



IV. Homer (1967)

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HOMER

In the mythical time we have been considering the whole human development of God consciousness, world consciousness, and man consciousness had been one. There had been no clear distinctions developed within one body, and so in that way no progress was possible. All of the lines of development of the fifth, and sixth centuries B.C. in different countries signaled the breaking of myths, and as we have observed, this meant that distinctions, and sharp distinctions were made between the three factors of man's gaining consciousness. A gaining consciousness of himself (human consciousness), a gaining consciousness of the world (world consciousness), and a gaining consciousness of God (God consciousness). Buddha took the idea of God, heightened it a little bit in the absolute, and then put it beyond the world, not personalizing it, not really developing it, even refusing to develop a God consciousness, but maintaining it only as a kind of background against which man consciousness and world consciousness could be developed. It was one of the first sharp distinctions and we have seen the results.

Lao Tze did the same thing. He kept the idea of God consciousness impersonal and in the background. The idea of the Tao still means a unity (or possible unity) of world consciousness and man consciousness. Zarathustra's idea was clearer than most, but it didn't have any real effect. He separated God consciousness and man consciousness by making God the maker of man, but then he left him alone. There was no contact possible, no further development of God consciousness, but only the development of man consciousness and world consciousness.

The Hebrew solution was a tremendous one sided development of God consciousness, at the cost of the development of man and world consciousness. Man consciousness was developed in a certain way, but it was restricted. Even with the absolutizing of the Hebrew religion; namely, making God even greater than in the Christian religion, the freedom for which man was created could not really be used. It could be used in both religions for only one purpose: Obeying God or disobeying God. The choice between good and evil. There was no other choice whatsoever.

The development of those religions (Judaism and Christianity) brought about a relationship to God that was one of servitude. Only Abraham made a distinction (between worship and servitude) but the Jews never took it up and developed it. You will always find in the Bible "thy

servant, thy servant, they servant, thy servant". We have seen how the secularization of this in western history has led to the permanent sustained servitude (of the Jews), and readiness for servitude, before absolute kings (who claimed to be the vicars of God on earth), and the Pope (who claimed to be the vicar of God on earth). Whatever they were teaching, it amounted to one thing: Servitude.

So the progress of man consciousness was very restricted. He was the crown of creation. He was the highest being. It was said of him that he ruled the world, but he couldn't rule the world as long as he was kept in servitude. In that respect, we will look now at the beginning of real freedom, and we will find it here also limited. But at least in the development of the whole Greek (or Hellenic) culture, there was one iron clad will at the bottom.

That Hellenes would never be slaves.

That they would never be servants. They insisted on their independence, and were the first people in the world to create a polis (which means a community of free men).

It was achieved at the price of slavery; alright, that is a very bad thing, but it was done for the very first time. People lived together in agreement on certain aims. The main aim for them was [blank in transcript--greek word?], or freedom. They decided to live in freedom under the law. What did they understand by the law?

The law, as it existed for the Hebrews, was a law given by God, by an absolute power and an absolute person. A law that was held to be inviolable and unchangeable. The law of the Greeks is another idea. It is an idea copied from their notion of the cosmos, that there are evolving laws in nature, and that we can agree upon them (we can see them to be so) and if necessary, we can change them in order to keep up our freedom. It is an entirely different context.

The man we meet who built the foundation for, what we call here the metaphysical assumptions (that means: the consistent worldview and life view) that led the Hellenes to the development of their culture, was, strangely enough, a singer. We have met up to now only personalities as the breakers of myths, great thinkers like Buddha, Lao Tze, Zarathustra, Abraham, and the Hebrew prophets. They are all breakers of myths in their own way, but they are primarily thinking or prophetic personalities. No one of them was a singer. We meet now a singer: Homer, and we find the strange phenomenon that he also belongs among the breakers of myth. He designed, in an almost unbelievably poetic way, a new position of man in the world; a new relationship between world consciousness, man consciousness, and God consciousness, almost as if he had been (not only a singer) but a philosopher (a great thinker). He must have been. That it could happen that the Greek, or Hellenic culture (whose sole development lasted only five hundred years and then broke down) was built by this person, a singer (a poet) must be explained.

