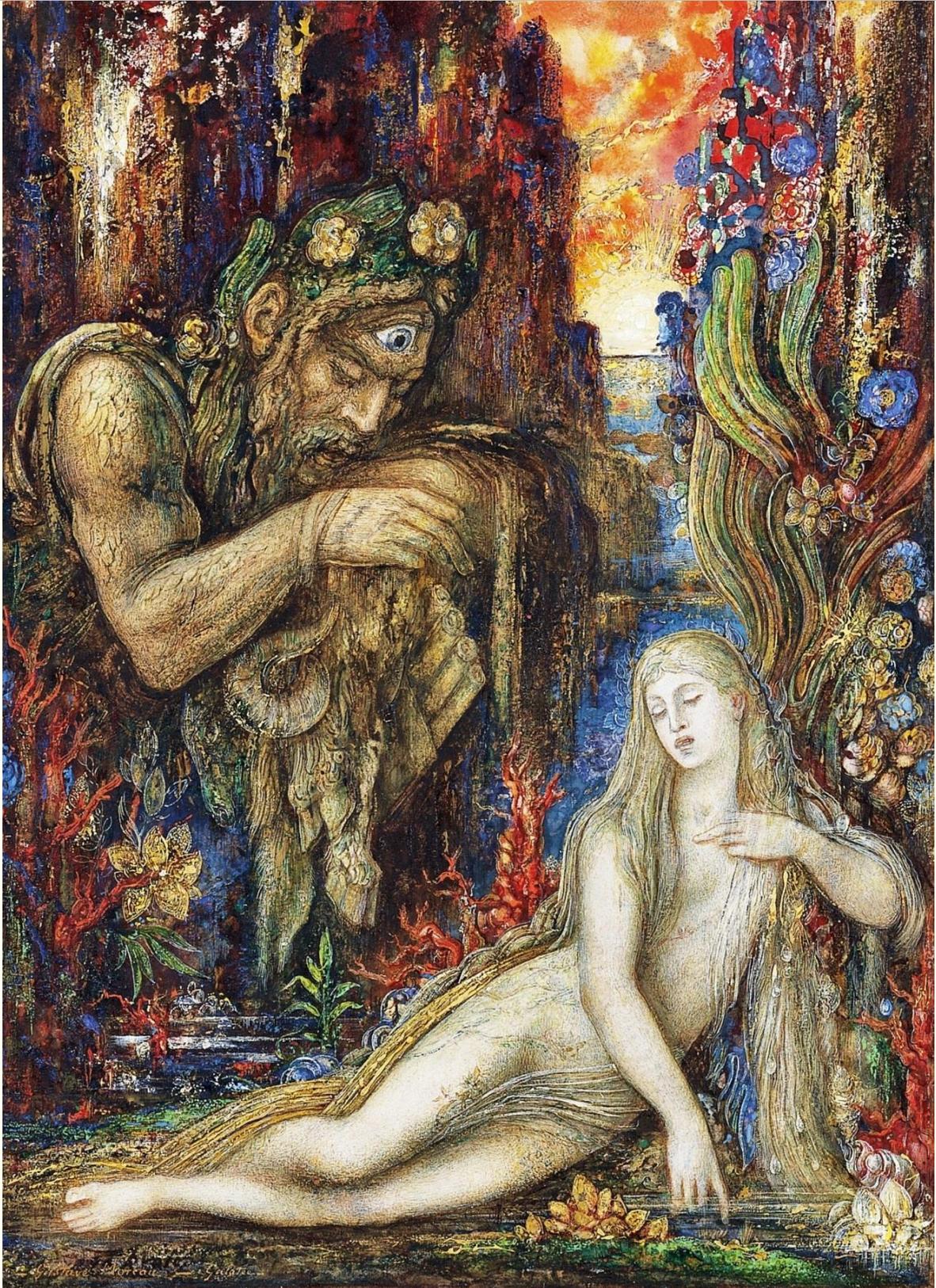


# *The Wanderings of Ulysses*



## Thomas Taylor on the Wanderings of Ulysses

From Thomas Taylor (*Tr. & Comm.*). *The Wanderings of Ulysses*. Appendix in: *Select Works of Porphyry*. (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1823); From: The Prometheus Trust, 1999 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Vol. II of "The Thomas Taylor Series," pp. 201-24.<sup>1</sup>

**I**N MY *History of the Restoration of the Platonic Theology*,<sup>2</sup> and in a note accompanying my translation of the treatise of Porphyry, *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, in that work, I attempted, from the hints afforded by Porphyry, and the work of an anonymous Greek writer, De Ulyxis Erroribus, to unfold the latent meaning of the wanderings of Ulysses, as narrated by Homer. But as, from my continued application to the philosophy of Plato for upwards of forty years, I now know much more of that philosophy than I then did, a period of thirty-five years having elapsed from that to the present time, I shall again attempt to explain those wanderings, rejecting some things, and retaining others which I had adopted before.

In the first place, it is necessary to observe, that Ulysses does not rank among the first heroic characters, or in other words, he was not one of those heroes who descend into the regions of mortality at certain periods, not only in compliance with that necessity through which all partial souls such as ours descend periodically, but also for the purpose of benefiting others, and leading them back to their pristine state of perfection. Hence, he was by no means such an exalted hero as Hercules, or Pythagoras, or Socrates, or Plato; for they largely benefited others; but he only benefited himself. For all his companions perished prior to his arrival at Ithaca. So that he was able to save himself, but not others. Says Olympiodorus, in his MS. Scholia, on the *Gorgias* of Plato,<sup>3</sup>

Hence, it is said, that Ulysses wandered on the sea by the will of Neptune. For by this it is signified that the Odyssean life was neither terrestrial, nor yet celestial, but between these. Since, therefore, Neptune is the lord of the middle natures, on this account it is said, that Ulysses wandered through the will of Neptune, because he had a Neptunian allotment. Thus, also, theologians speak of the sons of Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, regarding the allotment of each. For we say, that he who has a divine and celestial polity, is the son of Jupiter; that he who has a terrestrial polity, is the son of Pluto; and he [202] is the son of Neptune, whose polity or allotment is between these.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Illustrations: Front page, Polyphemus and Galatea (c. 1896) by Gustave Moreau.

Page 7, Ulysses at the Palace of Circe (1667) by Willem Schubart von Ehrenberg; animals painted by Carl Borromäus Andreas Ruthart.

Page 16, Ulysses at the court of Alcinoüs (c.1815) by Francesco Hayez.

Page 22, Embarkation of Ulysses (1646) by Claude Lorrain.

<sup>2</sup> [This essay is to be found in TTS Vol. VII.]

<sup>3</sup> [TTS Vol. XII, p. 426]

<sup>4</sup> Δια τοι τουτο, και τον Οδυσσεια λεγουσι κατα θαλαπταν πλανασθαι βουλη το Ποσειδωνος· σημαινουσι γαρ την Οδυσειαν ζων, οτι ουδε χθονια ην μην επι ουρανια, αλλα μεση· επει ουν ο Ποσειδων του μεταξυ κυριος εστι, δια

Hence Ulysses, from his Neptunian allotment, was a man who ranked among the middle class of characters that transcend the majority of mankind.

