

## Two Mountains, Two Tricksters: A Comparative Analysis of Nart Sosruquo and Mercurius/Hermes

Kerem B. Topçu\*

### Abstract

As this study concerns itself with previous scholarship on the Nart Sagas of the Caucasus—that particularly focus on the figure of Sosruquo—it remedies certain lapses and misrepresentations present in the literature. Furthermore, in its analysis of “Sosruquo and the Inquisitive Ayniwzh” (Colarusso), the study utilizes a Jungian framework to interpret the complex mythological figure of Sosruquo, as to an archetypal dimension of Sosruquo is wanting in previous scholarship. As the study argues Sosruquo presents a unique blend of the divine child, the hero, and the trickster archetypes, it emphasizes the sui generis position of this character in comparative mythology through a close reading of the aforementioned tale—and emphasizing the tension between Sosruquo the figure of Mercurius / Hermes, the latter whom Jung explores in his *Alchemical Studies*. As the study argues Sosruquo, and therefore on a larger scale, the Nart Sagas cannot be reduced to variations of other mythological corpi, it also establishes Sosruquo as a distinctive figure that breaks through the mold of traditional Jungian dichotomies. The significance of the study lies in the fact that it goes against the grain of the orthodox readings of Caucasus mythology—and yet it does not entrap itself in a contrarianism simply for its own sake. Rather the study intimates a paradigm shift in reading the mythopoeia of the Caucasus within the context of oral literature, a paradigm shift that does not rest on parallelisms and psychologisms.

**Keywords:** Oral Literature, Comparative Mythology, Jungian Studies, Jungian Literary Criticism, Caucasus Mythology, Archetypes

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\* Kerem B. Topçu. Graduate assistant. Literary Theory and Criticism, School of Humanities, University of Southern Mississippi. ORCID: 0000 0001-9960-0484. E-mail: keremtopcu777@gmail.com

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## İki Dağ, İki Düzenbaz: Nart Sosruquo ve Mercurius/Hermes'in Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

### Özet

Bu makale, Kafkasya'nın Nart Destanı üzerine, özellikle Sosruko bağlamında daha önce yapılmış olan çalışmalarla ilgilenmesi dahilinde, literatürde mevcut olan belirli eksiklikleri ve yanlış temsilleri gidermeye yöneliktir. Buna ek olarak çalışma, "Sosruquo and the Inquisitive Ayniwzh" (Colarusso) isimli öykünün analizini Jungçu bir teoretik çerçeve dahilinde yürütmesine içkin olarak, Sosruko isimli ziyadesiyle kompleks mitolojik figürü, evvelki çalışmalarda eksik kalan arketipal bir boyut bağlamında ele alır. Çalışma, Sosruko'nun ilahi çocuk, kahraman ve düzenbaz arketiplerinin benzersiz bir karışımını sunduğunun savunusunu yapmakla birlikte, yukarıda belirtilen öyküyü yakın okumaya tabi tutarak, bu karakterin karşılaştırmalı mitolojideki *sui generis* konumunu vurgular ve Jung'un *Alchemical Studies* isimli eserinde ele aldığı Mercurius / Hermes figürüyle Sosruko arasındaki gerilimi açılar. Çalışma Sosruko'nun —ve dolayısıyla daha geniş bir ölçekte Nart söylencelerinin —farklı mitolojik külliyatların varyasyonuna indirgenemeyeceğini tartışmakla birlikte Sosruko'yu geleneksel Jungcu ikiliklerin kalıbını kıran özgün bir figür olarak da ele alır. Çalışmanın önemi, Kafkas mitolojisinin ortodoks okumalarının aksi yönüne gitmesinde ortaya çıkmaktadır—ancak çalışma bunu salt muhalefet etmek adına değil, Kafkas mitolojisinin sözlü edebiyat bağlamında incelenmesinde bir paradigma değişimini ima eder ki işbu paradigma değişimi, paralelliklerden ve psikolojizmlerden azade bir paradigma değişimi niteliğini taşır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sözlü Edebiyat, Karşılaştırmalı Mitoloji, Jung Çalışmaları, Jungçu Edebiyat Eleştirisi, Kafkas Mitolojisi, Arketipler

