

WORDSWORTH CLASSICS

The Odyssey

HOMER



THE ODYSSEY

Homer

Translation by
GEORGE CHAPMAN

Introduction and Notes by

DR ADAM ROBERTS
Royal Holloway, University of London

江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章



WORDSWORTH CLASSICS

In loving memory of
MICHAEL TRAYLER
the founder of Wordsworth Editions

13

Readers who are interested in other titles from
Wordsworth Editions are invited to visit our website at
www.wordsworth-editions.com

For our latest list and a full mail-order service contact
Bibliophile Books, 5 Thomas Road, London E14 7BN
TEL: +44 (0)20 7515 9222 FAX: +44 (0)20 7538 4115
e-mail: orders@bibliophilebooks.com

First published in 2002 by Wordsworth Editions Limited
8B East Street, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 9HJ

ISBN 978-1-85326-025-4

Text © Wordsworth Editions Limited 2002
Introduction and Notes © Adam Roberts 2002

Wordsworth ® is a registered trademark of
Wordsworth Editions Limited

All rights reserved. This publication may not be
reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or
transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic,
mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise,
without the prior permission of the publishers.

Typeset in Great Britain by Antony Gray
Printed and bound by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Wordsworth Classics are inexpensive editions designed to appeal to the general reader and students. We commissioned teachers and specialists to write wide ranging, jargon-free introductions and to provide notes that would assist the understanding of our readers rather than interpret the stories for them. In the same spirit, because the pleasures of reading are inseparable from the surprises, secrets and revelations that all narratives contain, we strongly advise you to enjoy this book before turning to the Introduction.

General Adviser
KEITH CARABINE
Rutherford College
University of Kent at Canterbury

INTRODUCTION

Homer's *Odyssey* is about enduring suffering and returning home. Its hero is called in Greek *Odysseus polytropos*, Odysseus 'of many talents', 'versatile', 'the man of twists and turns'. A translation of the poem requires a similarly nimble-witted translator, one able to follow the twists and turns of the text with responsive wisdom. When Chapman first encounters the description of Odysseus as *polytropos* in the first line of the first book of the poem, he translates the term in circumlocutionary fashion:

The Man (O Muse) inform, *that many a way,*
Wound with his wisdom to his wished stay. [*Odyssey*, 1: ll. 1–2]

In a nutshell this elaboration of a simple Greek word epitomises Chapman's rendering: it is about the 'many ways' the hero travels, about his stoic 'wisdom', and about the eventual return to his longed-for home. The home to which Chapman was returning, his own 'wished stay', was the same Homer that had obsessed him all his life. Translating Homer, first the *Iliad* (which appeared in instalments in 1598, 1609 and 1611) and then the *Odyssey* (1614–15), was the major poetic effort, and achievement, of his life. The resulting text

is challenging, unique and beautiful. George DeF. Lord comments on the 'extraordinary complexity of Homer's Odysseus', adding that 'no translator has matched Homer in subtlety and richness, but Chapman's vision is so bold and comprehensive that it shows the inadequacy of all interpretations made from a more limited point of view'.¹ A more famous response to Chapman's *Odyssey* is John Keats's sonnet, 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer'. Keats's friend Cowden Clarke introduced him to Chapman's *Odyssey*: '... one scene I could not fail to introduce to him – the shipwreck of Ulysses, in the fifth book of the *Odysseis*, and I had the reward of one of his delighted stares upon reading the following lines:

Then forth he came, his both knees falt'ring, both
His strong hands hanging down, and all with froth
His cheeks and nostrils flowing, voice and breath
Spent to all use, and down he sunk to death.
The sea had soaked his heart through . . .

[Keats, p. 570; *Odyssey*, p. 5: ll. 608–12;
italics as in Cowden Clarke's account]

Keats departed at dawn, and had written his famous sonnet by 10 a.m. (it was published in the *Examiner* on 1 December 1816):

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his desmesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific – and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise –
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

[Barnard, p. 72]

Simeon Underwood points out that this sonnet, though famous, is usually misconstrued. 'The realms of gold' is not Keats's phrase for Homer, or for Chapman's Homer, but relates rather to the other poetry ('bards') that Keats

1 George DeF. Lord, *Homeric Renaissance: The Odyssey of George Chapman* (1956), p. 189. Further references to critics are incorporated into the text in the form: (DeF. Lord, p. 189).

