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INTERPRETING, EVALUATING, AND TEACHING LITERATURE BASED ON CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY

I. THEORETICAL PREMISES

Classical Myths —as they have come down to us primarily through literary, philosophical, or historical sources by Greek and Roman authors of Antiquity— have offered 'raw material' for the creation of original literary texts, in all genres, in most Modern languages ever since the Middle Ages and, especially, the Renaissance.

Although most of the principles applying to such an examination of literary texts based on Classical Myth(s) also apply while approaching, say, a Viking Myth, or a Medieval Legend, or a primitive Fable of religious or secular import¹, the fact remains that Roman and Grecian Myths had achieved such a high degree of cultural and psychological sophistication plus universal appeal, that specialized scholars readily demonstrate that non-classical mythologems are seminally contained or presupposed in rudimentary forms in the ancient Greek and Roman archetypes as they, in their turn, reflect the Jungian types and prototypes established by anthropologists and psychologists².

On the basis of the amount of Mythological material(s) used by a post-classical or modern writer, we may distinguish the following four categories of literature depending on Classical Myth:

- 1) Texts with ALLUSIONS to Myth(s).
- 2) Texts offering RE-INTERPRETATIONS or IMITATIONS of Myth(s).

1. The difference between archaic myths and medieval legends or fables is discussed by a host of popular scholars in *Myth or Legend?* compiled by Glyn E. Daniel. New York: Capricorn Books, 1968.

2. See, for instance William F. Lynch, *Christ and Apollo: The Dimensions of the Literary Imagination*. New York: Mentor, 1963.

3) Texts constituting comic or satirical PARODIES of Myth(s).

4) Texts utilizing functional or structural ANALOGUES to Myth(s)

Let me make it clear here that these four categories are by no means absolute or exclusive. Myth scholarship in recent decades has been enriched by the contributions of other disciplines, such as anthropology; or 'schools' of thought or method, like those of the structuralists, the Marxists, the de-constructionists and so on³. Since my purpose is not to discuss the structure and function of texts as such, but the function of classical myths as components of a text, I believe that the above four categories are both flexible and useful in their practical application, as well as encompassing in their coverage of literary works composed in various national traditions, ever since the beginning of the use of vernacular languages in post-Roman Europe.

By the term *modern* I certainly distinguish texts that do not historically belong to Classical Antiquity, and not merely those of our contemporaries or our immediate predecessors.

To clarify what I mean by the sentence "Literature Based on Classical Mythology", I feel I must establish some criteria which, first, define all such literature, and, then classify exemplary texts belonging to it on the basis of the degree of their dependence on mythology for the realization of their artistic goals. In the process of presenting examples, it will become increasingly apparent that interpretation, evaluation, and teaching of such texts is one tripartite but integrated scholarly activity, rather than a series or set of three independent and separate actions.

Borrowing some, but by no means all, categories and premises suggested by John J. White, in his article «Myths and Patterns in the Modern Novel», *Mosaic*, 2(1969), 42-55, and his monograph *Mythology in the Modern Novel; A Study of Prefigurative Techniques* (Princeton U.P., 1972), and completing them with my own categories and observations, I will be drawing a map, as it were, enabling the reader to follow my mental itinerary of approach. I will limit my examples to instances of use of the general mythologems of Odysseus (Ulysses) and Prometheus, for two chief reasons: a) Both are among the most interest-

3. For two useful collections of relevant studies see, Northrop Frye and others, *Myth and Symbol: Critical Approaches and Applications*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963. Also, John B. Vickery, editor, *Myth and Literature: Contemporary Theory and Practice*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973.

ing and fascinating myths with a lasting appeal to creative authors of all times, b) Both are widely known to scholars and readers, consequently they are instrumental to the understanding of my methodology.

1) Texts with *Allusions*.

One of the main characteristics of Odysseus, that of an adventurous traveller, and its usefulness as a means of instructing and enriching the individual, is found in Roger Ascham's prose text *The Scholemaster* (1570). Numerous other uses of, or allusions to, Ulysses are found in Renaissance and later texts, mostly dramas, where negative aspects (i.e., deception, lying) of his personality are remembered —cf Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* —more in keeping with unsympathetic interpretations of this Grecian hero, after Virgil's denigration in his *Aeneid*.

