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The Character of Odysseus

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THE CHARACTER OF ODYSSEUS

by

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the Requirements for the Degree of
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LIFE

William Charles Schaefer was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, July 26, 1929.

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In July, 1947, the author entered the Society of Jesus at Milford, Ohio. He began his work for the degree of Bachelor of Arts at Xavier University, Cincinnati (Milford Division) and graduated from Loyola University, (West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana) in June, 1952. In June, 1954 he received the degree of Licentiate in Philosophy from Loyola University.

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# Table of Contents

## I. Introduction

A. Observation of character
   1. In real life
   2. In music, art, literature
   3. In literary character portrayal
      a. Importance of such observation
      b. Difficulty of such observation
   4. Of Odysseus

B. Purpose of this thesis
   1. Synthesis through analysis
   2. Values of such a thesis

C. Nature of the thesis

D. Contents of the thesis

## II. What is Character?

A. Introduction
   1. Purpose of the chapter
   2. Need of the chapter
   3. Problems involved
   4. Sources consulted

B. Definition of terms
   1. Person
      a. Metaphysical significance
      b. Essentially immutable
      c. A complete totality
      d. Influences on personality
   2. Personality
      a. Its nature
      b. Capable of change
      c. Determinants of personality
   3. Character
      a. Its nature
      b. Nobility
      c. Strength
      d. Active principle

iv
III. THE CHARACTER OF ODYSSEUS

A. Introduction
1. The problem
2. The contents of the chapter

B. Identification of Odysseus
1. Legend
2. In the Iliad
3. In the Odyssey

C. The method of studying the character of Odysseus

D. Odysseus, the brave and clever warrior
1. Bravery
   a. Skill in battle
   b. Apparent lack of courage
   c. An ideal for his people
   d. Physical strength
   e. Athletic prowess
2. Cunning
   a. In counsel
   b. In speech
      (1) In battle
      (2) Variety
      (3) Persuasiveness
         (a) Alcinous
         (b) Nausicaa
   c. In action
   d. Lack of prudence

E. Odysseus the king
1. Mighty monarch
   a. Must be studied in the Odyssey
   b. Territory-realm
   c. Possessions
2. Leader
   a. In the Iliad
   b. On the journey home
   c. Lack of his followers' loyalty
      (1) Among his crew
      (2) Among the suitors
3. Beloved ruler
   a. Hospitality
   b. Loyalty of the household
      (1) Eumaeus
      (2) Other servants
F. Odysseus the religious man
   1. Influence of religion in man's life
      a. Differences between Christian and pagan
      b. Attitudes of love and fear
   2. Odysseus a religious man
      a. His attitude toward the gods
         (1) Fearful reverence
            (a) Prayer life
               i. Of petition for himself
               ii. Of petition for others
            (b) Resignation to gods' will
         (2) Love
            (a) Athene
            (b) Zeus
      b. The gods' attitude towards him
         (1) Athene
         (2) Conclusion
G. Odysseus the family man
   1. Faithful husband
      a. Outstanding example
      b. His longing for Penelope
      c. Fidelity to Penelope
         (1) Problem of Circe
         (2) Problem of Calypso
      d. Penelope's opinion of Odysseus
   2. Loving father
   3. Dutiful son
H. Analysis

IV. HOMER'S ARTISTIC CHARACTER PORTRAYAL
   A. Introduction
   1. Problem of the critic
   2. Techniques of the various arts
   3. Problem of this chapter
   B. Art of character portrayal
      1. Definition
      2. Elements
         a. Conception
         b. Communication
      3. Methods
   C. The art of Homer in portraying Odysseus
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When Shakespeare said "All the world's a stage," he was really only partially correct; for the whole world is also an audience. Every human being is a performer, an actor on the stage of life; but each one is also a very keen observer of the words and actions, and, as it sometimes seems, even of the thoughts of his fellow man. It is through this process that men come to know one another; they realize the various qualities which make up men's personalities; they understand the traits of character which govern these qualities; they see from a study of a person's individualizing notes and accidental perfections just what type of an individual that person is, and what are the determining factors in making him such an individual.

Peoples' first impressions of others are seldom the same as their later ones. The total individual cannot be presented to them in one glimpse, hardly sufficient for a real understanding. A study of details follows, frequent observation of the individual in action; for it is thus that one's capabilities are discerned. With the perception of each new detail the over-all picture of the
person heightens, broadens, and deepens, though this does not necessarily imply an objective change, but rather a subjective progress in understanding.

So it is in real life with the people with whom we live. So, too, in the world of fancy, in the glorious realm of literature, or in art, or music. Literary studies, painted portraits, and musical tone poems can all, through their various and different media, present a picture of an individual to us. A musical portrait depicts a person's emotional moods for us, and probably most effectively; painting presents the most vivid sense image, and will be easily remembered; but words are the most powerful, the most penetrating of the media for character portrayal. In all of these representations, as with real individuals, the general image is first presented for comprehension; then as details of phrasing, of line and shadow, of description and action appear, that first impression grows and usually more closely approaches the real nature of the person.

The average person bases his interest in works of art upon his liking or dislike of pictures; if a picture pleases him, he accepts it as good; otherwise, he rejects it, or at most, feels indifferent toward it. In order to evaluate such works of art correctly, really to appreciate them, it is necessary to have criteria of judgment, some norms which objectively determine whether a painting is good or bad. It is also necessary to define
the various elements in a portrait, the various aspects which need to be considered in evaluating its worth. The technique of the artist must be studied, too, in order to see how the finished product has been developed and finally attained. The color, the shading, the lines, the form, the light, the shadows, the feature point, all must be examined in detail. When this is done, the critic can stand back and take another look at the painting; this time he will have a fuller knowledge and better appreciation of the content of the painting, and a more exact evaluation of its worth.

All these statements are equally true for literary character portrayal. The magnificent images which Vergil, Homer, Shakespeare, and other authors have left us are testimony of the treasure we have. Everyone has marveled at the finished product of these artists, and that admiration has grown with each new approach and critical study of the works in their entirety as well as in detail. Hamlet is such a one. His depth of character has provided fruit for many a scholarly search, and still leaves even the most appreciative of critics not completely satisfied.

The study of character in literature is important. Both in writings which are strictly character studies and in others which are not, the analysis and synthesis of character is a very important means to the better understanding and appreciation of those writings. Such a study is also a difficult task, for
it requires careful and patient analysis, and an accurate penetration into the author's portrayal. In his work, The Classical Canons of Literary Character Portrayal, Father Schoder points out the importance and difficulty of such work.

A large and important element in many forms of literature is the artistic portrayal of character. Drama, epic, biography, history, oratory, the novel, and other forms of descriptive poetry or prose are full of character depiction in different forms and varying degrees. The analysis of such portraits, of their artistry of execution, their contents and significance, is an important part of advanced literary studies in both the classical and the modern fields. It has received of late more than usual attention, and numerous books, articles, and research studies have appeared, especially in the past ten or twenty years, to testify to the widespread interest this problem holds for contemporary students of the various literatures of the Western World. The problem is an unusually intricate one, challenging scholarly effort on a number of different planes and taxing many facets of the student's capacity at critical literary analysis. This is due to two main causes, the inherent complexity and perpetual mystery of human character itself, and the manifold aspects under which it can be treated in a literary work.1

It is with some uneasiness, then, that the writer begins this study of the character of the Greek hero Odysseus; for he is one of the finest creations of that master-artist of character portrayal, Homer. The deft touch of making his persons vividly real is one of Homer's greatest merits.

If all the sources of Homer's appeal, perhaps the noblest is his character portrayal. For human personality is one of the grand mysteries of life, and in human personalities Homer is a consummate artist. With extraordinary gifts for understanding and depicting the myriad affections of the human heart, Homer is able in the course of his two poems to make nearly twenty major characters and half a hundred minor ones all but live for us... For though living characters afford us greater occasion to know and understand them, few of us ever penetrate so deeply into their character as does Homer, into the inmost sanctuaries of the temperament of the people who make up his story.  

Homer painted his heroes and heroines so vividly that he sweeps his hearers from the world of their present-day reality onto the broad sandy plains of Troy, to the gates of Priam's palace, to the tent of Achilles, the cave of the Cyclops, the isle of Calypso and to the palace of Odysseus. When you have concluded your visit with Homer, you have met a score of new personalities.

A striking consequence of the vivid, human portrait Homer gives of his characters is that the reader who has followed them all through their story finds on completing the poem that the more prominent ones have taken on in his mind the status of long-known friends. We almost feel that we have shaken their hands, and lived with them under the same roof. They seem to sweep us into their own life-stream, and we look upon their experiences almost as our own. With them we have passed through great and testing circumstances; with them we have experienced the exultant frenzy of war, and the crushing yet challenging hour of desperate defeat. Together we have looked on almost every aspect of

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life; have felt the elevation and satisfaction of prayer, and the joy of heart resulting from deeds of kindness or of manly strength. We have passed through periods of exultant joy and light-hearted peacefulness, and also through times of grief, poignant sorrow, or unmanning disaster. Our hearts have beat in unison with theirs over the whole scale of human affections. Each subsequent reading of the poems only deepens our friendship, and we grow more grateful to Homer for having introduced us to them. 3

The purpose of this thesis is to produce by a careful study of the Iliad and the Odyssey a literary synthesis of the character of Homer's Odysseus. It is not intended to be a highly critical commentary on all the actions of this famous hero, but a literary study of the whole Odysseus, of the qualities which make him a fascinating individual, and of the ideals which govern the use of those abilities and make up his character. The values of such a study of any hero or heroine of literature have already been pointed out. In a sense this thesis is original work; many classical scholars have written interpretations of single actions of Odysseus, or have commented on one particular facet of his character; no full study of the Homeric portrait in its entirety seems as yet to have been written.

This thesis contains four chapters. The introductory one explains the problem, the purpose, nature, and division of the thesis. In the second chapter, the nature of character and personality are discussed, and the necessary distinction is drawn

3 Ibid., 21-22.
between them. The third chapter, the longest and most detailed of
the four, contains a summary of the story, a study of Odysseus'
personality, and an analysis of his character. Before concluding
the thesis, a brief study is made of some of the principles of
character portrayal and their particular application to the hero
of the Odyssey. To borrow an explanation,

The score or so of outstanding characters in the
Homeric story deserve our somewhat detailed study.
They are for the most part characters of some complexity,
and we must look for illuminating glimpses of their
make-up in many a passage not directly dealing with them.
It will be well therefore to collect all these scattered
references and endeavor to build from them something
like a complete and rounded notion of their personalities.
If the result should seem to be a little more than a
silhouette copy of their features, it may help at least
to indicate their greatness and recall to our minds the
full-length portrait, in color, by the master himself. 4

4 Ibid., 22-23.
CHAPTER II

WHAT IS CHARACTER?

Two large ideas call for consideration in this thesis, the two which constitute its title: character and Odysseus. Chapter Three will attempt a close study of the fascinating man of Homer's creation; it is the work of the present section to examine in brief (for a complete study would require an entire thesis in itself) the nature of character, and to offer a few fundamental ideas on the subject, in order to illuminate the chapters that follow.

The basic question which we ask is: what kind of man is Odysseus? As we gaze at the completed literary portrait, we examine its details, its light, shading, color, and form. And then we try to make a judgment about the composite of the person the artist has pictured. Before we ask, however, what type of man Odysseus is, we must analyze the notion of "what kind of", we must inquire into the very nature of character. Plato in his Republic,1 and in the Laws,2 insists on the necessity of first inquiring into the essence

1 Republic, 402 b-d.
2 Laws, 668 b-d.
the general nature of an object, before making a particular judgment.

Athenian Stranger: Now the man who is to judge a poem unerringly must know in each particular case the exact nature of the poem; for if he does not know its essence,—what its intention is and what the actual original which it represents,—then he will hardly be able to decide how far it succeeds or fails in fulfilling its intention. 3

An analysis of the nature of character offers several problems: the diversity of opinions on the matter, and the overwhelming wealth of literature dealing with this complex problem. Fortunately in this chapter we are able to use and rely rather heavily upon a doctoral dissertation on this very subject, The Classical Canons of Literary Character Portrayal. This work incorporates a concise summary of the nature and essence of character and personality. 4 The summary contains ideas from the standard psychological works on character such as Allers, Hull, Maher,

3 Ibid., v-d.
4 Schoder, Classical Canons. "The Dissertation has grown out of a larger work, a literary and philosophical analysis of Homer's portrait of Achilles....The need for a general statement of the canons of literary character portrayal, to serve as the basis for an analysis of Homer's Achilles in the light of the principles of classical and modern literary criticism, led to an intensive study in this field...since there was evident need of such a study both from its intrinsic interest on the speculative plane and its usefulness for any objectively grounded study of a particular literary portrait." Preface.
Castiello, Brennan and others. 5

Without our going into a detailed and philosophical analysis of the nature and elements of human character, some definitions founded on philosophical principles will help to clarify the situation. Three terms need immediate definition; these are person, personality, and character. All three are used in regard to one's individuality; each suggests a different aspect. Person, the ontological or metaphysical facet, personality the psychological aspect, and character, the moral or ethical feature of the individuality.

A real explanation of person would necessitate a detailed and involved search into the depths of metaphysical wells. Person has reference to the substance of man. Person is the individual nature existing in reality, including all the actual and potential features. The person is essentially immutable. It is the same during the whole of life, the same in the child, and the same in the adult; the same regardless of any accidental changes,


of any qualitative mutations. The person is complete from the moment the soul joins the body. The person does not increase nor decrease in its original inheritance of qualities; these may stay on in the state of potentiality, or they may become actualized and real. The actualization of these potential qualities depends upon intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The problem of person as can be realized is a philosophical one.

The notion of person contains both potentialities and actualities; man, however, can directly know only that which is actual. What we know of man is what has been actualized in his person. This is what is properly meant by "personality." It is the sum of all the actual features of a person. It has reference to the actual properties of a man.

