TRACES OF THE RHAPSODE

AN ESSAY ON THE USE OF RECURRENT SIMILES IN THE *Iliad*

'I was not about to dispute the point, Tim,' said young Cheeryble, laughing. . . . 'All I was going to say was, that I hold myself under an obligation to the coincidence, that's all.'

'Oh! if you don't dispute it, that's another thing. I'll tell you what, though—I wish you had. I wish you or anybody would. I would so put down that man,' said Tim . . . 'so put down that man by argument——.'—*Nicholas Nickleby*.

I

WE know roughly, says Prof. Murray,¹ how a rhapsode set to work. He would be tempted to introduce bright patches. . . . He would abhor the subordination of parts to the whole.

This tendency, he suggests, explains the occurrence both in Θ (555 ff.) and in Π (297 ff.) of the well-known description of a cloudless sky: 'Such lovely lines, once heard, were a temptation to any rhapsode, and likely to recur wherever a good chance offered. The same explanation applies to the multiplied similes of B 455 ff. They are not meant to be taken all together; they are alternatives for the reciter to choose from.'

I quote this pronouncement, not because I want to quarrel with the most generous of scholars, but because it hits on particularly instructive passages. The constellation of similes at B 455 ff. marks, I suggest, a provisional climax in the movement of the poem, and the images here chosen are poetically relevant, not only to the immediate context but to the whole design. Similarly, the image of Θ 555 ff. is not isolated, but provides a climax and a consummation to the whole series of images which decorates the movement Γ-Θ. The kindred, though more impressive, image of Π 297 ff. marks the beginning of yet another series. Finally, these examples illustrate a principle of Homer's art, which has not, I think, been realised by critics. His similes are rarely isolated and detachable decorations, relevant only to their immediate context. More often they are so related to each other, and so arranged, like the incidents, in formal patterns, that they become an important element in the organic structure of the poem. The cunning repetition, heightening and combination of images within his formal pattern is a device not only characteristic of Homer, but also of supreme importance for the appreciation of his art. It provides us also, I shall submit, with a valid argument for the unity of the *Iliad*.

¹ *History of Greek Literature*, 20-21.

Sing, goddess, the wrath of Achilles, and the evils that it wrought . . . in the accomplishment of the will of Zeus . . . beginning when the son of Atreus quarrelled with the glorious Achilles. The son of Zeus and Leto was angry because of Chryses. . . . Chryses had prayed, but it did not please Agamemnon . . . so Chryses prayed . . . and Apollo, in his anger, came, 'like the night' . . . and shot his arrows, and the pyres of the dead were burning.

Achilles summoned an Assembly. Calchas spoke. Agamemnon's heart grew black with wrath, and his eyes were like a shining fire. He threatened to take away Briseis. Athene intervened to check Achilles. The Assembly continued, Achilles swore that he would leave the fighting, and Nestor tried in vain to restore peace.

Then Agamemnon's second blunder, the taking of Briseis, corresponding in the pattern to the first, the refusal to give up Chryseis.

That is the first group of incidents in the *Iliad*. The second is different, and has its own shape :

Achilles prayed to Thetis. She heard him, as she sat with her old father in the depths of the sea, and she came up from the sea, 'like a mist,' and promised to help her son.

Odysseus and his crew restored Briseis, Chryses prayed, and sacrifice was made to Apollo. The day ended with feast and music and sleep.

Thetis prayed to Zeus in Olympus, and the Thunderer promised his aid. He nodded, and, at the nod of his immortal head, Olympus trembled.

Then the scherzo, the comedy of the Olympian Quarrel, in which Hephaestus was a more successful peacemaker than Nestor. The day ended in feast and song and sleep.

The third group repeats the pattern of the first :

Agamemnon's Dream and the Council; Nestor's Comment.

The Second Assembly, divided, like the first, by an intervention of Athene.

Nestor's advice, Agamemnon's prayer and sacrifice. The army mustered.

The similes are concentrated in this third part. In A we had only the three brief comparisons, 'Apollo came, like the night . . . the pyres were burning'; 'Agamemnon's heart grew black with anger, and his eyes were like shining fire'; and 'Thetis heard, and came, like a mist from the sea.' But the nod of the immortal head of Zeus is also relevant to our inquiry.

In B we have the following similes :

The people, crowding to Assembly, were like bees pouring from a cleft in a rock, clustering on spring flowers. Gossip blazed among them. The earth groaned beneath them.

After Agamemnon's speech, the Assembly was moved like the waves of the Ikarian sea stirred by the east wind or the south; like a cornfield bowing under the west wind.

When Odysseus and Athene drove them back, they returned to the Assembly with the noise of a wave dashing on a great beach.

After Agamemnon's second speech, they shouted for battle with the noise of a wave dashed by the south wind on a jutting headland.

Finally, when the army mustered, Athene, not Gossip, was with them. The flashing of their armour was like a fire in a mountain-forest. Throng after throng they came (imperfect), like flights of birds, geese, cranes or swans, over a meadow in Asia, and they came to a stand (aorist) in the flowery meadow of Scamander, as numerous as leaves or flowers: they were as greedy and persistent as flies about pails of milk in spring. Their captains marshalled them as easily as goatherds divide their flocks. Agamemnon himself was like Zeus (as to his eyes and head), like Poseidon, like Ares. As a bull in a herd of cows was Agamemnon made eminent by Zeus that day (aorist).

That is all. I submit that the similes are not thrown in at random. The three wave-images form a group, defining clearly the lines of the assembly episode: each repetition adds to the effect. Nor can we miss the connexion between the bees and spring flowers of the first simile and the leaves and flowers and flies round pails of milk in spring of the last paragraph. If Mr. Murray's reciter keeps the bees, he will have to keep the flies and leaves and flowers; and if so, he will have to keep the birds, or spoil his rhapsody. And if we look at the whole movement, we shall recognise, I think, a fitness in the other images. If Apollo came like night, and shot, and the pyres were burning, the army, when it musters, is like a raging forest-fire. If Agamemnon's eyes in his anger were like shining fire, his eyes and head in this moment of his glory are like the eyes and head of Zeus. The movement, which begins 'Achilles . . . Zeus . . . Achilles,' ends, 'So eminent Zeus made Agamemnon on that day.'

There remain isolated images, I admit; Thetis 'like a mist,' the goatherds with their flocks, the bull in the herd of cows. These will be developed in the sequel.

The Catalogue is an Interlude, but between the Greek list and the Trojan there is an instructive simile:

The army of the Greeks was like a fire raging over the whole land. Earth groaned, as beneath the anger of Zeus the Thunderer, when he lashes the earth because of Typhoeus. . . .

