Everything happens as if the ordeal of the Nekuia, the meeting of the dead, had a value in itself—as if having crossed the land of death rendered a man able to triumph over any and all dangers which might follow. Thucydides reports that in 430, those who had the plague and were cured of it came thereafter to wonder if they would ever die.

Ulysses encounters death under two antinomic and complementary aspects.

1. He confronts gigantic, monstrous, anthropophagic beings, the popular incarnation of the ancient Giants—enemies of the gods. Such are Charybdis and Scylla, the Laestrygonians, and the Cyclops. The latter is not one of the Cyclops who constructed Tyrens, great and wise builders, as are also the Giants of Germanic mythology. It is a fairy tale ogre who is vanquished by a Ulysses become a sort of dwarf, *ὄλιγος τε καὶ οὐτιδανὸς καὶ ἀκίκυς* (IX, 515) able to hide himself beneath the belly of a ram.<sup>44</sup> The Greek

<sup>43</sup> See the excellent study of Roland Crahay, "L'Eau de la vie, la méthode mythologique des frères Grimm," in *Mémoires de la société des sciences du Hainaut*, LXXVII (1983), pp. 111–40.

<sup>44</sup> Oskar Haackmann, *Die Polyphem Sage in der Volksüberlieferung* (Helsingfors, 1904) noted twenty-two variants and classed them according to the three themes: blinding of the giant, flight of the hero in an animal disguise, equivocation on the name (*ούρις*). This study reveals in Italian, Rumanian, French, and especially Slavic tales, the existence of a curious variation unknown in the *Odyssey*. The blinded ogre gives to his conqueror an object of metal, usually a ring, which puts the man again at his mercy if the latter does not cut off the finger and throw it

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eternity is full of oneiric images. It is a gloomy universe, similar to the Sheol of the Hebrews, full of morasses where the dead wander without finding their way if they are not guided. The punishments, those of Sisyphus, Tantalus, and Danaïds, are tasks which must be reassumed without ceasing, just as in a nightmare. Likewise, after their passage to the isle of Aeolus from that of the Cyclops, the ships of Ulysses find themselves again at their point of departure—a symbol of futile effort. On the contrary, the Greek Hades contains only a few voracious monsters, like the vulture of Tityus or that necrophageous Eurynomus painted by Polygnotus in his Delphic Nekuia (Paus., X, 28, 7). Charybdis and Scylla and the Laestrygonians, like the Cyclops himself, whatever their religious or psychological origins may be, represent, for Ulysses, death in its most dangerous aspect.

2. He also encounters death in a symbolic aspect—one so seductive that he must struggle with himself to tear himself away from it. Note that even the episodes of the first series, in which death wears its gross, brutal aspect, begin in the most harmless fashion: The grotto of Polyphemus with its sheep and cheeses, has the odor of a model farm; the voyagers are welcomed to the country of the Laestrygonians by a young giant, who peacefully draws water from the fountain; then they are led into the castle to a woman, already something less reassuring; then, after this bucolic beginning, the king eats one of the Greeks for his dinner. In the episodes in which death is symbolized, not represented, it is adorned with yet more seductions. A *daimōn* lulls the sea to sleep beneath a miraculous calm at the approach of the Sirens, when the enchanting voices are to be heard.<sup>45</sup> Exquisite music issues from the house of Circe, and lions and wolves come to rub against the arrivals. Calypso sings, weaving all the while. All is delightful in the country of the Lotus Eaters; there they eat flowers with the taste of honey, which causes loss of memory.

There is the key word. These flowers, the song of the Sirens, the

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into the water, where the monster will drown following the enchanted object. One may not conquer death without leaving him something of oneself (cf. R. Crahay, "L'Eau de la vie," p. 134). The errant rocks, which close again upon anyone escaping from the infernal kingdom, keep the heel of the escaped prisoner, the tail of the dove, and the stern of the ship *Argo*. Ulysses leaves him two of his companions, after which he frees his name for him, having first refused to make it known (IX, 504). *Sinfjötli* does likewise after having mortally wounded the dragon (*Volsungasaga*, 18). Curious, in all these tales is the role of metal and fire. The giant is blinded by a sharpened heated point (obviously, the sharpened point would suffice) or by molten metal flowing into his eye. All the conquests of civilization remain for a long time disquieting.

