

## HOMER AS ARTIST

HOMERIC studies today are flourishing, but admirers of Homer as poetry are a rather baffled lot. Homerists may devote themselves to Linear B, Mycenaean warfare and weaponry, formulaic modifications, linguistic features, Yugoslav parallels, and other such topics; but anyone who prefers to concentrate on Homer himself and offers an interpretation of some part of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* is liable to meet with the rejoinder that literary standards must not be applied to an oral poet.

Albert Lord, for example, in an article entitled 'Homer as Oral Poet',<sup>1</sup> which is a long critique of a recent volume of Homeric studies,<sup>2</sup> lists as one of the preoccupations of 'Homeric criticism of the present time . . . a return to subjective interpretation and appreciation of the Homeric poems' (p. 1). One might think that a return to appreciation of the Homeric poems would be a good thing, but apparently not. What Lord principally dislikes is what he calls 'subjective interpretation', for he seems to think that 'subjective' is a synonym of 'capricious', or perhaps even of 'obviously absurd'. But a reasonable interpretation of a poem, while 'subjective' in the sense that it represents one person's reading, rests as far as possible on objective material, that is, on the elements of the poem which it discusses. If these are not falsified in presentation, and if the interpretation accords with what the poem means to others who are concerned with it as poetry, then it is valid criticism. If all interpretation is to be damned as 'subjective' in Lord's pejorative sense, then we might as well admit that the meaning and poetry of the Homeric epics are unimportant and agree that what really matters is the counting of formulas.<sup>3</sup>

As an example of the kind of subjective criticism which he deplures, Lord takes an article of mine on the gates of dreams passage in the *Odyssey* and devotes the final part of his review to an attack on the last sixteen pages.<sup>4</sup> In this article I had tried (pp. 35-40) to forestall some of the objections which are often raised against any interpretative study of Homer by arguing briefly that the conditions of oral poetry, in which a bard may sing a song many times, afford a greater opportunity for artistry than is sometimes allowed.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Albert B. Lord, 'Homer as Oral Poet', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, lxxii (1967), 1-46. Henceforth, page references to this article will be given in parentheses in the text.

<sup>2</sup> 'Homeric Studies', *Yale Classical Studies*, xx (1966), edited by G. S. Kirk and Adam Parry (New Haven, 1966).

<sup>3</sup> Lord's assessment of what is of real importance in Homeric studies is shown elsewhere in his article: 'What is clearly needed most desperately is a moratorium on baseless speculation about formula quantity and in its stead active research in formula incidence and density, both in Homer and in oral poetry' (p. 19, *sic*, though presumably Lord did not intend the implication in the last phrase that Homer is not oral poetry).

<sup>4</sup> Anne Amory, 'The Gates of Horn and

Ivory', *YCS* xx (1966), 3-57. Henceforth page references to this article will be given in parentheses in the text.

<sup>5</sup> Classical scholars, by and large, are not eager to indulge in literary criticism, and the problems raised for critics by Parry's work have not been as thoroughly aired as they deserve. But in Old and Middle English studies the similar problems raised by F. P. Magoun's application and extension of Parry's theory to early English poetry have received considerable, and often intelligent, discussion. For example, on the question of the oral poet's artistry, R. F. Lawrence, 'The Formulaic Theory and its Application to English Alliterative Poetry', *Essays on Style and Language*, edited by Roger Fowler, (London, 1966), 166-83, writes: 'But artistic excellence by itself need argue no more

Lord makes no attempt to discuss the issue of what kind of artistry an oral poet may be able to achieve. He neither acknowledges nor refutes the considerations which I adduced. Instead he attacks the specific interpretation which I offered, namely that the poetic effect of the gates of horn and ivory passage is enhanced by associations between it and several other near-by passages in which horn or ivory is mentioned. Only at the end of his review does Lord assert that a completely new poetics for oral verse is necessary. Before returning to the general problem of what kinds of interpretation and criticism of Homer's poetry are possible, I should like to correct a number of statements in which Lord either misrepresents my argument or else makes misleading statements about the text.

Lord begins his attack by discussing the composition of Odysseus' bow, which he does at mysteriously great length. The mystery is not lessened by his inability to construe the passages in which Homer mentions the weapon. First Lord says:

Moreover, it seems to me transparent that in the case of the bow, at least, it is the bow itself, not the horn on it, that is associated with Odysseus. (p. 35)

Of course the bow is associated with Odysseus; no one ever thought otherwise. But it seems equally transparent that if Odysseus' bow contains horn (as it does), and if the bow is associated with Odysseus (as it is), then horn too is associated with Odysseus. Lord continues:

Horn is a part of Pandarus' bow in the *Iliad* as well. As a matter of fact horn is one of the materials of which a specific kind of bow, the composite, was made. (p. 35)

He then quotes ten lines of Lorimer's description of a composite bow, the relevance of which is an enigma, for the exact construction of Odysseus' bow is neither of any interest to Homer himself, nor of any significance for the point at issue.<sup>1</sup> Lord adds that 'one is reminded of a passage in the Ugaritic

conclusively against oral poesis than does the availability of writing. How can the twentieth-century scholar presume to have instinctive knowledge of what excellence is or is not appropriate to early oral poetry? It may be that a popular theme, or poem of several related themes, as it is progressively developed and refined by a succession of oral poets, could achieve a perfection of form and a density of utterance perhaps even beyond the capacity of written literature' (p. 173). Cf. below, p. 13 n. 3.

<sup>1</sup> The question of the composition of bows in Homer has intrigued many other scholars besides Lord. The line stretches from Henry Balfour, 'The Archer's Bow in the Homeric Poems', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, li (1921), 289-309, through H. L. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* (London, 1950), 289-301, and Frank Stubbings, 'Arms and Armour', *A Companion to Homer*, edited by Wace and

Stubbings (London, 1962), 518-520, to two books by A. M. Snodgrass, *Early Greek Armour and Weapons* (Edinburgh, 1964) and *Arms and Armour of the Greeks* (London, 1967). All these indulge in a form of documentary fallacy and conclude that Homer must, when he describes bows, be referring to composite bows, though they all simultaneously show that standard Mycenaean bows were simple, or self-bows, and that the composite bow was foreign and not common until after 600 B.C. Since the contest of the bow is integral to the story of the *Odyssey*, the usual solution is that 'an early form of the composite bow *must have* [italics mine] been known to the Mycenaean age also' (Stubbings, p. 520; cf. Snodgrass, *Greek Armour*, pp. 174-5). If one cares about early Greek weaponry, all this work is valuable, but if one cares about Homer, it is irrelevant, for the inescapable fact is that Homer seems to have had only the dimmest idea of how bows

“Tale of Aqhat”’, nine lines of which he proceeds to quote. The bow there contains yew trees of Lebanon and cane-forest reeds, and has nothing whatever to do with any bow in Homer.

