

## THE PERSONALITY OF HOMER, AS INDICATED BY HIS COMPARISONS

From the remote ages of Hellenic antiquity, the two oldest, and at the same time the most magnificent records of Hellenic artistic creation have been preserved: the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. These two works are the expressions of the selfconscious and carefree youth of a nation which, unlike all other nations, was destined to have a rich future and a universal development. Both epics were attributed by the ancients to Homer who, for a long time, was considered as being also the author of the other heroic and non-heroic epics. The first query was not uttered until the time of Herodotus who doubtlessly was the creator of the so-called Homeric problem; as regards the *Cypria*, the first epic of the Trojan cycle, he stated the following: „These verses (i. e. the *Iliad*, VI, 289—292; the *Odyssey*, IV, 227—230 and 351—352) are clear signs that Homer did not compose the *Cypria* and that its author must have been somebody else, for the *Cypria* tells how Alexander, together with Helen, came from Sparta to Ilion after having travelled for three days on the calm sea accompanied by the favourable winds, whereas in the *Iliad*, Alexander is said to be roaming with Helen“ (IV, 117). As to the *Descendants*, the fourth epic of the Theban cycle, he declares the following: „Hesiod spoke of the Hyperboreans, so did also Homer in the *Descendants*, if Homer ever composed the poem.“ (IV, 32). Aristotle sets the cyclic epics apart from those by Homer, because, in his *Poetic*, he contrasts the former with the latter. Only the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the humorous poem *Margites* are considered by him to be Homer's. When stressing the virtues of the epic, in his aesthetic work, he says: „Homer was the first to use all these in full measure; for he composed each of his poems according to these rules: the *Iliad* is simple and full of sufferings, whereas the *Odyssey* is varied because the identifications come one after another throughout the whole of the poem in which intellectual life is described.“ (Ibid). Later scholars went even further. On the basis of the actual and linguistic contradictions existing between the grammarians of Alexandria, Xenon and Hellanicus, denied even the *Odyssey* to be Homer's because they were aware of the fact that, in some respects, it disagreed with the *Iliad*: in the *Iliad*, for instance, Charis is said to be the wife of Hephaestus, whereas in the *Odyssey* it is Aphrodite; in the former (XI, 692), Nestor is described as having eleven brothers, while in the latter (XI, 286) he has only two, at least from the same mother, Chloris; in the

former, the Gorgon's head is carried by the goddess Athene on her shield whereas in the latter (XI, 634), it is to be found in Hades etc.; that is the reason why the said scholars were given the appellation „the separators“. That opinion was opposed by Aristarchus, the greatest grammarian of the time of Alexandria, in his work *Against Xenon's Paradox*: according to the younger poets he laid greater stress on the common characteristics of both epics and removed many a contradiction by proclaiming that a number of verses were not authentic. His opinion was of such authority that similar questions were never seriously raised for many a century. Early generations persisted in considering Homer as the poet of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, believing that Homer had composed the former in his early life and the latter in his old age: and it was not until the end of 18th century — when the German philologist F. A. Wolf, in his *Foreword to Homer*, moved the Homeric question — that many scholars adopted the opinion of the Alexandrians, by stating that the *Odyssey* was younger than the *Iliad* to such an extent that it would be impossible to consider them as being the work of the same poet. Modern scholars of the same opinion emphasise the difference existing between the two epics, the most outstanding among them being the following ones:

Firstly: The *Iliad* describes a series of events from the Trojan war, which was waged by the Achaeans against Priam, King of Troy, because his son Paris had taken away from the Spartan king Menelaus his wife, the beautiful Helen. The events are connected with the anger of the greatest Achaean hero, Achilles: on one occasion his anger being caused by the Achaean leader, Agamemnon, taking for himself Achilles' slave-girl Briseis; and on another — by Hector, Trojan prince, who killed Achilles' dearest friend Patrocles. Showing as it does the ideal of warlike bravery and the tempestuous outbursts of passions, the *Iliad* could have been created solely in a time of war, as a picture of the actual wars that were fought by the Thessalian tribes during the period of the colonisation of the Aeolian coast in Asia Minor. It refers, therefore, to the eastern side of the Hellenic world. The *Odyssey*, however, describes in verse how Ulysses, after the destruction of Troy, went wandering throughout the world for ten years; how the suitors of his wife Penelope, believing him to have been killed, were squandering his possessions at that time and plotting to kill his and Penelope's son; how Ulysses, having been absent for twenty years, came back home and had his revenge on the wicked suitors. The strange regions through which the hero wanders — such as: the city of the wild Cicones, the land of Lotophagis, the island of the Cyclops, the isle of Aeolus, the master of the winds, the land of the inhospitable Laestrigones, Aeaëa, the island of the sorceress Circe, the land of the Cimmerians, the Infernal Regions, the straits inhabited by Scylla and Charybdis, the Thrinacian island with Helios' cattle, Ogygia, the island of the Nymph Calypso, the Phaeacian island of Scheria and, at last, Ithaca, the island home of Ulysses, his cleverness, his dexterity, his prudence, his cunning and his endless persistence in all the

difficult ordeals and most dangerous situations that befall him during his wandering and coming back home, — all these details point to the fact that the *Odyssey* could have been created as a reflection of the adventures and impressions in various stages of Hellenic colonisation in the western regions of the Mediterranean. From the fact that the Hellenic colonisation towards the west dates from a later period than their colonisation towards the east, we draw the conclusion that the *Odyssey* belongs to a later epoch.

**S e c o n d l y:** The religion of the *Odyssey* is more developed and human than that of the *Iliad*. While in the latter the gods appear as selfish guardians and avengers of their own rights, as whimsical spectators of man's struggles and pains, as beings who on the one hand protect, and, on the other, trample upon laws and morals, in the former they are shown as being the serious guardians of lawful and moral behaviour. The more moral gods of the *Odyssey* are nothing else than a reflection of a better developed consciousness of the people. The *Odyssey* praises bravery which, through its psychological superiority, finds a way out of all the situations, and overcomes all the difficulties that would otherwise prevent the fulfilment of the aim in view. It is here that we can clearly observe the metamorphosis of the heroic ideal from one physical strength to one of psychological power and intellectual ability. In the *Iliad*, Ulysses appears with his character already formed, but he is shown simply as one of the noblemen beside Agamemnon, Achilles and Ajax. In the *Odyssey*, however, he surpasses all others, he stands out alone in the full mental plasticity and in the moral greatness of his character, so that, with Socrates, he becomes the most visible and the most real figure of Antiquity, an ideal of the Hellenes, not in the separate phases of life or in individual situations, but an ideal in general, without any phantasy, alive and real as if we were looking at him with our own eyes, listening to him with our own ears and touching him with our own hands. As a consequence of such a metamorphosis, such an affirming of moral values, and as a result of their influence on the conception of the divine role, there comes also a metamorphosis of the divine ideal. Athene, the mighty and heavy goddess under whose wight the axle of Diomedes' chariot is heard creaking (V, 837 and foll.), has gradually become a divine protectress of intellectual power, and as such she appears in the *Odyssey*. In the struggle for his life and during his return to his native island, Ulysses overcomes all the stronger enemies and all the dangers thanks to his energetic and resourceful mind; therefore it is only natural that Athene, the wise, merciful and just goddess, is in love with that intelligent man as with a natural object of her longing: she follows him wherever he may go and never deserts him. As it happens with her heroes, so it happens also with her: the physical manifestation of power has been discarded for one of interior strength. Religion has become deeper and more merciful owing to the development of morality. The *Odyssey*, in all its details, reflects a higher level of culture than does the *Iliad*.