It means the sum total of an individual man's unique complex of inborn physical and spiritual powers and acquired habits in their present state of development, maturity, and stable patterns of operation, prescinding from how these are used with regard to moral ends.7 Personality can undergo many changes; "it develops during childhood; it shrinks in disease or old age."8 The person of man, however, does not change; it is immutable. But a man's personality

8 Allers, Self-Improvement, 53.
develops and enlarges itself according to the pattern of his actions, the matured use of his powers, the sum-total of his habits.

Personality, therefore, is something compounded of the acts, powers, and habits of man, just as person is something compounded of the essence and existence, or nature and subsistence of man.  

Intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence the development of personality. The natural endowment and the cultivation of its gifts contribute to the "distinctive unique pattern of physical and spiritual traits setting this man off from all his fellows, constituting his own particular personality." No two men are alike; this dissimilarity holds for their native endowment as well as their culture. Those who do start out with a closely parallel native temperament soon become differentiated by the distinct way in which they develop their capacities.

A man's physical build and appearance, his dominant moods, his attitude toward daily occurrences; sensitivity to the finer things of life and nature, refinement of manners, vivacious or calm or sullen disposition; his social graces, his selfishness or generosity toward others, his solemnity, querulousness, or sense of humor in everyday situations; the quality of intellect, imagination, and artistic taste; the degree of warmth and sympathy and friendliness which he manifests; his interests and preferences, his athletic grace, the reasonable tenor of his behavior or its uninhibited boisterousness—these and many similar features of his individual qualities constitute


similar features of his individual endowment of human powers in their present state of elaboration which is properly termed personality. Its correct depiction is a major element of an effective literary portrait.

Personality, then, is the sum total of a man's qualities of his actualities. But from the nature of his actions, good or bad, we conclude to the good or bad type of the individual's character. Character is the "factor which determines the morally good or bad use to which one's developed personality is freely and habitually put." It is a pattern of moral action, the sum-total of all our moral habits grouped around the axis of our will. Maher defines character this way:

The total collection of a man's acquired moral habits grafted into his natural temperament makes up his character. Character is thus partly inherited, partly formed by experience.

Character is the factor determining the good or bad use to which one's personality is freely and habitually put. When a man adheres to a norm of conduct or ideal persistently, he has a strong

11 Ibid., 9-10.
12 Ibid., 10. "It (character) is the ethical structuring of the individual habits of behaviour into a consistent pattern deliberately impressed upon the temperament by the will under the dominance of those principles of moral conduct which constitute the individual's life ideal."
13 Maher, Psychology, 361.
character and not one easily moved by the constantly shifting sands of emotion, impulse, and circumstance. When the ideal to which he adheres is good, he has a good character; if the ideal is bad, he has a bad character, even though in adhering to that type of ideal he has a strong character. Strength of character is taken from the quality of adherence to the ideal; goodness of character is taken from the ideal itself.

Character is thus the culminating factor of individuality, the ultimate integration and dynamic organization of all a man's powers into stable habits of action on the full human plane of deliberative action and moral conduct. It is essentially a qualitative disposition worked into one's will-life by habits of conscious self-determination in pursuit of the explicit goal which each individual sets up in his dominant life-ambition, in the light of which he appraises all values and toward whose realization he guides his conduct.

I define character (in the sense required) as life dominated by principles....

The life of a man of character is a decided unity—something knit firmly into a consistent whole...

In other words, the man of character is a man ruled not by impulse or circumstances but by internal motives....That is what we mean by a man of character.

Character is not a negative factor, but an active principle which encourages a man to direct his actions toward his goal, and to perform only those acts which will enable him to

attain that goal. It is in his character that a man is good or bad, and it is from the nature of his character-guided actions that we may judge the essential worth of an individual, both in the world of reality and the realm of fiction.

Character and personality are clearly two different concepts; the former is a broader one, for under its material aspect it embraces all lower determinations such as personality, temperament, and person, since it is the ultimate integration of an individual's activities, penetrating and influencing every one of them. In its formal connotation, however, as the form organizing all the activities of man, it is the ethical factor in individual behavior which is distinct from the biological and psychological determination of a man's human powers which we term personality.

It is important to distinguish these two terms, character and personality, in our minds, though in actual practice in writing and in judgment, because of the diversity of opinion on their exact definition and actual use, it may not always be possible to distinguish them clearly. Our present study, The Character of Odysseus, will deal with the personality, and with the psychological and ethical aspects of the Greek hero, with his character, properly speaking.
Good character well-developed is the supreme achievement of human powers, the masterpiece of the art of living.  

A life compenetrated by single-minded devotion to the highest principles always and everywhere, even heroically at times adhered to, is a masterpiece of art, wrought into a fabric more dazzling than any employed by a Phidias or a Michaelangelo; it is always admirable, and can be, in great men, a work of genius.

The man whom we would term the ideal character would be a perfect man, one who would always react to the conditions of life in the way most truly human. So long as people have various views on the finer points of morality and the factors of character, there will be varying opinions on what or who is the ideal character. From the centuries and variety of peoples would come the various answers that the ideal character is a king, a warrior, a crusader, a scholar, a scientist, perhaps an athlete, and from the Christian, that it is Jesus Christ, in Himself and as He is mirrored in His Saints.

In the practical order of both fact and fiction, away from all metaphysical speculation, it is best not to analyze a

17 Ibid. "It is (good character) that rare, difficult, noble, and praiseworthy accomplishment of doing all things just right in every aspect, skilfully hitting the dead center, Virtue, rather than any of the various faults lying about it on all sides; it is steering one's life with consummate art between both extremes, to the goal of perfect manhood." cf. Aristotle, Ethics, 1109a24-35.

18 Ibid., 91.
man's personality and character in mutual isolation. In this thesis we will be considering the whole man, Odysseus, with his noble character of strong and deep-hearted desires and efficacious will, governing and uniting in singleness of purpose his vibrant and attractive personality.

In the end then, the wisest course is to analyze the whole man and to consider that behavioral composite which is constituted by character informing and sublimating personality, as a form its matter.

An understanding of the nature of personality—the sum-total of a man's qualities and abilities, and character—the use to which he puts these qualities and abilities, is all-important to the reader of this thesis. This chapter has given the essential distinctions between personality and character and has pointed out their mutual relationship. In the following chapter we will advance from the study of personality and character in the abstract to a study of a particular personality and especially a particular character, that of Odysseus.

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19 Ibid., 97-98. "They are (character and personality) in fact, inter-penetrative and a personality shows many of its traits from the manner in which its natural tendencies are indulged, directed and overborne by the character of which it is a part."

20 Ibid., 98.
In the next chapter we shall first examine the main actions of Odysseus which Homer narrates for us in the Iliad and the Odyssey. We shall then test the quality of these actions to determine their goodness, strength, and constancy. We shall also observe the inter-play of these various qualities one upon the other. After we have completed our analysis of Odysseus' character, we shall close the chapter with a brief synthesis.
CHAPTER III

THE CHARACTER OF ODYSSEUS

The portrait which Homer unveils is that of a Greek warrior, of medium stature, deep-set, sturdy features, and rather handsome appearance. It is a puzzling picture, full of many nuances and hidden depths. It is the portrait of the famous king of Ithaca, Odysseus, son of Laertes, father of Telemachus, and husband of Penelope. He is the man we wish to study in this chapter.

Odysseus is like a precious diamond in that his many-faced character gleams brilliantly under observation. Each separate feature displays a distinct interest all of its own. Like a diamond, too, Odysseus well merits the title of the invincible one, the one unconquered by the forces of land and sea, of heaven and earth. His brilliance, again, becomes more evident as the forces of fate and circumstance work upon him. And though we examine these sparkling facets that form our many glimpses into one impression, still we find that the depth of the man, like the heart of the jewel, is somewhat of a mystery; for something, deeply-centered, remains hidden, unuttered, unrevealed, and we can only examine what we are able to find, and wonder at it.
and appreciate the results of our search.

Homer painted his portrait of Odysseus on the wide canvas of the entire Odyssey and several books of the Iliad. In no one place do we find a description of all of Odysseus' personality traits, and in no one place do we find an estimate of the moral goodness or evil of all of our hero's varied actions. Homer, the narrative poet, builds his hero's character throughout his poems. Consequently our job of character analysis must of necessity be synthetic-analytic-synthetic. We must first see Odysseus' position in the general background of the Iliad and Odyssey.

Second, we must analyze the different personality traits which Odysseus manifests in the four general areas of his life as it is recorded in the two epic poems: namely, his life as a soldier, as a king, as a religious man, and as a family man. Finally, we must return to a synthetic view of Odysseus the man; we must discover the motives and moral principles which give unity and consistency to all of the personality traits he manifests through these actions.

Odysseus in Greek mythology was the son of the king of Ithaca, Laertes, and of Anticleia, daughter of Autolycus. He was originally one of the suitors of Helen, but despairing of success there, he married Penelope, daughter of Icarius, a nobleman of
Sparta. Originally all the suitors of Helen had sworn an oath at the insistence of Tyndareus, Helen's stepfather, that they would unite to protect Helen from violence. When Paris carried her off, Odysseus was obliged by his oath to join the expedition against Troy and King Priam's people. Now unwilling to join the expedition, Odysseus is said to have feigned madness, yoking himself to the plow and proceeding to cultivate his fields when the recruiting agents arrived. Palamedes foiled his ruse by putting young Telemachus in one of the furrows. The scheme worked, and Odysseus went off to the war, leaving his young bride and baby boy. The actual story of Odysseus then begins in the Iliad.

In the first of the Homeric epics, Odysseus appears in two chief capacities, that of warrier and counselor. It is he who is in charge of restoring Chryseis to her father. It is he who encourages the Greeks when they are discouraged, and stops them from flight. This short, broad-shouldered man, as he is there described does not hesitate to admonish Achilles and Agamemnon for their faults. It is Odysseus, though this incident

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1 Odyssey, iv.140; xi.444-453.
2 Iliad, i.308-311.
3 Iliad, i.180 sq.; ii.277-332.
4 Iliad, iv.348-364; ix.225-305; xiv.82-108.
is mentioned only later on in the *Odyssey*, who conceived the plan of the wooden horse which turned the tide of battle in the Trojan War, and put an end to the ten years of conflict. Odysseus flashes in and out of the whole first epic, in a night raid with Diomedes upon the Trojan camp in which they slay Dolon and capture the famed horses of Rhesus, and in battles, in single encounters, in the council-assembly, and on the battle-field. Here, in the *Iliad*, Odysseus is one of those public heroes held up for admiration, but he is not portrayed in any detail. He is a warrior, a brave, courageous, zealous fighter; he is a counselor, cunning, prudent, full of wisdom, and clever in speech.

In the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, Odysseus holds the center of the stage, and it is here that we can discover further facets of his character and can probe more deeply into the fascinating elements which make him the individual that he is. The action of the *Odyssey* embraces the narrative of all that Odysseus did after the fall of Troy, some ten years time. At home in

5 *Odyssey*, iv.271-275; viii.492; xi.523.
6 *Iliad*, x.219-579.
7 *Iliad*, i.145; ii.407; iii.203-224.
8 *Iliad*, iv.491-505; v.668-676; vi.30-31; xi.320-490.
Ithaca, that island-kingdom Turthest up the sea-line toward the darkness," "a rugged island." Odysseus' faithful wife Penelope waits for him, beset by the attention on the many greedy suitors who, parasite-like, have invaded the household. Both day and night they banquet and make merry in the halls of Odysseus' well-wrought palace, and await the choice of Penelope, who has been carefully avoiding and deluding the suitors. Odysseus' young son Telemachus, the infant whom he was forced to leave behind some twenty years before, is coming to manhood. Telemachus now begins to take verbal action, at least, against the suitors, and sets out to visit Nestor at Pylos, and Menelaus at Sparta, at Athene's suggestion, in an attempt to learn of his father's whereabouts. Odysseus is actually alive, though in great grief on the island of Ogygia, where he has been detained for seven years by the goddess, Calypso, who wants to have him for her husband. Because of Athene's intercession, Zeus commands Calypso to release Odysseus.

9 Odyssey, ix.21-27. "But I dwell in clear-seen Ithaca, wherein is a mountain, Neriton, covered with waving forests, conspicuous from afar; and around it lie many isles, hard by one another, Dulichium, and Same, and wooded Zachynthus. Ithaca itself lies close to the mainland, the farthest toward the gloom, but the others lie apart toward the dawn and the sun—a rugged isle, but a good nurse of young men." (N.B. All English quotations from Homer given in this thesis, unless otherwise noted, will be from the Loeb translation of the Iliad and the Odyssey by Murray.)

10 Odyssey, xi-iv.
and send him home. The latter builds a raft and loads it with provisions which the goddess gives him. He sails for seventeen days and approaches the land of the Phaeacians. At this point, Poseidon, father of the giant Polyphemus whom Odysseus had blinded during one of his earlier adventures, sees Odysseus, and seeking to avenge his son stirs up a storm which destroys Odysseus' raft and provisions. Helped by the sea-goddess Ino, Odysseus is cast ashore on the coast of Scheria. He is found by Nausicaa, daughter of the Phaeacian monarch, Alcinous, and by the help of this princess, together with the aid of Athene, he is hospitably received in the palace. In the course of his stay there with Alcinous, he reveals his name and tells of his adventures since leaving Troy; the raid he and his crew made on the Cicones at Ismarus; the short stay in the land of the famous Lotus-Eaters, who attempt to make his men forgetful of the return voyage they must make back to Ithaca; the disastrous adventure with the Cyclops, the blinding of Polyphemus, the narrow escape of

11 *Odyssey*, v.228-252.
13 *Odyssey*, vi, vii.
14 *Odyssey*, ix.39-62.
15 *Odyssey*, ix.63-105.
part of the crew, and the brutal destruction of the others; 16 the kindness of Aeolus, and the abuse of his gift because of the crew's jealousy; 17 a second terrible encounter with giant-folk, the Laestrygonians, who destroyed eleven of his twelve ships; 18 the year's stay on the island of Circe; 19 the visit to the under-
world, to receive instructions from the seer Teiresias, and the account of all the famous heroes and personal relatives and friends whom he met; 20 the passage past the Sirens, 21 and the narrow escape from Scylla and Charybdis; 22 the fatal destruction of the cattle of the sun-god, Hyperion, on the island of Thrinacia, and the consequent destruction of all the crew except their leader, Odysseus; 23 his unhappy imprisonment with the goddess, Calypso, and finally his release.