After these prolonged digressions Lord continues:

How closely horn is associated with a bow can be seen in . . . 21. 395 . . . where *κέρα* is actually used for the bow itself as well as for its ingredient. (Cf. *τόξον ἄνακτος* in 21. 56.) (p. 36)

The parenthetical reference is not germane. In 21. 395 we need only look at the whole sentence to see that Lord is wrong:

ὁ δ' ἤδη τόξον ἐνώμα  
πάντῃ ἀναστρωφῶν, πειρώμενος ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα  
μὴ κέρα ἵπες ἔδοιεν ἀποικομένοιο ἄνακτος. [21. 393-5]

I translate: ‘He was already handling the bow, turning [it] around in every direction, testing [it] here and there, in case *ipes* had eaten the horn while [the bow’s] owner was absent.’ Again, we need not debate the construction of the bow, or the question of what *ipes* are, to see that *keras* is not used for the bow itself, as Lord says, but simply refers to whatever parts were made of horn in the *toxon* mentioned in verse 393.

Lord next discusses the other passage in which horn is associated with Odysseus, that is, the simile comparing his eyes to horn or iron [19. 211-12]. Lord is anxious to prove that horn here cannot have any relation to the gate of horn, so he offers other reasons for the choice of this substance. One concerns alliteration and one the colour of horn, and these reasons will be discussed below (see pp. 7 and 10). But Lord’s main justification for the presence of horn and iron in this simile rests on an extraordinary misapprehension, as we shall see in a moment.

I did not discuss iron in my article, beyond remarking that horn and iron are linked elsewhere in the *Odyssey*, because iron has nothing to do with the gates of dreams passage, and is therefore clearly irrelevant to the point I was making. But Lord insists that ‘in fact, the association that Amory rejected as irrelevant is actually the operative association in both the passage about Odysseus’ eyes and in that of the bow’ (p. 39). He begins with a detailed

work, as Balfour at least (p. 290) admits, and as one would expect from the chronology of the archaeological evidence about bows. The fact that a bow made of two whole horns joined at the base would be ‘entirely useless’ (Balfour, p. 292) is neither here nor there for a reader of Homer, for that is how Homer seems to think that Pandarus’ bow was constructed [IV. 105-11]. Similarly, the only thing Homer says about the composition of Odysseus’ bow was that Odysseus looked to see if *ipes* had eaten the horn [21. 395], and there is absolutely no way of knowing whether he imagined the bow to be constructed like that of Pandarus or to have other substances beside horn. Stubbings says, p. 520: ‘The suitors could not string Odysseus’ bow because it was of this unfamiliar [i.e. the composite] type. They

stood up to try, and failed. Odysseus did it sitting down—not because he was stronger, but because he knew the way.’ But this makes dramatic nonsense of the whole of book 21, for the scene demands that the suitors *might* be able to string the bow; it would be dull indeed if we and Odysseus were supposed to realize all along that they could not possibly succeed, because they were going at it the wrong way, standing up. Everyone present assumes that stringing the bow is a matter of strength and not of a secret piece of technical knowledge [21. 91-4, 253-5, 281-4, 314-15, 325, 334-5]. Furthermore, Telemachus almost strings the bow standing up—*στῆ δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' οὐδόν* [21. 124ff.], and Odysseus seems to expect him to succeed with one more try [21. 128-9].

survey of the position of *sideros* and of the adjectives modifying it elsewhere in Homer, but since *sideros* in the simile has its normal position and is not modified by an adjective, the precise usefulness of Lord's survey is hard to see. Finally Lord concludes:

In the twenty-first book iron occurs eight times (out of eighteen times for the whole *Odyssey*). In all those instances it is associated with the bow. It occurs also twice in Book 24, referring both times to a bow. (pp. 37–8)

Actually, in two of these eight passages [21. 10 and 21. 61], the iron is not really associated with the bow, but merely refers to the iron which, along with other metals, is kept in the same storeroom as the bow. In none of the eight passages does iron ever *refer* to a bow. Nor can I see why Lord distinguishes between 'the' bow and 'a' bow. In the six remaining passages from books 21 and 24, the bow referred to is always Odysseus' bow, and the bow is indeed 'associated' with iron, but the nature of the association escapes Lord entirely. Surely most people who read the *Odyssey* realize that *sideros* refers to the axes through which an arrow must be shot in the contest which Penelope proposes, however puzzled they may be about the exact nature of the contest.<sup>1</sup> But Lord imagines that the bow is made of iron:

Finally, in 21. 328 and 24. 177 the connection of iron and bow is clear: *ῥηιδίως ἐτάνυσσε βίον, διὰ δ' ἦκε σιδήρου*. Horn *and* iron are, then, associated with the bow because the bow is made of them. (p. 38)

Does Lord take *siderou* to be genitive of material? And how in the world, one wonders, does he translate the rest of the sentence? One might think that a misprint or some temporary aberration is to blame, but Lord repeats his mistake on the next page:

*Horn and iron* go together with the *bow*, because it is from these that the bow is made. Amory's associations here seem to be too subjective and to go too far afield from the associative technique of oral poets. (p. 39)

Lord's associations here go too far afield from the plain sense of the Greek, which is: 'Easily he bent the bow and sent (an arrow) through the iron.'