In the next place, in order to understand accurately the recondite meaning of the wanderings of Ulysses, it is requisite to know what the most divine and theological poet Homer indicates by the Trojan war in the *Iliad*. For Homer, by combining fiction with historical facts, has delivered to us some very occult, mystic, and valuable information, in those two admirable poems, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Hence, by those who directed their attention to this recondite information, he was said, conformably to the tragical mode of speaking, which was usual with the most ancient writers, to have been blind, because, as Proclus observes,<sup>1</sup> he separated himself from sensible beauty, and extended the intellect of his soul to invisible and true harmony. He was said, therefore, to be blind, because *that* intellectual beauty to which he raised himself cannot be perceived by corporeal eyes. Thus, too, Orpheus is tragically said to have been lacerated in an all-various manner, because men of that age *partially* participated of his mystic doctrine. The *principal part* of it, however, was received by the Lesbians; and on this account, his *head*, when separated from his body, is said to have been carried to Lesbos. Hence, the Platonic Hermeas, conformably to this opinion of the occult meaning of the *Iliad*, beautifully explains as follows the Trojan war, in his Scholia on the *Phædrus* of Plato:

By *Ilion*, we must understand the generated and material place, which is so denominated from *mud and matter* (*παρα την ιλυν και την υλην*), and in which there are war and sedition. But the Trojans are material forms, and all the lives which subsist about bodies. Hence, also, the Trojans are called *genuine* (*ιθαγενεις*). For all the lives which subsist about bodies, and irrationals<sup>2</sup> souls, are favourable and attentive to their proper matter. On the contrary, the Greeks are rational souls, coming from Greece, *i.e.*, from the intelligible into matter. Hence, the Greeks [203] are called *foreigners* (*επηλυδες*) and vanquish the Trojans, as being of a superior order. But they fight with each other about the image of Helen, as the poet says (about the image of Eneas).

Around the phantom Greeks and Trojans fight.<sup>3</sup>

Helen signifying intelligible beauty, being a certain *vessel* (*ελενοη υς ουσα*) attracting to itself intellect. An efflux, therefore, of this intelligible beauty is imparted to matter through Venus; and about this efflux of beauty the Greeks fight with the Trojans [*i.e.*, rational with irrational lives].<sup>4</sup> And those, indeed, that oppose and vanquish matter, return to the intelligible world, which is their

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τουτο και τον Οδυσσεια φασι βουλη Ποσειδωνος [*supple* πλανασθαι] επειδη τον κληρον του Ποσειδωνος ειχεν. ουτω γουν και τους μεν φασι Διος υιους, τους δε Ποσειδωνος, τους δε Πλουτωνος, προς τους κληρους εκαστου· τον μεν γαρ εχοντα θειαν και ουρανειαν πολιτειαν Διος φαμε υιον, τον δε χθονιαν, Πλουτωνος, τον δε την μεταξυ Ποσειδωνος.

<sup>1</sup> In *Plat. Polit.* p. 398

<sup>2</sup> Instead of *αναλογαι ψυξαι*, in this place, it is necessary to read *αλογοι ψυχαι*.

<sup>3</sup> [v, 451]

<sup>4</sup> Conformably to this, Proclus, in *Plat. Polit.*, 398 says that,

. . . all the beauty subsisting about generation (or the regions of sense), from the fabrication of things, is signified by Helen; about which there is a perpetual battle of souls, till the more intellectual having vanquished the more irrational forms of life, return to the place from whence they originally came.

For the beauty which is in the realms of generation, is an efflux of intelligible beauty.

true country; but those who do not, as is the case with the multitude, are bound to matter. As, therefore, the prophet, in the tenth book of the *Republic*, [617e] previously to the descent of souls, announces to them how they may return [to their pristine felicity], according to periods of a thousand and ten thousand years; thus, also, Calchas predicts to the Greeks their return in ten years, the number ten being the symbol of a perfect period. And as, in the lives of souls, some are elevated through philosophy, others through the amatory art, and others through the royal and warlike disciplines; so with respect to the Greeks, some act with rectitude through prudence, but others through war or love, and their return is different [according to their different pursuits].

The first obviously fabulous adventure, then, of Ulysses, is that of the Lotophagi, which Homer beautifully narrates, and whose narration Pope very elegantly translates as follows:

The trees around them all their fruits produce,  
Lotos the name, and dulcet is the juice!<sup>1</sup>  
(Thence call'd Lotophagi) which, whoso tastes,  
Insatiate riots in the sweet repasts,  
Nor other home, nor other care intends,  
But quits his house, his country, and his friends.  
The three we sent from off th'enchanting ground [204]  
We dragg'd reluctant, and by force we bound:  
The rest in haste forsook the pleasing shore,  
Or, the charm tasted, had return'd no more.<sup>2</sup>

Plato, in the eighth book of his *Republic* [560c], has admirably unfolded to us what the *lotos* occultly indicates, *viz.* that it signifies,

. . . false and arrogant reasonings and opinions,

for daily experience shows that nothing is more enchanting and delicious than these to such as have made no solid proficiency in virtue, and who, like some of the companions of Ulysses, being fascinated by erroneous conceptions, consign their true country and true kindred to oblivion, and desire to live for ever lost in the intoxication of fallacious delight.

The next adventure of Ulysses is that of the Cyclops, whom he deprived of sight, and irritated by reproaches. But according to Porphyry, in the above-mentioned excellent treatise, this is no other than the natal *dæmon* of Ulysses, or the *dæmon* to whose protecting power he became subject, as soon as he was born.<sup>3</sup> In order, however, to understand perfectly the arcane meaning of this fable, it is necessary to observe, that according to the ancient theology, those souls that in the present life will speedily return to their pristine felicity in the intelligible world, have not the essential *dæmon*, or the *dæmon* which is inseparable from the essence of the soul, different from the

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<sup>1</sup> The second line is, in Pope's version, "Lotos the name, divine, nectarious juice!" which I have altered as above, as being more conformable to the original.

<sup>2</sup> ix, 94

<sup>3</sup> Vid. Censoris, *De Die Natali*, cap. iii

dæmon that presides over the birth; for they are one and the same. But the case is otherwise with more imperfect souls; as the natal is in these different from the *essential* dæmon.<sup>1</sup> As Ulysses, therefore, does not rank among the more perfect heroic characters, and was not one who in the present life, is immediately ascending to his kindred star, or, in Platonic language, to the paternal port, the soul's true paradise of rest; but was a man who, prior to this, had many laborious wanderings to accomplish, and many difficulties and dangers of no common magnitude to sustain, his *natal* was not the same with his *essential* dæmon. As he is, however, departing from a sensible to an intellectual life, though circuitously and slowly, he is represented in so doing as blinding and irritating his *natal* [205] dæmon. For he who blinds the eye of sense, and extinguishes its light, after his will has profoundly assented to its use, must expect punishment for the deed; a necessary ultimately to his own peculiar good, and the general order of the universe. Indeed, troubles and misfortunes resulting from such undertakings, not only contribute to appease the anger of their authors, but likewise purify and benefit the subjects of their revenge. According to the Greek theology, therefore, he who, in the present life, while he is in the road of virtue, and is eagerly searching for wisdom, perceives that there is a great resemblance between his destiny and that of Ulysses, may safely conclude, that either here, or in a prior state of existence, he has voluntarily submitted to the power of his natal dæmon, and has now deprived him of sight; or in other words, has abandoned a life of sense; and that he has been profoundly delighted with the nature of matter, and is now abrogating the confessions which he made. This, too, is insinuated in the beautiful story of Cupid and Psyche, by Apuleius,<sup>2</sup> when the terrestrial Venus sends Mercury with a book in which her name is inscribed, to apprehend Psyche as a fugitive from her mistress. For this whole story relates to the descent of the soul into this terrene body, and its wanderings and punishments, till it returns to its true country and pristine felicity.