Alcinoüs honors Odysseus with gifts, and after several athletic contests in which Odysseus manifests his prowess, he sends

16 Odyssey, ix.194-566.
17 Odyssey, x.1-80.
18 Odyssey, x.81-133.
19 Odyssey, x.144-574.
20 Odyssey, xi.23-635.
21 Odyssey, xii.142-201.
22 Odyssey, xii.202-254.
23 Odyssey, xii.255-454.
the hero home on one of the finest and speediest of the Phaeacian clipper ships. After landing in Ithaca, Odysseus, in the disguise of an old beggar man, returns to the hut of his faithful swineherd, Eumaeus, where he learns of the insolence and riotous living of the suitors. At this point in the story Telemachus returns from Sparta where he had been visiting with Menelaus and Helen and gaining information from them. He escapes the ambush which the suitors had prepared for him. Odysseus reveals himself to his son, and together, with the aid of the ever-present Athene, they plot the destruction of the suitors. Still disguised, Odysseus returns to his palace, now overrun with the current menace of the invading suitors. There he fights with the beggar Iris and is reviled by the haughty suitors who are enjoying the benefits of his wealth and possessions. He is invited by Telemachus to stay awhile, for Odysseus pretends to be a stranger bringing news to Penelope of her husband. Odysseus' old nurse recognizes him when she bathes him, from an old scar which he had received as a boy when on a boar hunt with his grandfather

24 Odyssey, xiii.25-125.
26 Odyssey, xvi.154-322.
27 Odyssey, xvii.329-492; xviii.1-158.
autolycus. 28 Penelope announces a contest, the winner of which will gain her for his bride. The contest consists of stringing the famous bow of Odysseus and shooting an arrow through the openings in twelve axe-heads. 29 Telemachus conducts the contest, and he and all the suitors unsuccessfully try their luck. The old beggar alone is able to bend the bow and shoot the arrow through the twelve axe-heads. 30 He then shoots down Antinous, and aided by Telemachus, Eumaeus, and another faithful servant, slaughters the rest of the suitors and hangs the maids who were their paramours. 31 Penelope is finally convinced by the hero's knowledge of their secret bedstead that he is her husband, and the loving couple are at last reunited after so long and painful a separation. Odysseus then makes himself known to his father, Laertes, who has been in great grief over his son's absence. 33 The relatives of the suitors, meanwhile, informed of the slaughter attempt to avenge their dead relatives, but are repulsed when Athene puts an end to the civil war, and restores peace and tranquility to Ithaca.

28 Odyssey, xix.308-508.
29 Odyssey, xix.555-582.
30 Odyssey, xxi.393-434.
31 Odyssey, xxi.381-477.
32 Odyssey, xxi.204-344.
33 Odyssey, xxiv.316-345.
and happiness to the war-and-travel-weary hero, Odysseus. 34

All these events, as narrated in the Iliad and Odyssey, form the general background upon which we must study the personality and character of Odysseus. Homer himself suggested such a general and synthetic view of his hero in the opening lines of the Odyssey:

"Ανδρα μοι ἔννεπε Μοῦσα πολύτροπον θά μᾶλα πολλά
κλάγχη, ἐπεί Τροίης θεόν πτολεύθρον ἐπερεαν." 35

Now that we know the general story of Odysseus' adventures and sufferings, his successes and failures, we are ready to analyze more precisely the traits of his personality.

For the sake of this analysis we may divide Odysseus' activities into four main categories: his life as a warrior, as a king, as a religious man, and as a family man. Obviously the personality traits which we discover will not necessarily belong exclusively to only one of these categories. Therefore, as we proceed with our analysis, we shall gradually come to an understanding of those personality traits which are common to all the phases of Odysseus' life. Then we shall be ready to return to a

34 Odyssey, xxiv, 413-528.

35 Odyssey, 1.1-2. "The hero of the tale which I beg the Muse to help me tell is that resourceful man who roamed the wide world after he had sacked the holy citadel of Troy."
synthetic view of Odysseus' character; we shall be able to discover the cause of this unity and consistency in our hero's personality traits.

Here then our study begins, the study of the man who has become a name:

I am become a name.
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; the cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honoure'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met.36

With the eye of our imagination we move to the sandy, blood-drenched plains of Troy, or the rock-hutted, hill-country of Ithaca. As Homer speaks to us, we see a battle in progress. Shields clang, spears and arrows cut through the air, fierce war-cries echo and re-echo, horses and chariots thunder across the ground; dull, sickening thuds, anguished yells and jubilant shouts mingle with this martial sound. In this bloody throng we find

Odysseus:
τόδε ὁ Ὀμήρους μάλα θυμόν ἀποκαταστάσα φολκῆς,
βὴ δὲ διὰ προμάχων κενοκυμάνος αἰθοκι χαλκῆς,
ετη δὲ πάθη ἑγγὺς οὐν καὶ ἀκόντιος οὐρή φαίνῃ
ἡφαῖ ἔλεγχες. ὡτὸ δὲ Τροίς κεκάλουντο
ἀνδρὸς ἀκοντίσαντος.37

36 Alfred Tennyson, "Ulysses", Works, London, 1882, 102

37 Iliad, iv.494-498. "For his slaying waxed Odysseus mightily wroth at heart, and strode amid the foremost warriors, harnessed in flaming bronze; close to the foe he came, and took his stand, and hurled his spear, and back did the Trojans shrink."
When Odysseus threw his spear it went to the mark; he was sure in his skill. There is another vivid picture of Odysseus in battle, at the conclusion of the Odyssey, where the relatives of the suitors are marching upon him to take their vengeance:

ομεροδέλεον δ' ἐβόησε πολύτλας ὁ Οδυσσέας
οἴμησεν δὲ ἀλήθεια τ' αἰετὸς υψιπεθής. 38

Odysseus is known and esteemed as a warrior, a hard-fighting soldier, an able-bodied general. Menelaus said that no one of the Achaeans toiled and endured as much as Odysseus did. 39 Priam marveled at his superiority in battle array, and compared him to a thick-fleeced ram marching through a flock of white ewes. 40 Telemachus himself told his father after the famous recognition scene:

ὠ πάτερ, ἢ τοι σεγο μέγα κλέος αἰέν ἄχουνον
χεῖρας τ' αἰχμητήν ἔμενας καὶ ἐπιφρονὰ βουλήν. 41

38 Odyssey, xxiv.537-538. "Terribly then shouted the much-enduring, goodly Odysseus, and gathering himself together, he swooped upon them like an eagle of lofty flight."


40 Iliad, iii.191-198.

41 Odyssey, xvi.241-242. "Father, of a truth, I have heard of thy great fame, that thou wast a warrior in strength of hand and in wise counsel."
And when Telemachus is on his expedition to Pylos and Sparta in search of information about his father, it is Helen who, after remarking in amazement the likeness between Odysseus and his son Telemachus, says that she cannot possibly tell of all the things that the courageous Odysseus did in the Trojan War.42

The two Homeric epics contain many such praises of Odysseus' valor; the very epithets which are frequently applied to him are evidence of his courage. He is called much-enduring, stalwart, heroic, glorious, of the steadfast heart. The verbal pictures of his deeds also bear testimony to Odysseus' fighting mettle. In the Iliad, he is sometimes mentioned in the battle scenes as being in the thick of the fighting.43 He sticks to his quarry with such tenacity that when he was in hot pursuit of Tlepolemus, it was necessary for Athene to call him off.44 It is Odysseus, along with the Ajaxes and the other Greek leaders, who inspire their comrades to follow their own example of bravery, and by their words urge them on in battle. They themselves in their conduct are compared to the mists which in the calm weather Zeus places on the mountain-tops, motionless.45 When Diomedes plans

42 Odyssey, iv.240-241.
43 Iliad, xi.320 sq.
44 Iliad, v.668-676.
45 Iliad, v.519-527.
his night raid upon the Trojan camp in which Dolon and a dozen or so other Trojans are slain and the famous horses of Rhesus are captured, it is Odysseus whom he chooses for his all-important accomplice and companion.

Very high praise from one hero to another, and Odysseus did not fail Diomedes in the evening's work, but proved the perfect partner. When the heroes had returned, the mission accomplished, Odysseus gives an account of the raid, praising Diomedes for his deeds of daring and carefully excluding himself from the picture.

The portrait of Odysseus the warrior is not one of a man of perfect character. In the Odyssey, we find the hero in deep despair; his companions have just mutinied against him, and

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46 *Iliad*, x.243-247. "If of a truth ye bid me of myself choose a comrade, how should I then forget godlike Odysseus, whose heart and proud spirit are beyond all others eager in all manner of toils; and Pallas Athenæ loveth him. If he but follow me, even out of blazing fire we might both return, for wise above all is he in understanding."

47 *Iliad*, x.450 sq.

48 *Iliad*, x.555-563.
loosed the bag of the winds which Aeolus had given him. For a moment he debates whether or not he should drown himself in the depths of the sea. His failing in courage lasts but a minute though, and then he decides to remain among the living.49 Another time, too, when at sea, on his raft going to the land of the Phaeacians after he had left the goddess Calypso, he becomes afraid when his immortal arch-enemy Poseidon stirs up a storm. He cries out in woe and misery, and regrets that he did not meet death and an honorable funeral on the fields of Troy.50

Odysseus cannot be called a coward because of any of these or other incidents; rather, he is the greater hero because of his reactions in those situations. When he trembles and fears, as all men do, he becomes more plausibly human, and not some unreal

49 Odyssey, x.46-55.

50 Odyssey, v.290-312. "Ah me, wretched that I am. What is to befall me at the last? I fear that verily all that the goddess said was true, when she declared that on the sea, before ever I come to my native land, I should fill up my measure of woes and lo, all this is now being brought to pass. In such wise does Zeus overscan the broad heaven with clouds, and has stirred up the sea, and the blasts of all manner of winds sweep upon me; now is my utter destruction sure. Thrice blessed those Danaans, aye four times blessed, who of old perished in the wide land of Troy, doing the pleasure of the sons of Atreus. Even so would that I had died and met my fate on the day when the throngs of the Trojans hurled upon me bronze-tipped spears, fighting around the body of the dead son of Peleus. Then should I have got my funeral rites, and the Achaeans would have spread my fame, but now miserable death was it appointed me to be cut off."
literary creation. When he overcomes his trembling and fear, his consistency of character and his courage are maintained. When Athene rebukes him in the midst of his conflict with the suitors, he fights all the more furiously.51 His whole spirit of bravery is best illustrated in a battle scene from the Iliad; cut off from his companions he is beset on all sides by the enemy host. Again momentarily he fears, but he overcomes his fear and enters more vigorously into the fray.

"μοι ἐγὼ, τι πάθω; μέγα μὲν κακὸν αἱ καὶ φέβωμαι πληθὺν ταρβήσαι· τὸ δὲ βίγιον αἱ καὶ ἄλῳ μοθνοὶ· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους Δαναοὺς ἐφόβησε Κρόνιον. ἀλλὰ τί ἢ μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμὸς; οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι κακὸν μὲν ἀπολυχται πολέμιοι, δὲ δὲ εἰς ἀριστεύῃ μάχῃ ἔνι, τὸν δὲ μᾶλα κρεδ ἐστάμενα: κρατερὸς, ἢ τ' ἐβλητ' ἢ τ' ἐβαλ' ἄλλον.52"

Odysseus is a warrior, a brave and daring one, and consistently so; there can be no doubt about it. And yet, in the superb depiction of Homer he remains a human hero, a model for his people, an ideal leader of his kingdom. As a leader of his people,

51 Odyssey, xxii.224-235.

52 Iliad, xi.404-410. "Woe is me; what is to befall me? Great evil were it if I flee; seized with fear of the throng; yet this were a worse thing, if I be taken all alone, for the rest of the Danaans hath the son of Cronos scattered in flight. But why doth my heart thus hold converse with me? For I know that they are cowards that depart from battle, whereas whoso is pre-eminent in fight, him verily it behoveth to hold his ground boldly, whether he be smitten, or smite another."
he has the duty to give them an example, and to be an ideal for them to follow.\textsuperscript{53} As Gladstone remarks when speaking of the Homeric king: "In peace he settles the disputes of his people; in war he lends them the precious example of heroic daring."\textsuperscript{54}

We can well realize that a warrior of such prowess was a man of great physical strength and endurance. Besides his accomplishments on the battle-field, Odysseus demonstrates his physical abilities in other ways. Eurylochus addresses Odysseus in words which portray the hero's might:

\begin{quote}
Εὐκλίδειος εἶς, ὁ Ὀδυσσέας περὶ τοι μένος, οὐδὲ τὴ γυνὴ
καμνεὶς; ἥ ὑμὸν οὐ̄ σοί γε σιδηρεα πάντα τευκταί.
\end{quote}

His mighty frame is capable of receiving many blows from his opponents; when the haughty suitor Antinous heaves a footstool at him, hitting him at the base of the right shoulder, Odysseus doesn't...

\textsuperscript{53} Richard C. Jebb, Classical Greek Poetry, New York, 1893, 48. "Odysseus is also an ideal type; but he is not lifted above ordinary emulation in the same degree as the dazzling embodiment of youthful force and vigor which is presented by the son of Peleus. Horace, who scarcely appreciates the Homeric Achilles, is more felicitous when he describes Odysseus as an instructive pattern of what can be done by manliness and wisdom. This hits the point—that the Greeks saw in Odysseus no unapproachable hero, but the great exemplar of certain qualities which everyone might cultivate."