## Introduction

All peoples on the earth possess their own mythological narratives and the nations of the Caucasus are no exception. However, aside from the work of established scholars (Dumézil), (Colarusso), the mythic corpus and the oral literature of the highlanders—the Nart Sagas—are either prone to misrepresentation or a certain disregard in mainstream intelligentsia. As the study provides an indigenous voice to worldwide scholarship, it rectifies these misstatements and negligences.

To do so, it analyzes the figure of Nart Sosruquo chiefly through the tale “Sosruquo and the Inquisitive Ayniwzh” (Colarusso 222-226)<sup>1</sup> as it compares the general elaborations on Sosruko by current scholarship with its own. As the study analyzes Sosruquo, it addresses the archetypal significance of Sosruquo through the use of Carl Gustav Jung’s thought. Also, the study establishes a comparison between the figure of Mercurius/Hermes as it draws from Jung’s elaborations on that figure in his *Alchemical Studies*. On the other hand, the aim of the study is far from using the figure of Sosruquo as a crutch for Jung’s theory. Rather, this study argues that albeit Sosruquo shares similarities with Mercurius/Hermes, he emerges as a figure who blends numerous Jungian archetypes such as the divine child, the trickster, and the hero archetype.

Instead of the blending of the divine child and the trickster, that is associated throughout other mythological narratives and Jung’s view on Hermes / Mercurius, Sosruquo blends the divine child, the hero, and the trickster, defying more widespread mythologies.

Regarding this defiance, one must state that various parallelisms that exist about his origins in current scholarship solidify his refusal to fit into a mold. Sosruquo is compared to pre-Christian Armenian, Iranian, and Greek figures yet however, the connections made by these studies unfortunately possess a

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to “How Sosruquo Brought Fire to His Troops”, all the sagas on Sosruquo included in the study are found in Colarusso’s *Nart Sagas from the Caucasus: Myths and Legends from the Circassians, Abazas, Abkhaz, and Ubykhs*.

circumstantial bent. Studies that try to understand Sosruquo through classical comparativism either possess serious lapses of judgment, or they acknowledge the fact that Sosruquo, as a figure, stands unique. As an example for the latter, John Lathlam's "Sun Gods and Soviets: Historicising a North Caucasian Saga" analyzes Sosruko's descent into the underworld and his apparent connection with the Sun with parallelisms from Christianity. Lathlam aptly establishes that the former descent to the underworld by Sosruko shares parallelisms with Christian eschatological narratives—in particular, *The Apocalypse of St. Paul*—as he states: "The hero Shoshlan's descent to the underworld (...) which shows apparent parallels with early Medieval Christian Apocalyptic Literature (161).

On the other hand—as a direct result of his sober scholarship—after asking the rhetorical question "Do we perhaps have a North Caucasian version of the Apocalypse of St. Paul here?" (172), he vehemently denies that possibility as he draws from the differences in supernatural figures, punishments for sins, and social structures (172-173).

Of course, Lathlam's study is also not without omissions or lapses—however, to be fair, one must state that these omissions and lapses do not overshadow his lucid detachment from Eurocentrism and egalitarian approach to myth. As an example to these minor omissions and lapses, Lathlam suggests that "The Nart Sagas are "mostly recorded by 19th and 20th century Russian and Soviet ethnographers, [as a] cycle of hero-tales is common to the peoples of the North Caucasus, including the Eastern Iranian-speaking Ossetians, the Turkic-speaking Karachai and Balkars, the Circassians [Adyghe], and the Nakh-speaking Ingush and Chechens" (160-161). Latham's statement is true, yet lacks totality, as Nart Sagas are also present in the national lore of other peoples of the North Caucasus—such as the Abkhaz and the Abaza. Such a claim for a more extensive argument finds an echo in John Colarusso's *Nart Sagas from the Caucasus: Myths and Legends from the Circassians, Abazas, Abkhaz, and Ubykhs*.