Thirdly: The composition of the *Odyssey* reveals greater artistic qualities than that of the *Iliad*. While the *Iliad* is rendered somewhat monotonous by the repetition of the motives of monomachia (III and IV) and the endless series of victories and defeats, the *Odyssey* shows a greater dexterity in the variation of a motive, for instance: the motive of ordeal. Ulysses is often tempted to forget Penelope and his home, those objects of his ceaseless longing; those temptations, however, are not tedious to the reader: the cause of his forgetfulness is now a beautiful scenery (V, 59—74), now lotus-eating that makes man forget his homeward journey (IX, 94—97); now the attractive faces of women, each conspicuously different from the other: the sorceress Circe, the cold and heartless, who puts dangerous herbs into the food of her guests in order to make them forget the land of their fathers; the immortal and forever young nymph Calypso, of the warm and sweet nature, who promises immortality to her lover if he stays with her (but he prefers his mortal wife), and lastly, the intelligent, charming and proud girl Nausicaa, slender and beautiful like the ever green fir-tree.

Fourthly: The *Odyssey* is distinguished by its excellence of construction in that the complicated plot is built up and then clarified, a characteristic of which the *Iliad* is completely devoid; this difference is considered as being similar to the difference existing between Aeschylus and Euripides.

Fifthly: In the *Odyssey* there are to be found forms, construction and words that are quite common in the later language but that are never to be traced in the *Iliad*.

All these differences, however, are not of such a character as to make us believe that the two epics could not have been the creation of the same poet; for if in the dramatic work of Aeschylus, for instance, a sudden progress is to be noticed between *the Suppliants*, a work that seems to be more of a cantata than a true drama, and the *Oresteia*, which is not only the summit of the poet's dramatic creativeness but also the most accomplished trilogy in which drama and music form a complete artistic unity, why should not such a progress be expected also in the poet of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*?

The mystery of the origin of these epics may, perhaps, never be illuminated, and the Homeric question will, perhaps, for ever remain a problem. The Homeric age may rightly be spoken of as the darkest age in the whole of Hellenic history; he never gave any details about himself as a poet or as a man. His personality was subordinated by him to his artistic aims to such an extent that various scholars go so far as to deny even his personality, as they deny Shakespeare's. He disappears behind his epics as did „the creative consciousness of the eternal expert“ which is hidden behind its visible and invisible creations. Meanwhile, although the human and poetic character of Homer is so little in evidence in his epic narration, yet, through a more intense observation and a more penetrating insight into the qualities of his art, especially into his ability to choose extraordinary material for

his pictures which he composes and arranges more naturally, there appear certain features of the human and artistic personality of the poet, so that it seems reasonable to speak of the human and poetic character of Homer. Such a Homer can be reached and understood only through Homer himself, through the details into which he brought himself to the greatest extent. In this respect, to a man who is in search after Homer's own personality, who is trying to discover the impressions that mostly influenced his life as well as the way in which he responded to those impressions, a rich, yet untouched, source is offered by those descriptive comparisons that, acting as independent and complete pictures, transfer the listener into a completely different atmosphere, delight him with new impressions and thoughts and, having refreshed him by doing so, bring him back to the course of the story itself. Surrounded by them, such a student should pay special attention to the comparisons that, apart from their aesthetic value, have also their biographical, or rather autobiographical, value. For those pictures Homer took the material not only from his immediate surroundings but also from his inner life, and it is clear that they, therefore, display, in a more immediate way than does his story-telling, the sentiments that vibrated in Homer as a man.

## II.

The first individual feature of the poet, which is reflected in those pictures, is a deep sympathy for the animal world, but it is a sympathy which is not developed in the atmosphere of this or any other period; it is completely individual, and emerges as an expression of a peculiarly sensitive personality. That sympathy is expressed with particular clarity in the comparisons that reveal the poet's heart trembling over the destiny of the small and weak animals. (The *Iliad*, II, 311—29: *φίλα τέκνα*).

Let us take a close look at the comparisons first in the *Iliad*.