\textsuperscript{54} William E. Gladstone, Studies in Homer and the Homeric Age, 3 Vols., London, 1858, II, 469.

\textsuperscript{55} Odyssey, xii.279-280. "Hardy art thou, Odysseus; thou hast strength beyond that of other men and thy limbs never grow weary. Verily thou art wholly wrought of iron."
even budge. Another demonstration of Odysseus' muscular strength comes in Book XXI of the *Odyssey*, when after all the mighty princes of the territories surrounding Ithaca have failed to string the great bow, Odysseus alone is able to perform the feat.  

In addition to being a great warrior, Odysseus was also a fine athlete. One of the primary athletic endeavors among the Greeks, and a very practical one, too, was hunting. A good example of Odysseus' eagerness and skill is found in the tale of the famous boar hunt on Mount Parnassus. There is no doubt about his skill at shooting arrows or throwing spears; the battle scenes of the *Iliad*, and the slaying of the suitors in the *Odyssey*, are ample testimony of that. After he has astonished the Phaeacian nobles with his ability in archery, Odysseus turns to King Alcinous, and makes this boast:

> Odysseus, xxii.404-423.

> Gladstone, *Studies in Homer*, II, 468. "He (the Greek youth of high birth) shares in many and graceful sports, acquires the use of arms, hardens himself in the pursuit, then, of all others the most indispensable, the hunting down of wild beasts."

> Odysseus, xix.445-455.

> Odyssey, xx.
He is a hunter, a Bowman, a runner. In the Iliad Odysseus shows his track skill in a race with Ajax. The two heroes were running almost abreast all the way, until in the final stretch Odysseus breathed a prayer for help to Athene, and Ajax tripped into the mud.

This is Homer's picture of the physical aspect of Odysseus the leader. Of medium height, but broad of build, he is a menace on the battlefield, a bulwark of bravery and daring, and in the hunt or in the athletic games a match for any mortal.

We must turn to that second element in Odysseus the warrior, which, when coupled with his courage and fighting ability, make him invincible. It is the element which is most characteristic.

61 Odyssey, viii.215-222. "Well do I know how to handle the polished bow, and ever would I be the first to shoot and smite my man in the throng of the foe, even though my comrades stood by me and were shooting at the men. Only Philoctetes excelled me with the bow in the land of the Trojans when we Achaean shot. But of all others I declare that I am best by far of mortals that are now upon the earth and eat bread."

62 Iliad, xxiii.751-793.
of him, the first epithet which Homer uses to describe him in the opening of the *Odyssey*, and which he uses most frequently in the course of the epics to characterize his warrior hero — *πολύτροπος*—Odysseus the cunning, the wise, the subtle, the crafty-minded, the nimble-witted, the clever, the man of many wiles. This is his chief character trait, his ability to master any situation by his careful planning, his smooth execution, his winning, persuasive words.

Ulysses is distinguished by a never-failing presence of mind, forethought and mastery over emotion.

But what a contrast does Odysseus supply! He, too, is a soldier, and a good one; but he is as the *πολύτροπος*, the man of many wiles...the incarnation of prudence, of self-control, of calm, dispassionate, resourceful intellect...that the character of Odysseus stands out not merely in the *Odyssey*, but to some extent in the *Iliad* also.

Basically, of course, craftiness is the ability to plan correctly, efficiently, and profitably. It is a quality of the mind; it is a realistic and colorful judgment, manifesting itself in words and actions. In Odysseus, every action seems guided and

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63 *Odyssey*, i.1.

64 Gladstone, *Studies in Homer*, III, 600.

directed by his careful planning; his oratory displays shrewdness and ability of judgment; he is keen not only in the style and intent of his speech, but also in its wisdom. King Alcinous best sums up Odysseus' skill when he tells him:

σοὶ δ' ἐπὶ μὲν μορφῇ ἐπέστη. ἐνὶ δὲ φρένις ἐσολαί. μὴδὲν δ' ὡς στ' ἀοιδὸς ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξα.66

Another witness of his craftiness is the goddess Athene, his "patron saint" in this matter, for it is because of Odysseus' craft that Pallas Athene has shown him such careful attention:

Κερδαλέος κ' εἰς καὶ ἐπίκλοπος δς σε παρέλθοι ἐν πάντεσσι δόλοσι, καὶ εἶ θεὸς ἄμετασεις. σχέτις, ποικιλομῆτα, δόλων ἄτ', οὐκ ἄρ' ἐμελλες, οὔδ' ἐν ση πέρ ἕνω γαλη. λήξειμ ἄκατων μῦθων τε κλοπών, οἳ τοι πεδόθεν φίλοι εἰσίν. ἀλλ' ἄγε. μηκέτι ταῦτα λεγόμεθα, εἰδότες ἁμαρ围着. κέρδω', ἐκεὶ σὲ μὲν ἐσι βροτῶν δχ' άριστος ἀπάντων βουλῇ καὶ μῦθοις, ἐγὼ δ' ἐν πάσι θεοῖς μητὶ τε κλέομαι καὶ κέρδεσιν. οὔδὲ σὺ γ' ἐγώς Πάλλας' ἄειναίνην.67

66 Odyssey, xi.367-369. "But upon thee is grace of words, and within thee is a heart of wisdom, and thy tale thou hast told with skill, as doth a minstrel."

67 Odyssey, xiii.291-299. "Cunning must be he and knavish who would go beyond thee in all manner of guile, aye, though it were a god who met thee. Bold man, crafty in counsel, insatiate in deceit, not even in thine own land, it seems wast thou to cease from guile and deceitful tales, which thou lovest from the bottom of thine own heart. But come, let us no longer talk of this, being both well-versed in counsel and in speech, for thou art the best of all men, and I among all the gods am famed for wisdom and craft."
Helen describes him as a man "who knows all manner of craft and cunning devices." In the Iliad, Odysseus is listed in the catalogue of the Greek warriors opposing Troy as the equal of Zeus in counsel. When the generals want some good advice, or have some difficult quarrel or dispute to settle, it is Odysseus upon whom they call to take command of the situation with his winning words. Nestor said that no man ever attempted to dispute with Odysseus in counseling, since Odysseus far-excelled in all manner of wiles. The Trojan Antenor has given the most striking description of Odysseus' counseling speech:

\[\text{\textit{This is the reputation he had gained for himself because of his predominant characteristic of cunning.}}\]

A few examples of his counseling will show why he was so highly admired and esteemed for his ability. In the Iliad when

69 Iliad, ii.631-637.
70 Iliad, i.168-180; Odyssey, 1.205; Iliad, 1.145.
71 Iliad, iii.221-224. "But whenever he uttered his great voice from his chest and words like snowflakes on a winter's day, then did no mortal man vie with Odysseus; then did we not so marvel to behold Odysseus' aspect."
he wishes to encourage the Greek leaders and their men to stay and finish the Trojan War, his words are simple, but full of good advice and wise counseling. He harkens back to the prophecy of Calchas and reminds them of how it will be fulfilled, that it is in the tenth year of the war that the Greek forces will be successful. The results of his speech are rather amazing:

"Ως ἔφατ', Ἀργεῖοι δὲ μέγα ήαρον, ἀμφὶ δὲ νῆς συμβαλλόν κονδύσασαν δύσάντων ὑπ' Ἀχαιῶν, μὴδον ἐπανήσαντες Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο."  

On two occasions Odysseus rebukes the chieftain Agamemnon for lack of zeal and courage in carrying on the war. Because of Odysseus' winning way and persuasive words, Agamemnon accepts his advice and thanks him for it. 73 Another time we find Achilles the recipient of Odysseus' wisdom. 74

The speeches of Odysseus, both in form and content, provide an interesting study in craft. He knows how to handle both men and women. A fine picture of his persuasive speech is found in the Iliad, 75 where he is going from man to man to persuade

72 Iliad, 11.333-335. "So spake he, and the Argives shouted aloud, and all around about them the ships echoed wondrously beneath the shouting of the Achaeans as they praised the words of godlike Odysseus."

73 Iliad, iv.346-364; xiv, 82-108; ix.225-305.

74 Iliad, xix.155-183; 214-237.

75 Iliad, 11.188-206.
them to begin battle again and have courage. Cleverly he works on their pride, accusing the nobles of being cowardly and the common soldiers of being unwarlike. The results are immediate and successful:

"ὡς δὲ γε κοιρανέων δίεπε στρατὸν. Οἱ δ' ἄγορῆνες αὕτις ἐπεσευόντο νεῶν ἀπὸ καὶ κλισίδων ἥχῳ, ὥς ὅτε κῦμα πολυφλοῖσβοιο θάλασσης αἰγιαλὸ μεγάλῳ βρέμεται, σμαραγεῖ δὲ τε πόντος." 76

His speeches show as great a variety of tones and purposes as the many styles of Plato. His self-introductions when in disguise are masterpieces of fiction. 77 When he speaks to the Trojan Dolon whom he and Diomedes captured on their night raid into the enemy camp, he sounds much like a modern detective, skilfully getting the answers out of a frightened captive. 78 The clever Greek can also be a master of narrative, as when in brief or in the complete version he tells Alcinous and his Phaeacian court the story of his

76 Iliad, 11.207-210. "Thus masterfully did he range throughout the host, and they hastened back to the assembly from their ships and huts, making noise, as when a wave of the loud-resounding sea thundereth on the long beach and the deep roareth."

77 His identification of himself to Eumaeus, Penelope, and Laertes are all different and fascinating. (cf. Odyssey, xxii. 221-226; xxiii.205-208; xxiv.344-349.) So, too, is the clever story he tells to Eumaeus, when he is begging a cloak from him. (Odyssey, xiv.462-517.)

78 Iliad, x.381-445.
adventures. At times he is impatient and speaks a bit rudely as he does to his host Alcinous when he becomes rather anxious to set off on his homeward voyage. Angry speech, too, is found in the mouth of Odysseus; his biting response to Thersites is sufficient evidence. A tinge of sarcasm is also present at times:

ας και σοι εἶδος μὲν ἄριστος, οὐδὲ κεν ἄλλως οὐδὲ θεὸς τεῦξεις, νοὸν δ' ἀποφώλιξε ἔσσι.82

"Ο πόποι, οὐκ ἄρα σοι γ' ἐπ' ἐνεῖκα καὶ φρένεσ χαλαν.83

Not all of Odysseus' words are warlike words or words uttered in anger or sarcasm; many of his speeches are excellent pieces of subtle beauty, of charm and grace, full of winning praise and flattering phrases. When he returned to Ithaca in disguise and conversed with his wife Penelope, his praise of her blameless character is typical of his winning eloquence. Odysseus' skillful speech to Alcinous, as he takes his leave of this king

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79 Odyssey, ix-xii.
80 Odyssey, vii.242-269.
81 Iliad, ii.207-225.
82 Odyssey, viii.176-177. "So, in thy case thy comeliness is preeminent, nor could a god himself mend it, but in mind thou art stunted."
83 Odyssey, xvii.454. "Lo, now, it seems that thou at last hast not wits to match thy beauty."
84 Odyssey, xix.106-122.
and thanks him for his hospitality, is simplicity and charm itself.

Odysseus mastered the art of making one's listeners attentive, well-disposed and capable of being won over. Two of his speeches, to Queen Arete and Princess Nausicaa, are fine examples. His address to Nausicaa deserves a brief commentary. Odysseus' introduction immediately wins her interest and flatters her age. He asks her whether or not she is a goddess, for if she is, she is most like to Artemis; but if she is only an earthly mortal, then her parents and her family are the most fortunate of

85 Odyssey, xiii.38-46. "Lord Alcinous, renowned above all men, pour libations now, and send me on my way in peace; and yourselves, too -- Farewell. For now all that my heart desired has been brought to pass: a convoy and gifts of friendship. May the gods of heaven sanctify them, and on my return may I find in my home my peerless wife with those I love, unscathed; and may you again, remaining here, make glad your wedded wives and children; and may the gods grant your prosperity of every sort, and may no evil come upon your people."

86 Odyssey, vii.146-154; vi,149-185.
souls. What young girl would not be swept off her feet by such a salutation? Next, Odysseus touches upon a point dearest to a maiden of her age and interests—her future husband. He then flatters her again, and proceeds to tell her of his own misery and needs. He strengthens his case by praying the blessing of the gods upon her. The speech is a masterpiece of eloquence and persuasion. A certain motive of personal advancement is behind Odysseus' actions, but there is also a large element of sincerity in what he says.

An important point to notice in all Odysseus' cunning speech is its effectiveness. He always gets what he wants; there is always some personal gain which results from his speech. This illustrates another element in his character, a predominant one—his desire for self-advancement, his driving purpose to be complete master of every situation. It is his craftiness of thought and word that implement this purpose.

In action, too, Odysseus is noted for prudence, caution, and cunning; these are a clue to his every movement. A masterpiece of ingenuity was the famous wooden horse which he constructed. In it he and a number of Greek warriors concealed themselves until the gullible Trojans had brought the horse into the city. At night the Greeks emerged and descended with fire and sword
into the city. In other incidents of smaller moment, too, Odysseus shows his craft. Before he will believe Calypso's offer to send him home, he cautiously questions her. He carefully plans the destruction of Penelope's suitors; even though he is filled with twenty years of anxious longing to see his wife, he refuses to rush in without careful planning. Before he requests the services of his two old herdsmen he tests their loyalty. Before he begins his attack on the suitors, he carefully examines his bow to see that it is in serviceable condition.

His record for prudence is not a spotless one. The risks he takes in the Cyclops adventure and in the voyage past Scylla and Charybdis are instances when his daring defies his usual caution. His emotions, his desire to have the last word on Polyphemus and to be the brave warrior against the monsters of the

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87 Menelaus relates the story to Telemachus in Book Four of the Odyssey. (262-295).