In the next fable, which is that of Æolus, the poet appears to me to signify that providence of divinity which is of an elevating and guardian nature, the influence of which, when properly received by the subjects of it, enables them to pass with security over the stormy sea of life to their native land; but when this influence is neglected through the sleep of reason, the negligence is followed by a temporary destruction of hope. This providence, also, of the Gods is not only one, but *all-various*, which Homer appears to indicate by Æolus; the word *αιολος* signifying various and manifold. As the advancement, therefore, of Ulysses in the virtues is as yet imperfect, extending no farther than to the *ethical* and *political*, which are but adumbrations of the true virtues, the cathartic and theoretic,<sup>3</sup> he is said to have fallen asleep, and to have been thereby disappointed of his wishes, his soul not being at that time in a

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<sup>1</sup> This is evident from the following passage in the Commentary of Proclus, on the *First Alcibiades* of Plato:

*Ταῖς μὲν οὖν ἀποκαταστατικῶς ζωσαῖς ψυχαῖς ὁ αὐτὸς ἐστὶν ἀνω κανταυθα δαιμόνων ταῖς δὲ ἀτελεστεραῖς ἄλλος μὲν ὁ κατ' οὐσίαν δαιμόνων, ἄλλος δὲ ὁ κατὰ τὸν προβεβλημένον βίον.* p. 37. Edit. Creuz.

But for a copious account of the essential dæmon, and of the different orders and offices of dæmons, see the notes accompanying my translation of the *First Alcibiades*, *Phædo*, and *Gorgias* of Plato.

<sup>2</sup> In his *Metamorphosis*, 4,28-6,25; TTS Vol. XIV, pp. 78-100; and additional notes regarding this fable.

<sup>3</sup> For an accurate account of the gradation of the virtues, see Porphyry's *Auxiliaries to Intelligibles*, p. 183.

truly vigilant state, as not having yet elevated its eye to real being from objects of sense which resemble the delusions of dreams. [206]

By the adventure of the Lestrignons, which follows in the next place, Homer represents to us Ulysses flying from voracity, and fierce and savage manners; a flight indispensably necessary, as preparatory to his attainment of the higher virtues.

In the next adventure, which contains the beautiful allegory of Circe, we shall find some deep arcana of philosophy contained, exclusive of its connection with Ulysses. By the ÆEean isle, then, in which the palace of Circe was situated, the region of sorrow and lamentation is signified, as is evident from the name of the island itself. And, by Circe, we must understand the Goddess of sense. For thus Porphyry, in *Stobæus*, p. 141:

Homer calls the period and revolution of regeneration in a circle, Circe, the daughter of the Sun, who perpetually connects and combines all corruption with generation, and generation again with corruption.

And this is asserted still more explicitly by Proclus, in his Scholia on the *Cratylus* of Plato.<sup>1</sup> For he says:

Circe is that divine power which weaves all the life contained in the four elements, and, at the same time, by her song harmonizes the whole sublunary world. But the shuttle with which she weaves, is represented by theologians as golden, because her essence is intellectual, pure, immaterial, and unmingled with generation; all which is signified by the shuttle being golden. And her employment consists in *separating*<sup>2</sup> stable things from such as are in motion, according to divine diversity.

And he also informs us that,

Circe ranks among the divinities who preside over generation, or the regions of sense.

Homer, too, with great propriety, represents Circe, who rules over the realms of generation, as waited on by Nymphs sprung from fountains. Says Hermias:<sup>3</sup>

Nymphs are Goddesses who preside over regeneration, and are the attendants of Bacchus, the son of Semele. On this account, they are present with water; that is, they ascend, as it were, into, and rule over generation. But this Dionysius, or Bacchus, supplies the regeneration of every sensible nature.

Hence we may observe, that the ÆEean isle, or this region of sense, is, with great propriety, called the abode of trouble and lamentation. In this region, then, the companions of Ulysses, in consequence of being very imperfect characters, are changed, through the incantations of the Goddess, into brutes, *i.e.*, into unworthy and irrational habits and manners. Ulysses, however, as one who is returning, though slowly, to the proper perfection of his nature, is, by the assistance of Mercury, or reason,

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<sup>1</sup> [53; TTS Vol. XIII, p. 553]

<sup>2</sup> For the shuttle is a symbol of separating power.

<sup>3</sup> [In Plato's *Phædrum*]

prevented from destruction. Hence intellect, roused by its [207] impassive power, and at the same time armed with prudent anger, and the plant moly, or temperance, which is able to repel the allurements of pleasure, wars on sensible delight, and prevents the effects of its transforming power. Ulysses, also, although he was not able to lead his companions back to their native land, the paternal port of the soul, yet saves them from being transformed, through the enchantments of sense, into an irrational life.



After this follows the allegory respecting the descent of Ulysses into *Hades*, which occultly signifies that he still lived a life according to sense, and not according to intellect, and that, in consequence of not having yet vanquished a terrestrial life, he was involved in *obscurity*. For ancient wise men universally considered Hades as commencing in the present state of existence, and that sense is nothing more than the energy of the dormant soul, and a perception, as it were, of the delusions of dreams, as I have abundantly proved in my treatise on the Mysteries.<sup>1</sup> The secret meaning, also, of what Ulysses saw in Hades, is no less beautiful than profound, as the following extract from the manuscript Commentary of Olympiodorus, on the *Gorgias* of Plato, abundantly evinces: Says he:

Ulysses descending into Hades, saw, among others, Sisyphus, and Tityus, and Tantalus. And Tityus he saw lying on the earth, and a vulture devouring his liver; the liver signifying that he lived solely according to the *epithymetic* part of his nature [or that part of the soul which is the source of desires], and that

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<sup>1</sup> [TTS Vol. VII, pp. 60–63]

through this, indeed, he was, indeed, internally prudent; but earth signifying the terrestrial condition of his prudence. But Sisyphus, living under the dominion of ambition and anger, was employed in continually rolling a stone up an eminence, because it perpetually descended again; its descent implying the vicious government of himself; and his rolling the stone, the hard, refractory, and, as it were, rebounding condition of his life. And, lastly, he saw Tantalus extended by the side of a lake, and that there was a tree before him, with abundance of fruit on its branches, which he desired to gather, but it vanished from his view. And this indeed indicates that he lived under the dominion of the phantasy; but his hanging over the lake, and in vain attempting to drink, denotes the elusive, humid, and rapidly-gliding condition of such a life.