has encountered. 'In the symbolic geography of Keats's sonnet . . . Chapman's translation is represented by the newly discovered Pacific Ocean, and this is reached only by crossing the "realms of gold" and leaving them behind' (Underwood, p. 17). None the less we can understand why the untarnishable 'gold' and the broad and expansive 'realms' of the phrase have attached themselves to Homer's poetry. Keats's sense of Homer is precisely of his expansiveness, his 'wide expanse', 'deep-browed', as tall as the night skies into which an astronomer gazes. The sense of reader-as-explorer travelling around the poetic topography of this great poem is precisely appropriate to the Homeric original, the first great 'odyssey' in literature, whose hero travels so widely into the unknown. Keats's sonnet even contains a notorious 'explorer'-related mistake; as every schoolchild knows, it was Balboa, not Cortez, who was the first European to see the Pacific. And yet the logic buried behind Keats's mistake is also significant. Keats talks of internalising Homer through Chapman, of drawing the poem into his heart, 'breathing its pure serene', of one's heart being soaked through by the poem just as Ulysses' heart is soaked through by the sea in which he has been immersed. The Latin *cor*, heart, at the heart of Cortez's name suggests itself to Keats's subconscious as the more appropriate.

This is, in fact, doubly appropriate. The beauty and vigour of Chapman's poem has reached the heart of many readers, from its publication to the present day; and Chapman himself undertook the translation in an attempt to get at the 'heart' of Homer, the Homeric truth and soul, rather than slavishly to reproduce the letter of the poems. In another poem, *The Tears of Peace* (1609), Chapman begins by imagining that he meets blind Homer's spirit, and addresses him:

And thus I spake: O thou that (blind) dost see
 My heart, and soul; what may I reckon thee?
 Whose heavenly look shows not; nor voice sounds man?
 I am (said he) that spirit Elysian,
 That (on thy native air; and on the hill
 Next Hitchin's [Chapman's birthplace] left hand) did thy bosom fill
 With such a flood of soul; that thou wert fain
 (With acclamations of her Rapture then)
 To vent it, to the echoes of the vale.

[*Tears of Peace*, ll. 72–80; Hudston, p. 293]

For Chapman, the encounter with Homer is a heart-to-heart in the profoundest sense, and his decades-long project to translate Homer a spontaneous reaction to the influx of soul that the great poems involve.

Life

Chapman was born near Hitchin, in Hertfordshire (thirty or so miles from London), about 1559. It is not known whether he attended university; his knowledge of Latin and Greek suggests that he may have done, but a lifelong distrust of 'professional scholars', expressed several times in his poetry, has been cited as evidence that he was wholly self-taught. He appears to have spent time in the military, possibly fighting in the Protestant army against Catholic Spanish troops on battlefields in the Netherlands; again there is no proof that he was in the army except that his plays and poetry seem to display detailed, insider-knowledge of war and soldiery. If he did serve as a soldier, he had certainly abandoned that profession by the mid 1590s, when the first references occur to his living in London writing both poetry and drama.

The poetry of this period seems to have been deliberately complex and even obscure; Chapman's preface to 'Hymnus in Noctem', one of the two works in *The Shadow of Night* (1594), claims that he will be happy if 'but a few, if one, or if none like it'. His next long poem, *Ovid's Banquet of Sense* (1595), carries a Latin epigraph on the title page which reads, in English, 'Who'll read this? Nobody by Hercules, nobody, maybe one or two or none at all.' The poem itself is a thousand-line allegorical account of the Roman poet Ovid's courtship of Corinna, a carefully crafted work almost metaphysical in its studied ambiguity. The preface to *Ovid's Banquet of Sense* argues that 'plainness' in poetry leads to barbarism, and that 'obscurity' in a positive virtue:

Where it [obscurity] shroudeth itself in the heart of his subject, uttered with fitness of figure, and expressive Epithets; with that darkness will I still labour to be shadowed: rich Minerals are digged out of the bowels of the earth, not found in the superficies and dust of it; charms make of unlearned characters are not consecrate to the Muses which are divine artists.