88 Odyssey, v.214-224.

89 Odyssey, xix.4-14.

90 Odyssey, xiv.301-306; xxi.193-198.

91 Odyssey, xxi.393-396.

92 Odyssey, ix.

93 Odyssey, xii.222-234.
sea got the better of him. 94

This occasional excess of daring is an important trait in the Homeric Odysseus; it distinguishes him from the cold, cautious, even mean-souled Odysseus of later writers. His true distinction, in the Odyssey, is that he has wit enough to extricate himself from any difficulty, and fortitude enough to bear whatever the gods send. He is sometimes found in situations trying to heroic grandeur... But even then he is heroic, with the heroism of supreme ingenuity. And his companions supply the measure of his superiority to commonplace men. The only thing in which they ever have the better of him is commonplace caution, and then it merely serves to bring out his advantage in intellect. 95

Odysseus is undoubtedly a leader; all men acknowledge his preeminence in wisdom and counsel, his skill in battle, his prowess as an athlete. Besides his natural endowments he is one of the divinely-nurtured rulers of men, who were warriors, priests, rulers, and landowners. 96 Gladstone offers us this picture of the Homeric king:

94 Sir Richard Jebb, Classical Greek Poetry, 55-57. passim. "But the Homeric Odysseus, be it observed, is not invariably prudent. Sometimes, when the most deadly danger is imminent, he fails in common prudence through too much curiosity, or through a spirit too sanguine or audacious, which leads him to tempt fate. Take, for instance, his adventures in the cave of the Cyclops.... Another instance of his rashness is when he forgets one of Circe's warnings, as they are nearing Scylla, and stands full armed at the prow of his ship, attracting her notice by his defiance."

95 Ibid.

96 Cf. Gladstone, Studies in Homer, III, 55-58. He considers the Homeric king under the four functions of priest, general, judge, and landowner.
In peace he settles the disputes of his people, in war he lends them the precious example of his heroic daring. He consults them, and advises with them on all grave affairs; and his wakeful care for their interests is rewarded by the ample domains which are set apart for the prince by the people. Finally, he closes his eyes, delivering over the scepter to his son, and leaving much peace and happiness around him. 97

It is important to study Odysseus in this capacity as ruler of his people. Under the old principle *hoblesse oblige*, his royal function was bound to have a strong influence on his life, and many of his actions were those necessarily performed as official duties. In the *Iliad* his royal dignity is somewhat overshadowed by the many monarchs participating in the Trojan War, and especially by Agamemnon, Achilles, and Menelaus. He remains, however, a leader, a man of royal blood, and never anything less. It is difficult in the *Iliad* to determine the exact status of a king, since the greater part of the story deals with the rulers alone, not in their relations with their subjects. The *Odyssey* offers a fuller picture, for there Odysseus appears in the capacity of a ruler, leading his men back to Ithaca, disposing of his wealth, coming back to his subjects, both the loyal and the traitorous. These passages plucked out and woven together will present a picture of Odysseus the king.

97 Ibid., 470.
Athene speaks of Odysseus in words of highest praise to Father Zeus, when she petitions him to release Odysseus:

Zeô páter ëò, álloi máxares theoi aî ev ëðntes 
mè tîs ëti prôfrwv áganovs kai ëpisos ëstov
skptovxov baxileâs, mhè fressin aïsima eîdovs,
ALL' aî ev xalepovs t' ëiì kai ëîsula ëevoi.
"Ως ðè wîs mnìntais 'Oðuosos theîoio
laðn oïsìn ënâsa, pàthì ð' ëò ëpisos ëèn." 98

Agamemnon says that he is deserving of much praise, and calls him the great glory of the Achaeans. 99

Odysseus was apparently a powerful monarch, whose influence extended beyond Ithaca. The catalogue of the Iliad lists him as a leader of the Cephalleneans who were inhabitants of Ithaca, Neritum, Crocyleia, and Aegilips, of those who lived on Zacynthos and about Samos, and of those who held the mainland and lived on the shores opposite the islands. Odysseus was their leader, and together with a host of their nobles he sailed from Greece at the beginning of the war with a fleet of twelve ships.

98 Odyssey, v. 7-12. "Father Zeus, and ye other blessed gods that are forever, never henceforward let sceptered king with a ready heart be kind and gentle, nor let him heed righteousness in his mind; but let him ever be harsh and work unrighteousness, seeing that no one remembers divine Odysseus of the people whose lord he was; yet gentle was he as a father."

99 Iliad, ix. 672-675.

100 Iliad, xi. 631-637.
Wealth, lands, flocks, and a beautiful palace were the material treasures that Odysseus left behind him when he went off to war. He himself, disguised as a beggar and talking to Eumaeus the faithful swineherd, gives a description of the palace. He says that it can easily be picked out from among all the dwellings because there is building upon building, the court is built with wall and coping, and the double-gates are well-fenced, all apparently signs of a prince's mansion. Earlier in the story the description of Odysseus' treasure chamber which Eurycleia guards both day and night is another indication of the wealth of Odysseus. A king is a leader, a ruler of his people, a shepherd of the flock. In the war, where he was in the company of so many brilliant lights of battlefield fame, his qualities of leadership could not be given sufficient notice. He was respected for his wisdom and good judgment; he did well in battle; he is often mentioned among the heroes; but his position as a leader is greatly overshadowed by the presence of Achilles and Agamemnon. In the Iliad Odysseus shows his qualities of a faithful subordinate; he knows how to take orders as well as to give them. He is as loyal himself as he expects his men to be.

101 Odyssey, xvi.264-271.
102 Odyssey, xi.337-448.
The Odyssey gives a fuller picture of Odysseus as a leader. In his journeying home, and in his expedition against the suitors, he demonstrates his ability to lead other men. He has that rare quality of personal interest in his men; he is one of them, working and fighting with them. When they arrive hungry and exhausted at the island of Circe, it is Odysseus who quietly goes hunting to find them some food. When his companions in dread and fear approach the terrors of Scylla and Charybdis, it is Odysseus who goes from man to man trying to fill them with encouragement:

"Ω φίλοι, οὐ γάρ πώ τι κακόν ἀδαμαντές εἴμεν. οὐ μέν δὴ τὸ φέρεν ἐπει: κακόν, ἢ οὔτε Κύκλως ἐισε: ἐνι σπη: γλαφυρῷ κρατησφί βίησιν. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνθεν ἐμὴ ἄρετη, βουλὴ τε νοὴ τε, ἐκφύγομεν, καὶ ποὺ τῶν δέ μνήσεσθαι δίῳ. νῦν δ' ἀσθ'. ἢς ἄν εἰπω, πειθώμεθα πάντες!"

Unfortunately his men whom he usually calls his faithful compan-

103 Odyssey, x.133-177.

104 Odyssey, xi.206-213. "But I went through the ship and cheered my men with gentle words, coming up to each man in turn: 'Friends, hitherto we have been in no wise ignorant of sorrow; surely this evil that beets us now is no greater than when the Cyclops penned us in his hollow cave by brutal strength; yet even thence we made our escape through vabr and counsel and wit; these dangers, too, I think, we shall some day remember. But come now, as I bid, let us all obey.'"

Cf. also Vergil, Aeneid, i.203, "Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit."; and Shakespeare, Henry V, Act IV, Scene 1, 294-297.
ions, do not always appreciate Odysseus' interest in them. Overcome by jealousy, his comrades disregarded his orders and unloosed the bag of winds which Aeolus gave them to assure them of a safe and certain voyage home. 105 Another minor mutiny occurs when Eurycleus urges his comrades to slaughter the cattle of the sun-god Hyperion. 106

Odysseus is an appealing and forceful leader; his men's rebellion should not lessen one's estimation of him in this capacity. His men depend upon his counsel and encouragement, his example of bravery, his personal interest in them, and in times of crisis it is only Odysseus who can bolster their spirits. He is an example of a king who knows his men and can deal with them; he boasts of his former accomplishments to remind his comrades of the success they enjoyed together. He is in command, but never afraid to do the ordinary work that his companions perform. 107

Examples of monarchs who were hated and despised or held in indifference by their subjects clutter the unhappy pages of history. A Prince John or Henry VIII of England, or a Louis XIV of France, or Peter the Great of Russia left the sting of their

105 Odyssey, x. 38-45.
106 Odyssey, xii. 352-396.
107 Cf. Gladstone, Studies in Homer, III, 600.
power upon the backs of the poor and rich whom they ruled. A king who rises above human frailty and tries to rule in justice, mercy, and kindness is one whom his subjects will praise and love. Such a king was Odysseus. Certainly there were miscontents even in his kingdom, and the mob of suitors glutting themselves at his expense is no crowd of loyal followers. But these, it can scarcely be believed, would have been loyal to any man. Their insatiable greed and desire for riches, honor, and power had completely mastered them. Such is the case, too, with the servants who failed to remain true to Odysseus.

Odysseus loves his land and his people; his reaction when he realizes that he is back home in Ithaca reveals his love for his native land. The people, in their turn, love Odysseus, for he is the epitome of goodness and justice. Unlike other kings, he renders to each his due. Penelope's words describe his ability as a ruler:

οὐδὲ τί πατρῶν
ὑμετέρων τὸ πρόσθεν ἁκοῦετε, παῖδες ἁόντες,
οἷος Ὀδυσσεὺς ἔσκε μεθ' ὑμετέροις, τοκεύσιμος
οὔτε τινὰ δέξας ἔχεισον οὔτε τι εἰπὼν
ἐν ὅμιτον, ἢ τ' ἐστὶ δίκη θείαν βασιλέων,
ἀλλὰν κ' ἐχθαίρεσι βροτῶν, ἀλλὰς κε φιλοινη.

108 Odyssey, xiii.352-360.
A problem which someone might pose when dealing with the popularity of Odysseus is the presence of the parasite suitors in the palace of Odysseus and their reaction to him when they learn his identity. Also, the uprising of their clan presents another difficulty. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that Odysseus had sailed to Troy some twenty years before, taking with him the flower of Ithaca's warriors, and leaving behind a large number of women and young children. These youths grew up without the stable influence of their fathers and they became a tribe of rich play-boys. When, twenty years later, the king returns without their fathers and relatives, this group of suitors who never really knew Odysseus could hardly be expected to give him much of a welcome.

Likewise, if Odysseus is considered in his regal function of judge, his action against the suitors seems valid.

There is indeed a terrible severity in the proceedings of Ulysses against the Suitors, the women, and his rebellious subjects. But it is plain that the case which Homer had to represent was one that required the hero to effect something

109 Odyssey, iv.697-693. "Surely ye (the wooers) hearkened not at all in olden days, when ye were children, when your fathers told what manner of man Odysseus was among them that begat you, in that he wrought no wrong in deed or word to any man in the land as the wont is of divine kings—one man they hate and another they love. Yet he never wrought iniquity at all to any man."
like a reconquest of the country. It is also plain that Homer felt that these stern measures would require a very strong warrant. Hence without doubt it is, that the preparations for the crisis are so elaborate; the insults offered to the disguised master are so aggravated; and the direct agency of Minerva introduced to deepen his sufferings... Both Ulysses and Achilles may err, but where they err, it is in measure and degree. Ulysses is the minister of public justice, and of divine retribution. But he is composed, like ourselves, of flesh and blood, and he carries his righteous office, in a natural heat, to the verge of cruelty. Then the warning voice is vouchsafed to him, and he at once dutifully obeys. 110

One of the duties of the king was to administer justice. In Odysseus' judgment the suitors had committed a crime which deserved retribution. They had invaded another man's home, consumed large portions of his goods, and were attempting to win the love of his wife. Such violations of the laws of hospitality deserved condemnation and punishment. As king of Ithaca, as the person directly involved in the injustice, he felt that it was his duty to punish the suitors. The immediate revolt of the relatives of the suitors is only natural. They came to kill whoever had wrought such a bloody slaughter upon their dear ones. They gave little consideration at that time to the fact that the destruction of the suitors might well have been deserved.

The outstanding example and most conclusive proof of Odysseus' excellence and worth as a king is the unfailing loyalty

110 Gladstone, Studies on Homer, II, 454-455.
of his faithful master. Even after twenty years' absence, they still remain as devoted to their master as ever. Their loyalty, under the circumstances, seemed one which would go unrewarded, for Penelope was in no position to give them relief from their service and a pleasant old age, and the chances of Odysseus' returning were very slim. Yet they were hoping against hope that he would return, and praying to the gods for the fulfilment of that hope, all the while cherishing happy memories of the days when all Greece was in tranquility and master Odysseus was sitting on the throne of Ithaca. Each of these devoted servants, especially Eumaeus (who receives lengthier treatment and thus fuller development) provides some new outlooks on the master's qualities.

Eumaeus is one of the most delightful characters in the Odyssey. An old swineherd, he is burdened with grief for his lost master:

The root of his character is utter and undying devotion. He not only serves his masters and their interests; he loves them. His own life-tempo is nothing else than an echo of their joys and sorrows. When exposed to the rude and haughty treatment of Antinous and the other suitors, he says that for his part he cares not, provided only Penelope and godlike Telemachus yet live in the halls. It is grief and hopelessness at the loss of his good master that has darkened his life.115

114 Schoder, Homer's Appeal, 102-107.
115 Ibid., 74.
Eumaeus' devotion to his master and to the duties of his office in the master's service are really amazing. One line in the Odyssey especially captures this trait of the good swineherd:

εσθέλος εὼν ἐνίαυεν, ἀνάχτωσιν ημιϊα εἰδωκ. 116

He has a genuine love for Odysseus; a prayer for his master's safe return was constantly on his lips and in his heart. When he unknowingly prepared dinner for Odysseus in disguise, he first made an offering to the gods, praying all of them that Odysseus would return home safely. 117 Odysseus, he says, is the kindest of all masters, and he mourns for him more than for his own parents:

οὐ γὰρ ἐτ ἅλλον
ημιϊον δὲς ἀνακτα κιχήσομαι, ὀπκὸς' αὖτις ἱκώμαι
οὐδ' εἴ κεν πατρὸς καὶ μητέρος αὖτις ἐπέλεω, ὁμον, δὲι πρότον γενόμην καὶ μ' ἐπρεφον αὐτὸι.
οὐδὲ νῦ τῶν ἄτι τόσσον ὀδύρομαι, ἠμενὸς περ ὑθελαμβίσιν ἱδέοια ἐν ὑ πατρίδι γαιη.
ἀλλά μμ ἁίειον καλέω καὶ νάσφιν ἔντα. 118

116 Odyssey, xiv.557. "Among whom (the swine entrusted to his service) slept the worthy swineherd, with a heart loyal to his master." Cf. also, xiv.528-533.