It is anchored in the difference of Greek myth from all other kinds of myth. Greek myth was a development of mythical thinking that concentrated more on the human being than any other kind of myth. That is what Homer inherited. It is the material that he takes into his epics. It also has another side (which seems to contradict the idea of the development of humanity, or human consciousness), and that is the strange hatred that runs through all Greek (Hellenic) myths of

monsters. The heroes of Greek myth are monster slayers. Here we have an early symbol of the fact that they wanted a world (a cosmic world) without monsters, and that slowly the human being (including the human body), was to become the model of that world.

When Homer appeared on the scene in the eighth century BC (it is in that sense that we are considering him one of the breakers of myth, perhaps, except for some of the Hebrew prophets, one of the earliest) he wrote his poems. There is another indication in Greek myth (of what we have been saying), and it has been rendered to us by the Greek poet Pindar who lived in the fifth century BC. He records, out of memory, a myth the Greeks once believed in. He might have interpreted it, he might have added something, we cannot find out. The myth goes this way.

Zeus put the world into order. He found it in chaos, and he ordered it. It became from chaos, a cosmos (cosmos, meaning an orderly, or strictly ordered world). When he had done that he was so proud that he showed all his other gods (the Olympians around him) the work he had finished, and asked them to look down upon him from Olympus and admire him. Then, Apollo said "something is missing". Zeus asked "what is missing"? Apollo said "a voice is missing". "There isn't any singing in it".

This world of yours (I am interpreting Pindar now in modern terms) is like a world constructed by computers. Only computers could figure it out. It's a dead thing. There are no voices in the world, there is no singing in it, and it's boring. So Zeus gets the assignment (being a philanderer anyhow, who always goes down to earth to see beautiful women) of marrying [Mnemosyne]. That means memory, and to have children with her. He has nine daughters by her, and these are called the nine muses. The moment the muses are born, the world changes completely. This dead cosmos becomes a living cosmos. Singing starts (that means art is born) and has been added to the cosmos, and what would the cosmos be without being appreciated by the artistic performance and consciousness?

It is a story about the origin of the muses. The consequences of this is that the Greeks were inclined to call all human occupations (that is, what we are calling here in this course the human creative gifts, or creative faculties) poetry, including politics. There is a muse of politics, a muse of rhetoric, there is [Urania?], the muse of the natural sciences. All the occupations that man engaged in were called poetry, and although we don't think so any more, this belief led to the consequence that they could only believe (and finally only wanted to believe, these highly artistic people, the first plainly artistic people that we see) in a singer. When the Greeks came to Egypt, and talked with the Egyptians, the Egyptians proudly said to them that "our gods are the oldest gods in the world". "We have always admired them and adored them, but what about your gods"? And the Greeks answered "oh, our gods are the youngest in the world". "They have been fashioned for us by Hesiod and Homer".

What did they mean by that? (Gods) made by human beings, by singers! Are they merely fictions? Why did they believe in them, if they were so clearly conscious that they had been made? What they meant is that "they have been formed, or shaped, for us by Hesiod and Homer". The gods of ancient Hellenic myth were in part mythical (natural) experiences and natural manifestations. Homer humanized them completely. There was only one moral for him, and it appears with Zeus who is described (as is every Olympian God) in the perfect form of perfect man. It was a humanization that went down to the very body. It was not like the Hebrew where the spirit is only taken, but rather a complete humanization from the beginning. One that goes on and on through Hellenic culture with more and more humanizing of the gods until only one thing is left: Namely, life forces, virtues, forces that can direct and conduct life, and at this point we are already with Socrates, and Hellenic culture comes to an end.