[Hudston, *Plays and Poems*, pp. 239-40]

The stress on 'learning', as much as the implied laboriousness of 'mining' out of the earth, is important. The combination of prolonged labour with extensive learning was required in so mammoth a task as translating Homer; and Chapman could expect a similar effort on behalf of his readership in uncovering the beauties of his verse. Chapman was working on the *Iliad* throughout the 1590s, and two characteristically 'difficult' poems also appeared: the 'De Guiana, Carmen Epicum' in 1596 and Chapman's continuation of Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* in 1598.

Despite this seemingly studied obscurity, Chapman was simultaneously writing for the populist arena of public theatre. 'In the late nineties, whilst writing his "dark poems for the enlightened few" ' (says Muriel Bradbrook), 'Chapman had also worked for Philip Henslowe, the impresario, writing plays for the Lord Admiral's Men at the Rose Theatre . . . in this he was surprisingly

successful' (Bradbrook, p. 11). What is 'surprising' in Bradbrook's opinion is that a poet so wedded to difficulty could write such thoroughly accessible, entertaining comedies. His first, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1596), ran for a year; *An Humorous Day's Mirth* (1597) followed, inaugurating a vigorous tradition of English 'humour' comedies based upon one or other 'humour', or fixed aspect of personality. Chapman's most famous comedy, *All Fools*, was probably performed in 1599, although not published until 1605. In 1600, Chapman transferred from the Admiral's Men at the Rose to the newly formed 'Chapel Children', a dramatic company made up entirely of boy-actors that performed at an indoor theatre in Blackfriars. He continued writing plays successfully for more than ten years: *May-Day* (performed 1601-2), *Sir Giles Goosecappe, Knight* (1602) and *The Old Joiner of Aldgate* (1602-3) were all comedies. *Bussy D'Ambois*, Chapman's most celebrated tragedy, was staged first in 1604, and was published in 1607. This tale, based loosely on French history, charted the rise of an impetuous but courageous soldier from poverty to a position at court, where his intrigues and pride result in his assassination. It was successful enough to merit a sequel, *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* (performed 1611), in which Bussy's virtuous brother Clermont is urged by his brother's ghostly visitation to avenge his death. But Chapman's theatrical work, though popular, also brought controversy upon him from several quarters. His co-authorship, with Ben Jonson, of the knockabout city comedy *Eastward Ho!* offended James, the new king, by making fun of Scotland and the Scots (James VI of Scotland had succeeded to the English throne as James I upon Elizabeth's death in 1603). Both Chapman and Jonson were so far in royal displeasure as to be sent to prison in September 1605, although they were released in October. Chapman's next tragedy was a double work: *The Conspiracy of Charles, Duke of Byron* and *The Tragedy of Charles, Duke of Byron* (performed 1608). Based on recent French history, this tale of a nobleman plotting against the (still-reigning) King Henri IV offended the French court. After protests from the French ambassador, London theatres were closed and Chapman's play censored. By the sixteen-teens Chapman seems to have abandoned the theatre to concentrate on poetry and especially on translation.

A writer's life in Elizabethan and Jacobean England was precarious in a number of ways, and financial insecurity was one of the most acute of these uncertainties. Chapman lacked independent wealth, and struggled for money all his life. He was imprisoned for debt in 1599, and unpaid debts may well have played a large part in his abandoning dramatic writing: he seems to have fled London in 1614 to avoid a second term in prison for debt, and for many years he lived with his elder brother in Hitchin. A court report of 1617 described him as a man 'of mean or poor estate' who 'doth now live in remote places and is hard to be found' [Hudston, p. xii]. Chapman doubtless believed that his best chance of financial stability lay in acquiring a wealthy patron.

Patronage remained a mainstay of artistic production for at least another century. But Chapman's luck in patrons was poor.

His first published Homeric translations appeared in 1598: *Seven Books of the Iliads of Homer* included English versions of Books 1, 2 and 7–11 of the *Iliad*. It was dedicated to Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the then-favourite of Queen Elizabeth. A preface to the volume praised Essex as a new Achilles, 'the Most Honoured now living Instance of the Achilleian virtues' (*Plays and Poems*, p. xi). The identification with Greece's greatest warrior presumably looked forward to Essex's anticipated military glories in Ireland. In the same year Chapman also published a translation of the *Iliad*, Book 18, *Achilles Shield*, again dedicating the work to Essex. Elizabeth had placed Essex in charge of the army sent out to suppress Tyrone's Irish rebellion, and in March 1599 he crossed the Irish sea with high hopes – the prologue to Act V of Shakespeare's *Henry V* makes reference to the brilliant return of 'the General of our gracious Empress' (*Henry V*, 5, Prologue, ll. 29–34). But in fact Essex returned to England in disgrace; ill-suited to war and alarmed at his lack of military success he abandoned his army without leave. He was kept under house arrest in London, attempted a rebellion against the Queen in February 1601 and was executed on 25th February.