118 Odyssey, xiv.142-147. "For never again shall I find a master so kind, how farsoever I go, not though I come to the house of my father and mother where at the first I was born, and they reared me themselves. Yet it is not so much eager though I am to behold them with my eyes and to be in my native land, nay it is longing for Odysseus, who is gone, that seizes me. His name, stranger, absent though he is, I speak with awe, for greatly did he love me and care for me at heart, but I call him my lord beloved even though he is not here."
A stirring picture of Eumaeus and his fellow herdsmen's devotion to Odysseus, and of his affection towards them, is the recognition scene in which Odysseus reveals his real identity to the two:

There are many similar examples of loyalty from other members of the king's household. Philoetius is a faithful herdsman in the employment of Odysseus. Two further recognition scenes, between Odysseus and the faithful serving-maidens and between Odysseus and Dolius show how much Odysseus was loved by his household. Such genuine reactions on the part of his servants could not have occurred unless their master were kind and generous, loving and lovable. He is a man with a warm and

119 Odyssey, xxi.221-227. "So, he drew aside the rag from the great scar. And when the two had seen it, and had marked each thing well, they flung their arms about wise Odysseus and wept; and they kissed his head and shoulders in loving welcome, and even in like manner, Odysseus kissed their heads and hands.

And now the light of the sun would have gone down up on their weeping had not Odysseus himself checked them."

120 Odyssey, xx.204-210; 236-239.
121 Odyssey, xxiv.394-395.
122 Odyssey, xxiv.394-405.
understanding heart, who knows how to win the hearts of all others.

In the tapestry of each man's life, a strong and predominant design is that of religion, either in its colorful life-giving presence, or in its dark, gloomy absence. Every man's life contains a complexity of relationships and duties to the God whom he acknowledges or fails to acknowledge as his Supreme Ruler and Preserver, upon Whom he is dependent for his existence, both for its initial stage and its later development. If a man believes in God and lives his belief, his whole mode of existence, all his actions will be colored by the influence which that belief has upon his life. He will be conscious of God and will pay Him the homage due to Him; he will live as he should with his fellow men, fulfilling his duties of justice and his voluntary works of charity. The ideals which govern his life will necessarily be stronger and more complete ideals. They will be ideals based upon a firmer and more lasting motivation, in a code of ethics which is based upon divine sanction and objective morality. If a man does not believe in God, or if his belief fails to exercise itself in an active way, these ideals will be absent from his life. God's influence will still be present in his life and the actions of his life, but his life will lack the presence of God. He will regard himself as a victim of some inexorable fate which he must try to escape, but which he can never successfully avoid.
The Homeric man and the Christian have religious concepts which are as different as day and night. The many gods of the pagan Greeks present a confusing picture. Their human faults and foibles and ways of acting are hardly consonant with Infinite Perfection. Their general lack of interest in the multitude of men does not measure up to the Christian notion of a Deity who is personally interested in all His creatures. Despite the errors of their religious belief, there is no doubt that the Greeks of Homer's time and those for many centuries before and after were basically religious people, and that the love and fear which they had for the gods was a constant one, with a strong influence on their daily lives and actions. Sacrifice to the gods and prayer of praise and supplication are frequently mentioned in Greek literature and noted in the finds of archaeology.

Odysseus himself is essentially a religious man; one cannot read far in the Iliad and Odyssey without perceiving that. His attitudes toward the gods, his love and fear of them have been minutely treated by other writers;123 this thesis can only

make a limited survey of some of the incidents in the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus has contact with the gods. This study would not be complete unless it considered at least briefly the religious aspect of Odysseus' character.

Two questions present themselves for consideration: Odysseus' attitude towards the gods, and their attitude towards him. In both cases there will be found friendship and some antipathy. Even in the case of the gods who are normally friendly to Odysseus, there are some instances of cickleness.

Odysseus' attitude toward the gods has two predominant elements, a fearful reverence and a loving devotedness, *pietas*. His fear seems to manifest itself in a genuine reverence for the worth and power of the gods, notwithstanding a real distrust of many of their actions. There is a marked simplicity in all of his prayers. There is also a predominance of petition in them. This is quite understandable, for the hero is continually beset by evils of every kind.

Before he set out with Diomedes for their night raid on the Trojan camp, Odysseus first prayed to Athene to help them in their work and to aid them in returning safely and gloriously to the camp of the Achaeans:

Χλετεί μεν αἰγιόχοιο Αίνετον τέχος, ἢ τε μοι αἰεί
ἐν πάντεσσι πόνοισι παρἐτασαί, οὐδὲ σε λῆθω
When Odysseus plans his attack upon the suitors, he again petitions his goddess friend for her necessary help. When he is miraculously saved from the storm which Poseidon has stirred up, spontaneously he beseeches the god of the river into whose mouth he has been tossed, to pity him, and offer him safe harbor:

Κλέθι, ἄναξ, δτις έσσι· πολυλίστον δέ σ' ἱκάνω. 
φεύγων ἐκ πόντοιο Ποσειδώνος ἐνικάς. 
cλαύοις μέν τ' ἐστὶ καὶ θανάτοις, θεοῖ σιν 
ἀνδρῶν δὲ τις ἰκτησί, ἀλώμενος, δὲ καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν 
σὸν τ' ῥόνον σοὶ τ' γούνας' ἱκάνω πολλά μοχθος. 
ἀλλ' ἐκέλαιρε, ἄναξ· ἰκτῆς δὲ τοι εὐχομαι εἶναι.

Frequently when Odysseus is to begin some new activity, undertake some major task, or face some great peril, he prays to the gods for

124 Ἰλιάδ, κ. 278-282. "Hear me, child of Zeus that beareth the aegis, thou that dost ever stand by my side in all manner of toils, nor am I unseen of thee, where're I move; now again be thou my friend, Athene, as never thou wast before, and grant that with goodly renown we come back to the ships, having wrought a great work that shall be a sorrow to the Trojans."

125 Οδυσσεία, κ. 445-450. "Hear me, O king, whoseever thou art. As to one greatly longed-for do I come to thee, seeking to escape from out the sea from the threats of Poseidon. Reverent even in the eyes of the immortal gods is that man who comes as a wanderer, even as I have now come to thy stream after many toils. Nay, pity me, O king, for I declare that I am thy suppliant."
help, or asks for some omen to indicate the blessing of the gods upon his work. When about to begin his destruction of the suitors, Odysseus lifted his hands and prayed to Zeus, asking him for a sign which would indicate the outcome of the battle:

Zeus' response was immediate; he loosed a thunderbolt from on high which brought joy to the heart of the hero.

One cannot help but be impressed by the prayerfulness of Odysseus. Its spontaneity shows the natural reverence he felt for the gods, and the feeling of great dependence upon them. Some instances of this have already been cited, and quite a few more could be mentioned. 127

126 Odyssey, xx.98-101. "Father Zeus, if of your food will the gods have brought me over land and sea to my own country, when ye had afflicted me sore, let some one of those who are awaking utter a word of omen for me, within, and without let a sign from Zeus be shown besides.

127 For other examples of Odysseus' prayer of supplication consult the following passages: Odyssey, viii.465-466, his words to Nausicaa after she has bid him farewell; xii.215-216, his prayer as he and his crew approach Scylla; xiii.213-214, his perturbation when, arriving back in Ithaca, he thinks the Phaeacians have deceived him; x.483-486, his prayer when he speaks to Circe on behalf of himself and his crew; xii.336-338, when his men threaten to mutiny; ix.294-295, in the save of the Cyclops; vi.324-327, his prayer to Athene before entering the city and the palace of Alcinous.
Odyssæus' prayers are not always in their entirety prayers of supplication for himself. Two of the most beautiful prayers in the Odyssey are contained in his words to Alcinous, on his arrival, and at his departure, when he begs the blessing of Zeus upon his kindly, generous host:

"Ως φάτο, γῆθησεν δὲ πολύτλας οἶκος 'Οδυσσεύς, εὐχόμενος δ' ἄρα εἶπεν, ἓκος τ' ἱψατ' τ' ὅνομαξεν. "Ζεῦ πάτερ, άθε' δοσι εἴπε τελευτήσειν ἤπαντα 'Αλκίνους' τοῦ μέν κεν ἐπὶ ζεύδωρον ἄρουραν ἄσβεστον κλέος εἰη, εγὼ δὲ κε πατρίδ' ἱκοίμην."

"'Αλκίνου κρηγον, πάντων ἀριστεῖκετα λαῶν, κέμπετε με σπείραντες ἀόμονα, χαίρετε δ' αὐτοὶ. Ἡδυ γὰρ τετέλεσατί α' μοι φίλος θεὸλε θυμός, ποιμὴ καί φίλα ὦφα, τά μοι θεοὶ ὁμαλώντες δάβι ποιήσειν ἀμύσμα δ' οἶκοι ἄξιοιτιν νοσθῆσας εὗρομι σὺν ἀρτέμεσσι φίλοισιν. ὑμεῖς δ' ἀδιν' μένοντες εὐφραίνοντε γυναῖκας κουρίδιας καὶ τέκνα. θεοὶ δ' ἁρετὴν ὅδε σεμαν παντοίγν, καὶ μή τι κακὸν μεταθήμιον εἰη."

Odyssæus' reverence of the gods -- his religious fear or awe for the divinity has one other point which should be con-

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128 Odyssey, vii.329-333. "Father Zeus, grant that Alcinous may bring to pass all that he has said. So shall his fame be unquenchable over the earth, the giver of grain, and I shall reach my native land."

129 Odyssey, xiii.38-46. "Lord Alcinous, renowned above all men, pour libations now, and send me on my way in peace; and yourselves, too—Farewell! For now all that my heart desired has been brought to pass; a convoy and gifts of friendship. May the gods of heaven sanctify them for me, and when I return may I find my peerless wife with those I love, unscathed; and may you again, who remain here, give joy to your wives and children, and may the gods grant you every sort of prosperity, and may no evil come upon your people."
may be said to be "humble!" He does not blaspheme as Ajax did. Thus Odysseus' character, for all of his suspicions, is eminently religious. He takes a certain amount of divine opposition for granted.133

Odysseus seemed to regard the will of Zeus and the designs of Athene with the same resignation. Odysseus was by no means a half-hearted coward; he would take his stand against mortals, and even against the semi-divinities such as Circe, Polyphemus and the two threats of the sea, Scylla and Charybdis. But in regard to the gods, it was different; he realized that it was impossible to oppose them and escape unscathed. So he bent himself in "humble" submission. He could scarcely be expected to have the real love and devotion to the gods and goddesses, full of their foibles, imperfections, and favoritisms, that a Christian can have toward God, His Mother, and the Saints. Greek religion excluded any such type of worship. Odysseus' simple resignation and quiet acceptance of the will of Zeus and the workings of the lesser gods is sufficient evidence that he is basically a religious man.

Fear and love--these are the determining principles of Odysseus' religious character.134 Love, as used here in regard

133 Ibid., 83-84.

134 Ibid., 96. "Suffice it to say that from his own experience any man will testify that, though fear and love do not determine, they do very much influence all his decisions, from his judgments of values, and mould his course of action. More particularly, when a man develops his religious outlook through experience....then, too, fear and love are clearly his basic reactions."
to the warrior's relations with the gods, is best expressed as a
familiarity or friendliness, rather than an emotional or a con-
templative love. Two gods, Zeus and Athene, are the principal
objects of attention in Odysseus' religious experience. Of the
two, Zeus has the more important position; after all, he is the
father and the ruler of the gods. His character is a rather
puzzling one; he seems harsh, and yet at times is very kind in
his actions; he naturally inspires fear, and yet it is he who
makes possible hospitable friendliness. 135 In times of peril and
distress in his daily wanderings, Odysseus' reverence for Zeus is
mixed with fear; times of relative security, however, bring out
the love or familiarity which Odysseus has for Zeus. 136

Athene is Odysseus' patron saint and guarding angel;
she protects and guides him in battle, she counsels, exhorts,
admonishes, praises, and reproves him. Her aegis covers not only
Odysseus, but Penelope and Telemachus, too. She seeks no selfish
reward in this special patronage of the warrior of Ithaca, but she
helps him because she sees herself, her own clever counsels,
mirrored in this stalwart and cunning Greek hero. All through the
Iliad and Odyssey it is Athene who comes to Odysseus' aid. Athene
encourages him in battle and deflects the spears of the enemy

135 Ibid., 130.
136 Ibid., 79; 130-131; also Odyssey, xxiii, 330.
Trojans or the blows of the insolent suitors. It is Athene who makes Odysseus' words so effective and who turns him aside from every evil of land and sea. She pleads for him before the throne of the gods and persuades Zeus to help the hero reach his wife and homeland. Athene clothes Odysseus in wisdom and beauty. She watches over Telemachus and helps him grow to manhood and become a true son of his father. It is she who brings welcome sleep to the tear-worn eyes of Penelope. She encourages and consoles Odysseus, brings him home, enables him to accomplish the slaughter of the suitors, and finally stops the rally of the Ithacans and establishes peace in the land.