It is a heightening of the fire-image, with a hint of coming trouble for the Achaeans. It links the imagery of B with the Catalogue. Let us see what happens after the Trojan list is ended.

The Trojans advanced with a noise like that of birds, cranes, who have left the storm and rain behind, and wing their way through the sky, bringing death for Pygmies. They make ready their battle in the mists of morning. The Greeks were silent.

The dust of the armies was like a mist on the mountains, not dear to shepherds, but better than night for a thief. You can only see as far as a stone's throw.

The birds, the mist and the herdsmen. If Γ was made by a later hand than A, and if B was made by yet another artist, anyhow it was a cunning craftsman who contrived the joinery.²

II

Herodotus³ quotes Z 289-292 as part of Diomed's *Aristeia*. He and his audience wanted a name for the whole strip of narrative, Γ-H, and they naturally called it after the hero whose exploits form the main part of its story. Diomed's own adventures have a unity and relevance of their own within

² A 47, 104, 359, B 87, 142, 206, 394, 455 ff., 780 ff., Γ 1 ff. I am indebted to H. Fränkel, *Homerische Gleichnisse*, for a few references which I had overlooked. To Professor Bury, who was good enough to read this article in proof and to suggest

an important modification, I am very much indebted.

³ Hdt. I. 116. Drerup's ingenious explanation (*Fünfte Buch* 47, *Homerische Poetik* I. 438) is unnecessary.

this larger group of incidents.⁴ But the larger group has also unity and relevance. The cause of the whole war, as of the present trouble, is a quarrel for a woman. So the poet, sketching in his background, shows us Menelaus, Paris, Helen and Aphrodite, symbol of that source of human sorrow. And he makes Aphrodite Diomed's first Olympian victim. He makes the meeting of Sarpedon and Tlepolemus the central scene of a symmetrical pattern. Then he puts Ares, god of the worse plague, war, to balance Aphrodite. With Hecuba for Priam, Ajax for Menelaus, Hector for Paris and Andromache for Helen, he rounds off his pattern, and prepares us for the sequel.

But he subordinates this pattern also to a larger scheme. Γ is linked with B by the images at the beginning, H with Θ both by the prominence of Diomed, now turned back by the thunderbolt of Zeus, and by the pattern of the images, which cuts across the sharp division of the narrative, and is completed only with the watchfires at the end of Θ . Θ again is linked with I by the balancing of a Greek and a Trojan assembly.⁵ That is as it should be. We are brought back to the tone of A, with its assemblies and supplications, its long speeches, and its lack of similes. The movement which began when Agamemnon spurned the suppliant Chryseis ends with the rejection by the tragic hero of the Achaeans prayers.

The contents of Γ - Θ may be tabulated thus :

First Battle.

- Paris challenges. Helen and Priam. The Oath-Taking. Paris v. Menelaus.
- Pandarus breaks the truce.
- Agamemnon's review, and the insult to Diomed.
- Death of Pandarus.
- Diomed v. Aphrodite.
- Sarpedon v. Tlepolemus.
- Diomed v. Ares.
- Hector withdraws to Troy.
- Diomed talks with Glaucus, and the two men make friends.
- Hector and Hecuba. The Supplication. Hector and Andromache. Hector v. Ajax
- Night. Assemblies, truce, the wall and burial of the dead.

Second Battle.

- Divine Assembly. Hera and Athene in their chariot.
- Greek defeat. Diomed turned back by thunderbolt.
- Hera tries to rouse Poseidon.
- Greek defeat. Teucer's archery.
- Hera and Athene in their chariot, turned back.
- Night. Trojan Assembly. Watchfires. Greek Assembly.

THE EMBASSY TO ACHILLES.

The armies advanced, the Trojans like cranes. The dust was like a mountain mist, not dear to shepherds. The similes link Γ with B, but that, we shall find, does not exhaust their significance.

⁴ I have discussed this matter in *J.H.S.* 1920, 49 ff., and in my book, *The Pattern of the Iliad*, 34 ff.

⁵ Wilamowitz (*Homer und die Ilias*, 35)

condemns the separation of Θ 524 ff. from I 53 ff., but himself puts asunder what the Muse has joined together, by making a sharp division at the end of E (*ib.* 297).

The first episode, the duel of Menelaus and Paris, begins thus :

Paris challenged and Menelaus rejoiced like a lion who has found his prey. Paris recoiled like a man who has met a snake. Hector rebuked him. 'Hector,' he answered, 'you have a heart as hard as a woodcutter's axe, with which he cuts a ship's timber.'

It ends with Menelaus, cheated by Aphrodite, going up and down the field, and looking for his prey like a wild beast.

These are the only images of immediate structural importance. In the oath-taking there are none at all. In the *Teichoscopia* there is a group of three, the old men chirping like cicadas, Odysseus like a ram (Agamemnon in B was a bull), and the words of Odysseus 'like snow.' I shall try to mention all developed similes as they occur. The reader will judge for himself how far I do justice to their relative importance in the poem.⁶

The second incident begins with a divine colloquy and the intervention of Athene, who incites Pandarus to break the truce. She came like a star, hurled by Zeus as a portent to sailors or to a host; it flashes; many sparks fly from it. When Menelaus was wounded, she saved him from serious hurt, brushing away the arrow which had touched him as a mother brushes a fly from her sleeping child. Still, the blood flowed and stained his flesh as a Maeonian or Carian woman stains ivory with crimson. Machaon tended him.

Agamemnon, indignant, mustered his men again for battle. He chid the laggards. 'Why do you stand terrified, like fawns?' He found Idomeneus with his Cretans, bold as a boar. The cloud of footmen with the Ajaxes was like a cloud seen by a goatherd from his look-out on the mountains, as it is driven towards him by the west wind over the sea. He shivers and withdraws his flock into a cave.⁷

That development of the 'mist on the mountains, not dear to shepherds' is the only full simile in the episode of the Review.

Agamemnon passes on. He has his interviews with Nestor and Odysseus. When he reaches Diomed, his patience is exhausted, and he insults him. Diomed answers with the modesty of a good soldier.

The battle is resumed, and once more we have a group of similes :

The Greeks are like a great wave driven by the west wind on a beach; the Trojans like sheep bleating as they are milked, and answering the lambs. Ares and Athene are with them, and Strife, the sister of Ares, is in the midst. Like the wave, she is tiny at first, then rears her head until it touches the sky. Finally the armies meet, and the noise is like the sound of two torrents in a mountain-chasm heard by the shepherd from above.⁸

Structurally, this group resumes the effect of Γ 1 ff. The waves here, like the cranes there, link this movement with B. But the shepherd who at Γ 10 ff. was wrapt in mist, and at Δ 275 ff. descried a cloud approaching and withdrew his flock, now hears the noise of the torrents meeting in the chasm below. For the moment, that is all.