The Promethean allusions, by contrast, tend to be positive and more imaginative. For instance, in Shakespeare's *Othello* the tragic Moor says to his dead wife: «I know not where is that Promethean heat / That can thy light relume...» (V, ii, 12-13). In *Titus Andronicus* Shakespeare remembers Prometheus's torture on the Caucasian rock (II, i, 16-17). The Titan's stealing of fire as well as his function as maker of mankind are alluded to by Thomas Campion in his *Lord's Masque*. John Donne uses the phrase «Promethean art» in his last Epithalamion (stanza I of «The Time of Marriage») to express the fervour of erotic desire.

These at random examples with Ulysses and the Fire-Bringing Titan are representative of the use of mythical allusions in prose or verse that, otherwise, has non-classical mythological subject-matter or thematic concerns. Rhetorical considerations, mostly, have occasioned their use, since through them these authors have a) enriched and embellished their poetic diction, b) offered *exempla* that illustrate a major or minor point in their discourse. Needless to say that this category is the most numerous, as such cultural allusions are part of the common heritage that all Europeans and Americans directly inherited and still share. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that the continuing use of such elements in modern poetry, even prose, proves the lasting universality of their collective appeal.

2) Texts with *Re-interpretations or Imitations*.

Not as numerous as the first, still splendidly varied and rich, is the group of literary texts wherein authors of all periods and many nationalities have utilized a classical myth as their sole fabric component to weave a story and to create a hero who functions as their spokesman or exponent of the problématique of their times.

In his dramatic verse address «Prometheus» (1816) Lord Byron attacked the restrictions and absurdities of Calvinist dogma and aired his personal anguish and justification of defiant attitudes by means of the persona of this Grecian Titan. Tennyson, in his recognizably Homeric «Ulysses» (1833), succeeded in expressing personal emotions, occasioned by the loss of his friend Hallam, as well as some characteristically Victorian ideals vis-à-vis the desire to travel, to explore, to get to know the unknown and so on. In both above instances, the poets' choice of mythological personae is quite felicitous.

Much later, in his verse drama *Der Bogen des Odysseus* (1914), Gerhart Hauptmann re-interpreted the character of Odysseus to suit his own modern and Naturalistic predilections as to psychological motivation and contemporary understanding of human nature and behaviour as these are conditioned by hostile and environmental factors⁴. Similarly, the American poet Robert Lowell composed in 1967 a prose 'imitation' (his term) of the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus. In it his hero and spokesman expresses Lowell's malaise at what was happening then in his own country and the world (the Viet Nam War, racial and civil strife, social unrest all over), thus also voicing the frustration of the modern intellectual, in general, as he realizes that his wisdom and foresight are not appreciated by the Supreme Power that arbitrariness controls human destiny⁵.

With some reservations, due to Shelley's strikingly original additions of characters and events to the Promethean mythologem, and its entirely romantic orientation, we could include his *Prometheus Unbound* here. Indeed, Shelley's lyrical drama is a re-interpretation

4. W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1968), 195-8.

5. M. Byron Raizis, «Robert Lowell's *Prometheus Bound*», *Papers on Language & Literature: Studies in American Literature in Honor of Robert Dunn Faner...*, ed. by Robert Partlow (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 154-68.

and extension of the captivating story first mentioned by Hesiod and then splendidly dramatized by Aeschylus in *Prometheus Bound* and the non-extant plays of his trilogy.

Of exactly the same nature is Nikos Kazantzakis's colossal modern epic, *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* (1938), since its central hero and background are initially Homeric but very soon develop into twentieth-century re-interpretations and extensions with a plethora of new data and details that help the poet to express a range of themes based on contemporary philosophies (Nietzsche, Bergson, Marx etc.) and concerns that have nothing in common with the Homeric culture and its lore⁶.

Kazantzakis's *Odyssey* and Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* have this one strong element in common: they both add substantially to the original mythologem; they proliferate its cast, motifs, and dynamics; and thus they succeed in expressing complex personal attitudes and beliefs with challengingly new values for their times. In the above telling examples we realize the tremendous potentialities of classical myths when they are used as the *only* means for the articulation of personal or collective *Angst*. The same is true when it comes to the expression of an author's *Weltanschauung*, be it Romantic, Victorian, Naturalistic, or Modern; English, German, Modern Greek and the like.

3) Texts with Comic or Satiric *Parodies*.