In his reply to Agamemnon, Phoenix, Ulysses and Ajax, Telamon's son, Achilles, among other things points to the fact that one group of men are toiling while others are enjoying the fruit of their labour, and therefore he is of opinion that there is no use in his permanently taking part in battles thus running the risk of losing his life and goes on saying:

Even as a hen bringeth her unfledged chickens each morsel as she winneth it, and with herself it goeth hard, even so I was wont to watch out many a sleepless night and pass through many bloody days of battle warring with folk for their women's sake.

(The *Iliad*, IX, 323—326\*).

Armed with shining arms, Agamemnon, early in the morning, leads his army into battle, fights very bravely and kills many heroes

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\*) All the quotations are taken from: The *Iliad*, translated by Lang, Leaf and Myers; Macmillan and Co., London, 1914.

of Troy including two sons of Priam, Isos and Antiphos, who could not be helped by any Trojan warrior. At their death, the poet applies the following simile:

And as a lion easily crusheth the young fawns of a swift hind, when that he hath seized them in his strong teeth, and hath come to their lair and taketh their tender life away, — and the hind, even if she chance to be near at hand, cannot help them, for on herself too cometh dread terror, and swiftly she speedeth through thick coppice and the woodland, hasting and sweating before the onslaught of the mighty beast, — even so not one of the Trojans did avail to save them from their bane, but themselves were fleeing in fear before the Argives.

(*Ibid.* XI, 113—121).

The Myrmidons, who, gathered around Patrocles, drive the Trojans back from the ships, are compared to wasps:

And straightway they poured forth like wasps that have their dwelling by the wayside, and that boys are ever wont to vex, always tormenting them in their nests beside the way in childish sport, and a common evil they make for many. And they, if ever some wayfaring man passing by stir them unwittingly, fly forth every one of them, with a heart of valour, and each defends his children; with heart and spirit like theirs the Myrmidons poured out now from the ships . . .

(*Ibid.* XVI, 259—267).

Menelaus sees that the Trojans have overcome Patrocles:

He went up through the front of the fight harnessed in flashing bronze, and strode over the body as above a first-born calf standeth lowing its mother, ere then unused to motherhood.

(*Ibid.* XVII, 3—6).

Achilles' lament over the dead Patrocles is illustrated by the poet in this picture:

. . . and moaning very sore, even as a deep-bearded lion whose whelps some stag-hunter hath snatched away out of a deep wood; and the lion coming afterward grieveth and through many glens he rageth on the track of the footsteps of the man, if anywhere he might find him, for most bitter anger siezeth him.

(*Ibid.* XVIII, 318—322).

Achilles separates the Trojan army into two groups and drives the one towards the city and the other to the river Xanthos which flows through the Trojan countryside, so that the river engulfs many of them:

. . . And as when at the rush of five locusts take wing to fly unto a river, and the unwearying fire flameth forth on them with sudden onset, and they huddle in the water; so before Achilles was the stream of deep-eddying Xanthos filled with the roar and the throng of horses and men.

(*Ibid.* XXI, 12—16).

In the second battle of the gods, Hera upbraids Artemis for her cruel attitude towards women — for she has killed Andromache's mother, Niobe's daughters etc. — and starts beating her ears, while Artemis

fled like a dove that from before a falcone flieth to a hollow rock, a cleft — for she was not fated to be caught, — thus Artemis fled weeping, and left her bow and arrows where they lay.

(*Ibid.* XXI, 493—496).

Such comparisons can also be found in the *Odyssey*. Let us examine them closely.

The anxiety of Penelope who is wondering whether Telemachus will be able to escape being killed or will be murdered by the spiteful suitors is illustrated by the poet in a very special and an almost bold picture:

And as a lion broods all in fear among the press of men, when they draw the crafty ring round him, so deeply was she musing when deep sleep came over her.