With the death of Elizabeth and the accession of James in 1601, Chapman came by another patron: Prince Henry, James's eldest son and heir to the throne. Chapman was appointed 'sewer-in-general' in 1604. The 'sewer' or 'server' was responsible for tasting the prince's food and waiting on him at table, and this was a position of considerable status. In 1609 he published his first long poem since *Hero and Leander* in 1598: *The Tears of Peace* was dedicated to Prince Henry, 'thrice-royal inheritor to the United Kingdoms of Great Britain'. The peace being celebrated in this poem was that between Protestant Holland and Catholic Spain, whose wars (with England intervening on the Dutch side) had continued since the 1590s. Henry's father, King James, was instrumental in negotiating the peace, and so Chapman celebrates his patron. But Henry seems also to have encouraged Chapman's on-going Homeric translations, and Chapman's gratitude for this seems more heartfelt. *The Tears of Peace* begins with the appearance of Homer's ghost, and ends with praise to Henry for 'your Command / To end his *Iliads*', and promises to 'Regather the sperst [*dispersed*] fragments of my spirits, / And march with HOMER through his deathless merits, / To your undying graces' (*Tears of Peace*, ll. 1210–17). That same year (1609) Chapman added translations of Books 3–6 and Book 12 of the *Iliad* to the previously published Homeric renderings, publishing *Homer Prince of Poets: Translated According to the Twelve Books of his Iliads* (1609). This volume translated the first half of the *Iliad*, and was again dedicated to Prince Henry.

Henry seems to have promised Chapman a pension and other financial remuneration on the completion of his Homeric translation; but the prince

died aged eighteen in 1612 and after his death Chapman received nothing. Chapman must have been already working on his version of the *Odyssey* at this point, and persevered through 1613 presumably in the hope that the prince's heirs would make good his promise. The first twelve books of the *Odyssey* were published in 1614 under the title *Homer's Odysseys*. This failed to produce the money that Chapman now considered himself owed, but he persevered with the translation, something he considered 'the work that I was born to do' ('Certain Epigrams', 1619, Nicoll, Vol. 2, p. 614). The complete *Odysseys* was published in 1615. When Chapman revised his translation of the *Iliad* and published the two epics together as *The Whole Works of Homer* (1616), his prefatory verses addressed the dead prince in mournful, not to say self-pitying, terms:

Not thy thrice sacred will
Signed with thy death, moves any to fulfil
Thy just bequests to me: thou dead, then I
Live dead, for giving thee eternity.
Ad Famam. ['To Fame']
To all times future, this time's mark extend:
Homer no Patron found; nor Chapman, friend.

The implied parallel between Homer and Chapman is an insight into the latter's frame of mind; and if he wasn't exactly 'friendless' in 1616 he was certainly living out of London, no longer writing plays, rarely composing original verse, and in straightened circumstances. In 1616 he translated the little-known *Hero and Leander* (a Greek epic from the fifth century AD by Musaeus Grammaticus) as *The Divine Poem of Musaeus*. Two years later he put out a translation of the *Georgics* of Hesiod (1618); and the lesser Homeric hymns and poems appeared in 1624 as *The Crown of All Homer's Works*. His last published work was a translation of *The Fifth Satire of Juvenal* (1629). He appears to have died in poverty in 1634, and was buried in St Giles-in-the-Field in central London. A monument was erected by Inigo Jones, on which is written: *Georgius Chapmanium, poeta Homericus, Philosophus verus etsi Christianus poeta* (George Chapman: Homeric poet, true Philosopher, and Christian poet), which strongly suggests that Chapman's contemporaries regarded him primarily as a translator of Homer.