This category is less popular, and its texts less numerous. However, in some historical periods, such as the Augustan Age in England, we find comic and satirical literature inspired by, and based on, classical myths and their individual heroes. In 1724 Jonathan Swift published anonymously a poem in couplets, titled «Prometheus». To hit the target of his satire Swift capitalized on Prometheus' negative aspects (cheating, stealing) to castigate a certain Mr. Wood who had coined the infamous 'Wood's halfpenny' for circulation in Ireland. In «Prometheus» the poet did not hesitate to suggest to the ruling monarch that this 'Prometheus' (Wood) should be hanged for fraud—a punishment comparable to that suffered by the Titan.

Three generations later, in 1816, the popular dramatist George Colman Jr., published «Fire: or the Sun Poker», a humorous narrative

6. Stanford, 222-40.

poem of some thirty-five pages of couplets, where practically all traits of the Titan's personality are dramatized with gusto in a light vein with the sole purpose of offering entertainment. Indeed, this poem is quite witty and funny, and rather inoffensive to Prometheus, by contrast to Swift's polemic ridicule.

Parodies of Odysseus in quality literature are unknown to me⁷. By implication comic, as the cuckolded husband of playful and unfaithful Penelope, Odysseus/Ulysses characters are found, however, in fiction primarily in the form of 'confessional' accounts by Penelope, such as Kostas Varnalis's *The Journal of Penelope* (1946), where all Homeric heroes and their values are stripped of their ethos, and their humanism shown to be hypocritical, outdated, and void of any real substance.

4) Texts with Functional or Structural Analogues.

This is a rich and fascinating category with texts in various genres spanning several historical periods. By analogue I mean—in the case of these two mythologems—texts where one or more salient features, motifs, themes, or characters bear similarities or resemblances, of some degree, with corresponding details in the archetypal or original source in the literary tradition. What causes this partial and not absolute approximation of features is normally the transposition of time and place of action from those of Antiquity to other contemporary or even recent times and milieus. This subtle strategy implies a commensurate adjustment of persons and circumstances to express changing and different tempers. Often challenging originality is achieved through irony, and the ensuing characters and circumstances may be considered imaginative parodies of the established prototypes or norms, if the overall effect is comic, or just analogous approximations if the effect to be achieved is serious.

The foremost example in this category is certainly the celebrated *Ulysses* (1922) by James Joyce. Time, setting, protagonist, and supporting cast have some pronounced features in common with the Homeric tradition, though in other aspects they are miles apart. Much has been

7. In minor texts, like James Smith's *Innovation of Penelope and Ulysses*, written c. 1640, comic parodies of the archetypal hero exist, especially in burlesque verse comparable to Colman's «The Sun-Poker». R.R. Bond cites a few in his *English Burlesque Poetry, 1700-1750* (1932).

written about the Odyssean analogy of Leopold Bloom, and of the Molly-Penelope and Stephen-Telemachus 'parallels' in the novel. The same is true of most episodes, symbols, motifs, and themes (or parodies of themes) skillfully approximated or parodied by Joyce in contemporary equivalents in *Ulysses*⁸.

This kind of structural formula/technique achieves greater verisimilitude and aura of realism than the mixture of the ancient and the modern —no matter how cleverly done— that we see, say, in Anouilh's *Antigone*, or Giraudoux's *La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*, where the classical heroes talk 'modern sense' and dramatize concerns of the 1920s or 1940s while still acting in their traditionally mythical contexts.

Talking of analogues of this broad category we must mention the Promethean attributes of Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost*, or even the quasi-Satanic qualities of some Byronic heroes, such as Manfred, Cain, or Lara. In post-War German fiction we have Thomas Mann's novel *Doktor Faustus* which is a very subtle analogue to the prototypes offered by Marlowe and Goethe, with all warranted adjustments to the modern temper made under various 'guises' or correspondences and in varying degrees of proximity.

Odyssean echoes as contemporary analogues are found in Du Bellay's Sonnet XIX, from *Les Regrets* (1558), beginning with the line, «Heureux qui comme Ulysse...» where the *nostos* (homecoming) motif and the name Ulysses are the only mythical allusions in a poem on an analogous theme, since Joachim Du Bellay was talking about his own longing to return to his village, Liré, and rest there among his compatriots and family in France. Similarly, names and echoes from *The Odyssey* of Homer appear under a familiar title in Constantine Cavafy's poem «Ithaca», a sophisticated poem about the process of the existential becoming of a modern sensibility. The opening lines are deceptively Homeric, whereas the concluding ones make it clear that Cavafy here is talking of all men at all times and places, including himself in early twentieth-century Alexandria. The analogue here functions almost as an 'objective correlative'—to borrow one of T.S. Eliot's popular terms.