We must now, however, view Ulysses passing from sense to imagination; in the course of which voyage he is assailed by various temptations of great power, and destructive effect. We shall perceive him victorious in some of these, and sinking under others; but struggling [208] against the incursions of all. Among the first of these is the enchanting melody of the Sirens,

Whose song is death, and makes destruction please.

But what is occultly signified by the Sirens, is beautifully unfolded by Proclus, on the *Cratylus* of Plato,<sup>1</sup> as follows:

The divine Plato knew that there are three kinds of Sirens; the *celestial*, which is under the government of Jupiter; *that which is effective of generation*, and is under the government of Neptune; and *that which is cathartic*, and is under the government of Pluto. It is common to all these, to incline all things through an harmonic motion to their ruling Gods. Hence, when the soul is in the heavens, they are desirous of uniting it to the divine life which flourishes there. But it is proper that souls living in generation should sail beyond them, like the Homeric Ulysses, that they may not be allured by generation, of which the sea is an image. And when souls are in Hades, the Sirens are desirous of uniting them through intellectual conceptions to Pluto. So that Plato knew that in the kingdom of Hades there are Gods, dæmons, and souls, who dance, as it were, round Pluto, allured by the Sirens that dwell there.

Ulysses, therefore, as now proceeding to a life which is under the dominion of imagination, but which is superior to a life consisting wholly in sensitive energies, abandons those alluring and fraudulent pleasures of sense, which charm the soul with flattering and mellifluous incantations. Hence he closes with divine reasons and energies, as with wax, the impulses of desire and the organs of sense; so that every passage being barred from access, they may in vain warble the song of ecstasy, and expect to ruin the soul by the enchanting strain. He also restrains the corporeal assaults by the bands of morality, and thus employs the senses without yielding to their impetuous invasions; and experiences delight without resigning the empire of reason to its fascinating control.

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<sup>1</sup> [158; TTS Vol. XIII, p. 597]

Ulysses, having escaped the dangers of the Sirens, passes on to the rocks of Scylla and Charybdis, of terrific appearance and irresistible force. By these two rocks the poet seems to signify the passions of anger and desire, and their concomitants, that compress human life on both sides; and which everyone must experience who proceeds, like Ulysses, in a regular manner to an intellectual state of existence. Some of these are, like Scylla, of a lofty malignity; fraudulent, yet latent and obscure, as being concealed in the penetration of the soul. And such is revenge, and other passions of a similar kind. In these recesses a dæmon, the prince of such passions, resides. For the Chaldean oracles assert that terrestrial dæmons dwell in the soul which is replete with [209] irrational affections.<sup>1</sup> This dæmon also may justly be denominated a dire and enraged dog, who partly exposes his own malice, and partly hides it in impenetrable obscurity. Hence he is capable of producing mischief in a twofold respect. For he privately hurts by malignant stratagems, openly ravishes the soul on the lofty rock of fury, and rends it with the triple evil of deadly teeth, *viz.* dereliction of duty, hatred of humanity, and self-conceit. Indeed, a dæmon of this kind will be perpetually vigilant in endeavouring to destroy, at one time the whole, and at another time a part of the soul of one, struggling, like Ulysses, against passion, and yielding reluctantly to its invasions.

But the other affections which pertain to desire are of a more corporeal nature, and are more conspicuously depraved. A wild fig-tree, *i.e.*, the will, is produced on the top of this rock; wild, indeed, on account of its free nature, but sweet in fruition; and under which, often through the day, the impetuosities of the boiling body are accustomed to absorb and destroy the man, agitating upwards and downwards inflamed desire; so that mighty destruction, both to soul and body, is produced by their mutual consent. But it is highly proper that a rock of this last kind should be anxiously avoided by one, who, like Ulysses, is labouring to return to his true country and friends. Hence, if necessity requires, he will rather expose himself to the other: for there the energy of thought, and of the soul's simple motions, is alone necessary to be exerted, and it is easy to recover the pristine habit of the soul. In short, the poet seems to represent, by this allegory of the two rocks, as well the dangers which spontaneously arise from the irascible part of the soul, as those which are the effect of deliberation, and are of a corporeal nature; both of which must be sustained, or one at least, by a necessary consequence. For it is impossible that neither of them should be experienced by one who is passing over the stormy ocean of a sensible life.

After this succeeds the allegory of the Trinacrian isle, containing the herds sacred to the God of day, which were violated by the companions of Ulysses; but not without the destruction of the authors of this impiety, and the most dreadful danger to Ulysses. By the result of this fable, the poet evidently shows that punishment attends the sacriligious [210] and the perjured; and teaches us that we should perpetually reverence divinity, with the greatest sanctity of mind, and be cautious how we commit anything in divine concerns contrary to piety of manners and purity of thought. But

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<sup>1</sup> And this is the meaning of the Chaldaic Oracle [fr. 157, TTS Vol. VII, p. 11]

Σον ἀγγείον θηρες χθονος οικησουσιν.

*i.e.*, "The wild beasts of the earth shall inhabit thy vessel." For, as Psellus well observes, by *the vessel*, the composite temperature of the soul is signified, and by the wild beasts of the earth, terrestrial dæmons.

Homer, by attributing sense to the flesh and hides of the slain herds, manifestly evinces that every base deed universally proclaims the inequity of its author; but that perjury and sacrilege are attended with the most glaring indications of guilt, and the most horrid signatures of approaching vengeance and inevitable ruin. We may here, too, observe, that the will of Ulysses was far from consenting to this impious deed; and that, though his passions prevailed at length over his reason, it was not till after frequent admonition had been employed, and great diligence exerted, to prevent its execution. This, indeed, is so eminently true, that his guilt was the consequence of surprise, and not of premeditated design; which Homer appears to insinuate by relating that Ulysses was asleep when his associates committed the offence.

In the next fable we find Ulysses, impelled by the southern wind towards the rocks of Scylla and Charybdis; in the latter of which he found safety, by clinging to the fig-tree which grew on its summit, till she refunded the mast, on which he rode after the tempest. But the secret meaning of the allegory appears to me to be as follows:

Ulysses, who has not yet taken leave of a life according to sense, is driven by the warmth of passion, represented by the southern gales, into the dire vortex of insane desires, which frequently boiling over, and tossing on high the storms of depraved affections, plunges into ruin the soul obnoxious to its waves. However, perceiving the danger to which he is exposed, when the base storms begin to swell, and the whirlpools of depravity roar, he seizes the helm of temperance, and binds himself fast to the solid texture of his remaining virtue. The waves of desire are, indeed, tempestuous in the extreme; but before he is forcibly merged, by the rage of the passions, into the depths of depravity, he tenaciously adheres to his unconsenting will, seated, as it were, on the lofty summit of terrene desire. For this, like the wild fig-tree, affords the best refuge to the soul struggling with the billows of base perturbations. Hence he thus recovers the integrity which he had lost, and afterwards swims without danger over the waves of temptation; ever watchful and assiduous, while he sails through this impetuous river of the flesh, and is exposed to the stormy blasts of heated passion and destructive vice. Hence, too, while he is thus affected, and anxious lest the loss from unworthy affections should return upon himself, he will escape being lacerated by the teeth of Anger, though she should terribly and fiercely [211] bark in the neighbourhood of Desire, and endeavour, like Scylla, to snatch him on her lofty rock. For those who are involuntarily disturbed, like Ulysses, by the billows of Desire, suffer no inconvenience from the depraved rock of Wrath; but considering the danger of their present situation, they relinquish the false confidence produced by rage for modest diffidence and anxious hope.