Athene's affection and warmth for Odysseus are quickly perceived in many instances of the story. When Odysseus returns to Ithaca, the goddess is the first to welcome him home. Some interesting conversation follows, in which Athene is unable to persuade Odysseus that he is actually home again. She shows her feelings for Odysseus when she remarks on the similarity between him and her, the goddess of wisdom:

\[
\text{ἄλλ' ἄγε, μηχέτι ταῦτα λεγόμεθα, εἰδότες ἀμφώ
κέρδε', ἐπεὶ σὺ μὲν ἔσσι βροτῶν ὅ' ἄριστος ἀπάντων
βουλὴ παί μυθοσίν, ἐγὼ δ' ἐν πᾶσι ἐσάις.}
\]

137 cf. Odyssey, i.45-85; xii.287-290, 299-302, 392-394; vi.436-444; vi.20; xii.200-212, 256-260; Iliad, i.168 sq.
μήτε τε κλέομαι καὶ κέρδεσιν· οὐδὲ σὺ γ᾽ ἔγνως Πάλλας Ἀθηναίην, κοῦρην Δίδης, ἢ τὲ τοι αἰὲν ἐν πάντεσσι πάνω σοι παρίσταμαι ἢδὲ φυλάσσω καὶ δὲ σε φαίνεσσι φίλον πάντεσσιν ξέρμα. 138

She promises him that in the attack on the suitors she will be with him and will not forget him. 139 Her affection for Odysseus had not gone unnoticed among mortal men. Nestor told Telemachus of it when Odysseus' son came to Pylos, inquiring of news of his father. Nestor wished that Telemachus might receive the same help. 140

All these examples are evidence of the quality and quantity of religious influence in the life of Odysseus. It was an influence which lessened his pride by making him acknowledge the supreme dominion of the gods. It made him feel their overwhelming power and the necessity of their help; it made him powerful, and filled his words and actions with a strain of the divine. Religion in this broad sense made Odysseus a deeper man, a man of

138 Odyssey, xiii.296-302. "But come, let us no longer talk of begng both well-versed in craft, since thou art far the best of all men in counsel and in speech, and I among all the gods am famed for wisdom and craft. Yet thou didst not know me, Pallas Athene, daughter of Zeus, who ever stand by thy side and guard thee in all thy toils. Aye, and I made thee loved by all the Phaeacians."

139 Odyssey, xiii.392-394.

140 Odyssey, iii.216-224. Nestor says, "For never yet have I seen the gods so openly showing love as Pallas Athene did to him, standing by his side, for everyone to see."
greater ideals and stronger character. It tempered him through suffering and misfortune, and aided him with the assistance of the gods.

Whether or not Homer is a great moralist is a question which has been debated. Some may say that the Iliad and the Odyssey contain no real system of morals, or that Homer had no moral purpose in writing his epics, or perhaps that there is no trace of morality in Homer at all. To the writer of this thesis none of the above statements seem to be completely in accord with the facts. Granted the Iliad and Odyssey are not textbooks in ethics or moral theology, and they do not present an orderly system of morals; yet they do not present immoral actions in an attractive manner. Indirectly, certainly, Homer was one of the greatest moral teachers of his people, for many of the characters that he offers are models of virtue for imitation.141

Of all the fine models of virtue that Homer has left us, one of the most beautiful and inspiring is the marital love of Odysseus and Penelope, and his fidelity to her. Their union is a striking picture, especially when contrasted with the modern stories which glorify divorce, adultery and other "sociable" vices.

141 Even a brief study of the brave, clever and devoted Odysseus, the loving, prudent Penelope, the manly Telemachus, the touching couple, Hector and Andromache, the devoted swineherd, Eumaeus, will provide sufficient proof for this statement.
of the same species. Commentators are strong in their praise of such a union as is found between the warrior king of Ithaca and his prudent wife.

Probably, however, no period of the world has exhibited a more stringent application of the doctrine of indissolubility to the case of disertion, than that on which the plot of the Odyssey is founded; where, after an absence of the husband is prolonged to the twentieth year, Penelope still waits his return; prays that death may relieve her from the dread necessity of making a new choice; and thus directed by her own conscience and right feeling, likewise apprehends condemnation by the public judgment in the event of her proceeding to contract a new engagement.

The Heroic age has left no more comely monument, than its informal, but instinctive, and most emphatic sense, thus recorded for our benefit, of the sanctity of marriage, of the closeness of union that it creates, and of the necessity of perpetuity as an element of its capacity to attain its chief ends, and to administer a real discipline to the human character. 142

Echoing throughout the work, in every movement of the symphony of the Odyssey, is a plaintive strain of sadness. It is like a phrase of a work of Tschaikowsky that keeps recurring, and each time its melody penetrates more deeply into the hearts of its listeners. One can seem to hear the beautiful voice of the violin being answered by a deeper-voiced member of its family; and the theme that they sing is a sad one, the sadness that arises from a great and unfilled longing. Penelope weeps and fills her bed with tears as she spends her sleepless nights bewailing her loss.

142 Gladstone, Studies on Homer, II, 458.
husband. Far away, whether in the prison of Calypso, or in the
cave of the Cyclops, or in the palace of Alcinous, Odysseus thinks
of his wife; his heart swells and his throat chokes with sobs of
grief.\footnote{\textit{143}}

An examination of Odysseus as the loving and devoted
husband and family man will reveal the fourth principal facet of
this amazing product of Homer’s art. In the first lines of the
\textit{Odyssey}, after his invocation to the Muse, Homer immediately
characterizes his hero with that particular trait with which we
shall identify him for the rest of the story, ”filled with longing
for his wife.”\footnote{\textit{144}} This is the key to one of his outstanding
caracter traits, loyalty, devotedness to duty, and in this case
it is his obligations as husband and father which are calling him.

Not even the charms of a goddess, the luxury of her
domicile, and the promise of immortality can lure him away from
thoughts of Penelope and home. No more complete picture of a man
filled with grief can be found:

\begin{quote}
oδε’ ἄρ’ Ὀδυσσῆα μεγαλήτορα ἔνδουν ἔτέτμεν
ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐπ’ ἄκτης κλαῖε καθήκειος, ἐνθα πάρος περ,
δάχυσι καὶ στοναχῆσι καὶ ἀλγεῖ; θυμὸν ἐρέχθων
πόντον ἐπ’ ἀπρόετον ἐπερχέσθε τὸ δάχυα λείβων. \footnote{\textit{145}}
\end{quote}

\footnote{\textit{143}} \textit{Odyssey}, \textit{v.81-84}; \textit{1.11-15}.
\footnote{\textit{144}} \textit{Odyssey}, \textit{i.13}.
\footnote{\textit{145}} \textit{Odyssey}, \textit{v.81-84}. ”But the great-hearted Odysseus
he (Hermes) found not within; he sat weeping on the shore, as his
wont had been, racking his soul with tears and groans and griefs,
and he would look back over the restless sea, shedding tears.”
And this had been going on for seven long years. Someone may object that in this same section of the story is found the statement that Odysseus was forced to sleep by her side in the hollow caves, the unwilling hero beside the willing nymph.\(^{146}\) At first glance, this seems to rock the foundations of Odysseus' marital fidelity and make the fellow seem rather insincere. A closer examination and a bit of explanation, however, will put the matter in a better light. First of all, it is necessary to remember that he is not a Christian with a Christian standard of morality; he is a pagan who has only natural helps and motives. Secondly, in the two instances of infidelity,\(^{147}\) it is on the initiative of the other party, each time a goddess, and in the case of Circe at the direct command of the god Hermes:

If it is objected that on Homer's own testimony Odysseus is not faithful to his wife, two points must be borne in mind before we pass judgment. First, we cannot ask of him a Christian standard of morality, or forget that as a pagan he has only natural helps and motives. Secondly, on both occasions when there is mention of his infidelity to Penelope, it is on the initiative of the other party—each time a goddess. It is scarcely to be hoped that a pagan could withstand such a temptation, when led into it by the gods themselves, the recognized guardians of morality. Even so Homer specifically tells us that Odysseus lies with Calypso against his will. And in

\(^{146}\) *Odyssey*, v.154-155.

\(^{147}\) The first instance, Odysseus' stay with Calypso is in *Odyssey*, v.205-225. The second instance, the stay with Circe, is in *Odyssey*, x.324 sq.
Circe's case, Odysseus is bidden by Hermes to yield to her desires in order to rescue his comrades. It is a rather crude system of ethe, it must be admitted. But it goes far towards palliating (at least in Homer's mind) what cannot be justified.\textsuperscript{148}

No better words could be added to indicate Odysseus' feelings towards his wife than Homer's own description of the recognition scene:

"ως φίλτρον, τῷ δ' ἔτε μᾶλλον ὑπ' ἀγέρον ἄρας γόοιον κλαῖε δ' ἔχων ἀλοχον θυμαρέα, κεδνά ἵνα παννακαν....

ὅς ἢ ἄρα τῇ ὀδαντὸς ἔναν πόσοι εἰσορώση, δειρήκε δ' ὧν πᾶ φάκαν ἀφ' ετο πέχει λευκά.\textsuperscript{149}

Penelope's devotion to her absent husband throughout the twenty long years gives an indication of her fine character as well as of Odysseus' worth. She tells the suitors, "in longing for Odysseus I waste my heart away."\textsuperscript{150} Sleepless nights are spent in tears for Odysseus; unhappy days are filled with the thoughts of her absent lord. Even the mere sight of an item dear to her husband, such as his bows and arrows, renews her grief.\textsuperscript{151} The

\textsuperscript{148} Schoder, Homer's Appeal, 63-64.

\textsuperscript{149} Odyssey, xxiv.231-240. "So she spoke, and in his heart aroused yet more desire for lamentation; and he wept, holding in his arms his dear and true-hearted wife....even so welcome to her was her husband, as she gazed upon him, and from his neck she could in no wise let her white arms go."

\textsuperscript{150} Odyssey, xix.136.

\textsuperscript{151} Odyssey, xx.55-60.
final recognition scene already quoted is proof enough of her love for him and the worth of him whom she loves.

In this same realm of family fidelity may be considered Odysseus' devotedness to his son, Telemachus, and to his father and mother. His mother is the first person he meets in the world below. She had gone to her grave and was now dwelling in the land of the dead. The tender meeting between her and her son is very beautiful. She tells him the cause of her death:

διόδι καί τε πόθος καί τε μήσα, παλεὶον Ὀδυσσέα
σὴ τ' ἀγαναποδίνη μελιηδία θυμὸν ἀπηδρα.152

Odysseus desires to embrace his mother, but her spirit cannot be encompassed by his arms:

"ος ἐφατ', αὐτὸς ἑγὼ τ' ἔθελον φρεισι μεμορίζας
μητρὸς ἐμῆς ψυχῆν ἐλέειν κατατενεύῃς.
τρίς μὲν ἐφορμηθένην, ἐλέειν τέ με θυμὸς ἀνάγει, τρίς δὲ μοι ἐκ χείρων σχη ἐκελον ἡ καὶ ὁνεῖροφ ἐκατατ'. ἡμοὶ δ' ἄχος ἀξοὶ γενέσκετο χηρὸι μᾶλλον.153

His father Laertes was alive back in Ithaca, but his body and his spirit were wasting away in grief for his absent son:

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152 Odyssey, xi.203-204. "Nay, it was longing for thee and for thy counsels, glorious Odysseus, and for thy tender-heartedness, that robbed me of honey-sweet life."

153 Odyssey, xi.205-209. "So she spoke, and I pondered in my heart and was fain to clasp the spirit of my dead mother. Thrice I sprang towards her, and thrice she flitted from my arms like a shadow or a dream, and pain grew ever sharper at my heart."

154 Odyssey, xvi.136-145.
When Odysseus returned and saw the conditions of his father, his heart was filled with great compassion:

\[
\text{τὸ δ' ὀρίνετο θυμὸς, ἀνὴρ πίνας οὐκ ηῇ ὃν δοριμὸ μὲνος προὔτυψε φίλον κατέρ' εἰσορώντι. κύσε ὦ μὲν περὶ φυσὶ ἐπιάλμενοι, ἤδε προσήμενα. 155}
\]

The old man's reaction fills the reader with real emotion. Laertes' knees quiver, his heart floods with the heat of joy at the recognition of his son. He flings out his arms and falls fainting into the embrace of his son. Such devotion needs no commentary.

Telemachus respects and admires as well as loves his great father; this is evident in the way he treats him. Odysseus has the true warmth of a father for his son, even though he has missed that rare joy of being with his son as he grew up and having their mutual love enriched. Their recognition scene gives us further knowledge of the character of Odysseus. 156

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155 *Odyssey*, xxiv.318-320. "Then the heart of Odysseus was stirred up through his nostrils shot a keen pang as he beheld his dear father. And he sprang toward him, and clasped him in his arms, and kissed him."

156 *Odyssey*, xvi.213-221. "So saying, he sat down, and Telemachus, flinging his arms about his noble father, wept and shed tears, and in the hearts of both the arose a longing for lamentation. And they wailed aloud more vehemently than birds, sea-eagles, or vultures with crooked talons, whose young the country-folk have taken from their nest before they were fledged; even so piteously did they let tears fall from beneath their brows. And now would the light of the sun have gone down upon their weeping, had not Telemachus spoken to his father suddenly...."
In the Odyssey Homer has portrayed a hero whose personality is quite amazing. Odysseus has many wonderful abilities—physical, intellectual, and emotional. At this point in the thesis we must analyze the use—good or bad, consistent or inconsistent, weak or firm—that Odysseus makes of his many and varied capabilities. But to analyze the character of Odysseus is a difficult task. As one writer says:

As in the Iliad, so in the later epic, Homer has centered his great story around a hero whose character is a very complex and intriguing one. Just when we have grasped the main outlines of his character, we discover him acting out of harmony with it all, and we see we must strive to understand him in a more fundamental and vitally balanced fashion. A careful analysis of Odysseus' character is therefore imperative.157

In analyzing the character of Odysseus we find two very basic traits from which flow other qualities which intermingle to form his composite character. These two fundamental traits of Odysseus' character are: "a clear-headed command of every situation along with a desire to capitalize on it, and a sympathetic understanding of human nature."158

The underlying motive of Odysseus' actions is a basic desire, a somewhat selfish desire to control every situation,

157 Schoder, Homer's Appeal, 83-84.
158 Ibid., 84.
and to profit from every situation. This motivation is in part a selfish one; it is a motivation that is always concerned with his own welfare. But in Odysseus' case it is not entirely selfish for it looks simultaneously to the welfare of others as well as the welfare of Odysseus. Usually Odysseus is able to control the force of this motivation, but there are occasions when he does not. When he fails to control the situation, he makes mistakes, mistakes due to an unmasted greed, an inordinate desire for self-advancement.