Laid out baldly in this fashion, Chapman's life comes over as a fairly mournful affair. His reputation, during his own day and after, was of a man who devoted his life to scholarship, to poetry, and to Homer above all. John Myers epitomises his single-minded austerity by quoting one sixteenth- and one nineteenth-century opinion:

He was a scholar, a dramatist, 'a person of most reverend aspect, religious and temperate, qualities rarely meeting in a poet', with a 'wealth and vigour

of humorous invention, a tender and earnest grace of romantic poetry', a man 'who held of no man and acknowledged no master, but . . . held his own hard and haughty way of austere and sublime ambition'.

[Myers, p. 39, quoting Antony Wood and Algernon Swinburne]

Homer

The work of the author with whom Chapman was so infatuated has been central to Western culture and literature since ancient times; Chapman was neither the first nor the last man to devote his life to Homer and consider that life well spent. The two epic poems associated with Homer's name, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, are the earliest extant masterpieces of Western literature. Critics are still divided over the question of whether Homer was a single man, or simply an authorial fiction devised to give unity to poetry composed by many people. Certainly, both poems were first made before the invention of writing; they bear the hallmarks of works designed to be memorised and recited, passed down by oral tradition through generations of professional bards over what may have been centuries. Some modern scholars think of the name 'Homer' as a convenient way of designating these anonymous bards; others think that there was a single individual called Homer, who lived in ancient Greece in the seventh century BC, and who composed both works drawing on this rich oral heritage. According to tradition, this individual was blind, a wandering poet without any great wealth or status in his own day. George Chapman certainly believed this latter scenario; the shade of Homer appears in *The Tears of Peace* (1609) as such a figure.

The issue of authorship is, partly, a red-herring; more important is the undeniable centrality of the Homeric poems. Classical Greece, especially the Athenian empire of the fifth-century BC, regarded Homer as the core of its education – literary, historical and moral. The masterpiece of Roman literature, Vergil's *Aeneid* (composed towards the end of the first century BC), is a self-conscious reworking and recontextualising of Homer's two poems. Modern literature from the Renaissance has been overshadowed by Homer's achievement; Alexander Pope, whose famous eighteenth-century translation of both poems owes more to Chapman than has been admitted by many critics, begins his preface: 'HOMER is universally allow'd to have had the greatest invention of any writer.' Chapman himself considers that Homer 'hath ever been both first and last', and quotes the Greeks in asserting that he is 'THE MOST WISE AND MOST DIVINE POET'. For Chapman, his fascination with Homer is based not just on his literary, poetic genius; it takes for granted Homer's continuing relevance. For Chapman, Homer is a model for poets, and Homeric heroes are models for men.

The *Odyssey* is named for its hero, Odysseus; although Chapman throughout

uses the Latin form of the name: 'Ulysses'. A Greek warrior at the siege of Troy (who appears many times in Homer's *Iliad*, set during that siege), he attempts, in the *Odyssey*, to travel home after the war. The journey is fraught with difficulty, as circumstance and adverse gods blow Odysseus hundreds of miles off course, wreck his ship, maroon him for years at a variety of locations. A bald summary of the poem cannot, of course, do justice to the variety and power of Homer's roving imagination. The first four books are a sort of prelude to the whole, dealing not with Odysseus, but with his son Telemachus, who has been awaiting his father's return for nearly twenty years. Meanwhile a group of men have installed themselves in his house, paying suit to Penelope his mother and Odysseus' wife on the grounds that her husband is surely dead, and that she must choose one of them as a new husband. Penelope has so far managed to put off these unwanted advances. Then, in Book 5, the scene of the poem shifts to Odysseus himself, who has spent many years as the unwilling partner of the immortal nymph Calypso on her island. Finally released, he builds a ship and sets sail for home again; but the sea-god Poseidon (Latin: Neptune) is still angry with him, and his boat is wrecked. Clinging to the wreckage, Odysseus is washed ashore at the kingdom of Phaeacia, where he is received hospitably first by the daughter of King Nausicaa and then by the people as a whole. In Books 9–12, Odysseus tells his own story to the Phaeacians, from the time of his leaving Troy to his detention by the enamoured nymph Calypso. For many readers, this is the core of the *Odyssey*: Odysseus and his crew encountering the Lotus-Eaters, falling prey to the monstrous but divine Cyclops, Polyphemus, a one-eyed giant who imprisons the men in his cave, devouring them one by one. Odysseus escapes by blinding the giant, but by doing this he incurs the wrath of Poseidon, Polyphemus' father. They travel on to the island of the enchantress Circe, who transforms Odysseus' men into pigs; after rescuing his men from this predicament, Odysseus visits the land of the dead, conversing with the shades of various departed figures. They sail on, past the deadly seductive Sirens and between the twin dangers Scylla and Charybdis, until Odysseus' men transgress a taboo not to eat certain cattle sacred to the sun god and they all die. The Phaeacians, after listening to this tale, agree to take Odysseus home themselves. Once back in Ithaca the hero is faced with the task of ousting the raucous suitors single-handedly. The goddess Athena disguises him as an old beggar, and in this form he is hospitably entertained by one of his swineherds, Eumeaus. He is reunited with his son, and together they come to his palace. There, still disguised as a beggar, he challenges the suitors to an archery contest. Stringing the great bow that only he has enough strength to handle, he wins the contest and immediately starts shooting the suitors themselves. When they are all dead, he hangs those of his maidservants who had slept with the suitors.