Lord then goes on to ivory. He first discusses two passages in the *Iliad*, the description of Pandarus' bow and the simile about Menelaus' wound (pp. 39–40), as if I had never mentioned them, though I discussed them at some length (pp. 45–7). Lord triumphantly concludes from his survey of the *Iliad* that my 'alleged symbolic system is valid only for the *Odyssey*, and only in a certain part of the *Odyssey*, if at all' (p. 40). Here Lord acts as if he is refuting my argument, but in fact he is stating it. I never claimed that the associations between horn and plain truth and Odysseus and between ivory

<sup>1</sup> On this vexed problem see now Denys L. Page, 'A Problem in Homer's *Odyssey*: The Arrow and the Axes', *Ανατύπωσης 'Εκ Τῆς 'Επιστημονικῆς 'Επετηρίδος Τῆς Φιλοσοφικῆς Σχολῆς Τον Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν Τοῦ 'Ετους 1963–1964*, (Athens, 1964), 541–62. Page concludes that the axes were cult-axes with rings or holes in the tip of the handle so that they could be hung on the wall. In preparing for the contests Telemachus sets

the axes with the blades partly in the ground and the handles upright, (see fig. 5, p. 559). To perform the contest, Odysseus shoots 'through the handle-tips of all the axes. . . . He may also be said to shoot 'through the iron', for the cult-axe (unlike the household-axe) is normally made of bronze or iron wholly. . . . The arrow which passes through the handle-holes is indeed passing *through the iron*' (p. 559).

and deceptive truth and Penelope were valid for the whole Homeric tradition. On the contrary, my point was precisely that such associations existed only in our *Odyssey*, and specifically in the section dealing with the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope (books 18–23). It is unlikely in the extreme, I think, that this kind of association would exist in the normal oral tradition. It is only a single master poet composing a particularly detailed and subtle *Odyssey*, portraying the characters of Odysseus and Penelope in exactly the way Homer does, and being concerned with problems of knowledge as the poet of our *Odyssey* is, who might use horn and ivory in this way.

Lord complains also that the sword of Euryalus does not fit into my scheme. If I had attempted to draw a passage in book 8 into a network of associations centring on book 19, I am sure that Lord would have pointed out that no oral bard would expect his audience to, or indeed could himself, keep in mind a very small detail from book 8 and make a connection with passages in 18–23. At any rate Lord objects to my linking passages even within this limited section of the poem.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless Lord himself sees a connection between this passage in book 8 and one in book 21:

The passage about Euryalus' sword (8. 404) has relevance also to the passage in which Penelope's key is described (21. 7). (p. 40)

Again the connection which Lord finds rests on a misreading of the Greek. Lord asserts that 'the key is of bronze (like Euryalus' sword) and has an ivory handle (like the decoration on the handle of Euryalus' sword)' (p. 40). The key and the sword are indeed both made of bronze, but only the key has an ivory handle: κώπη δ' ἐλέφαντος ἐπῆεν [21. 7]. The sword has a silver handle; it is the sheath (*koleon*) that is decorated with ivory:

δώσω οἱ τόδ' ἄορ παγχάλκεον, ὧι ἔπι κώπη  
ἀργυρέη, κολεόν δὲ νεοπρίστου ἐλεφάντος  
ἀμφιδεδίνηται.

[8. 403–5]

I cannot see that the passage about the sword and the key have any special 'relevance' to each other, but there is a similarity, in that each bronze object has a handle, though the objects, and their handles, are different.

\* \* \*

So much for Lord's errors of fact. The real point at issue concerns, I think, the nature of the meaning of details in a poem like the *Odyssey*. Because the *Odyssey* seems to me not just an entertaining tale expertly told on a surface level, but the thoughtful poem of a great artist who shaped his traditional material in an unusually complex and sophisticated way, I start with the assumption that the details in the poem can have an ascertainable meaning. The *Odyssey* is in many ways a comic poem, just as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a comic play, but they are both great works of art (the *Odyssey* greater), and both are saying something serious about reality and appearance and

<sup>1</sup> Thus, even to the passages between books 18 and 23 Lord objects: 'While it is not uncommon for an oral singer to have a run on a certain word, the passages in question . . . are both too far apart and too few to be such a run' (p. 35); and 'The passage in question [Odysseus' bow in 21.

395] is too far removed from the dream passage for any reference back to it to be effective. . . . The passage about Odysseus' eyes is *perhaps* near enough for the dream passage to echo back to it, although I have my doubts' (p. 36).

about modes of perceiving them. Consequently it seems to me reasonable to suppose that Homer could arrange details such as the horn and ivory passages into a coherent and suggestive pattern which expresses something about the different kinds of truth and knowledge that there are in human life.

Lord rejects not only the specific interpretation I offered of these passages, but also the assumption that the *Odyssey* can have definable concerns and meaning, particular to it, which may be expressed by associations between one passage and another. For him, instead, it is a 'fact that in traditional poetry, by its very nature, associations are traditional and not *ad hoc* phenomena' (pp. 34-5). This may well be true for Southslavic oral poetry, of which Lord has an unrivalled knowledge; I for one am quite prepared to believe, from the Yugoslav material published by Lord (see p. 14 n. 1 below), that *guslari* work entirely within their tradition of heroic song and have not in fact composed anything that can stand as a masterpiece of world literature. But is it true for Homer? If we had the tradition behind Homer, and if we found nothing in Homer that was not also already in the tradition, that would be one thing. As it is, it is false to assume that Homer could have done only what Yugoslav bards do. Since we have Homer alone to represent the Greek heroic oral tradition, the only thing we can be sure of is that whatever artistic merits are visible in Homer must have been within the powers of the poet (or poets) who composed the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. If we judge that such artistic effects are not within the scope of an ordinary oral tradition, then it is more sensible to conclude that Homer surpassed his tradition than to assert that the artistry that has made men admire and read Homer for hundreds of centuries cannot really be present in Homer because such artistry is unlikely to have been traditional.

It is not that Lord feels that being traditional excludes being artistic. It is just that the artistry must be, he says, of a traditional kind. He does not, as some might, classify the horn and ivory passages as essentially meaningless decorative details. Instead he says:

Oral tradition—as many scholars fail to realize—is very careful in its use of description; the 'purely' ornamental is rare indeed. . . . Oral tradition . . . uses description where it wants to indicate something important. (p. 45)

The example which Lord adduces here is that of Odysseus' bow:

The bow is certainly used in the oral artistry of Homer to express Odysseus and his qualities and perhaps function in tradition. It is described because it is important in tradition, not as ornament but as symbol. . . . The special weapon of the hero is a survival from mythic times, from the special weapons of the gods, their attributes. The bow has importance in oral tradition for Odysseus. . . . It is a mighty symbol in its own right, fraught with the past. (p. 45)

Now the bow is certainly important in the story of our *Odyssey*, and doubtless it was important in the tradition as well; the same is true of the bed by which Penelope recognizes Odysseus. The trouble is that, though the bed is ornamented [23. 200-1], the bow is not—it is merely said to contain horn [21. 395]. Nor does Lord's explanation of why 'oral tradition . . . uses description' hold up for other ornamented objects in the *Odyssey*. Euryalus' sword and Penelope's

key (see above, p. 5) are scarcely comparable in importance with the bed and the bow in our *Odyssey*. If they had functions in the tradition, neither Lord nor our *Odyssey* suggests why they deserve to be ornamented here. Moreover, Lord's statement leaves unanswered the question why Homer chooses certain substances rather than others when he does ornament an object. Finally, it fails to explain such passages as the simile about Odysseus' eyes (see below).