In the beginning is Homer. Might this (in itself) explain why they were so ready to believe in the inspiration, the higher inspiration of the muses and the arts? The beliefs that come to inspire most men (prophets so to speak) they didn't have. No God was talking to them, and they were not inspired by the gods. They were inspired by the muses, and the muses are nothing but manifestations of the capabilities of human beings. Homer says:

"Sing to me oh muse of the scorn of Achilles" "Sing to me
oh muse of this man Odysseus, who broke so many cities and
survived it all".¹

It seems so realistic, and he hopes (that is his belief) that the muses will inspire him to sing rightly. He shapes, or forms the gods of the Greeks from the beginning, and we meet the

¹ Paraphrases of the first lines of the Iliad and Odyssey respectively.

strange event that a singer, a mere poet, a man who did not have any kind of mythical belief (but who just used myth for poetic purposes) became the founder of the highest Greek religion which we call the Olympic religion. He really made their gods, and for hundreds of years that religion was accepted by the leading men in every Greek polis and in all of the city states. It is very strange, for us who analyze things, and who know that poetry means merely to create an illusion, but an illusion of a perfect life and a perfect world.

Homer did the sane, but he wasn't regarded as having done the same. He was regarded as the real architect of the Greek world. How does this world look, that he is singing about? The Greeks had an anecdote. It is about how Homer died. He is supposed to have been, like all Hellenes, a lover of riddles, and when he was very old they tell how he met some boys who were fishing on the shore. He asked one of them "what have you been doing"? It seemed obvious that they were fishing. They said to him "those we catch we leave behind, and those we do not catch we take away with us". What had they been doing?

The Greeks say that Homer couldn't solve the riddle and hanged himself, because now he knew he was old, and that he had to go. This readiness to go (is characteristic) of a man who had created a world view which is one of the few (except the Hebrew) that accepts death as the fate of man; that does not want for an eternity, a hereafter, for a dear soul in a sweet paradise; that knows that man is condemned to die (as Buddha knew) and accepts it. It is this readiness to die in the fullness of time (after he has fulfilled his human task) that the Greeks prayed for.

The love of riddles that comes to the fore here was so widespread in the Hellenic world, that even their gods talked in riddles. The Oracle at Delphi (where Apollo speaks indirectly through a priest) gives oracle sayings and they are all riddles. You have to handle them and interpret them rightly, or else you are fooled. There is no servitude to the Hellenic gods. Hellenes admire their gods, honor their gods, sacrifice the best part of the cow for them (the fat which they couldn't eat) but they absolutely refuse to bow down to them. There is no gesture of bowing down ever in Hellenic life. When the gesture of prostration was recommended to them by the Persians (during the Persian war when a Persian general tried to bribe one of the Greeks, and then take him over to the other camp where he would prostrate himself like a servant) he said to him, in the double way that Greeks could speak: "Your advice general is not from both sides well considered". That means there is no reason in it, and he could have added: "We Greeks listen only to reason".

Try to convince me. It is not well considered from both sides,
because what servitude is you indeed know well. It has its glories
too. It has its rewards, and you know about them. But you don't
know what freedom is, because if you knew what freedom is you
would recommend to me that I should fight for it not only with
spears, but with axes too.

This love of freedom, this independence, shows up very early in the Homeric epics. The condition for all relationships (between nature, man, the world, and the gods) is that each keep within their proper boundaries, and do not over step their lines. That goes first for man. No gods are all powerful. Even Zeus is not all powerful. He is immortal, like all of the other Greek gods, but the day might come when he finds himself living in the darkness of Hades where he cannot die. He might be dethroned. His power is not unlimited, he is not the absolute God. We can argue with him, and he will say that he knows better than us, but finally he will say "let's have another thought about it", and he is so far humanized that you can almost argue with him.