<sup>45</sup> These Sirens belong to two series; they enchant only in order to consume.

cup filled by Circe, all these enchantments have one and the same effect—to create forgetfulness, to dissolve in man that which is proper to human life, the solidarity of a past and a future. In the *Odyssey*, one may read all the drama of man at grips with his memory, and above all, in the most common-place form, which is that only forgetfulness of the daily task can confer perfect euphoria. Ulysses and his companions spend a year of delight with Circe; they have an abundance of meat and drink; and those who were changed into animals return to their human form stronger and more handsome than before (X, 395, 467). Calypso gives him a life fit for a god (VII, 453); she bewitches him with tender and flattering words designed to make him forget his Ithaca (I, 55). Is Calypso the *one who hides* or the *one who is hidden*? The trees, flowers, and birds which surround the grotto all have a chthonian value,<sup>40</sup> but this is not to say that the lethal nature of their enchantments was felt by those who heard the poem recited. Perhaps they saw nothing in it but a good story, and likewise in the sojourn with the Phaeacians, in the course of which Ulysses declares to Alcinoüs that to eat and drink to one's contentment is the most beautiful of lives (IX, 10). This appears to describe the realism of a man who enjoys living; but, after all, the joys of Valhalla are equally lacking of the spiritual. The Phaeacian kingdom is truly an Island of the Blissful, located beyond the inhabited lands in a place which escapes all quest. The philosophers understood it well, and the gardens of Alcinoüs (VIII, 114) would find rebirth in an eschatological reverie of Empedocles (fr. 77).

No other poem gives the *attraction of death* so startling an image, repeated with such strange instance. Freud, during the second half of his life, felt it necessary, in the face of the sexual instincts which tend towards life, to define other compulsions of the unconscious—those tending toward the repose of the inorganic world, which “born when inanimate matter received the breath of life, tend toward re-establishment of the inanimate order.” An antithesis of this kind suggests itself in the torpor of Ulysses while he keeps company with Circe and Calypso, torpor broken with sudden returns of memory and somersaults of activity.

But Ulysses refuses to take up abode in death. After three attempts symbolized by three women, he boards the ship of the Phaeacians. His departure is perfectly similar to the naval

<sup>40</sup> Ernst Riess, “Studies in Superstition and Folklore,” *A.J. Ph.*, Vol. XLVI (1925); L. Rademacher, *Die Erzählungen der Odyssee*, Sitzungsab. der K. Ak. der Wiss. zu Wien, phil. hist. Kl., CLXXVIII (1915), 1.

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obsequies of the Vikings and to those which Scyld receives at the beginning of *Beowulf*. The body is placed on a boat laden with precious objects, weapons, and articles of clothing. The funeral vessel, like that of Ajax the Locrian, is then delivered over the tides. Thus the Scandinavians and Slavs commit the dead man, sometimes on a lighted pyre placed upon a skiff which sets out to sea alone. The boat was so much a symbol of the voyage to the beyond, that once the rite had disappeared, the Germans constructed tombs which had the shape of ships. One imagines that they were similar to the Phaeacian ship, petrified on the open seas by Poseidon (*Od.*, XIII, 163). Odin himself, invisible, takes to the oars in the *Volsungasaga* (10) to conduct Sinfjötli to Valhalla. Ulysses' boat could easily spare any crew, for the ships of the Phaeacians are intelligent and navigate themselves (VII, 557). They take the deluded sailors to their port, like Hermes, who leads the souls to the place they ought to go. The hero embarks in silence and soon falls asleep. His friends deposit him, asleep "with a sleep like death" (*Od.*, XIII, 80), surrounded by his gifts, upon the shores of Ithaca, after having passed through a grotto with two entrances, one of which is forbidden to humans. Thus is marked the passage from one universe to another.

The mysterious ship should sail for an island even more excellent than that of the Phaeacians, where total happiness would result from the complete forgetfulness of that which was the earthly life. The problem for Ulysses, however, is the exile of the body, not that of the soul. He is no philosopher. With Circe, with Calypso, and with Nausicaa, although the pleasures cause him to forget, partially, if not his identity, at least the object of his voyage, he is not in any way the yogi, who, in falling in love with the queen, loses his soul.<sup>47</sup> On a purely earthly plane, he forgets, at one time or another, the purpose of his voyage, his wife, and his country. It should be further noted, that if he leaves the Phaeacians quickly, he who has been held up for a long time elsewhere, it is because there has not been sexual union between him and Nausicaa. He can detach himself more easily and resume relations with the memory of a living man. Instead of taking him to the place of timeless bliss, the magic boat simply returns him to the land of

<sup>47</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Aspects du mythe* (1963), p. 142; J. P. Vernant, "Aspects mythiques de la mémoire en Grèce," in the *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique* (1959), p. 11. The story of Henry the Lion (Grimm, *Deutsche Sagen*, no. 526) is so closely akin to that of Ulysses, that it is difficult not to admit a direct influence.

his birth, where something other than the lost and rediscovered paradise of eternal human aspiration awaits him.