This summary, brief though it is, gives some sense of the sheer variety of the *Odyssey*, with its ur-novelistic complexity of plot and non-linear, recursive

narrative line. In charting its hero's exploration of a range of new lands and strange new peoples, it matches the text's expansive, beguiling mapping out of new literary territory. It is no coincidence that writers like Keats encounter it as explorers entering a pristine continent. Chapman himself, in concluding verses appended to the end of the translation, talks of his work as a sort of voyage:

So wrought divine Ulysses through his woes,

...

As through his great renowner I have wrought,

And my safe sail to sacred anchor brought.

Nor did the Argive [Greek] ship more burthen feel,

That bore the care of all men in her keel,

Than my adventurous bark.

The 'great renowner' is Homer himself, the man who brought 'renown' or 'fame' to Ulysses' adventures. The implied parallel between Ulysses/Odysseus and Chapman himself points up the extent to which Renaissance readers took the *Odyssey* as a exemplary text, in which the central character embodies certain Stoic virtues that enable him to endure and survive so varied a range of trials. Where modern readings have tended to concentrate on the wonderful locales through which Odysseus travels, Chapman and many of his contemporaries read these as incidental to the main theme, the strength of character and wisdom of the protagonist. Chapman's own note to the opening passage of the *Odyssey* makes this plain:

The information or fashion of an absolute man, and necessary (or fatal) passage through many afflictions . . . to his natural haven and country is the whole argument and scope of this inimitable and miraculous poem.

[quoted in Nicoll, Vol. 2, p. 11]

'Information' here means 'formation or growth of mind and character', and 'fashioning' carries the same implication. By enduring his 'many afflictions', Chapman's Ulysses holds true to a set of personal moral virtues that it is convenient to think of as stoical. Chapman's sense of the *Odyssey*, then, is of a poem that, prime amongst many other virtues, embodies Stoic truth.

Translation

Chapman's *Odyssey* has an unfortunate reputation as a relatively inaccurate rendering of Homer's original; but this is one critical judgement that is worth challenging. The consensus of most critics is that the tone and timbre of Chapman is more ornate, more quaint and more explicitly moral than Homer. Moreover, there are reputed to be many places where, according to critics, Chapman deliberately or otherwise shifts the emphasis, adds to or subtracts from, or flat-out mistranslates his source. A complete list of all these 'inaccuracies' would make tedious reading and is out of the scope of this introduction, but some specifics are worth dwelling on. According to George deF. Lord, 'Chapman consistently alters the honorific epithets' which Homer attaches to all his characters:

Where Homer calls the murderous Aegisthus ἀμύμων [*amumon*] faultless, Chapman substitutes faultful [*Odyssey*, 1: l. 47]. ἀντιθεὸν Πολυφῆμον [*antitheon Poluphemon*], godlike Polyphemos becomes god-foe Polypheme [*Odyssey*, 1: l. 118]. This change may be objected to as a violent alteration of Homer's meaning on the grounds that Polyphemos is, after all, Poseidon's son and the Cyclopes *are* godlike in their toil-free lives and indifference to higher deities. Yet Chapman's alteration, for his readers, seems justified by the gratuitous cruelty, cannibalism and social isolation in which they lived, all of which distinguish them radically from the Olympians. [Lord, pp. 58–9]