This energetic humanization of the gods does not lead to the humanization of the world. On the other hand, it doesn't lead to the Hebrew distinction that we are the masters of the world either. Oh no, we are not the masters of the world. As Heraclitus once said, we have a greater logos than the world has, we are superior, but not absolutely superior. As soon as we move into the realm of nature and try to handle nature we have to be damn careful not to break the laws that rule there. Three compartments are created. First, Olympus, where the immortal gods dwell, and where human beings cannot go. Second, the world of human beings, and third, the world of nature. These compartmentalized pieces of the new world view are absolutely set, like a three layer cake. In that will operate the whole development of Greek art, of Greek philosophy, of Greek science, and it will make true that early idea of the Greeks, that called all of those capabilities art. There is the development of philosophy (the first development in Europe and in the world), and it is influenced by art. There is the first consequential development of science and it too is influenced by art, inspired by art, with the always underlying metaphysical assumptions that sound so artistic and even poetic.

This is all the outgrowth of one conception and one man. There is not a single piece of Hellenic art in later centuries that cannot be retraced to Homer. He is called the father of the Hellenes, the father of poetry, the educator of Greece, and in the fifth century the tyrant [blank in transcript] in Athens collected the works of Homer and made them required reading for all young Athenians as the start of their education. This procedure went on all over Greece, so we have the astonishing phenomenon that at one time a work of art had the decisive voice. A voice was needed, and it developed an entire culture.

When Greece started to decay the Homeric God consciousness was questioned by Plato. The Homeric world consciousness was questioned by some Greek materialists, but all of them without any exception still stood on the grounds that Homer had created for them. Such an effort of poetry and of art has not been there in the world since; not before, and not since. That art was the start of a whole way of life, the beginning of a whole way of Weltanschauung (which was consequentially pursued by the Greeks) is a singular phenomenon. Let's have a look at the man who did it, and how he created this work which influenced them so much.

(As we mentioned before) he has been called the father of poetry, and in a way he is, for western poetry at least. We have no other father. Poetry starts with him, in so far as poetry is a human performance, and not the inspiration of any mystical experience (or of any higher ways, but merely realistically human in spite of all the metaphors he uses). He wrote two works. Both

are concerned with man, and with man only. The gods in those works are there only to give a frame for man's actions. Nature is there to give a soil for man's actions, and he says it when he opens the epic (of the Iliad):

"Sing me oh Muse of the scorn of Achilles"

Nothing more. It is a world epic. The scorn of Achilles; now he starts to achieve that. He restricts himself exactly to the scorn of Achilles, and what it causes. He takes Achilles, a figure from Greek myth who, as a young boy, had been given the choice either to lead a very short life, but doing one great deed that would never be forgotten; or, to become a happy man who leads a long life with much success and dies in peace, but is entirely unknown to anybody else. And he makes his choice, for the short life and for the great deed. Portrait of the artist as a young man ... does that say something to you? I would say here that Homer gives a portrait of man as a young man. The life that man can have as a young man, if he is ambitious enough. He describes to us mainly a short life, and he does it in an unmythical way, because in his epic it seems that Achilles only takes it as a pretext that he has been insulted by Agamemnon who supposedly has taken his bride and his booty away, and for which he withdraws into his tent full of scorn leaving us half suspicious. Isn't it perhaps, because he knows that when he fights he will kill Hektor, the hero of Troy, and with this killing Troy will fall, and the consequence will be that Achilles will die. Homer is so human that he tries to show his hero wanting to avoid that very fate which he had chosen, and so the poet has to trick him into it, so to speak, to fulfill his chosen fate. As soon as Achilles gets into this tremendous scorn, it seems like a storm in a glass of water, nothing more, and then all hell breaks loose. The battle of Troy becomes hopeless. One hero after the other has to die, because Achilles has that tremendous scorn, and then finally it involves the whole world, nature, the world of the gods, and they are all fighting each other like mad, because Achilles does not take part in the fight. It is all very very short (although the poem might seem long to us), but as far as a lifetime goes, it is a story of about ten years, no more. Now if Homer had been a mythical poet he would have made it easy. He could have said "this is the fate he has chosen, and now he is going to fulfill his fate", and so on, but he doesn't make it so easy for himself. Achilles truly tries to withdraw. On the one hand he doesn't want this fight, and on the other the fight can never be won without him, because Hektor, the main hero of Troy has to be killed first. It can draw on endlessly (like the war in Vietnam) if Achilles does not join the force.