Lord does, however, have another explanation for such questions as why the poet chooses horn and iron for the simile about Odysseus' eyes and why he specifies ivory as the decorative material in Penelope's chair. The explanation is that the substances chosen fit into an alliterative pattern. Thus in discussing the simile about Odysseus' eyes, Lord explains the presence of horn as follows:

κέρα fits perfectly . . . because the passage as a whole is filled with 'k' and 'r' alliteration, with 'a' assonance; its key word is δάκρυα, found in 19. 204, 208 (δάκρυ) and 212. (p. 39)

Similarly, on the choice of ivory for the decoration of Penelope's chair, Lord comments:

Perhaps the alliteration of ἐλέφαντι with ἐφίζε at the end of the preceding line helped in suggesting [the phrase 'ivory and silver']. Actually, χρυσῶι τε would have done as well as ἐλέφαντι for the meter, but the alliteration and the usual formula of ἀργύρῳ ἦδ' ἐλέφαντι carried the day. (p. 41)

Lord lays some stress on this explanation of choice of detail, both in this article and elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> because it takes into account, as he claims I failed to do, 'the importance of formula association and acoustic association for the oral poet' (p. 36). But he makes no attempt to establish any objective criteria for the role of alliteration in word choice, an effort which we are entitled to expect in an article attacking subjective criticism, and so we must supply the omission.

Let us begin with Penelope's chair. First we must remark that Lord entirely misrepresents the situation as far as 'formula association' is concerned. The phrase used in 19. 56 is ἐλέφαντι καὶ ἀργύρῳ and is unique in Homer. The phrase ἀργύρῳ ἦδ' ἐλέφαντι, which Lord calls 'the usual formula', in fact occurs only twice, both times at the end of the line, whereas the phrase 'gold and silver' occurs five times, always in the position needed for our passage.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thus in discussing the bed, Lord says: 'Here too . . . alliterative pattern of the preceding and following lines is probably significant' (p. 42). On the role of alliteration and assonance in Yugoslav songs, see Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), p. 56; and 'Homer and Other Epic Poetry', Wace and Stubbings pp. 200-2, n. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Lord has a list of passages where ivory is mentioned. (pp. 40-1). In these ivory does, as he claims, occur most often with silver. But then in the discussion on p. 41 he confuses *formulas* which join ivory and silver with passages in which they are merely mentioned together. The usage in actual formulas is as follows. In the description of

Penelope's chair [19. 56] the line begins δινωτήν ἐλέφαντι καὶ ἀργύρῳ. . . . This is the only object in either poem that is decorated with only these two substances and it is the only occurrence of this particular phrase in this order and in this position. In the other two passages, the phrase 'silver and ivory' is at the end of the line: ἀργύρῳ ἦδ' ἐλέφαντος [4. 73] and in the description of the wedding bed made by Odysseus: δαιδάλλων χρυσῶι τε καὶ ἀργύρῳ ἦδ' ἐλέφαντι [23. 200]. This last passage combines the formula for 'silver and ivory' with the more common one for 'gold and silver'. This latter occurs, always in the same position, but in various

Lord's argument is thus reduced to 'acoustic association' or alliteration. He does not follow up the implication about the alliteration of words beginning with epsilon, but he quotes the description of Penelope's chair, circling eleven alphas (he misses a twelfth at the end of v. 53), and he remarks that '“ph” and “k” are found in every line' (p. 41). It is unclear to me what influence a kappa in every line is supposed to have exerted on the choice of *elephanti*, but the suggestion that a sound pattern of alphas and phis may account for the selection of *elephanti* instead of *chruoi te* should be explored.

The first question to ask (which Lord does not) is: what is the normal incidence of these sounds in Homer? If we count alphas (excluding those in diphthongs) in a random sample of 200 lines from the *Odyssey*, we get an average of 2.9 alphas per line, or 11.58 in four lines.<sup>1</sup> In Lord's four lines there are 12 alphas, an average of 3.00 per line. Did Homer really use the unique phrase *ἐλέφαντι καὶ ἄργύρῳ* because *elephanti* would give 0.105 more alphas per line than usual? It seems unlikely.

The situation with phi is more complicated and ambiguous, but it does not forcefully support Lord's contention. Nothing Lord says shows that he is aware of the fact that phi would have sounded more like our p than like our f, just as he talks about the presence of kappa and the absence of *chruoi* with no acknowledgement of the fact that chi would reinforce a pattern of kappa alliteration. Still, he underlines the pis in the passage, so we will assume that he would have counted pis and psis, as well as phis, if he had made an attempt to demonstrate the validity of his theory about 'acoustic association'. The same random sample that was used for alphas (see below, n. 1) gives an average of 1.6 p-sounds per line, or 6.4 for four lines. In Lord's passage we have a total of 10 (4 phis and 6 pis), and therefore an average of 2.5, so the incidence of p-sounds is indeed higher than normal.

Unfortunately this proves nothing, for the distribution of phis in the *Odyssey* is more uneven than that of alphas, and four lines is too small a sample to be significant. Many lines in the *Odyssey* have no phis, but it is not at all difficult to find runs of four to seven lines with at least one phi per verse, with no mention of ivory.<sup>2</sup> In one case there is a run of eleven lines with a phi in each (14 phis altogether). Moreover, this passage [17. 33-43] is quite closely parallel in sense to Lord's, and the acoustic pattern of alphas and p-sounds is more marked, but the bard was not thereby led to introduce an ivory-inlaid chair.<sup>3</sup>

cases, four more times: *χρυσέοισι καὶ ἄργυρέοισι* (of Hera's chariot) [V. 727]; *χρυσῶι τε καὶ ἄργύρῳ* (of Rhesus' chariot) [X. 438]; *χρυσόν τε καὶ ἄργυρον* [10. 35]; and *χρυσός τε καὶ ἄργυρος* [10. 45] (both of the gold and silver which Odysseus' crew think he has in the bag of winds given to him by Aeolus).

<sup>1</sup> The lines used for the random sample were vv. 332-81 in books 4, 10, 15, and 21. The 200 lines contain at least 579 alphas, or an average of 2.9 per line. For future reference these same 200 lines also contain: 322 p-sounds, or an average of 1.6 per line (includes pi, phi, and psi); 281 rhos, or an average of 1.4 per line; 299 k-sounds, or an average of 1.5 per line (includes kappa, xi, and chi).