Systematizing J.J. White's observations and theory, and applying some of them in a more specific and exclusive discussion of the story of Jesus Christ as subject matter, theme, or analogue in fiction, Pro-

8. Stanford, 211-22.



fessor Theodore Ziolkowski made an ingenious use of the terms *prefiguration*, *configuration*, and *postfiguration* in his treatise *Fictional Transfigurations of Jesus* (1972). Although what he writes there applies only to fictionalized biographies of characters of undisputed universality some of his terms may be used along with my modifications to cast more light even on texts featuring mythological gods or heroes.

According to Ziolkowski's argument, the real story of historical Jesus, as recorded in the four Gospels, constitutes the *prefiguration* of any Christ figure found in subsequent literature. Thus, if a later text features a contemporary recreation of Jesus's character (what I termed an imitation or reinterpretation), such as the Christ in Kazantzakis's novel *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1951), then this 'hero' is a *postfiguration* of the original. Also, if an author develops a character with Christ-like qualities and a humanitarian mission *pro bono publico* in a modern setting, such as Manolios in *Christ Recrucified* (The Greek Passion, 1948) by Kazantzakis, this is a *postfiguration* of the historical Jesus as well. The latter types are more numerous (for obvious reasons) in Western literature. For instance, Ignazio Silone's Pietro Spina in *Bread and Wine* (1937), and John Steinbeck's Jim Casey in *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), constitute such *postfigurations*—what I would have classed as analogues of the Ulysses-Leopold Bloom type.

At this point I would like to differentiate in terms of time setting and, conversely, separate a character such as Leopold Bloom functioning in the Dublin of the early 1900s from an Odyssean figure functioning in a traditionally Homeric time setting of antiquity.

Following this differentiation and broadening its application to include historical as well as mythological figures, we realize that Joyce's Bloom is a modern *postfiguration* of Odysseus, whereas Kazantzakis's hero in his *Odyssey* is a different type because he is still functioning in a traditional setting. I propose to call this latter type a *configuration* of the original, to avoid confusion of settings and historical circumstances. When it comes to Prometheus, though, we realize that even this modification of Ziolkowski's categories is of little avail since the few 'modern' Prometheuses in literature—such as Lawrence Lee's *Prometheus in Pittsburgh* (1952) and Wallace B. Nichols's *Prometheus in Piccadilly* (1927)—are the very Grecian Titan of antiquity released after thousands of years to find himself involved with Londoners or Americans of our own century. To boot, these *postfigurations*—like most of those Jesus types mentioned by Ziolkowski—do not constitute great art. If we apply these modified terms, we realize that Robert Lowell's Prometheus,

or Giraudoux's Ulysse are *configurations* rather of the classical characters, while they express concerns and problématiques poles apart from those of the original sources, thus functioning, in effect, as *postfigurations* on the thematic level. This discrepancy between 'identity' and function of the characters poses problems not only to classification but to interpretation as well, and a certain doubt ensues as to their artistic effectiveness.

II. APPLICATION

The reader must have realized by now that it is not easy to separate interpretation from evaluation, and both from presentation, i.e., teaching. As a matter of fact, these three scholarly activities are inter-related, inter-dependent, and even overlapping.

A scholar who wants to write a publishable academic monograph or paper on Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* or Joyce's *Ulysses* must certainly evaluate the role played by the mythological component in either text before feeling sure that he has comprehended the function and meaning of these texts as integrated artistic entities. Determining the category in which each belongs (2 and 4 in these cases) will enable him to ascertain whether Shelley and Joyce achieved their re-interpretation and analogue, respectively, with a commendable degree of artistic originality. He may then proceed to offer his own new way of evaluating, interpreting, or criticizing one or more salient features in these masterpieces.

The recording of his observations, critique, and conclusion constitutes an act of *instruction*. His readers are his class, his thesis is the lesson to be taught. If the scholar fails to be effective in the presentation of his thesis, his paper is flawed and, in all probability, will remain unpublished. Similarly, a classroom teacher must have researched all relevant data before attempting to convince the 'innocent' students that Shelley has done an ingenious job of continuing and concluding the Promethean legend by inventing and properly manipulating characters and events that were inconceivable in the times of Aeschylus. Since *Prometheus Bound* belonged to a trilogy, credit must be given to Shelley for conceiving and realizing a final and concluding part for such a trilogy. Of course, the English poet created an end-drama for a 'Prometheia' expressing his own idiosyncratic views within a larger romantic perimetre, by contrast to the classical temper of the Athenian tragedian.