(*The Odyssey*, IV, 791—794)\*

While swimming and trying to reach firm ground, Ulysses, girdled by Leucothea's veil, catches hold of a rock, but a wave snatches him and throws him far away into the sea:

And as when the cuttlefish is dragged forth from his chamber, the many pebbles clinging to his suckers, even so was the skin stript from his strong hand against the rocks, and the great wave closed over him.

(*The Odyssey*, V, 432—435).

Having overcome Circe by means of magic herbs, so that she restores to him his friends that have been turned from swine into human beings again, Ulysses comes back to the shore to collect the rest of his friends. Their joy is described by the poet, speaking through Ulysses, in the following way:

And as when calves of the homestead gather round the droves of kine that have returned to the yard, when they have had their fill of pasture, and all with one accord frisk before them, and the folds may no more contain them, but with a ceaseless lowing they skip about their dams, so flocked they all about me weeping, when their eyes beheld me.

(*The Odyssey*, X, 410—417).

When Ulysses, after twenty years' absence, comes back home and reveals his identity to Telemachus, the latter weeps, and Ulysses himself cannot help shedding tears:

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\*) All the quotations are taken from: *The Odyssey*, translated by Butcher and Lang; Macmillan and Co., London, 1932.

And they (Ulysses and Telemachus) wailed aloud more ceaselessly than birds, sea-eagles or vultures of crooked clans, whose younglings the country folk have taken from the nest ere yet they are fledged.

(The *Odyssey*, XVI, 215—219).

When Euryclea is washing Ulysses' feet, Penelope talks with him, although, of course, she cannot recognize him as yet; she tells him about her immense sorrow and worries that keep on troubling her at night when all other people are having their rest:

Even as when the daughter of Pandareus, the nightingale of the greenwood, sings sweet in the first season of the spring, from her place in the thick leafage of the trees, and with many a turn and trill she pours forth her full-voiced music bewailing her child, dear Itylus, whom on a time she slew with the sword unwitting, Itylus the son of Zethus the prince; even as her song, my troubled soul sways to and fro.

(The *Odyssey*, XIX, 518—524).

Before Ulysses kills his wife's suitors, he lies awake for a long time listening to the wanton talk of the shameless maid-servants who are going out of the hall to the suitors in order to be possessed by them. Ulysses is filled with indignation:

And even as a bitch stands over her tender whelps growling, when she spies a man she knows not, and she is eager to assail him, so growled his heart within him in his wrath at their evil deeds.

(The *Odyssey*, XX, 14—16).

The souls of the murdered suitors are called up by Hermes in order to be taken down by him to the Nether World:

And even as bats flit gibbering in the secret place of a wondrous cave, when one has fallen down from the cluster on the rock where they cling each to each up aloft, even so the souls gibbered as they fared together, and Hermes, the helper, led them down the dark ways.

(The *Odyssey*, XXIV, 6—10).

### III.

Another individual characteristic of the poet emanates from the descriptive comparisons, the material for which was provided by the poet from various situations of human life especially of family life.

Let us first examine such comparisons in the *Iliad*.

In an apostrophe, addressed to Menelaus, the poet stresses that the goddess Athene has stood in front of him thus protecting him from the arrows:

She turned it just aside from the flesh, even as a mother driveth a fly from her child that lieth in sweet slumber.

(The *Iliad*, IV, 130—131).



When Agamemnon's wound has dried up, and the blood has stopped running, he feels terrible pains:

And even as when the keen shaft cometh upon a woman in her travail, the piercing shaft that the goddess of the birth-pangs send, even the Eilithyiai, the daughters of Hera that have bitter pangs in their gift, even so keen pains sank into the might of the son of Atreus.

(The *Iliad*, XI, 269—272).

When the Trojans, led by Hector attack the Achaean fortifications, they are helped by Apollo who, with his shoulders wrapped in a cloud, tears apart the Achaean walls:

And not easily did he cast down the wall of the Achaians, as when a boy scatters the sand beside the sea, first making sand buildings for sport in his childishness, and then again, in his sport, confounding them with his feet and hands; even so didst thou, archer Apollo, confound the long toil and labour of the Argives, and among them rouse a panic fear.