<sup>2</sup> For example, a very hasty and random survey yields: 1. 69-73 (5 phis in 5 lines); 3. 277-80 (4 in 4); 3. 369-75 (7 in 7); 4. 113-17 (7 in 5); 4. 261-5 (5 in 5); 5. 113-17 (6 in 5); 5. 180-3 (4 in 4); 5. 287-91 (5 in 5); 5. 330-3 (4 in 4); 5. 424-8 (6 in 5); 9. 424-7 (4 in 4); 10. 197-200 (5 in 4); 13. 85-9 (6 in 5); 16. 20-5 (6 in 6); 18. 153-6 (4 in 4); 22. 297-300 (5 in 4); 24. 23-6 (4 in 4); 24. 127-30 (4 in 4).

<sup>3</sup> In this passage Penelope enters to greet Telemachus as she enters to greet the beggar in 19, and 17. 36-7 = 19. 53-4. Nothing is said here about Penelope sitting, but in 17. 32 Eurycleia is spreading fleeces on decorated seats (*θρόνους ἐνι δαδάλεοισι*), so that the poet could easily have introduced an ivory-inlaid chair. The whole passage

Conversely, it may be remarked, the alliteration of p-sounds is not significantly present in the other passages where ivory occurs. The average in Lord's passage is 2.5 per line, but in the other passages the averages are lower, ranging from 1.4 to 2.1 per line.<sup>1</sup>

In the passage about Odysseus' eyes what Lord says (see above, p. 7) is perfectly true, for the occurrences of alpha, rho, and k-sounds in it are above average.<sup>2</sup> But the passage begins with the statement that Odysseus in telling all these lies [about having seen Odysseus in Crete] made them sound like the truth:

*ἵσκε ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγων ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα* [19. 203]

Since *ἔτυμα* and *ψεύδεα* are precisely the terms used for the two kinds of dreams that pass through the gates of horn and ivory, the suggestion in my article (pp. 43 and 51-2) that *kera* here reflects an association with the gates of dreams passage seems possible also.

As a final test of Lord's theory of 'acoustic association' let us consider the gates of horn and ivory passage itself. Lord is dissatisfied with all explanations of the gates of dreams passage.<sup>3</sup> Why then does he not seize the opportunity to

[17. 33-43] contains, in addition to the 14 phis, 13 pis and 1 psi, for an average of 2.5 per line (the same as in Lord's passage); there are 39 alphas, for an average of 3.5 per line. The p-sounds are clustered with especial thickness in three lines (11 in vv. 38-40, for an average of 3.7), which makes them more noticeable than in Lord's passage. If we take just the five lines which begin like 19. 53-4, to get a sample comparable in length to Lord's, the averages are higher still: 3.6 for alpha and 3.2 for p-sounds.

<sup>1</sup> The figures are as follows:

IV. 141-7:	2.1 p-sounds per line (6 phis, 9 pis, 1 psi in 7 lines)
V. 580-6:	1.6 p-sounds per line (3 phis, 8 pis in 7 lines)
4. 71-5:	1.4 p-sounds per line (2 phis, 8 pis in 5 lines)
8. 401-5:	1.6 p-sounds per line (2 phis, 6 pis in 5 lines)
18. 192-6:	1.6 p-sounds per line (2 phis, 6 pis in 5 lines)
21. 5-10:	1.7 p-sounds per line (2 phis, 7 pis, 1 psi in 6 lines)
23. 195-201:	1.9 p-sounds per line (6 phis, 6 pis, 1 psi in 7 lines)

The average of these averages is 1.7 p-sounds per line; this times 4 gives an average of 6.8 p-sounds per 4 lines, only a little above the 6.4 average in our random sample of 200 lines (see above, p. 8 n. 1). A look at the two passages which do have relatively high averages, that is, IV. 141-7 and 23. 195-201, raises another problem which Lord does not consider. It is impossible to tell whether the poet chose ivory because he had an alliterative pattern of p-sounds or

whether, having chosen ivory for some other reason, he produced a p-sound alliteration to complement *elephas*. The *Iliad* passage is a simile comparing blood staining Menelaus' legs to a woman staining ivory with crimson. The ivory could presumably be for any number of decorative objects but the poet makes it a cheek-piece for horses which gives him 7 pis right there (*παρήϊον* and *ἵππος* used thrice in various cases). He could also have ended the simile with 146 where the thought is complete, but he adds a line with 2 phis and 1 pi: *εὐφύεες κνήμαί τε ἰδὲ σφυρὰ κάλ' ὑπένερθε* [IV. 147]. Similarly, without the purple thongs (*φοίνικι φαεινόν*) which Odysseus adds to the ivory-decorated bed [23. 200], the average of p-sounds in that passage would be only 1.6. I have not counted alphas in these passages, but would be surprised if the incidence of alphas varied significantly from the 2.9 average per line of the random sample (p. 8 n. 1 above).

<sup>2</sup> In 19. 203-12 the averages are: 3.6 alphas per line; 2.1 rhos, and 2.3 k-sounds. For comparative figures from a random sample see p. 8 n. 1 above.

<sup>3</sup> Lord concludes: 'It was . . . methodologically not unsound to seek an answer to the problems of the gates of horn and ivory in the usages of the words for horn and ivory. . . . But Amory has proved, I believe, that the solution to the meaning of the passage does not lie in that direction. It may, indeed, be found only outside Homeric tradition' (p. 46). In fact there have been a number of attempts, a very determined one on the part of Highbarger, to find a solution to the passage outside the Homeric

solve this famous mystery by applying the principle of 'acoustic association'? Because the alphas, rhos, p-sounds and k-sounds are uncooperative—the frequency of these sounds is less than in most of the other passages where horn and ivory appear.<sup>1</sup> In any case, it is obvious that such alliteration as there is in the gates of dreams passage is present because of the paronomasia, not vice versa.<sup>2</sup>

By relying on alliteration, which is a definite measurable phenomenon, Lord apparently meant to lend his discussion an objectivity which would show how 'subjective' (i.e. false) were my interpretations of the horn and ivory passages. But, in fact, Lord's assertions about the influence of sound patterns on word choice do not always, as we have seen, rest on an objective basis. Moreover, Lord never considers the elementary question whether the problem of a poet's choice of words (or a bard's choice of formulas) is genuinely amenable to such 'objective' methods. It seems to me that it is not. We have counted letters assiduously, as Lord did not, but we are not thereby closer to knowing why Homer specifies horn or ivory in certain passages. Any poet, oral or literary, shapes his lines partly by sound and partly by sense. In speculating (and that is all we can really do) why a poet composed specific lines in a specific way, we can reasonably pay attention to both sound and sense. In passages where alliteration is marked, for example in the first four lines of the *Odyssey*, where alliteration with pi is much more obvious than any of the acoustic patterns which Lord comments on,<sup>3</sup> we may say that the sound pattern must have influenced the wording. But we still cannot confidently point to any single word that is there primarily because of the alliteration. The unusual epithet *πολύτροπον* (only here and 10. 330) obviously fits into the pattern of alliteration of pi; but who can say for certain whether Homer used it for its pi or for its meaning?