Hitherto we have followed Ulysses in his voyage over the turbulent and dangerous ocean of sense; in which we have seen him struggling against the storms of temptation, and in danger of perishing through the tempestuous billows of vice. We must now attend him in the region of imagination, and mark his progress from the enchanted island, till he regains the long-lost empire of his soul. That the poet then, by Calypso, occultly signifies the phantasy or imagination, is, I think, evident from his description of her abode. For she is represented as dwelling in a cavern, illuminated by a great fire; and this cave is surrounded with a thick wood, is watered by four

fountains, and is situated in an island, remote from any habitable place, and environed by the mighty ocean. All which particulars correspond with the phantasy, as I presume the following observations will evince. In the first place, the primary and proper vehicle of the phantasy, or, as it is called by the Platonic philosophers, *the imaginative spirit*, is attenuated and ethereal, and is therefore naturally luminous. In the next place, the island is said to be surrounded with a thick wood, which evidently corresponds to a material nature, or this body, with which the phantasy is invested. For *υλη* or *matter* also signifies *a wood*. But the four fountains, by which the cave is watered, occultly signify the four gnostic powers of the soul, *intellect, the discursive energy of reason, opinion, and sense*; with all which the phantasy, being also a gnostic power, communicates; so that it receives images, like a mirror, from all of them, and retains those which it receives from the senses, when the objects by which they were produced are no longer present. Hence the imagination, or the phantasy [*φαντασια*], is denominated from being *των φανετων στασις*, *the permanency of appearances*. And, in the last place, the island is said to be environed by the ocean; which admirably accords with a corporeal nature for ever flowing, without admitting any periods of repose. And thus much for the secret agreement of the cavern and island with the region of imagination.

But the poet, by denominating the Goddess Calypso, and the island Ogygia, appears to me very evidently to confirm the preceding exposition. For Calypso is derived from *καλυπτω*, which signifies *to cover as with a veil*; and Ogygia is from *ωγγυιος*, *ancient*. And as the [212] imaginative spirit is the primary vehicle of the rational soul, which it derived from the planetary spheres, and in which it descended to the sublunary regions, it may with great propriety be said to cover the soul as with a fine garment or veil; and is no less properly denominated *ancient*, when considered as the first vehicle of the soul.

In this region of the phantasy, then, Ulysses is represented as an involuntary captive, continually employed in bewailing his absence from his true country, and ardently longing to depart from the fascinating embraces of the Goddess. For thus his situation is beautifully described by the poet:

But sad Ulysses, by himself apart,  
Pour'd the big sorrows of his swelling heart;  
All on the lonely shore he sat to weep,  
And roll'd his eyes around the restless deep;  
Tow'rd his lov'd coast he roll'd his eyes in vain,  
Till dimm'd with rising grief they stream'd again.<sup>1</sup>

His return, however, is at length effected through Mercury, or reason, who prevails on the Goddess to yield to his dismissal. Hence, after her consent, Ulysses is, with great propriety, said to have placed himself on the throne on which Mercury had sat: for reason then resumes her proper seat when the reasoning power is about to abandon the delusive and detaining charms of imagination. But Homer appears to me to insinuate something admirable when he represents Ulysses, on his departure

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<sup>1</sup> v, 82

from Calypso, sailing by night, and contemplating the order and light of the stars, in the following beautiful lines:

And now, rejoicing in the prosperous gales,  
With beating heart Ulysses spread his sails;  
Plac'd at the helm he sate, and mark'd the skies,  
Nor clos'd in sleep his ever watchful eyes.  
There view'd the Pleiads, and the northern team,  
And great Orion's more refulgent beam;  
To which around the axle of the sky  
The Bear, revolving, points his golden eye;  
Who shines exalted on the ethereal plain,  
Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main.<sup>1</sup>

For what he here says of Ulysses, is perfectly conformable to what is said by Plato in the seventh book of his *Republic* [516b], respecting the man who is to be led from the cave, which he there describes, to the [213] light of day, *i.e.*, from a sensible to an intellectual life, *viz.*,

. . . that he will more easily see what the heavens contain, and the heavens themselves, by *looking in the night to the light of the stars and the moon*, than by day looking on the sun, and the light of the sun.

For by this, as Proclus well observes:

Plato signifies the contemplation of intelligibles, of which the stars and their light are the imitations, so far as all of them partake of the form of the sun, in the same manner as intelligibles are characterized by the nature of *The Good*. These, then, such a one must contemplate, that he may understand their essence and those summits of their nature, by which they are deiform processions from the ineffable principle of things.

Ulysses therefore, who is hastening to an intellectual life, contemplates these lucid objects with vigilant eyes, rejoicing in the illuminations and assistance they afford him while sailing over the dark ocean of a sensible life.

But as he is now earnestly engaged in departing from sense, he must unavoidably be pursued by the anger of Neptune, the lord of generation and a sensible life, whose service he has forsaken, and whose offspring he has blinded by stratagem, and irritated by reproach. Hence, in the midst of these delightful contemplations, he is almost overwhelmed by the waves of misfortune, roused by the wrath of his implacable foe. He is, however, through divine assistance, or Leucothea, enabled to sustain the dreadful storm. For, receiving from divinity the immortal fillet of true fortitude, and binding it under his breast (the proper seat of courage), he encounters the billows of adversity, and bravely shoots along the boisterous ocean of life. It must, however, be carefully observed, that the poet is far from ascribing a certain passion to a divine nature, when he speaks of the anger of Neptune: for, in thus speaking, he, as well as other theologians, intended only to signify our inaptitude to the participation of its beneficent influence.