The fight ensued. Echépôlos fell 'like a tower.' The armies fought 'like wolves.' Then Simoeisios fell. This was a young man, cut off in his

⁶ Γ 2, 10, 23, 30, 60 (151, 196, 222), 449.
For Hector's heart of iron cf. X 357, α 521.

⁷ Δ 75, 130, 141, 243, 253, 275.

⁸ Δ 422, 433, 442, 452.

prime, the son of Anthemion, the 'Flower-Man,' named after the river on whose bank he was born. Homer invented him, I think, in order to remind us, without undue emphasis, of Achilles. Hit in the breast by Ajax, he fell, and lay like a black poplar in a meadow-pasture, a smooth trunk with branches growing at the top. A carpenter has cut it down with the bright iron, to bend it into a felloe for a car, and it lies there drying by the river. Such was Simoeisios Anthemides, when he was killed by Zeus-born Ajax. Immediately afterwards, Antiphos killed Leukos, friend of Odysseus, and Odysseus, very angry, strode through the ranks of the first fighters, aimed his javelin, and hit a son of Priam, in his anger for the friend who had been killed. And Apollo shouted from the citadel, 'Up, Trojans! The son of Thetis is not fighting.'

That is the development of the theme, so simply introduced by Homer, when Paris said to Hector, 'Your heart is like a woodcutter's axe.'⁹ We shall meet the theme again.

We pass to the first exploits of Diomed.

Athene made him glorious. He shone like an autumnal star. He raged in battle like a torrent, swollen by the rains of Zeus, breaking down dykes and fences, ruining the cultivated fields. Wounded by Pandarus, he was like a lion wounded by shepherds but still valiant. He leapt on two sons of Priam, like a lion killing a cow and her calf. He killed Pandarus, but Aeneas defended the body, like a lion. Aphrodite intervened, but Diomed wounded her, and after she had gone he still attacked Aeneas, though Apollo now protected him. Thrice he attacked, and was foiled, but when for the fourth time he rushed on like a daimôn, Apollo shouted, and he yielded in his awe of that great god. Sarpedon upbraided Hector. The Trojans, he said, were shrinking from this Greek as hounds shrink from a lion. Hector rallied them, and the dust on the Achaeans in the fight was like the chaff in a great winnowing. Ares put night on the battle. Ares and Strife together stirred up the fighting. Diomed and the Ajaxes and Odysseus fought stubbornly, like clouds which Zeus has set on the mountains, and which will not leave them, whatever winds may blow. Aeneas still fought well. He killed two victims, who were like lions reared by their mother in the mountain-thickets to prey on farmsteads and at last to be killed by men. They fell and were like tall pinetrees. Finally, Aeneas was put to flight, and Ares came himself against Diomed. The hero yielded to the god. He recoiled, like a man who is daunted when he meets—not a snake, this time—a river in flood.¹⁰

That completes, for the moment, the pattern. The noise of battle was like two torrents meeting; Diomed was like a torrent; Diomed recoils, like a man daunted by a river in flood. We have also reached the central incident of the series, the encounter of Tlepolemus and Sarpedon. They boast of their origin, and fight. The son of Heracles is killed, and the son of Zeus lies wounded under a tree, the fresh wind blowing to revive him.¹¹

The second part of the movement (which, it is important to remember, includes, for our present purpose, Θ), begins quietly. After a little comedy in heaven, Hera and Athene, with the permission of Zeus, drive down between heaven and earth in a marvellous car. The divine steeds carry them at one bound 'as far as a man can see into the misty distance from the watch-point where he sits and looks over the wine-dark sea.' They leave their horses,

⁹ Γ 60, Δ 482.

522, 554, 560, 597.

¹⁰ Ε 5, 87, 136, 161, 305, 436, 476, 499,

¹¹ Ε 627-698.

in much mist, where two rivers meet (geographically odd, we are told; but poetically not without value, in view of the two torrents). And they step out to the field 'like doves.'

At the corresponding moment in the first part, the dust of the moving armies was like a mist so thick that you could only see a stone's throw. The Trojans were like noisy cranes flying to battle. The Trojans like fighting cranes, Athene and Hera like doves. Is it possible that Homer smiled as he devised his pattern? He knew what he was about. Presently Athene and Apollo will perch like vultures on the oak of Zeus to watch the duel between Ajax and the Trojan hero. And, in the sequel, Zeus will send his eagle as a sign that he has not abandoned the unhappy Greeks for ever.¹²

Throughout this second part of the movement, the similes are less frequent, but the effect is heightened. The matter is more impressive. Hector is more to us than Paris, Andromache than Helen. Also the poet has elaborated the divine machinery. When the wounded Ares goes up to heaven, he looks to the watching Diomed like a thundercloud, and it is the thunderbolt of Zeus himself, not a mere shout from Apollo, that turns Diomed back at last.¹³ Thirdly, many images of the first part are echoed in the facts of the sequel. Thus, the crimson of the Maeonian or Carian women, staining the royal ivory, finds its echo not in a simile, but in the rich embroidery of the robe of Hecuba's vain offering, the work of Sidonian women.¹⁴

The lions reappear, but in company always with boars. After the arrival of the dovelike goddesses, Odysseus, Diomed and the Ajaxes fought stubbornly, like lions or boars. Ajax and Hector were like lions or boars in their duel, and Hector, in the rout, advanced victorious, like a hound that worries a lion or a boar.¹⁵

When Pandarus shot his arrow, Athene brushed it from Menelaus, as a mother brushes a stinging fly from her sleeping child. Now, when Teucer, a more honest archer, shoots, he takes refuge with Ajax like a child running to its mother.¹⁶ Athene came like a star, and Diomed was like an autumnal star. Now Athene and Hera drive down in their glorious chariot, and Diomed, in a chariot too, is turned back by the thunderbolt of Zeus. But the stars contrive to shine in less conspicuous place, with greater lustre, as decoration for the robe of Hecuba's offering, and for the exquisite child of Hector and Andromache.¹⁷ The tree-simile finds for the moment its consummation in the famous speech of Glaucus, relating the *Diomedea* to the spirit of the whole epic, 'We mortals, for all our pride, are like the leaves that come and go in their generations in the forest,' and its quality is recalled with a hint of new, more tender developments, when Gorgythion bows his head beneath his helmet as a poppy, heavy with fruit and with the rains of spring.¹⁸

Finally, our shepherd, once wrapped in mist on the mountain, once shivering as he watched the cloud approaching—the cloud which would not leave the

¹² E 768 ff. (cf. Γ 1 ff.), 778, H 59, © 247.