In passages like the simile about Odysseus' eyes and the description of Penelope's chair, where the alliteration is slight, it is idle to try to justify the choice of a single word by the sound pattern. The possibilities are two. One is that the poet chose his materials at random. He compared Odysseus' eyes to horn and described Penelope's chair as inlaid with ivory simply because the words for these substances happened to occur to him and could be easily fitted into the metre of the lines he was singing. The alternative is that he chose phrases which specified these substances in accordance with some design or some association of ideas, however slight, however unconscious.<sup>4</sup> (It should

tradition, and they are all unsatisfactory (see pp. 3–14 of my article).

<sup>1</sup> In 19. 560–9 the averages are: 2.5 alphas per line; 1.1 p-sounds; 1.8 rhos; and 1.4 k-sounds. For comparative figures from a random sample see p. 8 n. 1. (Even if we include v. 559 with *προσέειπε περίφρων Πηνελόπεια* the average of p-sounds is still only 1.6, not much above that in the random sample, and still below the 1.7 average in the other ivory passages.)

<sup>2</sup> The word for ivory (*elephas*), which is used twice, and its attendant verb *elephairontai* supply three of the four pisis in the passage. Similarly, four kappas and four rhos are in the word for horn (*kera*; used twice) and its

accompanying *akraanta* and *krainousi*. These seven words, which are necessary for the paronomasia, also account for 8 of the 25 alphas in the passage.

<sup>3</sup> In 1. 1–4 there are 13 pisis, for an average of 3.3 (twice as high as that in the random sample; see above, p. 8 n. 1). This alliteration is more noticeable than any of the alliterative patterns Lord alludes to, for several reasons: of the 13 pisis, 8 are initial; there is marked repetition (*πολλά, πολλῶν, πολλά*); they are more closely juxtaposed (*πολλά / πλάγχθη; πτολίεθρον ἔπερσε, / πολλῶν; πολλά δ' ὅ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν*).

<sup>4</sup> Modern adherents of the Parry–Lord theory sometimes speak as if an oral bard

be borne in mind that neither of the phrases in question is duplicated elsewhere in Homer.) In this case the design or association of ideas should be discoverable and its significance expressible.

Lord himself offers explanations of word choices which are based on association of meaning; he is not wedded solely to his alliteration theory. For example, in discussing the passage where Odysseus' eyes are compared to horn and iron, he says:

The word *σίδηρος* itself in the *Odyssey* in the formulaic technique of composition would be enough to call forth the associations with the bow and the material of which the bow was made, horn, particularly if color as well as hardness were of importance, as it would be, I believe, in a passage concerned with eyes. (p. 38)

Clearly hardness did influence the poet, for he was describing how fixed (*atremas*, 19. 212) Odysseus' eyes were as he repressed his tears (cf. 19. 494). Colour may have played some part also, though in that case it seems odd that the poet should choose two substances which suggest two different eye colours, grey and brown, especially when he could easily, as Lord himself points out, have used stone, which would probably suggest grey, like iron:

We might note that *λίθοι ἔστασαν ἢ σίδηρος* would have been as acceptable metrically in our line as *κέρα ἔστασαν ἢ σίδηρος*. Acoustically it goes well after *ὀφθαλμοί* with 'l' and 'th' alliteration. (p. 37)

We might note that by his suggestion about stone Lord vitiates his own argument without noticing it. And of course to believe that iron called forth associations with the bow, and that the bow in turn suggested horn, one must share Lord's peculiar delusion that the bow was made of iron (see above, p. 4).

In discussing ivory, Lord begins with a survey of it and a number of other decorative substances (pp. 39-42). Then he gives a review of the horn and ivory passages from books 18-23, ostensibly to show that 'if there is any truth in Amory's thesis, it should emerge and become clear as we listen to, or read, the text consecutively' (p. 43). My suggestion (it was hardly a 'thesis') was that the striking image of dreams passing through gates of horn and ivory might have 'exercised a sort of magnetic effect on the surrounding decorative passages, and that these are phrased in such a way and so placed as to complement and clarify the meaning of the dreams passage' (p. 50). Since Lord in his review fails to include the cornerstone of my suggestion, the passage about the gates of dreams, he naturally is unable to see any connection between this passage and the other passages mentioning horn or ivory.

had no choice of diction, but this is a *reductio ad absurdum*. Clearly a bard, like a poet, decided what he wished to say, and then selected formulas which expressed his intention as exactly as possible. So in conversation, or better in informal lecturing, we choose words to express our thoughts; we may, in the pressure of *ex tempore* composition, not express things as neatly or exactly as we might in writing, but we certainly choose both our thoughts and our words. The work done on this aspect of oral style is not very extensive, and what exists is (as it must be) detailed

and technical. See, for example, M. W. M. Pope, 'Athena's Development in Homeric Epic', *AJPh* lxxxi (1960), 129-35; he concludes from a study of the epithets of Odysseus in Homer that 'to the Homeric poet . . . the epithets were felt as meaningful and not just used as line fillers for purely metrical convenience' (p. 135). See also Mark W. Edwards, 'Some Stylistic Notes on *Iliad* XVIII', *AJPh* lxxxix (1968), 257-83; and William Whallon, 'The Shield of Ajax', *JCS* xix (1966), 7-36.

Lord does see various other significances in these passages, but his language is so vague that it is difficult to say exactly what either Lord or ivory means. Phrases like 'real import', 'meaningful elaboration', 'mythically significant' abound (all from p. 43). There are sentences like 'The ornamenting of the chair is in keeping with the whole splendid scene for the resplendent queen' and '[Homer] knew what he was doing, emphasizing the traditionally meaningful by traditional means' (both from p. 44). Homer undoubtedly knew; but does Lord? This is Lord's account of the meaning of the ivory-inlaid wedding bed:

Its significant function is clear; its importance needs no justification. Here, if anywhere, full description is ritually and traditionally *de rigueur*. . . . There is no mere empty ornamentation here, but once again description of the traditionally meaningful. (p. 45)

Significant of what? Meaningful how? We ask in vain.