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<sup>1</sup> v, 269

Ulysses, therefore, having with much difficulty escaped the dangers arising from the wrath of Neptune, lands at length on the island of Phæacia, where he is hospitably received, and honourably dismissed. Now, as it is proper that he who, like Ulysses, departs from the delusions of imagination, should immediately betake himself to the more intellectual light of the rational energy of the soul, the land of Phæacia ought to correspond to our intellectual part, and particularly to that portion of it which is denominated in Greek *dianoia*, and which is characterized by the power of reasoning scientifically, deriving the principles of its discursive energy from intellect. And that it has this correspondence, the following observations will, I persuade myself, abundantly evince. In the first place, then, this island is represented by [214] the poet as enjoying a perpetual spring, which plainly indicates that it is not any terrestrial situation. Indeed, the critical commentators have been so fully convinced of this, that they acknowledge Homer describes Phæacia as one of the Fortunate Islands; but they have not attempted to penetrate his design in such a description. If, however, we consider the perfect liberty, unfading variety, and endless delight, which our intellectual part affords, we shall find that it is truly the Fortunate Island of the soul, in which, by the exercise of the theoretic virtues, it is possible for a man, even in the present life, to obtain genuine felicity, though not in that [such?] perfection as when he is liberated from the body. With respect to the Fortunate Islands, their occult meaning is thus beautifully unfolded by Olympiodorus, in his MS. commentary on the *Gorgias* of Plato:<sup>1</sup>

*Δει δε ειδεναι οτι αι νησοι υπερκυπτουσι της θαλασσης ανωτερω ουσαι, την ουν πολιτειαν την υπερκυψασαν του βιου και της γεννησεως, μακαρων νησους καλουσι ταυτον δε εστι και το ηλυσιον πεδιον· δια τοι τουτο και ο Ηρακλης τελευταιου αθλου, εν τοις εσπεριοις μερεσιw εποιησατο, αντι κατηγωνισατο του σκοτεινου και χθονιου βιου, και λοιπον εν ημερα, ο εστιν εν αληθεια και φωτι εζη:*

*i.e.,*

It is necessary to know that [the] islands are raised above, being higher than the sea. A condition of being, therefore, which transcends this corporeal life and generation, is denominated the islands of the blessed; but these are the same with the Elysian fields. And on this account, Hercules is reported to have accomplished his last labour in the Hesperian regions; signifying by this, that having vanquished an obscure and terrestrial life, he afterwards lived in open day, that is, in truth and resplendent light.

In the next place, the poet, by his description of the palace of Alcinous, the king of this island, admirably indicates the pure and splendid light of the energy of reason. For he says of it:

The front appear'd with radiant splendours gay,  
Bright as the lamp of night, or orb of day.  
The walls were massy brass: the cornice high  
Blue metals crown'd in colours of the sky.  
Rich plates of gold the folding doors incase;  
The pillars silver on a brazen base.

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<sup>1</sup> [TTS Vol. XII, p. 426]

Silver the lintels deep projecting o'er,  
And gold the ringlets that command the door.  
Two rows of stately dogs on either hand,  
In sculptur'd gold, and labour'd silver, stand.  
These Vulcan form'd intelligent to wait  
Immortal guardians at Alcinous' gate.<sup>1</sup> [215]

And he represents it as no less internally luminous by night.

Refulgent pedestals the walls surround,  
Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd;  
The polish'd ore, reflecting ev'ry ray,  
Blaz'd on the banquets with a double day.

Indeed, Homer, by his description of the outside of this palace, sufficiently indicates its agreement with the planet Mercury, the deity which presides over the rational energy. For this God, in the language of Proclus,<sup>2</sup>

. . . unfolds into light intellectual gifts, fills all things with divine *reasons* [*i.e.*, forms, and productive principles], elevates souls to intellect, wakens them as from a profound sleep, converts them through investigation to themselves, and by a certain obstetric art and invention of pure intellect, brings them to a blessed life.

According to astronomers, likewise, the planet Mercury is resplendent with the colours of all the other planets. Thus Baptista Porta in *Cœlest. Physiog.*, p. 88:

*Videbis in eo Saturni luridum, Martis ignem, Jovis candidum, Veneris flavum, necnon utriusque nitor, hilaritasque, et ob id non peculiaris formæ, sed eorum formam capit, cum quibus associatur, ob id in describendo ejus colore astrologi differunt.*

*i.e.*,

You may perceive in this planet the pale colour of Saturn, the fire of Mars, the whiteness of Jupiter, and the yellow of Venus; and likewise the brilliancy and hilarity of each. On this account it is not of a peculiar form, but receives the form of its associates, and thus causes astrologers to differ in describing its colour.

But that the island of Phæacia is the dominion of reason, is, I think, indisputably confirmed by Homer's account of the ships fabricated by its inhabitants. For of these, he says:

So shalt thou instant reach the realm assign'd,  
In wond'rous ships self-mov'd, instinct with mind.  
No helm secures their course, no pilot guides,  
Like man intelligent they plough the tides,  
Conscious of ev'ry coast and ev'ry bay,

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<sup>1</sup> vii, 84

<sup>2</sup> In Euclid's *Elements*, I, p. 14

That lies beneath the sun's all-seeing ray;  
And veil'd in clouds impervious to the eye,  
Fearless and rapid through the deep they fly.<sup>1</sup> [216]

For it is absurd to suppose that Homer would employ such an hyperbole in merely describing the excellency of the Phæacian ships. Hence, as it so greatly surpasses the bounds of probability, and is so contrary to the admirable prudence which Homer continually displays, it can only be admitted as an allegory, pregnant with latent meaning, and the recondite wisdom of antiquity. The poet likewise adds respecting the Phæacians:

These did the ruler of the deep ordain  
To build proud navies, and command the main;  
On canvas wings to cut the wat'ry way,  
No bird more light, *no thought more swift than they.*

The last of which lines so remarkably agrees with the preceding explanation, that I presume no stronger confirmation can be desired. Nor is the original less satisfactory:

των νεες ωκειαι ωσει πτερον ηε νοημα.<sup>2</sup>

*i.e.,*

The ships of these men are swift as a wing, or as a *conception of the mind.*

But the inhabitants of the palace are represented as spending their days in continual festivity, and unceasing mirth; in listening to the harmony of the lyre, or in forming the tuneful mazes of the joyful dance. For to the man who lives under the guidance of reason, or to the good man, every day, as Diogenes said, is a festival. Hence, such a one is constantly employed in tuning the lyre of recollection, in harmonious revolutions about an intelligible essence, and the never-satiating and deifying banquet of intellect.

And here we may observe how much the behaviour of Ulysses, at the palace of Alcinous, confirms the preceding exposition, and accords with his character, as a man passing in a regular manner from the delusions of sense, to the realities of intellectual enjoyment. For as he is now converted to himself, and is seated in the palace of reason, it is highly proper that he should call to mind his past conduct, and be afflicted with the survey; and that he should be awakened to sorrow by the lyre of reminiscence, and weep over the follies of his past active life. Hence, when the divine bard Demodocus, inspired by the fury of the Muses, sings the contention between Ulysses and Achilles, on his golden lyre, Ulysses is vehemently affected with the relation. And when the inhabitants of the palace, *i.e.,* the powers and energies of the rational soul, transported with the song demanded its repetition,

Again Ulysses veil'd his pensive head,  
Again, unmann'd, a shower of sorrow shed. [217]

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<sup>1</sup> viii, 556

<sup>2</sup> vii, 33



For to the man who is making a proficiency in virtue, the recollection of his former conduct is both pleasing and painful; pleasing, so far as in some instances it was attended with rectitude, but painful so far as in others it was erroneous.