Yet it is unfair to assume that such deviations from the contemporary sense of the Homeric meaning are indices of ignorance, or sloppiness. The contrary is the case; Chapman worked extraordinarily hard, within the framework of the scholarship of his day, to be as precise as possible. Chapman's treatment of these two epithets, in other words, engages the lengthy critical debate over Homer's use of epithets in general and his representation of the Cyclops in particular. Polyphemos devours several of Odysseus' shipmates; he is anti-social, cruel and – tricked by Odysseus – stupid. Why, then, does Homer call him 'godlike'? DeF. Lord assumes that Chapman revolted against the implied impiety of the epithet, and simply reversed it. This 'mistranslation', in other words, is an active piece of Homeric interpretation, with the implication that Chapman knew what he was doing and deliberately reworked the text to favour a specific hermeneutic project. It is also the case that Chapman was alive to ambiguities in the word; in Greek ἀντί (*anti*) means both 'to be worth the same as' and 'over against, opposite' (the latter sense is the one that has come down into English). In fact Chapman read *antitheon* as both 'god-like' and 'anti-god' and translated it according to his sense of the context. A marginal gloss to the description of Aegisthus as 'faultful' makes this clear; he feels obliged to explain himself –

... lest I be thought to err out of ignorance, that may perhaps possess my depraver [i.e., as my detractor's might argue]. ἀμύμονος [amumonos] translated in this place *inculpabilis* ['faultless'] and made the epithet of Aegisthus, is from the true sense of the word as it is here to be understood which is quite contrary. As ἀντιθεός [antitheos] is to be expounded in some places *divinus* ['divine'] or *deo similis* ['god-like'] but in another (soon after) *contrarius Deo* ['anti-god'] – the person to whom the epithet is given giving reason to distinguish it.

[Nicoll, Vol. 2, pp. 12–13]

Chapman's vision of the Homeric original is informed at all levels, macro and micro, by a set of beliefs in Homer's consistency, 'truth' and 'soul'. He sought to reproduce the essential Homer-ness of the works. In 'The Epistle Dedicatory' to the *Odyssey* he lays out plainly his belief that 'the poet creates both a body and a soul' when writing poetry:

Wherein, if the body (being the letter or history) seems fictive, and beyond possibility to bring into act [i.e., to translate], the sense then and allegory, which is the soul, is to be sought.

[Chapman, 'Epistle Dedicatory' to the *Odyssey*]

Chapman's thirty-year labour to translate Homer was chiefly an attempt to understand the allegorical and essential 'soul' of the poems. In other words, apparent 'mistranslation' is in fact Chapman deliberately crafting his translation in order to realise what he takes to be the 'truth' or 'soul' of his master-texts. It gives quite the wrong impression to regard Chapman's versions as 'loose' or 'ragged'; in fact, if anything, his controlling artistry is too strong too allow the modulating intensity of the Homeric original. What I mean by this is that Chapman translates both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* according to certain aesthetic benchmarks, and that this 'absolute' governs the resulting text to an extraordinary degree. It is true that he spent thirty years assembling the finished *Whole Works of Homer* in a manner that appears piecemeal from the biographical aspect: but his sense of the 'truth' of the texts did not vary over that period. He is quite explicit about the 'soul' of the two works in his 'Epistle Dedicatory' to the *Odyssey*:

... the first word of his *Iliads* is μῆνιν, wrath; the first word of his *Odysseys* ἀνδρα, man: contracting in either word his each work's proposition. In one *predominant perturbation*; in the other *overruling wisdom*. In one the body's fervour and fashion of outward fortitude to all possible height of heroical action; in the other the mind's inward, constant, and unconquered empire, unbroken, unaltered, with any most insolent and tyrannous infliction.

This deep-rooted sense of the two works' separate 'propositions' informs Chapman's work as translator on every level. It explains, for instance, why the one is rendered in expansive fourteeners, and the other in more tightly

controlled pentameter couplets: precisely because the one is about the forces that push, relentlessly, at control and boundary – Achilles' terrifying wrath – and the other is exactly about the reining in of such perturbative chaotic emotion and the rule of 'the empire of sense'. In each case Chapman finds the form that best embodies the essential truth of the text.