¹³ E 864, © 169.

¹⁴ Δ 141, Z 289.

¹⁵ E 782, Z 256, © 357.

¹⁶ Δ 130, © 271.

¹⁷ Z 295, 401.

¹⁸ Z 146 ff., © 306.

mountains when it reached them—once listening to the roar of the two torrents meeting in the chasm below, looks out again and rejoices, when the watchfires of the Trojans are as numerous as the stars about the bright moon in a windless sky, when all the stars are seen, and all the peaks and glens and promontories; and above the sky the infinite heaven breaks open.

So much for the first occurrence of this famous simile. Here, at any rate, it completes a pattern, which a 'rhapsode' might have spoilt, but only a constructive poet can have made.¹⁹

III

The first movement of the *Iliad* begins with the rejection of Chryses and ends with the rejection of the Achaean embassy. Within this movement, after the introductory group of episodes, the Catalogue is an interlude. The second movement begins at Λ (after the Doloneia),²⁰ with the arming of Agamemnon and the shout of Strife at the ships. It develops, first slowly, then with increasing rapidity, through the second battle-series, the firing of the ships, the exploits of Patroclus and the struggle over his body, to a provisional conclusion with the rousing of Achilles and his shout from the trench. The *Shield* is, again, an interlude. But it is linked with the main movement by its position between two balancing Assemblies, the meeting in which Hector finally rejects the counsel of Polydamas, and the meeting in which Agamemnon and Achilles are reconciled. With the arming of Achilles, we begin the third and final movement. Thus the first movement begins with the rejection of the suppliant Chryses by Agamemnon, and ends with the rejection by Achilles of the suppliant Achaeans. The second movement brings tragedy for Achilles, and ends with the rejection of good advice by Hector. The third begins with the reconciliation of Achilles and Agamemnon, and ends with the acceptance of the suppliant Priam.

We shall be concerned here with the second movement, from Λ to the rousing of Achilles. This stretch of narrative contains the most disputed passages in Homer, and I do not deny that parts of it are inferior to the work of Homer at his best. Even so, much criticism has been based on ignorance of the main lines of composition. We must learn the technique before we judge the artist.

We shall begin by analysing the narrative from Λ 1 to O 219. Attempts to cut this stretch of poetry into rhapsodies of equal length obscure the structure. Nor will the scheme which fitted Γ-H prove useful. The poet here employs a new device, simple and easy to remember, once you see it, but often missed by critics—I confess I have been of the number—because they are looking for something else, or not looking for anything worth while at all. This is the

¹⁹ Γ 10, Δ 274, 452, Ε 522, Θ 555. The (323 ff.).

only similes in I are the two at the beginning (4, 14) and the comparison of Achilles to a bird foraging for its young ²⁰ K is an Interlude, linked by its similes with the main structure (5, 154, 183, 297, 360, 485, 547).

plan. The narrative is composed of alternating scenes of battle and of talk. The wounding of the Greeks is followed by the Exhortations of Nestor to Patroclus, and these in turn by the Trojan successes at the wall. But the alternating scenes are so arranged, in triads, that the pattern has the massive form aba bab (not ababab), bab. In the second triad, Poseidon exhorts the Greeks; then come the exploits of Idomeneus; then, as the third panel, the return and mutual exhortations of the wounded Greeks. This pattern is repeated in the next triad, where two scenes of divine comedy and persuasion frame the Greek victory. After that, we shall have two Trojan successes, framing the paragraph about the rousing of Patroclus. But, for the present, we shall consider only the three sections, A-M, N-Ξ 152, Ξ 153-O 219.

The second movement of the *Iliad* begins, as I have said, with A.²¹ Its Introduction nobly recalls the opening paragraphs of the poem. For the form, Achilles, Zeus, Achilles : Apollo, Agamemnon, Apollo, we now have the form, Zeus, Agamemnon, Zeus, Hector and Zeus.

Zeus sent Strife to the ships, to shout, with the portent of battle. Agamemnon armed. On his breastplate were snakes, like rainbows, on his shield a Gorgon, on his belt a snake. Athene and Hera thundered in his honour, but Zeus rained blood, because he meant to hurl to Hades many strong heads. Hector, marshalling his men, was like a baneful star, now brilliant, now obscured by clouds. He gleamed in armour like the lightning of Zeus.

The battle opens with two pictures :

The armies met like lines of reapers facing one another as they cut a swathe of barley or of wheat in the field of a rich man. The sheaves fall thick on the ground. So the Greeks and Trojans leapt on one another, and kept cutting. . . .

While it was morning and the strong day was growing, they hurled their weapons and the people were falling; but at the time when a woodcutter prepares his dinner in the mountain-glade, because his arms are tired of felling the tall trees : he has had enough, and longing takes him for sweet food : at that hour the Danaans broke the enemy. . . .²²

These reapers are working in the field of death, and the felled trees, as the first part of the *Iliad* has taught us, are an image of the bodies of dead men. Images from the life of field and forest are to play a greater part in the second movement than in the first. And the boars and lions, the fire and wave and torrent, we shall find, are worked into a new pattern.

Agamemnon raged like a lion, like a fire in which a forest collapses. Hector withdrew. Agamemnon still fought like a lion, but was wounded and retired. His pain was like that of a woman in travail.

Hector, attacking Diomed and Odysseus, was like a hunter setting dogs at a boar. He was like a wind falling on the waves. The two Greeks were like boars falling on the dogs. But Paris wounded Diomed, who cried, 'Your arrows only scratch; my spear makes widows of men's wives and orphans of their children.'

Odysseus, alone, was like a boar at bay against dogs and hunters. He was wounded, but rescued by the Ajaxes. Ajax was like a lion scattering jackals who are worrying a

²¹ 12 ff. Here I disagree with Prof. Bury in agreement.
(*J.H.S.* 1922, p. 1), but with his general ²² A 67 ff., 84 ff.
view and his criticism of Mr. Drerup, I am

wounded stag. He was like a river in high flood, a torrent full of the rains of Zeus, sweeping with it many dry oaks, many pines, much rubble, to the sea.

Elsewhere Paris wounded Machaon. Hector came against Ajax, in whom Zeus put terror. He stood helpless, then retired, unwillingly, like a lion slowly driven from a farm, like an ass driven from a field by boys, but not until he has eaten his fill. Then Paris wounded Eurypylos.²³

That completes this group of incidents. It began with the picture of the reapers, and ends with the ass in the field. It began with the woodcutter and ends with the torrent sweeping the dry oaks and pines to the sea. These trees were left to dry by a woodcutter in the summer by a peaceful river. With the autumn rains the river has become a torrent, which carries them away. Thus the second movement gives new value to the images of the first, when Hector's heart was like an axe, and Simoeisios lay like a poplar left to dry, and Diomed was like a torrent.