Ulysses, also, is with the greatest propriety represented as relating his past adventures in the palace of Alcinous. For as he now betakes himself to the intellectual light of the reasoning power, it is highly necessary that he should review his past conduct, faithfully enumerate the errors of his life, and anxiously solicit a return to true manners and perfect rectitude of mind. As likewise he is now on his passage, by the pure energy of reason to regain the lost empire of his soul, he is represented as falling into so profound a sleep in his voyage, as to be insensible for some time of its happy consummation; by which the poet indicates his being separated from sensible concerns, and wholly converted to the energies of the rational soul. Nor is it without reason that the poet represents Ithaca, as presenting itself to the mariners' view, when the bright morning star emerges from the darkness of night. For thus he sings:

But when the morning star, with early ray,  
Flam'd in the front of heav'n and promis'd day;  
Like distant clouds, the mariner descries  
Fair Ithaca's emerging hills arise.<sup>1</sup>

Since it is only by the dawning beams of intellect that the discursive energy of reason can gain a glimpse of the native country and proper seat of empire of the soul.

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<sup>1</sup> xiii, 93

Ulysses therefore, being now converted to the energies of the rational soul, and anxious to commence the cathartic virtues, recognises, through the assistance of Minerva, or wisdom, his native land: and immediately enters into a consultation with the Goddess, how he may effectually banish the various perturbations and inordinate desires, which yet lurk in the penetralia of his soul. For this purpose, it is requisite that he should relinquish all external possessions, mortify every sense, and employ every stratagem, which may finally destroy these malevolent foes. Hence, the garb of poverty, the wrinkles of age, and the want of the necessaries of life, are symbols of mortified habits, desertion of sensible pursuits, and an intimate conversion to intellectual good. For the sensitive eye must now give place to the purer sight of the rational soul; and the strength and energies of the corporeal nature must yield to the superior vigour of intellectual exertion, and the severe exercise of [218] cathartic virtue. And this, Homer appears most evidently to indicate in the following beautiful lines:

Now seated in the olive's sacred shade,  
Confer the hero and the martial maid.  
The Goddess of the azure eyes began:  
Son of Laërtes! much experienc'd man!  
The suitor train thy earliest care demand,  
Of that luxurious race to rid the land.  
Three years thy house their lawless rule has seen,  
And proud addresses to the matchless queen;<sup>1</sup>  
But she thy absence mourns from day to day,  
And inly bleeds, and silent wastes away;  
Elusive of the bridal hour, she gives  
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.<sup>2</sup>

Hence:

It fits thee now to wear a dark disguise,  
And secret walk unknown to mortal eyes;  
For this my hand shall wither ev'ry grace,  
And ev'ry elegance of form and face,  
O'er thy smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread,  
Turn hoar the auburn honours of thy head,  
Disfigure every limb with coarse attire,  
And in' thine eyes extinguish all the fire;  
Add all the wants and the decays of life,  
Estrange thee from thy own; thy son, thy wife;  
From the loath'd object ev'ry sight shall turn,  
And the blind suitors their destruction scorn.<sup>3</sup>

After this follows the discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus, which is no less philosophically sublime than poetically beautiful. For by Telemachus, we must understand *a*

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, Philosophy; for of this Penelope is an image.

<sup>2</sup> *xiii*, 397

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

*true scientific conception of things*; since this is the legitimate offspring of the energy of the rational soul in conjunction with philosophy. Hence Ulysses, while employed in the great work of mortification, recognizes his genuine offspring, and secretly plans with him the destruction of his insidious foes. And hence [219] we may see the propriety of Telemachus being represented as exploring his absent father, and impatient for his return. For the rational soul then alone associates with a true conception of things, when it withdraws itself from sensible delights, and meditates a restoration of its fallen dignity and original sway.

And now Ulysses presents himself to our view in the habits of mortification, hastening to his long deserted palace, or the occult recesses of his soul, that he may mark the conduct and plan the destruction of those baneful passions which are secretly attempting to subvert the empire of his mind. Hence, the poet very properly and pathetically exclaims:

And now his city strikes the monarch's eyes,  
Alas! how chang'd! a man of miseries;  
Propt on a staff, a beggar, old and bare,  
In tatter'd garments, flutt'ring with the air.<sup>1</sup>

However, as this disguise was solely assumed for the purpose of procuring ancient purity and lawful rule, he divests himself of the torn garments of mortification, as soon as he begins the destruction of occult desires; and resumes the proper dignity and strength of his genuine form. But it is not without reason that Penelope, who is the image of philosophy, furnishes the instrument by which the hostile rout of passions are destroyed. For what besides the arrows of philosophy can extirpate the leading bands of impurity and vice? Hence, as soon as he is furnished with the irresistible weapon, he no longer defers the ruin of his insidious foes, but

Then fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode;  
Stript of his rags, he blaz'd out like a God.  
Full in their face the lifted bow he bore,  
And quiver'd deaths a formidable store;  
Before his feet the rattling show'r he threw,  
And thus terrific to the suitor crew.<sup>2</sup>

But Homer represents Penelope as remaining ignorant of Ulysses, even after the suitors are destroyed, and he is seated on the throne of majesty, anxious to be known, and impatient to return her chaste and affectionate embrace. For thus he describes her:

Then gliding through the marble valves in state,  
Oppos'd before the shining fire she sate. [220]  
The monarch, by a column high enthron'd,  
His eye withdrew, and fixed it on the ground,  
Anxious to hear his queen the silence break:  
Amaz'd she sate, and impotent to speak;

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<sup>1</sup> xvii, 201

<sup>2</sup> xxii, 1

O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,  
Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts again.<sup>1</sup>

By which Homer indicates that Philosophy, through her long absence from the soul, and the foreign manners and habits which the soul had assumed, is a stranger to it, so that it is difficult for her to recognize the union and legitimate association which once subsisted between them. However, in order to facilitate this discovery, Ulysses renders all pure and harmonious within the recesses of his soul; and by the assistance of Minerva, or wisdom, resumes the garb and dignity which he had formerly displayed.

Then instant to the bath (the monarch cries)  
Bid the gay youth and sprightly virgins rise,  
Thence all descend in pomp and proud array,  
And bid the dome resound the mirthful lay;  
While the sweet lyrist airs of raptures sings,  
And forms the dance responsive to the strings.<sup>2</sup>

And afterwards Ulysses is described as appearing, through the interposition of Minerva, *like one of the immortals*.

So Pallas his heroic form improves,  
With bloom divine, and like a God he moves.<sup>3</sup>

For, indeed, he who, like Ulysses, has completely destroyed the domination of his passions, and purified himself, through the cathartic virtues, from their defiling nature, no longer ranks in the order of mortals, but is assimilated to divinity. And now, in order that he may become entirely known to Philosophy, that chaste Penelope of the soul, is only requisite for him to relate the secrets of their mystic union, and recognize the bower of intellectual love. For then perfect recollection will ensue; and the anxiety of diffidence will be changed to transports of assurance, and tears of rapturous delight.

And thus we have attended Ulysses in his various wanderings and woes, till, through the *cathartic* virtues, he recovers the ruined empire his soul. But, as it is requisite that he should, in the next place, [221] possess and energize according to the theoretic or contemplative virtues, the end of which is a union with deity, as far as this can be effected by man in the present life, Homer only indicates to us his attainment of this end, without giving a detail of the gradual advances by which he arrived at this consummate felicity. This union is occultly signified by Ulysses first beholding, and afterwards ardently embracing his father with ecstatic delight. With most admirable propriety, also, is Ulysses represented as proceeding, in order to effect this union, by himself *alone*, to his father who is also *alone*.

