



Philosophical Methodology

The Utilization of Myth in Philosophical Literature

Alexandr Bilyk, Yaroslaw Bilyk

ABSTRACT: Any philosophical work is not only the aggregate of ideas, but is also the work of literature. The myth, used for the transmission of philosophical ideas, has a particular importance. Take for example the Homeric cycle. Philosophers often use topics bound up with the adventures of Odysseus: the salutation from Sirens, from Scylla and Haribdis, from Cyclop, from the witchcraft of Circe and the lotus-eaters. This paper will explore these issues.

Any philosophical work is not only the aggregate of ideas, but it is also a work of literature. The term "literature" can mean not only the belles-lettres. It is necessary to distinguish form and contents in philosophical work, as in any work of literature. It is erroneously to consider that philosophy is only contents of works.

The myth, utilizing for the transmission of philosophical ideas, has the particular importance among the forms of philosophical works. The myths of Homeric cycle have the particular importance for philosophy.

Philosophers often used topics which were bound with the adventures of Odysseus. Basilus Magnus affirmed, it is necessary don't to pay attention to all in works of poets. If poets tell about good people, it is necessary to imitate them, and when poets depict villains, it is necessary to avoid those poems and close ears, as Odysseus. But Plutarchus affirmed, that though Gorgias call the tragedy the fraud, when that, who deceive, is just, than honest, and that, who deceived oneself, is wiser, than that, who didn't deceived oneself, it isn't necessary to close ears, youths as the fellow-travellers of Odysseus, (1) and them to compel to boat of Epicurus, (2) to avoid poetry as Sirens.

Philosophers compare any short-coming of people with the singing of Sirens, which as if captivate them. It is possible and laziness, (3) and rumours about another's misfortunes, but first of all aspiration for earthly blessings, in particular, for delights. (4)

In Socrates's opinion, who was follower of Pythagorean tradition, the cosmos has such organization, that on every sphere of celestial spheres one of Sirens sits, who turns together with the sphere and creates sound of definite pitch. The cosmic harmony arises from combination of sounds of eight Sirens. (5)

In Plutarchus's opinion, in the works of Plato Muses are called Sirens, because they sing about the kingdom of Aides. (6) But song strength of Sirens symbolizes no the ruin of person, but waking up of love of divine and oblivion of mortal in souls wandering after the death of body-they, captivated singing, follow after him, and the only weak echo of that music reaches our ears and reminds our souls, that was before. But ears in most cases are

closed up and are closed-no wax, and the carnal obstacles and experiences. (7) Those eight Muses govern cosmic spheres, and one of Muses is on the Earth. (8)

Socrates called memory present of mother of Muses (9) and compared with waxen plate, on which imprinted, that wanted to remember. And that has hardened on this wax, we remember for the time being the imprint remains. When it was obliterated of the place for new imprints isn't, we forget. (10) Marcus Aurelius affirmed, that nine basic rules of ethics it is necessary to perceive as present of Muses, and tenth rule it is necessary to perceive as present of Apollo. (11)

Plutarchus identified Muses not only with Sirens, but and with Moeraes: the cosmos is divided into parts are situated in the harmonious correlation; the first part belongs to fixed stars, second part belongs to planets, third part belongs to sublunary; every of them is guarding one of Muses. (12) In his opinion, there are four beginnings of all a life, a movement birth, a death; Monada in accordance with Aides (invisible) unites first with second, Nous in accordance with Sun-second with third, Nature in accordance with Moon-third with fourth; the daughter of Ananke (13) Moerae (14) is on every union: Atropos is on first union, Cloto is on second union, Lachesis is on union is turned to the Moon. Lachesis determines the vital way of all the born. (15)

Free will in Christianity was opposed paganism with the help of those myths: we don't have Sirens, don't have fetters of Odysseus, don't have a wax, we have the free from fetters, every person has absolute free to listen. (16)

In Socrates's opinion, who wants to have friends, he must not be as Scylla, (17) from who all ran away, because she used strength, but he must be as Sirens, who captivated all people their songs. (18) In Socrates's opinion, Perikles and Themistokles knew many such songs. (19) In Abelard's opinion, philosopher must show preference to spiritual occupations to delights, that this Haribdis shan't swallow him. (20) But Divine charity can't liberate from the whirlpool of mistakes, to save from terrible Haribdis and to direct to the salutary haven after great storms. (21)