To exemplify the ubiquitousness of the sagas, Colarusso states: "Satanay and her last son, Sosruquo, have expanded to assume the

roles of a wide range of earlier figures, especially in the Abaza and Abkhaz corpora" (6). Despite this, the encompassing presence of Nart figures in the myths of adjacent peoples such as Abaza and the Abkhaz is hardly surprising. This lack in the element of surprise becomes clear when one considers that all peoples of the North Caucasus—again, according to Colarusso—share "a set of striking features of language, dress, and custom" (2).

Nevertheless, what can be considered as a "surprising" event of synchronicity is that the Nart Sagas "closely resemble the myths of the pagan Norse and the Ancient Greece" (5), and this study will elaborate on the resemblance regarding the latter. While Colarusso (2002) establishes this resemblance through figures such as Nasran and Prometheus (158-168). Curiously enough, he does not mention the possible parallelisms between Sosruquo and Hermes. As it follows this opening in Colarusso's extensive research, this study will first offer a brief overview of Sosruquo in the Nart Sagas and to underline certain similarities between Hermes and Sosruquo.

According to Vasily Ivanovich Abaev's introduction to Colarusso's research on the Ossetian variant of the Nart Sagas entitled *Tales of the Narts: Ancient Myths and Legends of the Ossetians* Sosruquo "Occupies a most prominent place, (...) not only in the Ossetian but also in Kabardian (as well as other Circassians, Abaza, Ubykh), Balkar, Chechen, and other variants" (XXXVI).

While this statement underlines the significance of Sosruquo in the Nart Sagas, it also asserts Sosruquo's ubiquitousness in the Caucasus Region as it re-emphasizes the lapse in Lathlam's study. Besides establishing the position of Sosruquo and responding to Lathlam in a preemptive fashion, Abaev highlights the trickster nature of the figure when he states Sosruquo "Readily resorts to all kinds of trickery and cunning" (XXXVI) against adversaries who are more formidable than him. As the study implies in its introduction however, defining Sosruquo solely as a trickster would be a reductionist approach. This denomination is due to the fact that Sosruquo is not only a trickster.

In addition to the trickster figure, Sosruquo also shares qualities with what Jung calls the hero archetype and the divine child<sup>2</sup>—and in turn, with the first attempts of the baby Mercurius/Hermes in divinity. With reference to his birth, in “Onomastica Nartica: Sozyryqo - Soslan” Sonja Fritz and Jost Gippert describe the birth of Sosruquo as: “The stone starts growing, and after nine months it gives birth to a boy” (2).

Here, one sees that Sosruquo is born out of a stone—in addition to the extraordinary circumstances of the birth of the divine child that Jung further emphasizes in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1956) as “sprung out of stone” (158). This direct link is one of the initial suggestions that accentuate Sosruquo as the manifestation of the divine child.

Following this miraculous birth, the Blacksmith Tlepsh—another prominent Nart—“baptizes” Sosruquo seven times in water (3), establishing a link between the former with metals and metalwork, which Kudaeva et. al. underline in their “Mythopoetic Basis of Sosruko Character” as they mention Tlepsh’s “tempering” of Sosruquo’s body and the latter’s declaration that his body is made of steel (6). This association with metals and metalwork also arises as another facet of the divine child in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Considering this association, Jung states that the child is also symbolized by the dwarf and the elf as a manifestation of the occult forces of Nature.