These instances of imaginative originality in the work of Shelley—after they have been traced, interpreted, and evaluated—easily convince fellow-scholars, or 'innocent' students, that Shelley created a masterpiece. The only difference between the task of a teacher and that of a scholar-critic is in the *degree* of erudition and professional sophistication that will be employed in either case: to instruct erudite specialists, or to instruct young persons who must be initiated to the basic issues.

To facilitate his task, a teacher of *Prometheus Unbound* may prepare, and distribute to his class, an outline of what happens in Aeschylus's play by *whom*, *how*, and *why*. This outline must indicate main themes, symbols, motifs as well as how and why all these function as an artistic whole. The teacher will then show how Shelley's corresponding, or new, features function for the articulation of his own concerns as a romantic intellectual. A comparative examination of the original 'source' and the work produced in response, as it were, will enable the learner to master the target text, thus avoiding misconceptions, oversimplifications, or loss of key points⁹.

A comparable approach to a presentation of *Ulysses* for teaching purposes will warrant the making of a *chart* of sorts, wherein all Homeric characters, episodes, symbols, motifs etc., will be shown in their corresponding approximations (analogues) in each chapter of Joyce's novel. The student will then have made a big step forward in his process of deciphering and understanding the elements controlling the structure of this complex work—a prerequisite to the understanding of its themes and artistic purpose. The latter will be assisted by the teacher's explanation of Joyce's personal and contemporary preoccupations and concerns as an Irish intellectual. Once more, a comparison between what Homer offered Joyce as 'raw material', and what the Irishman achieved thanks to his ingenuity in his modern analogue, will convince the student that Joyce, indeed, created a novel of great originality and literary value.

The task of the teacher and that of the scholar thus coincide in their inter-related, inter-dependent, and overlapping function—to instruct others. *Instruction*, however, will not be effectively accomplished if the classification of data has not 'illuminated' their interpretation and

9. For a number of interpretations of Shelley's text see, M. Byron Raizis, *From Caucasus to Pittsburgh: The Prometheus Theme in British and American Poetry* (Athens: Gnosis, 1982), 84-95.

their critical evaluation as means to comprehend the overall meaning and function of a work of art based on classical mythology.

Determining the category is the first step. Texts belonging to Category I (allusions) require an equally responsible approach on the part of the scholar-teacher, as texts belonging to the other three. The reason is simple: students may form a vague idea as to the nature and general meaning of a poem like *The Waste Land* of T.S. Eliot even if not all allusions in it are explained. But they will never master it in all its dimensions if they remain uncertain, confused, or partly informed, about the meaning and function of its artistic cultural ingredients. As a matter of fact, students may even become embarrassed when asked to justify it as a modern masterpiece if they cannot understand and evaluate how effectively echoes and allusions function in it to turn it into a sophisticated and strikingly original poetic manifesto of the spiritual aridity experienced by Eliot in the aftermath of the Great War¹⁰.

Similarly, readers of as 'simple' a novel as *The Centaur* by John Updike, will certainly fail to relate its title to its contents, and its contemporary significance to the relevance of issues and problems that were first confronted by the ancient Greek myth-makers, if the instructor fails to explain the story of Cheiron (Caldwell); and the approximation (analogue) of the school Principal (Zimmerman) to Zeus, and the rest of the characters to gods, goddesses, and other figures of classical mythology. Classifying *The Centaur* (1963) as an analogue (Category 4) is then a necessary first step before attempting either to teach or criticize it as a competent work of recent fiction.

As I stated in the beginning of my paper, I consider these four practical categories extremely useful. Though I learned much from the scholarship and expertise of White and Ziolkowski, I based most of my approach on my own thirty years of experience as a college instructor and professor of anglophone and other literature—in Comparative-Literature courses—related to Classical Mythology¹¹. The methodology

10. In a Note Eliot himself refers to Miss Weston's anthropological classic *From Ritual to Romance* (1920). Notice how close it is to the time when *The Waste Land* was written (1922). See, Jessie L. Weston *From Ritual to Romance*. New York: An Anchor Book, 1957.