Let us consider, however, the legends of his death. One version has it that he was killed by Telegonus, his unknown son by Circe. Thus the perilous island takes him back, after having permitted his escape. The *Odyssey* ignores Telegonus. Tiresias (XI, 135) predicts many wanderings yet for the hero, and then "the gentlest of deaths in a comfortable old age, surrounded by happy peoples."

Thus, Ulysses, while alive, undergoes the funeral rites of a Viking in order to reach a universe as unlike the paradise of Odin as possible, where only those who die by weaponry are gathered; and they wish to die in combat in order to rejoice in battles and banquets for all eternity. The Greeks had neither taste for heroic death nor contempt for senility to the same degree as the Germanic peoples. Yet Achilles prefers a glorious death in the midst of youth to an inglorious longevity. And among the heroes, old age is held to be a most miserable state. Achilles dreads a thousand outrages for his father, Peleus, and Laërtes in his orchard resembles a king of Nemi waiting for one who should come to kill him.

Despite this, the one whom the epic calls a *πολιόροθος* (but what cities has he taken?) accepts the prospect of a peaceful death at a rich and respected age. The two contradictory versions of the death of Ulysses describe two opposed conceptions of royalty. That of the *Odyssey* corresponds to the wisdom of Solon asserting to Mimnermus that a reasonable man is obliged to accept living not just until sixty but until eighty.

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The legends of Ajax and of Ulysses are characteristic of a highly cultured land in which no religious phenomenon may be described without consideration of the greatest poets. Thanks to Sophocles, an ancient Giant, transformed into a warrior, has become this *homme révolté*, in whom we find a new aspect of the titanic spirit. Ulysses evolved in an entirely different way. In the *Odyssey* he still has brief outbursts against the gods who perfidiously lull him to sleep while his companions roast the cows of the Sun—and Zeus will punish him for it (XII, 371–85). "Will you not even submit to the Immortals?" Circe asks him (XII, 22). Brief flames of revolt. Ulysses is, in the end (for his beginnings escape us), the one who accepts the human condition. The tutelary presence of Athena at

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his side in Ithaca (for during his adventures she does not aid him) carries essentially this meaning.

These interpretations given by the poets which seem to us so rich in meaning were not considered at all by the cult. The city of Athena honors Ajax I, the enemy of Athena; Locris, in a parallel way, honors Athena and Ajax II. A *daimōn*, at whatever level he may be situated, is a force which must be rendered favorable in whatever sense the poets interpret their acts.

In the religious life of antiquity the heroes of the cult played a role which resembles, in certain aspects, that of the saints of Christianity. The great difference between them is that the saints were all servants of a unique God, elected because of their perfect submission, while the heroes are practically always former *daimōnes* vanquished by greater ones and relegated to the second rank where their rancor remains inveterate. Then "lyric and tragic poetry abounds in cries of despair at the impotence of the individual in the face of overwhelming misfortune, in which the gods take no interest, even when they are themselves responsible for it."<sup>48</sup> Antiquity ignored the problem of *l'homme révolté* such as we pose it before a universe which we give up understanding. A hundred legends have crumbled it into a hundred divine rivalries. Christian monotheism, on the other hand, isolated an incontestable God, well defended by the army of the Elected Ones. The waters behind this barrier have slowly increased.

A Christian saint has but one visage, which, as he becomes proportionately more highly honored, becomes more and more plain to the point of falling into a pious insignificance insofar as popular beliefs are concerned. The Greek heroes have retained their manifold variety and their contradictions. The late poets see in Ulysses only the trickster enemy of Palamedes, Philoctetes, and Ajax, a *ἥρώων φθόρος, ἔχθος ἀπίστων* (Tzetzes, *Pro Homero*, 295). In the opposite, the Stoics made of him the very model of the sage.

<sup>48</sup> Roland Crahay, "The Political Background of the Religious View of Man in Ancient Greece," *Diogenes*, No. 41 (1963), p. 55, insists opportunely on the relationship between the indifference of the gods with regard to ethics and the solitude of the Greek man in search of morality.