Jung establishes this juxtaposition as: “To this sphere also belongs the little metal man<sup>3</sup> of late antiquity (...) who, till far into the Middle Ages, on the one hand inhabited the mine-shafts, and on the other represented alchemical metals” (158)<sup>4</sup>. Moreover,

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<sup>2</sup> In *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1956), Jung explains the divine child as a figure that is “begotten, born, and brought up in quite extraordinary circumstances” (161). He also underlines that “the child is endowed with superior powers (. . .) it is a personification of vital forces quite outside the limited range of our conscious mind” (170), emphasizing the child’s supernatural and supernal qualities.

<sup>3</sup> Sosruquo’s figure is also described as “puny” by Amjad Jaimoukha in his “An Introductory Account of Circassian Literature”.

<sup>4</sup> Hermes is also extensively associated with alchemy.

Jung regards the association of the child with metals in conjunction with civilization. Regarding the divine child and societal advancement, Jung states in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* that “[The Child Archetypes] are identified with things that promote culture, e.g., fire, metal, corn, maize, etc. as bringers of light” (169).

While Sosruko is associated with metal due to Tlepsh’s tempering, he is also associated with fire as Rashidvash highlights in his “The Caucasus, Its Peoples, and Its History”: “[Sosruquo is] born aflame from a rock” (33). As this study will later argue, Sosruquo also brings fire, an act that is a universal symbol of bringing civilization. Concerning Hermes, on the other hand, the primary association with fire is chiefly with Prometheus in Greek Mythology. However, studies also argue that the god of thieves is also a god of fire. In “A Proposal upon the Figure of Hermes as an Ancient God of Fire”, Vinci and Mauri make an argument concerning Hermes’ role as a fire god—after suggesting Hermes’ role as a stone god in line with his nature as the initial divine child in the sentence “[Hermes] is also a stone-god and the god of piles of stones” (107).

Furthermore, *the Homeric Hymns*—one of the most important primary sources of Greek Mythology—also credit Hermes as the inventor of fire: “He gathered a pile of faggots, and had resort to the art of fire” (54). Considering the fact that Hermes invented fire as a child-god in the Homeric Hymns, his association with the divine child’s civilization-bringing aspects becomes clear.

In light of the fact that both Sosruquo and Hermes act as stone gods and bringers of fire, they apparently become closely associated. This association is further emphasized in their tendency of resorting to trickery and deceit in their exploits, and their act of giant-slaying. However, as this study displays, the manner of these supernatural figures in giant-slaying is highly different in a way that echoes Sosruquo’s archetypal significance. Sosruquo’s slaying of the giant Ayniwzh in “Sosruquo and the Inquisitive Ayniwzh” (Colarusso) is directly connected to his bringing of fire to his henchmen. In the tale, Sosruquo’s men lose their flint in a quest, unable to kindle a fire (222). When Sosruquo

realizes that a blizzard is approaching he says: ““So we have no flint anymore. Then I shall go and get fire. You stay here and wait for me. Stay as warm as you can. Do not despair” (222). Here, Sosruquo’s ability to lead, encourage, and aid his men seemingly establish him as a classical manifestation of the hero archetype that Jung, in his *Symbols of Transformation*, defines as “The hero sees fear as a challenge and a task, because only boldness can deliver from fear. And if the risk is not taken, the meaning of life is somehow violated” (551).

Sosruquo’s task to bring fire to his men is indeed risky for in order to do so, he has to face Ayniwzh, a man-eating giant in Caucasus mythology (200).

While the Ayniwzh is asleep, Sosruquo tries to steal a firebrand from Ayniwzh, highlighting his trickster nature (223) yet he fails and the Ayniwzh wakes up, correctly deducing that it is the Nart Sosruquo who tries to rob him from one of his firebrands. However, the ever-crafty Sosruquo first affirms his identity and then misleads the Ayniwzh that he is actually Sosruquo’s cook and nothing else, after he dodges the clubs hurled by the Ayniwzh: “I myself, his cook, with Sosruquo’s help will cut off your head right away,” (223) Sosruquo says, therefore causing Ayniwzh to think that if Sosruquo’s cook is agile enough to dodge his clubs and brave enough to taunt him, Sosruquo’s power must be immeasurable—for Ayniwzh responds in fear: “Don’t kill me! I mistakenly took you for Sosruquo. We have nothing to share, have we? So let me take my clubs” (223).