11. For anthropological backgrounds to the Prometheus mythologem, as originating in fire cults, cooking habits, and the 'religion of the hearth' see Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, *Religion in Primitive Culture* (New York: Harper Torchbooks,

of my approach and its theoretical premises are not exclusive or unique, neither do they supersede others in their entirety. They are, however, useful and effective as a practical first step to be taken by a literary scholar about to enter his office to write an article, or about to enter his classroom to teach the 'innocent'¹².

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Μάριος Βύρων Ραΐζης, «Ερμηνεία, αξιολόγηση, και διδασκαλία λογοτεχνικών κειμένων που βασίζονται στην κλασική μυθολογία».

Αυτή η μελέτη είναι προϊόν τῆς τριανταπεντάχρονης πείρας μου ὡς πανεπιστημιακοῦ διδασκάλου διεθνoῦς λογοτεχνίας πoῦ προέρχεται ἀπὸ τοὺς μύθους τῶν ἀρχαίων Ἑλλήνων καὶ Ρωμαίων λογοτεχνῶν, στοχαστῶν, καὶ ιστορικῶν. Οἱ παρατηρήσεις μου εἶναι ἐμπειρικὲς καὶ ὄχι τελικὰ συμπεράσματα ἀπὸ τὶς διεργασίες τῶν θέσεων καὶ ἀντιλήψεων τρίτων. Οὐτε εἶναι ἀποκλειστικὲς ἄλλων καὶ διαφορετικῶν προσεγγίσεων.

Στὸ Α' Μέρος, θεωρητικὲς Ἀρχές, ἐξηγῶ ὅτι οἱ διανοητικὲς γνωστικὲς λειτουργίες πoῦ ἀναφέρονται στὸν τίτλο ἀποτελοῦν, στὴν πράξη, μία ἐνίαxia διαδικασία διότι εἶναι ἀπόλυτα ἀλληλοσυμπληρούμενες, ἀλληλένδετες, καὶ ἀλληλοεξαρτώμενες διεργασίες. Δὲν εἶναι λογικὸ νὰ διδάσκει κανεὶς κείμενα τῶν ὁποίων τὸ νόημα τοῦ διαφεύγει ἢ τῶν ὁποίων τὸ λογοτεχνικὸ ποινὸν δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ἀξιολογήσει μὲ τὰ παραδεδεγμένα φιλολογικὰ κριτήρια.

Μὲ κριτήριο τὴν ποσότητα καὶ φύση τοῦ μυθολογικοῦ ὕλικoῦ ἢ στοιχείου πoῦ ἓνας νεώτερος λογοτέχνης χρησιμοποίησε στὴ σύνθεση τοῦ λογοτεχνήματός του, διακρίνω τέσσερις (4) κατηγορίες λογοτεχνίας αὐτοῦ τοῦ εἶδους: 1) Κείμενα πoῦ περιέχουν ΑΝΑΦΟΡΕΣ σὲ μῦθο, μύθους, ἢ μυθικὰ στοιχεία· 2) Κείμενα πoῦ εἶναι ΕΠΑΝΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΕΣ ἢ ΑΠΟΜΙΜΗΣΕΙΣ μύθων· 3) Κείμενα πoῦ συνιστοῦν κωμικὲς ἢ σατιρικὲς ΠΑΡΩΔΙΕΣ μύθων· καὶ 4) Κείμενα πoῦ χρησιμοποιοῦν λειτουργικὲς ἢ δομικὲς ΑΝΑΛΟΓΙΕΣ πρὸς μύθους. Παρέχω ἱκανὰ παραδείγματα ἑλoν τῶν κατηγοριῶν ἀπὸ κλα-

1958), 365 and 486; Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, trans. by Alan Ross (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 35; Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. by John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969), *passim*.

12. In its original short form this essay was delivered as a paper at the 16th International Congress of the International Federation for Modern Languages and Literatures, at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, in August 1984.

σικά, ἀγγλόφωνα, καὶ εὐρωπαϊκὰ λογοτεχνήματα ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀναγέννηση ὥς τὸ 1970 περίπου.