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<sup>1</sup> xxiii, 88

<sup>2</sup> xxiii, 131

<sup>3</sup> xxiii, 163

*Alone* and unattended, let me try.  
If yet I share the old man's memory,<sup>1</sup>

says Ulysses. And afterwards it is said,

But all *alone* the hoary king he found.<sup>2</sup>

For a union with the ineffable *one* of the Demiurgus, the true father of the soul, can only be accomplished by the soul recurring to its own *unity*; and having for this purpose previously dismissed and abandoned everything foreign to it. This occurrence, indeed, of the soul with deity, is, as Plotinus divinely says, *φύγη μουρου προς μουρου*, a *flight of the alone to the alone*,<sup>3</sup> in which most beautiful expression I have no doubt he alludes to this mystic termination of the wanderings of Ulysses, in the embraces of his father. Proclus also, in a no less admirable manner, alludes to this union in his Commentaries on the *Timæus* of Plato.<sup>4</sup> The allusion is in his comment on the words

It is difficult, therefore, to discover the maker and father of this universe; and, when found, it is impossible to speak of him to all men.

On this passage Proclus observes:

It is necessary that the soul, becoming an intellectual world, and being as much as possible assimilated to the whole intelligible world, should introduce herself to the maker of the universe; and from this introduction, should, in a certain respect, become familiar with him through a continued intellectual energy. For uninterrupted energy about anything calls forth and resuscitates our dormant ideas. But through this familiarity, becoming stationed at the door of the father, it is necessary that we should be united to him. For discovery is this, to [222] meet with him, to be united to him, *to associate alone with the alone*, and to see him himself, the soul hastily withdrawing herself from every other energy to him. For, being present with her father, she then considers scientific discussions to be but words,<sup>5</sup> banquets together with him on the truth of real being, and in pure splendour is purely initiated in entire and stable visions. Such, therefore, is the discovery of the father, not that which is doxastic [or pertaining to opinion]; for this is dubious, and not very remote from the irrational life. Neither is it scientific; for this is syllogistic and composite, and does not come into contact with the intellectual essence of the intellectual Demiurgus. But it is that which subsists according to intellectual vision itself, a contact with the intelligible, and a union with the demiurgic intellect. For this may properly be denominated difficult, either as hard to obtain, presenting itself to souls after every evolution of life, or as the true Labour of souls. For, after the wandering about generation, after purification, and the light of science, intellectual energy and the intellect which is in us shine forth, placing the soul

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<sup>1</sup> xxiv, 215

<sup>2</sup> xxiv, 225

<sup>3</sup> These are the concluding words of the last book of his last Ennead. [TTS Vol. III, p. 413]

<sup>4</sup> See my translation of that work. [92d, TTS Vol. XV, p. 280]

<sup>5</sup> This is in consequence of a union with the Demiurgus being so much superior to scientific perception.

in the father as in a port, purely establishing her in demiurgic intellections, and conjoining light with light; not such as that of science, but more beautiful, more intellectual, and partaking more of the nature of *The One* than this. *For this is the paternal port, and the discovery of the father, viz. an undefiled union with him.*

With great beauty also, and in perfect conformity to the most recondite theology, is the father of Ulysses represented as coarsely clothed, and occupied in botanical labours:

But all alone the hoary king he found;  
His habit coarse, but warmly wrapt around;  
His head, that bow'd with many a pensive care,  
Fenc'd with a double cap of goatskin hair;  
His buskins old, in former service torn,  
But well repair'd; and gloves against the thorn.  
In this array the kingly gard'ner stood,  
And clear'd a plant, encumber'd with its wood.<sup>1</sup>

For this simplicity, and coarseness of the garb of Læertes, considered as an image of the true father of Ulysses, is, in every respect, conformable to the method adopted by ancient mythologists in their adumbrations [223] of deity. For they imitated the transcendency of divine natures by things preternatural; a power more divine than all reason by things irrational; and, by apparent deformity, a beauty which surpasses everything corporeal. This array, therefore, of the father of Ulysses, is, in the language of Proclus, indicative

. . . of an essence established in the simplicity of *The One*, and vehemently rejoicing, as some one of the piously wise says, in an unadorned privation of form, and extending it to those who are able to survey it.<sup>2</sup>

And the botanical labours of Læertes are an image of the providential attention of the Demiurgus to the immediate ramifications and blossoms of his own divine essence, in which they are ineffably rooted, and from which they eternally germinate.

Though Ulysses, however, is placed through the theoretic virtues in the paternal port, as far as this is possible to be effected in the present life, yet we must remember, according to the beautiful observation of Porphyry, [p. 161] that he is not freed from molestation, till he has passed over the raging sea of a material nature; *i.e.*, has become impassive<sup>3</sup> to the excitations of the irrational life, and is entirely abstracted from external concerns. For,

Then heav'n decrees in peace to end his days,  
And steal himself from life by slow decays;  
Unknown to pain, in age resign his breath,

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<sup>1</sup> xxiv, 225

<sup>2</sup> *τα μεν γαρ εστι θεια και εν τη απλοτητι του ενός ιδρυμενα την ακταλλοπιστον ευμορφιαν (lege αμορφιαν) ως φησι τις των τα οσια σοφων, διαφεροντως αγαπωντα, και προτεινοντα τοις εις αυτα βλεπειν δυναμενοις. — Procl. in Parmenid., lib. i, p. 38, 8vo Parisiis 1821*

<sup>3</sup> This impassivity, or perfect subjugation of the passions to reason, which is the *true apathy* of the Stoics and Platonists, is indicated by Ulysses finding a nation "Who ne'er knew salt or heard the billows roar."

When late stern Neptune points the shaft of death;  
To the dark grave retiring as to rest;  
His people blessing, by his people blest.<sup>1</sup>

I shall only observe farther, that Plotinus also considered the wanderings of Ulysses as a fabulous narration containing a latent meaning, such as that which we have above unfolded. This is evident from the following extract from his admirable treatise *On the Beautiful*:<sup>2</sup> [224]

It is here, then (in order to survey the beautiful itself) that we may more truly exclaim:

Haste, let us fly and all our sails expand,  
To gain our dear, our long-lost native land.<sup>3</sup>

But by what leading stars shall we direct our flight, and by what means avoid the magic power of Circe, and the detaining charms of Calypso? For thus the fable of Ulysses obscurely signifies, which feigns him abiding an unwilling exile, though pleasant spectacles were continually presented to his sight; and everything was proffered to invite his stay, which can delight the senses and captivate the heart. But our true country, like that of Ulysses, is from whence we came, and where our father lives.



<sup>1</sup> xxiii, 281. By *the people*, in these lines, the inferior parts or powers of the soul are indicated.

<sup>2</sup> [*Ennead* I, 6, viii, TTS Vol. III, p. 16]

<sup>3</sup> *Iliad*, ii, 140 & ix, 27

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