Sosruquo’s manipulation of the Ayniwzh speaks of his trickster nature in a threefold manner. Firstly, as he deceives the giant, Sosruquo acts as a traditional trickster archetype that is depicted in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* as a player of “malicious tricks” (256)—which is also in line with Jung’s understanding of Mercurius / Hermes in *Alchemical Studies*: “Mercurius, following the tradition of Hermes, is many-sided, changeable, and deceitful. He is duplex and duplicitious” (217)<sup>5</sup>. Secondly, Jung describes the trickster as a figure that breaks away

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<sup>5</sup> A well known example of this is Hermes’ thievery of Apollo’s cattle and his attempt to manipulate him through printing false footsteps.



from human contact, as Sosruquo breaks away from his companion before going into the cave of the Ayniwzh (Colarusso 223).

Thirdly, Jung describes the trickster as a shapeshifter in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (255)—as he also depicts Mercurius / Hermes in *Alchemical Studies* as a being that “consists of all conceivable opposites” (par. 284), underlining his changeability, mutability, and non-commitment to a single form. While Sosruquo does not supernaturally change his shape akin to a traditional shapeshifter, he assumes the identity of his cook; suggesting a more latent approach.<sup>6</sup>

Sosruko’s deception of the Ayniwzh which manifestly asserts his trickster identity and latently confirms his ability to shapeshift continues throughout the tale. As he shoos away the Ayniwzh after their initial encounter, the giant says to Sosruquo: “Can you tell me about some of Sosruquo’s games, please” (Colarusso 223). The use of the word “game” is a peculiar choice here as it both hints at childishness and deceit in a way that resembles the fusion of the divine child and the trickster in the figure of Hermes, particularly concerning the birth of the thieving God. In a way that befits his trickster nature, Sosruquo abides by the Ayniwzh’s request to uphold his masquerade as the Ayniwzh says that he wants to see whether he can play the games Sosruquo plays as well (Colarusso 223). However, Sosruquo’s acquiescence of Ayniwzh’s request suggests a hidden agenda that yet again echoes his trickster status.

When telling the Ayniwzh his “games” in the guise of his cook, Sosruquo apparently hatches a plan to use the so-called games as a ploy to discover the weaknesses of the Ayniwzh so he could kill him.

As Sosruquo does this, the word “game” itself becomes a game—it acts as a *trompe l’oeil*, an illusion, a trick that is hidden behind a childish pastime. Sosruquo says to the Ayniwzh:

Well, when Sosruquo is bored he throws a stone up a very high and steep mountain, like this one, and he plays with the stone,

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<sup>6</sup> In another variant of the story, he disguises himself as his shepherd, suggesting a more humane and material way regarding his change of shape and identity.

hitting it with his forehead while the stone is rolling back, trying to get it back to the mountain's top. (224).

As the Ayniwzh responds he can do this without effort (224), Sosruquo thinks to himself: "What a strong forehead he has! It should be difficult to cut it. No, I wouldn't beat him if I tried to do this. I have to think of something else" (224), revealing his aforementioned deception to the reader. As this deception fails, Sosruquo further tries to lead the Ayniwzh, as he harnesses all of his guile and cunning. When Ayniwzh asks him to relay another game, Sosruquo says: "He loves to bathe in a cauldron of boiling milk" (224).