There he sits in his tent singing, again singing to his lyre, with his friend Patroklos. How does Homer trick him into the performance? His friend Patroklos finally says to him "now let me fight Hektor and give me your armament" (Achilles has wonderful weapons and armament).(2) "Give me your armament" he says, "and they will perhaps get afraid seeing me in it, and I will try my best to help the Hellenic forces". And Achilles, in a weak moment, agrees. Patroklos is then slain (by Hektor), and Achilles has to avenge him. It is human nature. He was his friend, and all of the Hellenes would spit on him if didn't go. He has to have to go, and so he goes and slays Hektor and with that the fall of Troy is assured. The story ends here, with this wonderful artistic

trick. He does not tell the story of how Achilles dies, or of the final fall of Troy as it is in the sagas of the Greeks. He stops it short where Achilles has killed Hektor, and Priam, the King of Troy comes to ask him for the body of his dead son, and Achilles starts to weep.

A very short story so to speak. The life of man as a young man, and there is a symbol in the story which shows how world wide it is. It is the description of the shield of Achilles. In that description you will find that every detail on the shield makes a whole world as Homer was trying to compose it. I say trying, because this might have been the young Homer. The Odyssey was written for another purpose: Namely, the full life of man in its full length, with all of the possibilities there. Not man as a young man, but rather man as someone who grows old and achieves everything. It is a quite different topic. The story seems at once to become world wide. The idea is that man consciousness has become a consciousness of independence and of freedom at all costs. Homer has found a place for him in the middle, between nature and the gods. The consequence of this is that he can only describe him by more and more humanizing his description of the gods, even putting motives in their mouths which make them, as Plato will say later, "all too human".

How Zeus behaves is sometimes not very moralistic. The other gods are jealous of each other, and they fight like hell, almost like human beings. So a lowering of this God consciousness is required, in order to increase man consciousness and world consciousness. Now world consciousness means to develop a united view of the world, and here help comes to Homer again from Greek myth and from Greek language. He describes the world as a cosmos, but it is a cosmos that does not belong to the gods. To the cosmos belongs nature, to the cosmos belongs man, they all belong in the cosmos. There is no transcendent idea above the world, because the gods are suffering from the same curse that man suffers. Not, that they have to die, but that they might be dethroned. They run a risk. Above them lies moira (fate) who decides all, and the gods have a fate just as man has, and as nature has, and there is no getting away from it.

When we first meet Odysseus we find that he is sitting on an island with (the goddess) Calypso. He is paralyzed at the moment, because Calypso loves him, wants to keep him, and he cannot get away. He wants to go home to fulfill his life, and he cannot, because Calypso promises him immortality. He refuses immortality (to refuse immortality for a - Greek, for a Hellene: That is really fantastic). He rather wants to die with his wife (Penelope) than to be immortal and lie with Calypso. That is quite a rebuke, and he tells her "you are so much more beautiful, beautiful you are". "It would be so much more seducing but I have a purpose in life". What's the idea? The idea is that if he accepts immortality (and we must suppose, within the framework of Greek myth, that this could be done by Calypso) that he will become somebody other than Odysseus. He will be changed. He will not be the same man. He cannot pursue his purpose, which is to go home and be victorious over the suitors of his wife, and he prefers here clearly in Homer, to fulfill his fate. To die as a man instead of living as a God. It is almost an atheistic idea.