After the peaceful interview of Nestor and Patroclus, in which there are no similes, the battle-story is resumed in M. We ended with Ajax, like a lion scattering jackals, like a torrent carrying dry trees and rubble to the sea, like a lion driven slowly from a farm, and like an ass driven out of a field.

We begin again with the description of a flood in which the gods shall some day sweep away to sea the wall, with the logs and stones on which the Achaeans spent their labour. For the present the fire of battle is round it. Hector, raging like a whirlwind, is eager to attack, but the Trojan horses shy at the trench. He is like a boar or lion, attacking dogs and huntsmen who are massed against him like a tower.²⁴

Polydamas advised him, and he prudently agreed, that the chariots should be left behind. It is the first hint of the coming tragedy, when Hector shall fatally refuse to follow this man's advice. The Trojans now prepare to attack on foot in five divisions. The list is important, and is easy to remember because the names of the chief leaders are arranged in one of the author's favourite patterns. Hector is at one end, and Sarpedon at the other; in the middle is Asios, the fool; in the second and the fourth divisions, respectively, we find Paris, favourite of Aphrodite, and Aeneas, her son.

Asios, a foil and warning for Hector, disregarded Polydamas, and drove in his horses, which were magnificent, through a gate held open for Greek fugitives. Two champions awaited him :

Polypoites and Leonteus stood as firm as oaks, high-foliaged, deep-rooted, withstanding wind and rain on the mountains. They were like boars who wait on the mountain for the men and dogs, then suddenly break on them sideways, crashing through the bushes. The defenders above hurled their weapons, in a storm like snow, shaken from the clouds by wind. The fool protested to Zeus, 'These Greeks are like wasps or bees : they protect their hive.'

Then Zeus sent a portent, a snake, biting an eagle which has seized it. We remember Agamemnon's blazon. This is no good sign for Hector. Polydamas warns him, but Hector, as a tragic hero must, goes on.

²³ A 113, 129, 155, 172, 239, 269; 292, 297, 305, 324, 383, 391; 414, 474, 492; 547, 558. ²⁴ M 18 ff., 35, 40; 132, 146, 156, 168; 278 ff.; 293, 299, 375, 385; 421, 435.

Zeus sent a wind and a cloud of dust which covered the Achaeans. The Trojans were encouraged. But the defenders poured down their missiles like the sheets of snow that fall on a day when Zeus shows forth his marvels. He stops the wind, and the fields and promontories and shore are covered: even the wave of the sea, as it washes to the land, is checked.

That brings us to the famous conversation of Sarpedon and his friend, the introduction to Sarpedon's exploit. Sarpedon, roused by Zeus, was like a lion attacking cattle, or a lion, very hungry, who will have a sheep from the farm, though he die for it. He talked with Glaucus, and the Lycians attacked like a black whirlwind. Glaucus was wounded, and fell back, like a tumbler. But Sarpedon tore away part of the battlements.

The fight became equal again. It was like two men, with measures in their hands, disputing about boundaries in a field. It was as nicely poised as the scales of a widow weighing her wool.

I suggest that the flood, the pattern of boars and lions, the trees in the Asios incident, the men in the field, the widow-woman at the end, help to make this episode the structural complement of Λ 1-595. And that is what the content of the story also makes it.

Finally, Hector was given even greater glory than Sarpedon. He seized a mighty boulder, carried it in his arms, as a shepherd carries a lamb, broke down a gate, and rushed in, like the night. His eyes were blazing with fire.

The second triad ($N-\Xi$ 152, exhortations of Poseidon, exploits of Idomeneus, return of the Greek leaders) contains the most disputed episodes of the *Iliad*. Its structural value has not, I think, been understood.

Poseidon came, in a marvellous sea-journey.

He exhorted the Ajaxes, and went off 'like a hawk.'²⁵

He exhorted the younger men, Meriones, Teucer, etc.

Two phalanxes were formed about the Ajaxes.

The Trojans came on. Hector was like a boulder smashed from a mountain by a torrent. It leaps through the wood, but is stopped when it reaches the plain. So Hector was stopped. Meriones broke his spear, leaving the head of it in the shield of Deiphobus, one of the three chief leaders of the third Asios division. Teucer killed Imbrios, who fell like an ash, cut down by the bronze on a mountain-top. In the fight for the spoils and body, Hector killed Amphimachus, a grandson of Poseidon. But the Ajaxes snatched the body away, like two lions snatching a goat from the hounds, and the head was hurled at Hector's feet.²⁶

Poseidon exhorted Idomeneus.

Idomeneus talked with Meriones.

The battle raged like a whirlwind on a very dusty day. So Zeus and Poseidon pulled both ways.²⁷

Then the central scene:

Idomeneus killed three victims, Othryoneus, who had been promised Cassandra in marriage, Asios, who fell like an oak or a white poplar or a pine, etc., and Alkathoos, son-

²⁵ N 62 (cf. 829). At 39 the Trojans fight like a flame or wind (cf. 53, 334, 795, Ξ 16). The simile of 102 ff. is isolated and unimportant.

²⁶ N 136-205.

²⁷ N 334. Between 205 and this climax, I notice only (242) Idomeneus 'like lightning,' Meriones (296 ff.) like Ares, going out with his son Phobos to war.

in-law of Anchises. Alkathoos was spell-bound, and stood 'like a pillar of stone or a tree.' Idomeneus declared himself a son of Zeus.

Deiphobus called on Aeneas for help (3rd and 4th divisions combined), and two phalanxes formed about Idomeneus and Aeneas. Idomeneus was like a boar awaiting the huntsmen, and the Trojans followed Aeneas, as sheep follow the ram when they are going to drink: the shepherd rejoices.

In the fight over the body of Alkathoos, Idomeneus killed Oenomaus and Askalaphos a son of Ares. In the fight for the spoils, Meriones wounded Deiphobus.

Aeneas killed Aphareus, Antilochus killed Thoon, and Meriones (who was like a vulture) stuck his spear so firmly into the body of Adamas that the man was dragged after it panting, as an ox dragged unwillingly by the ropes of herdsmen on the mountains.

Helenus, the third leader of the Asios division, shot an arrow at Menelaus, but it glanced off from his breastplate as beans jump from a winnowing-fan. Menelaus wounded Helenus, and killed Peisander. He was attacked by a third Trojan, who was killed by Meriones, and lay on the ground like a worm. Finally Paris killed the rich and good Euchenor with an arrow.²⁸

Paris was leader of the 2nd division. The mention of his exploit is important. Three divisions of the Trojans are concentrated against Idomeneus and Meriones, whose work is thus accomplished. We return to the Ajaxes and Hector, who are struggling elsewhere, Hector like a flame, the two Ajaxes like two oxen ploughing together, sweating at the work.