(The *Iliad*, XV, 362—366).

When Patroclus, with tears in his eyes, asks Achilles to allow him to take part in the battle, Achilles feels sorry for him, and addresses him in the following way:

„Wherefore weepst thou, Patroklos, like a fond little maid, that runs by her mother's side, and bids her mother take her up, snatching at her gown, and hinders her in her going, and tearfully looks at her, till her mother takes her up?“

(The *Iliad*, XVI, 7—11).

And when Achilles cremates Patroclus' body, pouring wine down on the earth and calling upon poor Patroclus:

As a father waileth when he burneth the bones of his son, new-married, whose death is woe to his hapless parents, so wailed Achilles as he burnt the bones of his comrade, going heavily round the burning pile, with many moans.

(The *Iliad*, XXIII, 222—225).

Such comparisons, the material for which was taken from the same sources and conveyed up in that same special warmth by the poet, are to be found also in the *Odyssey*.

Ulysses, already very near to the Phaeacian Island of Scheria, is noticed by Poseidon, who raises a storm which causes damage to his ship. The powerful waves begin to toss him here and there and go on doing so till the goddess Leucothea shows compassion for him and gives him an immortal veil to put round his chest; by this he is to be saved. For two days and two nights he is being tossed by the waves, and on the third day he sees the land near by:

And even as when most welcome to his children is the sight of a father's life, who lies in sickness and strong pains long wasting away, some angry god assailing him; and to their delight the gods have loosed him from his trouble; so welcome to Odysseus showed land and wood; and he swam onward, being eager to set foot on the strand.

(The *Odyssey*, V, 394—399).

During the feast at the court of the king Alcinous — whose guest Ulysses has been for two days — the bard Demodocus sings the poem about the wooden horse with which the Achaeans cheated the Trojans. While listening to the poem, Ulysses begins to weep with delight for he can hear also his own heroic deeds mentioned by the singer:

And as a woman throws herself willing about her dear lord, who hath fallen before his city and the host, warding from his town and his children the pitiless day; and she beholds him dying and drawing difficult breath, and embracing his body wails aloud, while the foemen behind smite her with spears on back and shoulders and lead her up into bondage, to bear labour and trouble, and with the most pitiful grief her cheeks are wasted; even so pitifully fell the tears beneath the brows of Odysseus.

(The *Odyssey*, VIII, 523—531).

When Telemachus comes back home safe from his journey, he immediately goes to the swineherd Eumaeus who is greatly delighted to see him:

And even as a loving father welcomes his son that has come in the tenth year from a far country, his only son and well-beloved, for whose sake he has had great sorrow and travail, even so did the goodly swineherd fall upon the neck of godlike Telemachus, and kiss him all over as one escaped from death, and he wept aloud and spake to him winged words.

(The *Odyssey*, XVI, 17—23).

Having taken away the weapons to the treasury — according to their previous arrangement — so that the suitors will not be able to find them when necessary, Ulysses begins to talk to Penelope to whom he has not yet revealed his identity, and invents a story — as if it were told to him by the Thesprotians — about Ulysses' coming back home very soon. Ulysses' story causes great joy to Penelope and she bursts into tears:

And even as the snow melts in the high places of the hills, the snow that the South-East wind has thawed, when the West has scattered it abroad, and as it wastes the river, streams run full, even so her fair cheeks melted beneath her tears, as she wept her own lord, who even then was sitting by her.