So we meet him there. He is paralyzed, he cannot move. This man who has gone everywhere, who has met every situation. He is at a dead point, as if he were in the center, where nothing moves, of a tremendous storm, a world storm. He sits there in complete stillness, paralyzed, so to speak, for his whole life. He is sitting in the center of all of his explorations. He has gone

around the whole of the Mediterranean. He has achieved it already. There is only one wave of the past that must still go over him, and that is the wave that will put him on the shore of the Phaeacians. The very moment he is on that shore, and Nausicaa comes, his success is guaranteed, and his future is open. The last piece of the past is brought in by Homer with a storm that almost drowns Odysseus, after he has made a raft in order to sail that last piece of space between himself and the island of the Phaeacians. The gods intervene in the meantime. Athena loves him, and tells Zeus that they must help him in order that he may fulfill his promise. She has been busy working for him in Olympus (while Poseidon is away getting feasted and celebrated in Ethiopia) and since he cannot see what they are doing they are able to save Odysseus. Why do they help him to get away?

The story is that he defied a God. He defied Poseidon. Poseidon hates him from the beginning, and doesn't want to let him get home. He knows (the other gods tell him) that destiny (moira) will let him get home, and they indeed let him get home, without any companions or other conditions whatsoever. But first Poseidon heaps suffering after suffering upon Odysseus, because he hates him. This hatred grows. What has Odysseus done? He has met the Cyclopes and the Cyclopes is the son of Poseidon. He has blinded the Cyclopes, and then, he was in a situation where the Cyclopes said to his comrades "no man has ever blinded me", and so Odysseus has to give out his name. He has (up until then) called himself no man, but now he sits in his little boat, and cannot draw back from himself the spelling of his name. Suddenly he shouts out "and that you might know who did that to you, Odysseus, son of Laertes". At that moment Poseidon knows that he can pursue him, the man who did that deed.

Why did Odysseus do that? We have met the cleverest man possible, who knows every situation. He is a guy who can wriggle himself out of every situation (with the help of the gods, with the presence of Athena, or, what we might call in the twentieth century, with this tremendous presence of mind that this man has). The presence of mind is always there and he can meet any situation. He is crafty, wiley, and another thing, just. He has been fighting for just causes, fighting with Athena for the right to found a new state in Ithaca. He sees it through, but why at this moment, does he risk to raise the scorn of Poseidon? Because he cannot resist. He has become what all Greek heroes want to become which makes him immortal. A monster slayer. He has blinded a monster, and that is eternal glory. When he comes home they all will have to sing about him, and this glory he cannot resist. That, in a way, is what does him in.

The first wave of the future goes over his head and he finds himself at the island of the Phaeacians where he sits, having proved himself, and not giving out his name. In all of the sports (athletics) he excels (after having taken a defeat in dance, because the Phaeacians have such wonderful dancers), and they start to wonder who he is, so they prepare a big table and sit to dine at the table, and in comes a singer. The singer is described like Homer. It is almost (a modern man would say, one great masterpiece of truth). Namely, the author introduces himself into the picture, into the epic. And what does he do? He starts to sing to Odysseus. He is singing of him. He sings about his exploits before Troy, how he suffered, how he endured until Troy fell, and finally we see Odysseus sitting there listening to Homer, because he knows that this is Homer. He is exactly described that way. Homer becomes an actor in his own work of art. Such a sophisticated means that not even a modern artist would invent. And then, Odysseus

starts to weep. This man, who has never shed a tear in all of his life, who has always said to himself "endure it my heart, we have endured worse things, endure it, endure it, endure it". A hard man, and Homer looks at him with 'horned rimmed eyes' and says "what is here"? "Why does he weep"? For at that (moment) he gives himself away to the Phaeacians, and he says "that is me". Homer has seduced him to weep, to give himself away, this singer who is Homer. Why?

He has made him face himself. He has made him reflect, has shown him what he was, how he suffered in those times, and he cannot (bear) to hear it. As soon as he hears it he breaks into tears, and gives himself away. This is a masterpiece of self revelation; again, caused by art, by the song of this singer. The song weakens his heart and he starts to behave completely humanly.