The last part of the triad reverses the pattern of the first:

Hector talked with Polydamas, whose advice he took, and with Paris. The fresh Trojan concentration made the battle like a tempest of winds loosed by Zeus over land and sea. Hector, like Ares, led them. Ajax cried, 'It is the lash of Zeus. But Hector shall soon pray for his horses to be swifter than hawks.' Zeus sent the sign of an eagle, but Hector pressed on.

Nestor heard the shouting. He went out, his mind troubled as a sea before the wind is certain. Nestor, Odysseus, Diomed, exhorted Agamemnon, and Poseidon joined them. Poseidon shouted louder than nine thousand or ten thousand men in battle.²⁹

It is surely very ingenious. In the first triad we had the form: Strife shouted. Agamemnon, Odysseus, Diomed were wounded. Nestor. In the second we have: Nestor, Odysseus, Diomed, encouraged Agamemnon. Poseidon shouted. In the first, we had the interview of Glaucus and Sarpedon, followed by the exploits of Sarpedon; in the second, we have the interview of Idomeneus and Meriones, followed by the exploits. In the first, we had Hector accepting the advice of Polydamas, but rejecting his warning, when he bade him yield to an omen; in the second, he accepts this man's advice, then ignores an omen.

Yet the material is so disposed that the main scheme has the form: Trojan success; Oratory of Nestor; Trojan success. Oratory of Poseidon; exploits of Idomeneus; Oratory of the Greek chieftains.

As for the similes, I need say no more at present.

There are no similes in the delightful tale of Hera's trickery. To what indeed should one compare the son of Cronos, with his consort, asleep in a golden cloud on the mountain-top among the lush grass and the dewy lotus and the soft thick hyacinth?

²⁸ N 389, 437, 471, 493, 531, 571, 588 ²⁹ N 703, 795, 819, Ξ 16. Poseidon shouts (cf. the puffing away of Pandarus' arrow). at Ξ 148.

But in the central panel of this triad, the Victory of the Greeks, the incidents and similes combine to make so fine a climax that one fears to spoil it by analysis.

Odysseus, Diomed, and Agamemnon, with Poseidon, re-armed the Greeks. The sword of Poseidon was like lightning. The sea washed up to the ships and huts of the Argives, and the armies met again with a great shout. The noise of a wave upon the land, when it is raised and gathered by the cruel blast of Boreas; the roar of a flaming fire in the mountain glades, when it arises to consume the forest; the voice of the wind upon high oaks, when it roars loudest and most angrily, is not so great as was the noise of the Achaeans and the Trojans, shouting terribly, when they leapt on one another.

Hector aimed at Ajax, but missed him. Ajax seized a mighty boulder—one of many used for propping the ships—lifted it, and spun it, like a top, and sent it hurtling against Hector. And the Trojan champion fell, as an oak falls headlong, smitten by the stroke of Zeus. The sulphurous smell of it makes men afraid. There is none that is bold when he sees it near at hand. The Thunderbolt of great Zeus is terrible.³⁰

And, after that, no more similes, unless indeed we count the passing reference to a man's head held up like a poppy.

Consider how the whole series of battle-scenes has been developed. There have been decorative images of lions and boars in all, arranged in a formal pattern. From this climax all these have been cut away; but see what images the lions and boars have framed:

In A, Agamemnon armed, and Hector's armour shone like lightning. Agamemnon was like a lion, *like a forest fire*, like a lion. Diomed and Odysseus were like a boar or lion, *like a wind, upon the sea, or scattering the clouds*, like boars and lions. Ajax was like a boar at bay, like a lion, *like a torrent carrying dried trees and rubble* from the mountains to the sea.

In M, Hector was like a wind, a boar, a lion; Polypoites and Leonteus were like *oaks withstanding wind and rain*, like wild-boars in the mountain-thicket. At the end of the episode, Hector seized a mighty boulder, carried it as a shepherd carries a lamb, and burst through the gate.

In N, Hector was *like a boulder* smashed from a cliff and leaping down the wooded mountain to the plain. He was stopped by the Achaean phalanx, and Imbrios fell *like an ash cut down by the bronze*. Finally, Asios, cut down by Idomeneus, crashed to the ground *like an oak or a white poplar or a pine*, Alkathoos stood helpless, *like a stone or a tree*, and Idomeneus proclaimed himself a son of Zeus.

I have not cheated, but have reported all these things in the order in which Homer has recorded them. If the combination here in E, of the arming and the lightning, the fire, the wind, the oaks withstanding wind, the boulder, and the fallen tree, now blasted by lightning, be fortuitous—well, with young Cheeryble, I hold myself under an obligation to the coincidence, that's all.

IV

³¹ When Zeus wakes, and sends his consort on an errand, she darts as swiftly as the mind of a much-travelled man, who says, 'I was there and I was there.' Homer, as it seems to me, having completed this massive scheme of triads, does not mean to let his story languish. So he changes suddenly his

³⁰ E 386, 394, 413, 499.

Olympian scene. At O 237 Apollo sent

³¹ O 80, 170 are the only similes in the by Zeus to Hector, darts like a hawk.

pattern, but leaves no pause between the old pattern and the new. The transition is effected thus :

Hera prevails on Aphrodite, Sleep and Zeus.

Greek Victory.

Zeus wakes. Hera coaxes Ares. Iris makes Poseidon withdraw.

Apollo with Hector. Overthrow of the Wall.

Patroclus roused.

Hector at the ships.

Patroclus with Achilles.

Fire at the ships.

Patroclus arms. . . .