My suggestion that in books 18–23 of the *Odyssey* Homer used horn and ivory not just at random but in a pattern centred on the most notable passage, the gates of horn and ivory, may be wrong. All the passages may be primarily decorative, like the ones in the *Iliad* and the beginning of the *Odyssey*. The fact that references to horn and ivory occur more densely just around the gates of dreams passage than in any other part of Homer may be just coincidental. Or the references to horn and ivory may have some other significance which someone who knows the *Odyssey* well may be able to set forth convincingly. But I find it hard to see what is gained by asserting that the horn and ivory (or any) passages are 'mythically significant' and 'traditionally meaningful' in Lord's undefined (and undefinable) sense.

\* \* \*

Lord concludes his article with a paragraph calling for a new poetics with which to read oral poetry; it is worth quoting in full:

Surely one of the vital questions now facing Homeric scholarship is how to understand oral poetics, how to read oral traditional poetry. Its poetics is different from that of written literature because its technique of composition is different. It cannot be treated as a flat surface. All the elements in traditional poetry have depth, and our task is to plumb their sometimes hidden recesses; for there will meaning be found. We must be willing to use new tools for investigation of multiforms of themes and patterns, and we must be willing to learn from the experience of other oral traditional poetries. Otherwise 'oral' is only an empty label and 'traditional' is devoid of sense. Together they form merely a façade behind which scholarship can continue to apply the poetics of written literature. (p. 46)

Here we return to the general problem with which we opened, but we cannot simply and gratefully accept Lord's advice, for he ignores several issues which are relevant to his demand.

At the very outset there is the question whether Homer is indeed an oral poet. No one knows incontrovertibly exactly what kind of poetry the Homeric epics are. For Lord, to be sure, the question *is* securely settled: they are oral dictated texts.<sup>1</sup> If this were so patently true or so cogently argued as

<sup>1</sup> See Lord, 'Homer's originality: oral dictated texts', *TAPA* lxxxiv (1953), 124–34. For some cogent criticisms of Lord's belief in a dictated text of Homer see Frederick

to be universally accepted, then some of Lord's plea for a totally new poetics would have undeniable force. As it is, Lord's view of the nature of the Homeric poems has not attained the status of Revealed Truth, and other scholars are still wrestling in various ways with the problem of how the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were actually composed and transmitted.<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, a consensus, even in our present state of knowledge, that the tradition behind Homer was an oral one. Everyone who understands the work of Milman Parry would agree that the poetics of oral poetry differs in some ways from that of written, and since Parry's original work there has been a growing recognition, particularly in America and England, that much past criticism is irrelevant to Homer.<sup>2</sup> Every sensible person would agree with Lord that the more we know about traditional oral poetry of all kinds, the better. We would all benefit if Lord were to proceed more rapidly than he has with the publication of the Yugoslav material which has been sequestered for thirty years and more in the Milman Parry collection at Harvard University. But Lord is not saying merely that a knowledge of oral poetry is helpful in dealing with Homer. He is demanding in effect a totally new poetics, founded on oral traditional poetry, and uncontaminated by 'the poetics of written literature'.

Let us look more closely at the implications of his advice in the paragraph quoted above. It is clear from the second sentence, as from his published work in general, that Lord feels that oral and written poetry are so thoroughly different from each other that the poetics of the one must be wholly inapplicable to the other. Such a distinction is surely too crude to be true. Oral and written poems have things in common as well as differences, and just as an understanding of oral poetry may aid us in dealing with written work that makes use of repeated themes or traditional motifs, so also we cannot justly say that the canons of written literature are entirely useless in dealing with oral poetry.<sup>3</sup>

Combellack, Review of *The Singer of Tales*, CP lvi (1961), 181-2.

<sup>1</sup> For serious discussions of this problem, see, e.g., George E. Dimock, Jr., 'From Homer to Novi Pazar and Back', *Arion*, xi (1963), 40-57; G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge, 1962), especially pp. 98-101; Adam Parry, 'Have We Homer's *Iliad*?', *YCS* xx (1966), especially pp. 201-16, and his introduction to the forthcoming *The Making of Homeric Verse: Collected Homeric Papers of Milman Parry*, pp. lxi-ii; and M. W. M. Pope, 'The Parry-Lord Theory of Homeric Composition', *Acta Classica*, vi (1963), 1-21, especially pp. 3-7. Douglas Young, 'Was Homer an Illiterate Improviser?', *Minnesota Review* v (1965), 65-75 is puerile in argument and gratuitously insulting in tone (pp. 71-2: 'Parry, when concocting a doctoral thesis, evolved the improbable theory that Homer used repeated word-groups to avoid breakdown in metrical improvisation, and then examined Yugoslav material, having made up his mind in advance what he wanted it to prove'). Young, 'Never Blotted a Line? Formula and Pre-

meditation in Homer and Hesiod', *Arion*, vi (1967), 279-324, makes some good points, but is marred by oversimplification of the issues and by tendentiousness. In both articles Young's strictures on Magoun's extension of Parry's work have much truth, but Young erroneously implies that what he says of Magoun is valid for Parry too.

<sup>2</sup> Parry's work has reduced complaints about repeated passages and minor narrative inconsistencies in Homer. Frederick Combellack, 'Milman Parry and Homeric Artistry', *Comparative Literature*, xi (1959), 193-208, shows how the kind of criticism that focuses on the choice of *le mot juste*, especially of adjectives, is no longer applicable to Homer; but this is not the only kind of literary criticism that exists. (See also some needed qualifications of Combellack's position in Whallon, op. cit., [p. 10 n.4 above] 33-5.) Cf. Combellack, 'Contemporary Unitarians and Homeric Originality', *AJPh* lxxi (1950), 337-64 on the futility of searching for original elements in Homer.

<sup>3</sup> James A. Notopoulos, 'Studies in Early Greek Oral Poetry. III. Towards a Poetics

All narrative poetry presents characters, recounts actions, describes a world, implies values, and so on. At a certain level it makes no difference to a critical interpretation whether a poem is written or oral.

The real questions are these: exactly how and to what extent are oral and written poetry different from each other? Lord does not discuss the questions, but he does imply some answers. First, to judge from the third and fourth sentences of the paragraph quoted, Lord thinks that oral poetry has 'depth', while written poetry should be 'treated as a flat surface', but I doubt if many critics would agree with this particular distinction.