(The *Odyssey*, XIX, 205—210)

After the suitors have been murdered, the maidservant Euryclea wakes up Penelope and lets her know that the beggar who has been in their house is Ulysses himself and that he was the man who killed the suitors. Penelope can hardly believe that it is true; however, she goes to the lower chambers where she finds Ulysses. Still she cannot

believe it. Ulysses orders that Telemachus and the shepherds should sing and dance so that nobody in the town would guess what has happened in the house. He takes a bath, and having been made by Athens as strong and cheerful as he used to be, he comes back to his wife and upbraids her for being hard-hearted. She does not believe that he is her husband, but when Ulysses mentions the secret about their wedding-bed, she is convinced that he is her husband, for nobody except him knows about the secret, and she hurries to embrace and kiss him:

And even as when the sight of land is welcomed to swimmers, whose well-wrought ship Poseidon hath smitten on the deep, all driven with the wind and swelling waves, and but a remnant hath escaped the grey sea-water and swum to the shore, and their bodies are all crusted with the brine, and gladly have they set foot on land and escaped on evil end; so welcome to her was the sight of her lord, and her white arms she would never quite let go from his neck.

(The *Odyssey*, 233—240)

#### IV.

It is with reason that we notice that more developed comparisons are to be found in the *Iliad* in a far larger number than in the *Odyssey*; the former has one hundred and eighty-two of them, whereas the latter counts only thirty-nine. If we take into consideration even the shorter ones, than in the *Iliad* we shall find two hundred and seventy-seven, and in the *Odyssey* fifty-eight. Meanwhile I feel it unreasonable that this difference should be considered as one of the proofs used to refute the same authorship of the two epics. This difference, indeed, is not to be wondered at when the general considerable difference, existing between these two works is taken into consideration. Although the *Odyssey* is full of interesting adventures and wonders, it is devoid of the many exciting moments that are to be found in the war scenes of the *Iliad*. It is particularly lacking in those numerous opportunities for comparisons, that are provided in the *Iliad* by the removal of the troops; even so, the comparisons in the *Odyssey* are imbued with the same spirit as those in the *Iliad*. However, the number of comparisons in separate cantos of the *Iliad* itself is very different. Whereas the number of comparisons in the cantos that deal with battle moves from four to twenty, the cantos that describe more quiet scenes — such as a part of the sixth canto which sings about Hector's stay in Troy and his encounter with Andromache, a part of the seventh canto which describes the truce, the burial of the dead and the Achaeans' fortifications, or the twenty-second canto which describes the terrible treatment of Hector's body, the session of the gods and their decision according to which Hector's body should be handed over to the Trojans, Thetis' coming to Achilles and Iris's visit to Priam, Priam's stay with Achilles and, at last, the lament over Hector in Troy — have only one single comparison. The use of comparisons is dependent on the nature of the content itself, and therefore the number of comparisons in the

*Odyssey*, which is smaller, cannot be used as a proof that the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* were composed by different poets.

The twenty-four comparisons that have been mentioned here — twelve of them being taken from the *Iliad* and the same number of them from the *Odyssey* — are considered by us as a very important source which serves as a help towards a better knowledge of Homer's own personality. The material for fourteen comparisons — seven from the *Iliad* and seven from the *Odyssey* — is taken from animal life, and for the other ten — five from the former and five from the latter epic is drawn from various situations of human life, particularly from that of family.

The pictures from animal are as follows:

a) in the *Iliad*:

1) the bird bringing food to the newly-hatched birds while, at the same time, she is sick; 2) the fawns snatched by a lion in their den at the time when they cannot be helped by their mother who trembles and runs away; 3) the wasps that most courageously protect their young ones from an aggressor; 4) the cow that, having a calf for the first time, goes round it lowing; 5) the lioness that, in pain and wrath, moves through valleys in search of her young ones that have been stolen from her; 6) the locusts that flee from fire and jump into the water; 7) a dove which escapes from the falcons that are pursuing her, and hides in a cleft in the rock.

b) in the *Odyssey*:

8) a lion seeking a means of escape from the hunters; 9) a cuttlefish with many pebbles on its tentacles, that stuck to it when the cuttlefish was taken out of its hole; 10) small calves frisking in their folds when they hear their mothers coming back from the pastures; 11) the eagles or the vultures crying because their young ones have been taken away; 12) Aedon who, changed into a nightingale every spring, bewails, through her sad song, her only son Itylus whom she has killed mistaking him for another; 13) the bitch that protects her frail pups and barks at the unknown man, and 14) bats that squeak and gibber when they fall down from their cluster on the rock.