The exploits of Patroclus follow, with a pattern of their own. My point is, that after the massive triads *aba bab bab*, the pace is quickened by the arrangement of the alternate scenes of battle and persuasion in the form *ababab*. There is no great pause after the waking of Zeus until Achilles prays, and the Myrmidons take the field. Homer is like a musician, and musicians will understand what he does here, just as musicians have understood, and scholars ignored, Walter Headlam's teaching about metrical overlapping in Greek lyric. The pace quickens; the pattern changes; and, with the change of pattern, the decorative scheme takes on new colours. Not that the old are forgotten. The lions and the boars reappear, but, with the rousing of the Myrmidons, ravening wolves are added. The fight is still like fire and tempest. But the waves have a ship at their mercy, and the fire roars over a burning city. It is the development of a symphony, which begins quietly, and grows more and more exciting as the simple themes are repeated, developed and combined.³²

Hector, revived by Apollo, led the attack. Paris was never more gay and beautiful and reckless, Ajax never more bold and terrifying. That is the prose translation of the two comparisons here transferred from Ajax and from Paris to Hector.³³ The Greeks, before Hector and Apollo, were like cattle in a farm at night, terrified by two beasts, when their shepherd is away. They resisted, but Apollo had his aegis, and a great stretch of the wall collapsed, like a child's castle on the sands. Nestor cried to Zeus, who thundered his answer, but the Trojans leapt on the Greeks even more violently, like a wave that leaps over a ship's wall.³⁴

Patroclus heard the noise, and left Eurypylos. The Greeks reformed their lines, and the fight became equal again. It was as even as the line in the hand of a clever carpenter, making straight a timber for a ship.³⁵

Ajax and Teucer were now fighting actually for the first ship. 'Get your bow and arrows, Apollo's own gift,' cried Ajax. Teucer obeyed, and shot one hero, but when he aimed at Hector, Zeus broke his bowstring. 'Get a good spear,' said Ajax.

Antilochus leapt on Melanippus as a hound leaps on a wounded lion. But Hector came, and Antilochus went back, like a wild beast that has done wrong. The Trojans

³² Π 156, O 381, 623, P 737.

³³ O 263 ff. (cf. Z 506, A 48 ff.).

³⁴ O 323, 362, 381.

³⁵ O 410.

now were like lions. Hector raged like Ares; like a fire on the mountains. But the Greeks stood, like a rock resisting wind and wave. Hector, aglow with fire, leapt on them as a wave leaps on a ship; the wind roars in the sails; the sailors are terrified. Hector was like a lion coming with evil purpose on a herd of cows grazing innumerable in a meadow-pasture. He is able to seize one of them, because the herdsman is unskilful. Ajax was like a trick-rider on four horses. Hector leapt on him like an eagle swooping on a flight of birds, geese, cranes, or long-necked swans that are feeding by a river. Men fought with axes, staves, swords, spears; many black-bound swords fell from their hands or from their shoulders as they struggled; the black earth ran with blood. Hector cried, 'Bring fire!' and Ajax shouted. But he had to give way, still fighting, still wounding his men. . . . Twelve he wounded. . . .

And Patroclus stood by Achilles, weeping, like a fountain of black water. 'Why do you weep?' asked Achilles, 'like a little girl running behind her mother, plucking at her skirts, and looking up at her in tears, until she stops and picks her up.'

There are no more similes in the talk between Achilles and Patroclus, and there are no similes when the spear of Ajax breaks, and the ships are fired. The fire at the ships is itself the consummation of many similes. Notice, if you have patience, how the geese and cranes and swans of our first pattern have returned.³⁶ We shall have other instances of such revival, but we shall not stop to mention them. The arming of Patroclus is a sequel to the arming of Agamemnon: the Myrmidons in their five divisions recall the five divisions of the Trojans. The Myrmidons are like ravening wolves, gorged, but thirsty. That is new. Achilles prays to Zeus, and the Myrmidons go out to battle, like wasps that have been irritated by mischievous boys and have become a danger even to the harmless passer-by.³⁷

Then, with the beginning of the exploits of Patroclus, we begin a magnificent series of comparisons. This is the first:

Patroclus killed Pyraechmes, and the Achaeans were relieved. It was as when the clouds are driven from a mountain by the lightning-flash of Zeus. The high peaks and the promontories and the glens are seen, and the infinite heaven above breaks open.³⁸

It is our questionable repetition, the unscrupulous rhapsode's work. At the end of the first movement, the rejoicing of the shepherd when he saw the clouds rolled from the mountain and the innumerable stars revealed in the windless sky, was a climax and a consummation. The mountain had once been wrapped in mist, so thick that you could only see a stone's throw. He had watched the clouds approaching over the sea, and shivered. He had heard the noise of torrents in the valley. The clouds had clung to the mountain, in spite of winds. And at last the air was clear again, the stars shone, and the valleys were revealed, and the shepherd rejoiced. To the effect of the first movement, anyhow, this simile was indispensable. Here, at the beginning of the last fight of Patroclus, the same simile is used again. And here it is not the end, but the beginning, of a more magnificent development:

Patroclus and the Greeks did great deeds, fighting like wolves. The Trojans at length were routed, and a shout went up as suddenly as a cloud that sweeps into the sky out of a clear heaven when Zeus intends to make a storm. There was confusion at the

³⁶ O 690 ff. (cf. B 459).

³⁸ II 296 ff., cf. 364, 386.

³⁷ II 259 ff. (cf. M 167).

trench. Patroclus himself passed over. The fight was like a great day of storm, when Zeus destroys the works of men, wreaking vengeance on men whose deeds are evil.

We have had many storm-similes before, but never one like this, in which the men who suffer find their place as victims of the anger of the gods. It is like the addition of the ship and sailors to the wave-simile a little while ago. Patroclus killed many victims, and at last he met Sarpedon. They were like vultures.

Zeus talked with Hera, and resigned his son to death. Even the son of Zeus must die. Only, in death he shall be honoured. His brothers in Lycia shall make a funeral mound for him, and raise a pillar of stone: that is the prize of honour of the dead.

They fought, and Sarpedon fell.³⁹ He lay, like an oak or a white poplar or high pine, felled by the carpenters in the mountain, to be a ship's timber. As a great-hearted brown bull is picked out from a herd of cows and killed by a lion, and bellows angrily as he dies, so Sarpedon was angry, and called to Glaucus to avenge him. Glaucus was wounded, but he prayed to Apollo, who healed him. He appealed to Hector, and Patroclus called to the Ajaxes, and Zeus put darkness on the field.

Patroclus, angry for a fallen friend, darted on the Trojans, like a hawk pursuing smaller birds. They gave ground, as far as a man can throw a javelin. Aeneas taunted Meriones, 'My spear would have finished you, had I hit—though you are a dancer.' Meriones replied, 'Even you are a mortal,' but Patroclus called for deeds, not words. The noise of battle was like the noise of woodcutters in the forest. They fought about the body of Sarpedon, like flies round milk in spring.⁴⁰

Zeus sent Apollo to snatch the shining body from among their weapons, and to wash it in river-water and anoint it with ambrosia and clothe it in immortal raiment; then to give it to the brothers, Sleep and Death, for safe carriage to Sarpedon's home in Lycia.

Patroclus fell into great folly. He forgot the word of Achilles, and attacked the wall of Troy. Thrice he attacked, and three times Apollo foiled him. And when, for the fourth time, he leapt on, like a daimon, Apollo shouted and he gave way.