Next he implies that oral poetry can be understood only through other oral poetry, and through 'investigation of multiforms of themes and patterns'. Knowledge of other oral poetry and its themes and patterns, discriminately applied to Homer, would yield some knowledge to be sure, but there are dangers in this procedure which Lord himself illustrated in discussing the horn and ivory passages in the *Odyssey*. If we read Homer with an imperfect command of Greek and through a veil of other oral poetry, paying little attention to what precisely is present in the particular *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which we possess, then indeed we can only talk inanely about undefined 'traditional meanings'. To substitute, as Lord does, vague notions of ritualistic scenes and mythical significances for a knowledge of the actual language and text of Homer is at least as pointless as the analysts' anachronistic application to Homer of nineteenth-century standards of coherence, logic, unity, and relevance.

Finally, Lord entirely ignores the evident differences between Homer and the Yugoslav material through which, and through which alone apparently, he would have us approach Homer. That the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are longer and more complex than the Yugoslav poems already entails some difference in interpretation. But the crucial difference is simply that of quality. By comparing Homer with the material that Lord has published, even someone who knows no Yugoslavian language can judge that Homer was a far greater poet than any of these recorded by Parry and Lord.<sup>1</sup>

of Early Greek Oral Poetry', *HSCP* lxxviii (1964), 45-65, 75-7, is very general and occasionally confused, but takes a more moderate position than Lord; e.g. p. 46: 'The poetics of oral and written poetry cannot be pushed to the breaking point so that they have nothing in common'; and p. 49: 'Provided literary criticism lives in a true symbiotic relation with a poem, it enriches our understanding of the poet's technique and meaning.' See also Stanley B. Greenfield, 'The Canons of Old English Criticism', *ELH* xxxiv (1967), 141-55. He argues (pp. 143-4) that 'even if a poem like *Beowulf* were to be convincingly demonstrated as of oral composition, which it has not been, the case for abandoning standard critical techniques in analyses of its poetic values remains unproved'. Greenfield then analyses some passages from *Beowulf* and concludes (pp. 154-5) that 'an understanding of the special technique of [formulaic] poetry

rather helps the critic, as it enabled the Anglo-Saxon auditor, to evaluate the effectiveness of individual instances. We need not reject 'the ordinary canons of literary judgment' in dealing with the poetry, nor need we evolve new critical methods apart from those applicable to all English poetry.' *Mutatis mutandis*, the same is true of Homer.

<sup>1</sup> The material in the Appendices (pp. 223-75) of Lord's *Singer of Tales*, op. cit., (p. 7 n. 1 above) is presumably among the best and most interesting of the Yugoslav songs, but it is strikingly inferior to Homer as poetry. See also Milman Parry, 'Whole Formulaic Verses in Greek and Southslavic Heroic Song', *TAPA* lxxiv (1933), 179-97, which compares Homeric and Yugoslav formulas which have the same 'essential idea'. Parry is trying to demonstrate the similarity of the two oral traditions, but in almost every case the Homeric version is more concrete, more

The magical vitality of Homer's characters, the vividness and precision with which their thoughts and actions are conveyed to us, the extraordinary subtlety with which each major character speaks unmistakably in his own voice, though all use the same traditional language,<sup>1</sup> the completeness and orderliness, the tragic splendour and the humane comedy with which the heroic worlds of Achilles and Odysseus respectively are presented—in short all the elements of Homer's artistry—are unmatched in any other oral poetry, just as surely as they are unmatched in most written poetry. Can we, then, fairly be bound in interpreting Homer to standards applicable to Yugoslav oral poetry? Shakespeare and his predecessors and contemporaries were all literate poets and they all worked in the same tradition, but that does not mean that when we talk about *Hamlet* we must restrict ourselves to the kinds of observation and interpretation that are suitable and useful in dealing with plays like Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*. Aristarchus said long ago that Homer should be interpreted by Homer, and Parry was mindful of that observation as Lord is not.<sup>2</sup> Yugoslav poetry may help to give us some idea of what poetic level the ordinary song in the Greek oral tradition is likely to have reached. But if we ask what kind of artistry Homer was capable of, the only one who can answer the question is Homer himself.

### *Yale University*

### ANNE AMORY PARRY

colourful, in short more poetic, than the Yugoslav. For example:

‘καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα  
(49 times)  
And addressing him he spoke winged words

This in Southslavic is:

Pak mu poče tiho govoriti (ii. 44, 50)  
And quietly she began to speak to him.’ (p. 185)

Or:

‘ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἀμπεπαλὼν προίει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος  
(9 times)  
He spoke, and brandished and hurled his long-shadowing spear

To mu reče, bojno koplje pušti (ii. 43, 617)  
So he spoke to him, and hurled his battle spear.’  
(pp. 187–8)

Or:

‘ἦμος δ’ ἠριγένεια φάνη ροδοδάκτυλος Ἥως  
(21 times)  
When appeared the early-born rosy-fingered dawn  
Kad u jutru jutro osvanulo (ii. 5, 54)  
When on the morn the morning dawned.’ (p. 188)

Cf. C. M. Bowra, ‘The Comparative Study of Homer’, *AJA* liv (1950), 192: ‘It would be idle to pretend that any other oral heroic poem has [Homer’s] range or strength or purity of poetry. . . . There are fine moments

. . . in some of the Yugoslav lays, but they are not Homeric either in spirit or in accomplishment. . . . The art of oral composition is still mysterious, but so are the workings of creative genius, and in the last resort not even comparative study can tell us why the Homeric poems are as good as they are.’

<sup>1</sup> See Adam Parry, ‘The Language of Achilles’, *TAPA* lxxxvii (1956), 1–7.

<sup>2</sup> Milman Parry, ‘Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. I. Homer and Homeric Style’, *HSCP* xli (1930), 76: ‘We must go back to the principle of Aristarchus of getting “the solution from the text”, but we must enlarge it until it covers not only the meaning of a verse or passage but the poems entire, and lets us know why the poet, or poets, of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* made them as they are. . . . Whatever feature of poetic art we may study, we must follow it throughout the traditional text, and try to see it clearly and fully; . . . [and] after finding all the elements of the poems which bear upon that feature, to draw from them when we can, but from them only, a new idea of poetic artistry. . . . What I wish to point out is not the need of a new method, but of a stricter use, in the supreme problem of Homer’s idea of style and poetic form, of the one good one.’