Following this, the Ayniwzh squeezes out a cauldron of milk from a boulder and boils the milk with the fire Sosruquo attempted to take from him. Stepping into the boiling cauldron of milk, the Ayniwzh is more than happy as he says: "Oh, what a pleasure it is! It makes all my bones very soft" (224), as Sosruquo thinks to himself in frustration: "What is the way to kill him? Even the boiling milk cannot boil him" (224). Ayniwzh, becoming more and more confident with his ability to match Sosruquo's Herculean "games", asks for a third game from Sosruquo in the guise of a cook, to which the latter replies that Sosruquo chews scorching-hot plows when it is cold outside (224).

As the Ayniwzh successfully replicates Sosruquo's game, he says: "Ah, how fine a way to warm up! Tell me of Sosruquo's fourth game!" (225).

Regarding this question, one should elaborate on the expanding overconfidence on the Ayniwzh as it reveals an archetypal dynamic in Jungian psychology. As an ego-personality becomes inflated with overconfidence that stems from an unconscious inferiority—this inferiority is revealed to the reader in Ayniwzh's initial fear of Sosruquo and his latter attempts to be on par with him—the trickster archetype arises in order to deflate the ego-personality's illusion. Therefore, the presence of Sosruquo and his attempts to further deceive the Ayniwzh is also reflective of the dynamic between the conscious mind and the archetypes. Whereas in regard to his fourth game, Sosruquo forces the Ayniwzh into a frozen sea as he states "He makes the sea freeze,

and then gathers all his powers and lifts out the whole sea as ice, icebergs. He takes it out on his shoulders" (225). Ayniwzh however also manages to break free from this trap as well.

After this, he gloats to Sosruquo: "Now you see? You said I would not come out of the sea, but I made it. Tell me now what else Sosruquo does" (225). It is interesting to note that Sosruquo does not vocalize his disbelief that the Ayniwzh will not be able to come out of the ice. While this may be a lapse in translation, it begs the question whether Ayniwzh is capable of a supernatural sense of intuition that allows him to read Sosruquo's thoughts. However, if such a case would be possible, Sosruquo's deception would be in peril in the first place. After the Ayniwzh breaks free from the task, Sosruquo finally comes up with a rather simple idea as he answers the Ayniwzh's question.

As Sosruquo considers what to do, he says to the Ayniwzh: "Sometimes Sosruquo throws himself flat on the ground and asks somebody to ride a horse on his back" (225). An increasingly overconfident Ayniwzh's response to Sosruquo again underlines his ego-inflation—and brings forth another mythological motif that is common in Greek, Roman, and Christian mythology, namely, "the pride before the fall". Ayniwzh says to Sosruquo: "That is nothing (...) Get your horse and ride him on my back!" As a response to this, Sosruquo seizes the opportunity as he rides his horse and draws out his sword, ultimately stabbing the Ayniwzh on his left shoulder blade, delivering him a grievous wound (225).

After completing the deed, Sosruquo finally reveals himself to Ayniwzh: "Now listen! Your death is from Sosruquo's hands. I am Sosruquo" (225), in a way that echoes Abaev's statement that to defeat enemies that are more powerful than him, Sosruquo "readily resorts to all kinds of trickery and cunning" (XXXVI).

Here, Sosruquo's resort to trickery and deceit stems from the fact that he keeps his identity secret in order to manipulate Ayniwzh to put himself in a vulnerable position. With his wit, Sosruquo overcomes an enemy who is more powerful than him, considering the fact that the Ayniwzh is a giant.

On the other hand, Sosruquo's cunning does not mean that Ayniwzh is stupid, as he also demonstrates a certain cunning after

the veils of his pride are lifted from his eyes. He tries to provoke Sosruquo to attack him again by provoking his masculinity: "If you were born to be a man, come closer and charge me one more time" (226). This is quite a guile attempt at deception as the Caucasus culture has strong ideals of virility and manhood.