Apollo roused Hector. Patroclus killed Kebriones, and taunted him, 'Oyster-diver, Tumbler!' Patroclus was like a lion; Hector and Patroclus were like two lions fighting for a body. They were like two winds fighting in the forest: there is a noise of the breaking of branches. But Kebriones lay still. He had forgotten his feats of horsemanship.

So long as the sun was in the midst of the heaven, they fought. But when the sun turned to the hour of the loosing of oxen, Patroclus had to die. Thrice he leapt on the enemy, like Ares. And when, for the fourth time, he leapt on, like a daimon, Apollo met him in the battle, and he did not know the god. Apollo stunned him, Euphorbus wounded him, and Hector killed him. He was like a boar killed by a lion on the mountain in a fight for a small spring of water.

³⁹ π 482 ff.

⁴⁰ π 633 ff.

Menelaus fought for the body, like a cow defending her first calf. He killed Euphorbus, in his beauty, as the wind uproots a cherished olive-plant once nurtured by the breezes. He was like a lion killing a cow, while dogs and huntsmen dare not approach him. But Hector came, like Ares, like a flame, and Menelaus had to yield. He left the body unwillingly, turning back like a noble lion driven from a farm. Ajax came to the rescue, and defended the body as a lion defends his young.⁴¹

We are back again to the imagery of the first panel of the whole movement, when Agamemnon and then Ajax fought so well. But this time the development will be different.

First, an interlude, in which Hector puts on the armour of Achilles, without similes. Then this, for the resumption of the pattern.⁴²

The meeting of the armies was like the meeting of a torrent with the sea. There was darkness on the helmets of the fighters. Ajax was like a wild-boar scattering the dogs and the young men on the mountain. They fought like fire, but you would have said the sun and moon had been put out, so dark it was about the body. Elsewhere on the field the sun shone, and there was no cloud on plain or mountain. And Antilochus did not know. They fought, and dragged the body, as men stretch an oxhide, sweating at their work. And Achilles did not know. They encouraged one another.

Then a second, more elaborate interlude, the fight for the horses of Achilles.

The horses stood, like a pillar of stone on a tomb, and Zeus pitied them, and pitied men. He gave them spirit, and they flew, and Automedon, driving, was like a hawk pursuing geese. But he could not fight, for he was alone. Alkimedon relieved him: Aeneas and Aretos made a bid for this great booty. Aretos, felled like an ox by a young man's axe, was left dead, and Automedon took his armour, and drove off with bloody arms and legs, like a lion that has eaten a bull.⁴³

Then the body again.

Athene came, like a rainbow, a sign of war or tempest, stopping the work of the field and frightening the cattle; and she gave Menelaus the persistence of a fly that still comes back to bite, though it is driven off: so dainty is the blood of a man.⁴⁴ Zeus, with his aegis, watched, and still gave victory to the Trojans, until Ajax prayed: 'If thou wilt destroy us, destroy us in the light!' ⁴⁵ And Zeus sent light, and Menelaus went to find Antilochus. He went unwillingly, like a lion kept away from a farm throughout a hungry night. He glared like an eagle, and he found Antilochus, and sent him to Achilles.

This darkness, and its dispersal is, if I mistake not, the sequel to the moment when Achilles prayed to Zeus, and the Myrmidons went out, and the Achaeans were relieved, as when the clouds are driven from the mountain by the lightning-flash of Zeus.

Menelaus went back to the body. Meriones and Menelaus lifted it, while the two Ajaxes fought on. The Trojans attached the bearers, as dogs attack a wounded boar, but fell back, when the Ajaxes turned on them. The fight behind them blazed like a fire that suddenly attacks a city: the houses collapse in the glare; the wind roars over it. Like mules, which put out their strength, and drag a log or a ship's timber down the mountain-side along a craggy path: their spirit is afflicted by the labour and the sweat; so were they zealous,

⁴¹ P 4, 53, 61, 109, 133.

⁴² P 281, 366, 389.

⁴³ P 436, 480, 520, 542.

⁴⁴ P 570 (cf. B 469, Γ 189, Π 641).

⁴⁵ P 647.

carrying the body. And behind them the two Ajaxes held back the Trojans, as a wooded headland, running sharp into the plain, stops the strong mountain-torrents, and turns their waters back.⁴⁶

So, at last, Antilochus told Achilles. Thetis heard the cry, and the Nereids lamented, and Thetis came to her son. But still they struggled. As a shepherd cannot drive a lion from a body, so Ajax could not drive Hector off. But Iris came to Achilles, and bade him shout at the trench. Athene put her aegis about him, and set a golden cloud and a flame about his head. The sight of him was like the flame of beacons from a beleaguered city. The sound of his voice was like a trumpet-call from a city besieged.⁴⁷ Thrice he shouted. Thrice the Trojans fell back. And the body was brought home.

The *Iliad* is not a string of little poems. Its materials are grouped in cycles, not straight lines. Many of the incidents are arranged like Chinese boxes. Such a method has advantages for a story-teller like Demodocus, or Homer. It makes the poems easy to remember. Also, this disposition of his matter gives the poet a repertoire of stories, long or short, for use as occasion demands. All of them, as by a miracle of inspiration, will possess artistic form. But on great days, when your audience is yours, not for an hour, but for a long-drawn festival, you can recite your *Achilleis*—no, your *Iliad*—and still, if you are Homer, it will be one poem, with one splendid pattern. Because, thirdly, the recurrent themes and images have cumulative value. They affect the audience like repeated themes of music.

It is in this honourable sense, I think, that the *Iliad* is made up of many 'rhapsodies,' and that Homer can be fitly called a 'stitcher' of poetry. Lyric is woven. There are no clear seams between the parts of the design. Epic is like a series of tapestries, not woven in one piece, but made of strips placed side by side, stitched, as it were, not woven, into their places.⁴⁸ The prelude to the *Theogony*, the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*, and many other poems, are constructed on this principle, and, of course, the fact that the *Iliad* is so constructed proves nothing, by itself, about the unity of authorship. But when, across the divisions of the formal pattern, we observe the strands of another pattern, subtly interwoven, our theory of the authorship must be affected. The recurrent images of Homer—who, in this matter, as in many, was a forerunner of Aeschylus—do, I submit, afford an argument for the existence of one great constructive poet. For the tests by which stitched epic must be judged are these: the splendour of the main design, the texture of the component strips or panels, their imaginative value, their relation to each other, and their relevance—imaginative, not merely logical—to the main theme.

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⁴⁶ P 725, 737, 742 ff.

⁴⁷ Σ 207 ff.

⁴⁸ I have discussed this point in a paper

read to the Cambridge Philological Society, and summarised in the *Cambridge University Reporter*, May 23, 1922.