This represents, of course, a particular philosophy of translation. The work is undertaken under the principle of expressing the 'whole argument and scope' of the poem, rather than in rendering localised or individual effects. As has been noted, for Chapman this meant producing a Stoic masterpiece. DeF. Lord quotes a Renaissance compendium of myths, Natalis Comes's *Mythologiae* (1581), as evidence that Ulysses/Odysseus was commonly taken as an allegorical figure: 'these fables represent the whole span of a man's life . . . for who is Ulysses if not wisdom, which passes unscathed and triumphant through every danger?' (DeF. Lord, p. 38). Ulysses as model 'absolute man' embodied ideal masculine virtues, and Phyllis Bartlett has argued that Chapman translates in such a way as to emphasise his Stoical virtues. 'By every right Ulysses should have been perfectly patient and stoical – as renaissance critics had assumed him to be – and so, when oft times his powers of endurance fail him, Chapman in friendly fashion bolsters him up' (Bartlett, pp. 270–1).

Stoicism: Suffering and Purification

Chapman's Ulysses, as Stoic hero, is characterised by his self-government, his self-control and discipline, and the strength of character that enables him to endure the trials he is obliged to undergo. As Burrows points out, conventional Renaissance perspectives 'show more interest in the ethical qualities required of Odysseus in order to overcome the hardships which he endures' than in the exotic and wonderful places he visits. Ulysses/Odysseus 'was generally held to exemplify prudence, fortitude (the endurance of material hardships), and temperance. He was frequently regarded as a man who subdued his passions and overcame the storms and temptations of life, while his companions were metamorphosed into swine for their greed and cupidity' (Burrow, p. 220). This particular ethical dimension to Chapman's poem has been thoroughly studied by modern critics (see, in particular, Smalley and deF. Lord). According to this interpretation of Homer's original, Ulysses/Odysseus is presented with a number of challenges which he can only survive by resisting temptation or by disciplining himself. His men succumb to the sensual pleasures of the Lotus-Eaters (in Book 9), Circe's enchantments (Book 10) or the urge to slaughter and eat the taboo Cattle of the Sun (Book 12); but in each case Ulysses alone resists, sometimes able to save his men and sometimes not. The resistance to temptation finds particularly striking physical embodiment in two episodes: our first encounter with the hero, when all

seems lost at sea and the urge simply to give up and die must be resisted by his iron will (Book 5); and the famous episode of the Sirens' song, where Ulysses' strength of will finds material shape in the bonds that tie him to the mast. Chapman's rendering of this last moment captures the dialectical interrelation of 'restraint' and 'onward flow' especially well.

This they gave accent in the sweetest strain
 That ever open'd an enamour'd vein;
 When my constrain'd heart needs would have mine ear
 Yet more delighted, force way forth, and hear.
 To which end I commanded with all sign
 Stern looks could make (for not a joint of mine
 Had pow'r to stir) my friends to rise, and give
 My limbs free way. They freely striv'd to drive
 Their ship still on; when, far from will to loose,
 Eurylochus and Perimedes rose
 To wrap me surer, and oppress'd me more
 With many a halser than had use before.
 When, rowing on without the reach of sound,
 My friends unstopp'd their ears, and me unbound
 And that isle quite we quitted. [Odyssey, 12: ll. 284–97]

Ulysses is here 'constrain'd' and 'oppress'd', but in a good way; he is prevented from ordering his men to stop the ship, which would mean their certain destruction. 'Stopping' Ulysses (hypnotised by the Sirens' song) is a good thing; stopping the ship would be bad. Similarly, 'giving free way' to the ship is praiseworthy, but 'giving free way' to Ulysses' bondage would be to condemn everybody to death. The play, in this passage, between 'freedom' and 'restraint' is worked through in a complex, satisfying manner; and more to the point we can see the way Chapman works this dialectic into the form of the verse itself. The Sirens' song is rendered in couplets that exhibit a far greater sense of end-stopped containment:

*'Come here thou worthy of a world of praise,
 That dost so high the Grecian glory raise,
 ...
 The Grecians and the Trojans both sustain'd
 By those high issues that the gods ordain'd.
 And whatsoever all the earth can show
 T' inform a knowledge of desert, we know.'*

[Odyssey, 12: ll. 272–83]

The dangerous stasis that the Sirens represent infects the first four lines of Ulysses' reply, two self-contained couplets – 'This they gave accent in the sweetest strain/That ever open'd an enamour'd vein'; and 'When my