However, in contrast to historical revisionists might argue, Sosruquo cannot be simply reduced to an ideal of masculinity, as his cunning is also one of his defining features that prevent him from being reduced to a one-dimensional character. As evidence to such a claim, he outright refuses the challenge of Ayniwzh, stating: "No. To hit twice is not my rule. I think one hit was enough for you" (226). This response is another testament to Sosruquo's guile as a trickster for he misleadingly invokes a sense of personal ethics to shy away from the Ayniwzh's entrapment. As a response, Ayniwzh uses a clever stratagem to appeal to Sosruquo's intelligence, trying to manipulate him through cajoling:

"Had I been smarter, I would have recognized that you might be Sosruquo. Although you could not beat me with your power, you beat me with your intellect," the giant said. "Now, can you bring here my sword, which is hanging on the cave wall, above my bed? And in order not to torture me, hit me with this sword and cut out my entrails," the giant said. (226)

With this quotation, the Ayniwzh not only appeals to Sosruquo's intellect but also to his mercy—which implies that Sosruquo is not a trickster that fits to the mold, for as implied before, this archetype is cruel and cunning—and yet, Sosruquo does not fall to this trap either since if he touched the Ayniwzh's sword with his hand, it would have killed him. Instead, Sosruquo picks up the sword with tongs. This final display of guile convinces the Ayniwzh that he indeed faces with Sosruquo (226). As Ayniwzh realizes that the man who killed him is indeed the cunning Nart, Sosruquo's role as the trickster gains further emphasis because the Ayniwzh identifies him through the other's remarkable cunning. After his identification by the Ayniwzh, Sosruquo grants his final wish, disemboweling him and hanging his entrails to a tree.

Following this, he returns to his companion and they behead the Ayniwzh. However, they fail to bring his head to their camp due

to its gigantic stature—as proof, Sosruquo cuts the ear of the Ayniwzh and alongside the fire, brings it to their camp instead. In the camp, they peel the skin of the ear, making five saddles out of it (226). While the act of making saddles out of the skin of the Ayniwzh's ear is reminiscent of Mercurius / Hermes—who is also the god of craftsmen—the complexity of the relationship of this two figures is further emphasized as Sosruquo reintroduces fire, the symbol of civilization to his men, in a way that correlates to the hero archetype. Sosruquo's reintroduction of fire is vastly different than its invention attested to Hermes—it is not an act that echoes the divine child through innovation; it is an act that echoes the hero through putting one's own life at risk for the sake of others.

### Conclusion

While one can also argue that Sosruquo and Mercurius / Hermes' similarity is asserted in their fondness of childish games and trickery, which becomes evident in the former's attempts at slaying Ayniwzh—underlining Jung's emphasis of the trickster's malicious nature—one must not lose Sosruquo's endgame that establishes him as the hero archetype. Furthermore, Sosruquo's status as the hero archetype is further highlighted in his reintroduction of civilization—fire—to his men. In this regard, the crafting of the saddles is also recontextualized as the first products of civilization regained.

Compared to Sosruquo, Mercurius / Hermes however, manages to unite only two archetypes, namely the divine child and the trickster in his most famous myth concerning his birth. Nevertheless, the fundamental difference that separates Mercurius / Hermes from Sosruquo is, compared to the dual-nature of Hermes, Sosruquo presents a trinitarian nature in a single myth<sup>7</sup>—this shifting of shapes between archetypes as Sosruquo's "becoming" puts Sosruquo in a unique position while simultaneously questioning the claim of "close resemblance" Colarusso makes. Through his complexity as the manifestation of

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<sup>7</sup> Through this, Sosruquo's nature also becomes reminiscent of the Christian trinity as all of these aspects are Sosruquo, but Sosruquo cannot be limited to these aspects, further underlining his complexity.

three different archetypes—and the tension it creates with Greek Myth and Jung’s dichotomy that establishes a non-duality between the child and the trickster—Sosruquo’s slaying of the Ayniwzh and his reintroduction of fire establishes his character—and the Nart Sagas— as a unique mythological phenomena that cannot be reduced to an inspiration from Western Mythology or a simple proof for Jung’s theory.

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