Being up to new tricks, he prepares to go home. The Phaeacians bring him home, but not before Naussica has fallen in love with him. Look at the two pieces. (In the Iliad) Homer describes Achilles mostly in a surrounding of men. It is very rare that a woman says anything about Achilles. His co-heroes speak about him, and the braver they grow, Achilles becomes still braver. He brings him out fully through the witness of heroes that are almost as great.

In the Odyssey, there is a different trick. Odysseus is surrounded by women. There is not a single one that doesn't love him. It starts with Athena. Athena says that "I have to love you". "You are the cleverest guy on earth, I am clever on Olympus, I have to love you, I was always with you". His wife, Penelope, waiting for twenty years, and having him come home as a rather middle aged man. Keeping that faith, and living only for him, and her son. Another one who loves him is Calypso. She falls in love with him, and like everybody else, she wants to keep him, to make him immortal. The sorceress [Circe] also is beguiled by him. He had a root (something that evil) and now she loves him and wants him to stay. Finally, Naussica, that young girl, who is so much in love that she wants to marry him, and he is very polite to her. He tells her "I am an old man, and I wish you a good husband". He is surrounded by women and they all admire the guy. That is how Homer mirrors the figure of Odysseus. It comes out clearer and clearer and clearer. His own mother in Hades also describes how she loved him. He is loved by everybody, so to speak. And when he finally comes home, even his old dog recognizes him, and then lays down and dies. Before he goes to kill his wife's suitors his old nurse recognizes him by a sore on his [blank in transcript].

How realistic all of that is. All of [the] women, the whole femininity that the Greeks were able to meet and to accept (in Helen, on Olympus) and on earth, surround Odysseus. All in order to bring out the complete portrait of a man, and nothing but common, because Homer has indeed taken somebody out of Greek myth. Achilles was still half the son of a God. That he had to handle. He handled it very subtly. But Odysseus is nothing but a man, a plain man, and he even defeats a God. He comes home in spite of Poseidon.

When we first see him, he is sitting in the middle of his space which he has explored, and the space is fixed. Then it starts to run backwards. His time is measured as one lifetime and nothing else. He has no idea of time except the idea of the lifetime of a man that Homer wants to make as a model for all men. He is not only in the middle of his space. He is in the middle of his life.

We can easily figure it out. He went away for ten years before Troy, and he spent ten more years coming back from Troy. That's twenty years. If he had been a youngster of eighteen or twenty when he started, then he would be forty now. That means he has become an old man, which was the original prophesy. He is sitting in the middle of his life-time too. That is how the poet renders it, and it is all so visible. Every scene is alive. We see here the foundation of the whole plastic (sculptural) art of the Greeks. The first discovery that a world can be composed (and Homer composes it) out of those few metaphysical assumptions that I have mentioned, and there we can sit and enjoy it. The Hellenes loved it. They accepted death, they accepted the fact of tragedy in human life, because only one meaning was given (to them), and that meaning was that a man can fulfill all his possibilities, and die happily, having fulfilled them. A fulfilled human life was of more importance to Homer and to all Hellenes than any premises of a hereafter, or anything like that. And they stuck, for at least four hundred years, to that world that Homer had created for them. There is again, a symbolic thing in it, and that is Homer, as (a kind of builder), is also the father of Greek architecture. (When the Greeks made their temples) they had to have the perfect equilibrium between the columns and the weight. The perfect equilibrium, it is not stiff, but something that shivers like a muscle a man holds up. This is done by extreme mathematical applications, and then deviating from them slightly. As soon as the thing was mathematically correct, they started to deviate from it. Until then it was not a work of art. Because they created for the eyes. Homer did the same thing.

The light of Greece is an illuminating light.

If you ever go to Greece you will find the sun not too overbearing. It is nothing but the most extreme degree of utter clarity. Everything stands out in three dimensions. Everything comes out, as the Greeks say, in its fullness, to get into appearance, and to come forward.