Ἀναφέρομαι στὶς θέσεις καὶ ὁρολογίες δύο διεθνῶς γνωστῶν θεωρητικῶν, τῶν καθηγητῶν John White καὶ Theodore Ziolkowski, τὶς ὁποῖες καὶ ἀξιολογῶ ὡς πρὸς τὴν πρακτικὴ χρησιμότητα, ὅχι μόνο ὡς πρὸς τὸ σοφιστικὸ τους ὑπόβαθρο. Εὐκόλα ἐξάγεται τὸ συμπέρασμα, α) ὅτι καὶ μῦθοι τῶν πρωτογόνων ἢ θρύλοι τοῦ Μεσαίωνα μποροῦν ἄνετα νὰ ἐξετασθοῦν εἴτε μὲ τὴ μίᾳ προσέγγιση εἴτε τὴν ἄλλη, ἂν καὶ ἡ τοῦ Ζιολκάουσκι προσφέρεται κυρίως γιὰ τὰ λαϊκοῦ γούστου μυθιστορήματα (ἀστυνομικά, ἐρωτικά, γουέστερν κ.τ.τ.), τῶν ὁποίων ἡ αἰσθητικὴ ἀξία εἶναι μηδαμινή. Κύριο μυθολόγημα ποῦ ἐξετάζω εἶναι τοῦ Ὀδυσσεᾶ μὲ παράδειγμα τὸ ἔμμετρο δράμα τοῦ Hauptmann *Τὸ Τύξο τοῦ Ὀδυσσεᾶ* (1914) τὸ ὁποῖο κατατάσσω στὴ Β' κατηγορίᾳ (ἐπανερμηνεῖς ἢ ἀπομιμήσεις κλασικοῦ μύθου ἀπὸ νεωτέρους), ὁμοίως κατατάσσω στὴν Δ' κατηγορίᾳ (ἀναλογίες) τὸ γνωστὸ μυθιστόρημα Ὀδυσσεᾶς (1922) τοῦ Joyce, καὶ τὰ δύο, φυσικά, προσερχόμενα ἀπὸ τὴν Ὀμηρικὴ Ὀδύσεια κυρίως.

Ἀναλύοντας τὴν μέθοδο τοῦ Ζιολκάουσκι, τὴν ὁποία ὁ ἴδιος στηρίζει σὲ ἐξέταση μυθιστορημάτων Χριστολογικοῦ περιεχομένου, ὅπως τοῦ Καζαντζάκη καὶ πολλῶν ξένων στὰ ἑκατὸ τελευταῖα χρόνια, ἐξηγῶ τὰ ὑπὲρ καὶ τὰ κατὰ τῶν ὅρων του: Configuration, prefiguration, καὶ postfiguration, ὡς πρὸς τὸ πρωτότυπο, δηλ. τὴν Καινὴ Διαθήκη μὲ τὴν ἱστορίᾳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἐφαρμόζοντας τὴν ἴδια μέθοδο καὶ σὲ μοντέρνα ἢ ρομαντικά κείμενα γιὰ τὸν Προμηθεῖ ἢ τὸν Ὀδυσσεᾶ, καταλήγω στὸ συμπέρασμα ὅτι στὴν περίπτωσι πολλῶν συγγραφέων, ὅπως π.χ. ὁ Giraudoux, ὁ μὲν κεντρικὸς τοῦ ἥρωας παραμένει configuration τοῦ Ὀμηρικοῦ, ἐνῶ ἡ θεματολογία τοῦ κειμένου εἶναι σαφέστατα τῆς ἐποχῆς 1940-50, συνεπῶς ἡ μέθοδος καὶ ὁρολογία τοῦ διαπρεποῦς Ἀμερικανοῦ ἔχουν τὸ ἐλάττωμα ὅτι προκαλοῦν σύγχυσι στὰ ἐπίπεδα λειτουργίας τοῦ λογοτεχνήματος.

Στὸ Β' Μέρος, Ἐφαρμογές, παρέχω λεπτομερικὸ σχέδιο παρουσίας (διδασκαλίας) νεώτερων κειμένων γιὰ τὸν Ὀδυσσεᾶ καὶ τὸν Προμηθεῖ ἀφοῦ προηγηθεῖ σύγκρισι τῶν κειμένων μὲ τὶς ἀρχαῖες πηγές τους, ἀξιολόγησι τῶν κύριων ιδεῶν τους, καί, τελικά, ἐκτίμησι τοῦ βαθμοῦ ἐπιτυχίας στὴ χρῆσι μυθολογικῶν μοτίβων, ἀναλογιῶν, χαρακτηρισμοῦ, δομῆς, ὅφους κ.τ.τ.