That which is common to the pictures both in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey* is sympathy for the life of the weak and threatened animals; and the autobiographical value of the pictures consists in that they reveal the personality of one who, like Alcman, the connoisseur of birds' melodies, like Sappho, the poet of flowers, like Aristophanes in *The Birds*, or our Serbian poet Đura Jakšić to whom birds represent his only friends, is possessed of a deep and abiding sympathy towards animals and especially towards the tender attitude of parents towards their young ones.

The pictures of human life, especially of family life, are the following:

a) in the *Iliad*:

1) the mother who protects from flies her child who is sleeping peacefully; 2) a woman in pain who is giving birth to her child; 3) a boy who builds up and destroys his toys while playing; 4) a little girl who runs beside her mother and begs her, with tears in her eyes, to take her up in her arms; 5) the bitter anguish of a father who is burning the bones of his dead son who was newly-married.

b) in the *Odyssey*:

6) children who are happy to see their father recovered from a serious illness; 7) a woman crying over her husband who was killed while defending his own town, while the conquerors are beating her and leading her into captivity; 8) a father who joyfully welcomes his only son coming home after an absence of many years; 9) a wife who, while listening to the news about her husband, who has been absent from home for twenty years, begins to cry, and her face begins to melt away like the snow on the mountain tops; 10) the joy of sailors when they are saved after a tempest which has destroyed their ship.

The autobiographical value of even these pictures is in that they reveal the same poetical individuality: the atmosphere of the pictures that throws light upon deep human feelings in the *Iliad* is the same as that of the pictures that throw light upon similar touching feelings in the *Odyssey*.

Many a scholarly Theseus has thought that in the labyrinth of the Homeric question he has come across his Minotaur and has overcome it; but the monster has only fallen silent later to spring up revived before the eyes of the curious generation of new scholars. Although that Minotaur has not been overcome till now — and perhaps never will be —, still the wrestling with him has brought to light many results that are very important to the history of Hellenic epic poetry. If that investigation continues to develop, — and if thus the shuttle becomes adjusted so that it enables to lay the trail of Ariadne's thread (without which it is impossible to find the way out of the labyrinth), the work will help towards the better knowledge and understanding of Homer's poems. Nobody will refuse the great merits of the German criticism on Homer, but one of its great drawbacks lies in that it buried Homer both as a man and as an artist. However, Homer's grave-diggers were forgotten long time ago, while Homer still lives and will go on living in his works because his genius is immortal. That genius is best seen in those descriptive comparisons that are more developed, and that represent the greatest artistic excellency of his epics. In former times there existed a custom whereby the poets were introduced to their audience by indicating in a part of their poems, their own merits,

their name and birthplace, so that the audience might know who the author of the poem was and so that nobody could falsely claim authorship. A name is like a σφραγίς, i. e. like a sign or a seal which a poet puts on his name, and according to this that appellation is given to the part of the poem. The descriptive comparisons, particularly those that we have mentioned, can, in a way, be used as Homer's σφραγίς; into them the poet brought the most tender and the most noble virtues of his own personality: his warm and deeply human heart. And it is this quality, this deep warm humanity, which secures for his works an immortal name in the history of literature throughout the world.

By indicating the autobiographical importance of these more developed, the importance of which homerology to date has not considered, the author hopes that he has indicated road which leads to the solution of one part of the Homeric problem, that road being the questions: 1) did Homer exist as man and poet?, and 2) is the poet of the *Iliad* the same as that of the *Odyssey*? Like Aristotle and Aristarchus, the author of this work is convinced that the answer to both these questions is yes: and this conviction he has endeavoured to demonstrate in the above discussion.

*Belgrade.*

*M. N. Đurić.*

(Translated from Serbian by D-r Ranka Kuić)

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