What deviation there is from the twin channels of action nearly always arises from his lack of sufficiently high moral courage to embrace duty at the sacrifice of self-aggrandizement.\textsuperscript{159}

This basic selfish motivation—a desire for wealth, recognition, power—makes Odysseus the man he is. He achieves his goal; he is master of every situation. He rises to this mastery chiefly by means of his outstanding character trait—his crafty ingenuity. Odysseus is a man of high intellectual qualities. "In Odysseus, Homer for once stresses the head above the heart."\textsuperscript{160} Odysseus uses these intellectual qualities well to further his desires. He is always able to find a new and successful method. He plans not only for the present; he forsees the future, and

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 84.

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 85.
profits from the past. And in all things he is eminently prudent. Odysseus integrates his actions and plans into a harmonious program of success. He has a tremendous desire to increase his knowledge, to know men and their cities. Odysseus has the skill of planning needed for his activities. He also has a firm and enduring will to make his resolutions, the moral courage and physical stamina to execute them, and the calm, self-possessed patience to await their completion.

We must not think, however, that Homer's hero is a cold, unemotional, selfish barbarian, interested only in himself and in what will profit him. Odysseus' second character trait, his sympathetic understanding of human nature, shows that this could not be true. Many of the examples given in this chapter show Odysseus as a friendly, lovable, sociable, interested, devoted, and beloved human being. He demonstrates great tact as he deals with people. Again, he says and does the right thing at the right time and in the right way. His speeches are masterpieces of tact. He knows how to deal with his subjects, how to direct his men, and how to obey his leaders.

Although Odysseus is not a man of the deepest emotions, he is quite human. He can laugh and weep. He loves his homeland, Ithaca, and the people whom he governs there. He shows unusual affection for his goddess-protector Athene. He has a great
capacity for human tenderness. He is kind, benevolent, and loving to those with whom he is on good terms. He shows his appreciative thanks to his benefactors.

Odysseus' devotion to his family is outstanding in a pagan world. The famous and beautiful recognition scenes illuminate his enduring fidelity and tender love for his wife Penelope, his fatherly care and affection for Telemachus, and his devotion and tenderness toward his old father Laertes.

These two basic character traits—-a clear-headed command of every situation, along with the desire to capitalize on it, and a sympathetic understanding of human nature, along with the qualities which flow from them, form a composite character which is ever fascinating, ever puzzling.

Odysseus lived in a world of natural vice and virtue. He lacked the supernatural motivation of the era of Revelation. He fulfilled his duties to the gods and his fellow men consistently and well. For his fellow Greeks who lived in the same pagan world, he was an exemplar, a heroic figure. For men of today, he stands as a model of ingenuity, skill, bravery, tact, and human tenderness.
CHAPTER IV

HOMER’S ARTISTIC CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

When a critic steps into an art gallery or a symphony hall, he is primarily interested in a finished product—a new painting, or the latest opus of music. "Is it good or bad or mediocre?" he will ask himself, and use an objective criterion for his reply. Besides forming a judgment on the work of art, he will inquire, "Just what made it good or bad or mediocre?" In other words, he is interested in learning the techniques which the artist, painter, musician, or composer employed in order to betain that result. Analysis of these techniques and methods will give him a finer appreciation and will increase his admiration for the work he is experiencing as well as for the artist who is responsible for its production or reproduction.

Each art has its criterion according to which the finished product stands as good or bad; this criterion will necessarily involve an appraisal of the work of the artist. Different techniques and different equipment as well as different standards of judgment will necessarily be used in criticizing two such genera as music and art, just as they will be among the latter's
various species, such as the rich oils, the sharp charcoal, the smooth chalk, or the delicate water colors. Good writing, too, is achieved through the individual writer's clever use of worthy material. Character portrayal is no exception to this general rule; its techniques are some of the subtlest and most involved in the field of creative writing.

Thus far in this thesis we have been analyzing a very rich character portrait, that of Odysseus. A study of the artwork has been made; we have learned more in detail just what Homer produced; the purpose of the present chapter is to find out how and how well he has accomplished it. Again, as before, this chapter is indebted to The Classical Canons of Literary Criticism for laying the groundwork by providing divisions and references. There is scope here only for a brief summary.

So far, this thesis has been concerned with the portrait as such; in other words, does Odysseus have a good character or a bad one, and what type of personality does he have? Now some thought must be given to the way in which his character has been depicted. Is it clearly portrayed? Simply, or ornamented with much detail? Is it natural, or too ideal? Are the seeming inconsistencies of his character, which we noted, just slips of the artist's pen or are they deliberate?
What is involved in the art of character portrayal?

Artistry of character portrayal means eminent success in presenting human agents who are natural, impressive, and directly productive of the action which constitutes the plot. For human personality and the general issues of a man's life are everlastingly interesting....Profound insight into the secrets of character, and eminent skill in expressing these secrets in words are a sign of genius.¹

This art is not an easy one, nor one that comes from learning alone. A quick, perceptive mind, a vivid but realistic imagination, color and shading in use of words—these are some of the necessary qualities which the character artist must have.

As is evident from the definition already given, this art involves two factors: conception and communication. It is this primary concept, in its intrinsic details, that is the all-important part of the art.² But a concept gives information and enjoyment to no one but its possessor. It needs the expression in words, words worked into a style and design that perfectly

¹ Schoder, The Classical Canons, 30. Cf. also, Elmer Edgar Stoll, Shakespeare Studies; New York, 1927, 90. "All felicitous characterization is a mystery; and characterization as practised by the greatest of dramatists may well be more of a mystery than any other. Nevertheless, something of the means or method may appear. In the greatest art means and methods are generally simple; the mystery and marvel lie in their application—the right touch at the right time and place; and often we can, in a sense, see how a thing was done which none of us could ever do."

² Ibid., 104-105, passim. "The artist's own living concept of the object in its essential beauty, significance, and enriching relationships to other reality is the essential prerequisite for any work of art."
describe the truth which that concept represents. The artist must show rather than describe. He must make his characters live before his audience; and this he does through the words he has them speak, through the actions they perform, by his description of them, by the titles he gives them, by the clear-cut impressions he leaves of them.

It is through the words which the hero utters that we get to know him best. As Bassett remarks, "The more we hear the characters speak, the better we know their personalities." The character's speech should be clear, and typical of his nature. Actions, however, often speak louder than words, for "it is usually clear from what a man does, how he acts in a given situation or crisis, what are his characteristic qualities and ideals." Finally, the words which the writer uses to describe his characters are also an important means and technique. He himself steps in to

3 Ibid. "But until this stirring vision is creatively clothed in a material medium which adequately represents in concrete sensible form its truth, significance, and vital beauty, so that others may share in the artist's glowing experience and rise from his artifact to that vision of beauty which has inspired it, no art-work can result."


5 Samuel Bassett, The Poetry of Homer, Berkely, California, 1938, 78.

6 Schoder, The Classical Canons, 111. "In fact... character is often more convincingly manifested in deeds than in words, for the real test of moral ideals is not in proclaiming but in acting up to them."
tell us certain of the physical or ethical features of his characters. Epithets are a type of description which denote some prominent characteristic of an individual; by constant repetition of this epithet throughout the poem, a unified impression of some famous or significant feature of the person is formed. The artist must know just how much detail to include in his characterization; an excessive use of words will keep the person's true nature from being seen. Figures of speech are another instrument used to further the creation and development of character. Of these, simile and metaphor are the most powerful, for by their beauty and their striking disclosure of real but overlooked resemblances of relationship to other objects, they call greater attention to the object which is being compared. Other factors to be considered in the production of a word portrait are the medium which the writer is using, the particular style he employs (which will vary with each author and sometimes even the same author will have many

7 Ibid., 118. "The main point in handling direct description is to make it natural, adequate for artistic needs, but not over-done, used at the right moment and in effective distribution and sequence, graphic yet always in good taste. Otherwise it is not truly effective. This is a good technique, but one easily fumbled or abused."

8 Ibid.
styles\textsuperscript{9}, and the first impression the author presents to his audience--an important one in which the basic traits of character should be indicated. A master of these techniques, and these are not all of them, is a master indeed.

These, then, are some of the chief means of character portrayal: speeches, actions, and description. The immediate purpose of this chapter is to show how Homer used these means of character portrayal in creating the character of Odysseus.

Homer's people, through the words they speak, really describe directly and indirectly their own personality and outline their own character. Almost the entire personality portrait of Odysseus can be painted from his own words. Let us recall for a moment some of the words Odysseus has spoken, and see how through them he has revealed his character.

Odysseus shows his courage when he exhorts his fellow-soldiers to battle outside the walls of Troy, and again when he soliloquizes on the baseness of being a coward. He demonstrates his carefulness and cunning in his speeches to Dolon, Calypso,

\textsuperscript{9} Plato is noted for his many-styled works; such is their diversity in the original that the great edition of his works, bearing the name of Jowett as translator, scarcely approached the beauty of Plato's variety. Hilaire Belloc was also noted for such a variety of style in his writing.
Nausicaa, Arete, Athene, the Cyclops, Penelope, and the servants of his household. Odysseus' words to Nausicaa and Alcinous are also proof of the strong vein of greed in Odysseus' character.

The speeches of Odysseus also tell us much about his sympathetic understanding of human nature. When Odysseus speaks to Nausicaa, he demonstrates his tact, sociability, friendliness, and ability to make favorable first impressions. He shows gratitude in his prayer for Alcinous. He speaks words of personal interest and encouragement to his frightened crew as they approach Scylla and Charybdis. He shows his worth as a leader when he tells of the loyalty of his men. His words to his mother, father, son, and especially to his wife Penelope are touching examples of the devotedness he has for his dear ones. His frequent and spontaneous prayers to the gods demonstrate the rather deep religious quality of Odysseus' character.

The speeches of Odysseus present an adequate picture of his character. To supplement and strengthen the picture, Homer also uses the words of other characters in the Iliad and the Odyssey. For example, we learn of Odysseus' cunning and counsel from Agamemnon, Athene, Helen, Diomedes, Nestor, and Telemachus; of his courage, from Priam, Diomedes, Telemachus, and Menelaus; of his rashness, from Circe and Eurylochus. Agamemnon, Penelope, Athene, Eumaeus, and Philoctetes testify that Odysseus is a good ruler.
Telemachus and Penelope praise him for his fatherly care and conjugal devotion. Athene and Nestor tell of Odysseus' devotedness to the gods. Eurymachus, Penelope, Achilles, and Anticleia speak of Odysseus' humane qualities.

Actions are often said to speak louder than words: actions indicate the true nature of man, words can sometimes be a mask. In the case of Odysseus, however, words speak loudly enough they tell us the true nature of his character. His actions only add strength to the testimony of his words.

In several incidents in the Iliad and in the Odyssey, where he deals with the Cyclops, Scylla and Charybdis, and the suitors, Odysseus demonstrates his courage, skill, and bravery. He also shows his momentary lack of courage when Poseidon stirs up the sea, and when his companions loosen the bag containing the winds. In the beginning and conclusion of the Cyclops incident, and when passing Scylla and Charbydis, Odysseus acts rashly. He is clever in plotting the escape from the cave of the Cyclops and in planning the destruction of the suitors. He is greedy when he counts the treasure gifts Alcinous gave him. Odysseus displays various emotions at different times: anger when recognized by Euryoleia and at the unfaithful servant maids; affection for his wife and family, for his loyal servants, for his faithful companions, for his old dog Argos; patriotism, upon his return to
Ithaca; grief for his dead mother, for the comrades he loses on
the journey.

Description and epithets are a third medium used by
literary artists to portray character. In the use of these,
Homer excels; his reputation as a master of simile and epithet is
unrivalled. Such phrases as crafty, the peer of Zeus in counsel,
wise, subtle, crafty-minded, nimble-witted, wise, noble, stalwart,
brave, glorious, heroic, great-hearted, much-enduring, of the
steadfast heart, and godlike, are definitely characteristic of
Homer's hero, Odysseus. By these phrases Homer pinpoints certain
of Odysseus' key personality and character traits. By frequent
repetition of these phrases, Homer emphasizes in clear lines the
exact nature of Odysseus.

Another medium of character portrayal is the first
character-impression the author gives to his reader. First
impressions are extremely important in character studies just as
they are in real life. The first impression which Homer gives us
of Odysseus is vivid, exact, and comprehensive. He mentions
Odysseus' resourcefulness—a definite point of reader interest—
his many sufferings, and his warfare in Troy.

Character portrayal has a large part to play in Homer's
epic. The Odyssey is at once an interesting adventure and a
fascinating character sketch. Each makes parallel growth and
progress in the course of the book.
This thesis has attempted to do directly what Homer has done indirectly. We have made direct statements about the personality and character of Odysseus. Homer has used the indirect method: he does not tell, he shows. By repeated, similar actions, Homer shows us the consistency of Odysseus' character. And by the quality and the consequences of Odysseus' actions, Homer demonstrates the morality of Odysseus' character.

Personality is explicit and actual; it requires only perception and observation to determine its nature. Character is implicit and potential; careful thought and detailed analysis are necessary to discover its essence. Homer has demonstrated his mastery in the art of character portrayal by giving a clear, concise view of Odysseus' personality, and at the same time by enabling his readers through their study to come to a deep understanding of Odysseus' character. All the time Homer is extremely subtle; he gives his audience sufficient evidence so they can understand and appreciate the character of Odysseus. But he also leaves unexplained clues which give Odysseus an element of mystery and awe, and compel men to return again and again to learn more of this wonderful and fascinating character.
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The thesis submitted by William O. Schaefer, S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Classics.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Sept. 10, 1956

Date

Raymond V. Schoder, S.J.
Signature of Adviser