Crates affirmed, that all, except water and common bread, as the witchcraftal philtre of Circe, transmute people into animals. (22) In Diogenes's opinion, a delight deceives and captivates with terrible philtres, as Circea transmuted the fellow-travellers of Odysseus: (23) who was transmuted into swine, who-into wolves, who-into other animals; (24) when delight seized with soul and entangled with the sorcery, it, as Circe, slightly beat person with its rod and penned cattle; from delight too are born the venomous snakes and other reptiles, which bent before delight, crawl near its door, thirst for it, suffer tortures-and all is in vain, because delight conquer them and sent to them misfortunes. (25)

Socrates too affirmed, that Circe transmuted people into swine-she regaled them with such dishes, which are eating without a hunger, and such drinks, which are drinking without a thirst, and Odysseus, thanks to admonitions of Hermes (26) and own moderation, held out from the excessive use and because didn't transmute into swine. (27)

In Plutarchus's opinion, women mustn't try to captivate men-even Circe didn't have use from people were captivated and transmuted into animals, in contradistinction to Odysseus, who was in his right mind.

Diogenes affirmed that he shall contend with that Circe, fed fellow-travelers of Odysseus, were captivated into swine, (28) but not all agree with Diogenes. Leo the Philosopher (Mathematician) affirmed, that we, the result of heaven, are ashamed to devour acorns, (29) and Leo the Philosopher promised to not betray the Motherland (30) for the sweet food of

lotus-eaters he affirmed, that craves to get from God moli-flower (31) for salvation of soul-
the protection from designs. (32)

In Philostratus's opinion, if a philosopher goes for the conversation with tyrant, this is the
same when Odysseus goes to the Cyclop's cave; (33) the meeting with tyrant cans to cost for
philosopher (34) by far costly, than for Odysseus his meeting with Cyclop-too ruined his
fellow-travelers, because he can not renounce the contemplation of the cruel monster. (35)
On the other hand, Socrates like admired Cyclop's words, that Nobody offended him, (36)
because nobody can not offend us-a misfortune concerns only the outside matters and
doesn't concern a soul. (37)

The attitude of the Odysseus's journeys was different. In Theophrastus's opiniion,
Democritus, when he travelled, collected better collection, (38) than Menelaus and
Odysseus, who, as a matter of fact, differed in no way from Phoenician merchants, because
they collected money. (39) Seneca affirmed, that it isn't necessary to research, where
Odysseus wandered-it is better to stop the wandering of one's own reason. (40)

Notes

- (1) Homerus. Odyss, XII, 39-49; 173-200; Apollod. Epit, VII, 18.
- (2) Epicurus. Disclaimed any art.
- (3) Horat, Sat, II, III, 14-15.
- (4) Leo Philosophus. Epicurus; Bacon. De Sapientia Deterum, XXXI.
- (5) Plato, Resp., X, 617 b.
- (6) Plut. Simp., IX, XIV, 6, 745 F.
- (7) Ibid, IX, XIV,6 , 745 DE.
- (8) Ibidem, IX, XIV, 6, 746 A.
- (9) Muses are daughters of Zeus and Mnemosine (memory) (Appolod. Bibliotheca, I, III, I).
- (10) Plato. Theaet., 191 DE.
- (11) Marc. Aurel., XI, 18.
- (12) Plut. Simp., 1X, XIV, 4, 745 BC.
- (13) Ananke is fate.
- (14) Or is Themis (right). (Apollod. Bibliotheca, I, III, I).
- (15) Plut. De genio Socrat., 22.
- (16) Methodius. De libero arbitrio, I, I.
- (17) Scylla was six canine heads and devoured six Odysseus's sailors (Homer. Odyss., XII, 89-100; 245-246; Appolod. Epit, VII, 20-21).

- (18) Xenoph. Memorab., II, 6, 31.
- (19) Ibid, II, 6, 13.
- (20) Abelard. Istoria calamitatum mearum; Haribdis was on the rock opposite Scylla and devoured the all.
- (21) Abelard. Dialog.
- (22) Crates. Epist., 14.
- (23) Homer, Odyss., X, 211-213; 235-240; 282-283; 337-338.
- (24) Dio, VIII. 21.
- (25) Ibid, VIII, 24-26.
- (26) Homer. Odyss, X, 277-301.
- (27) Xenoph. Memorab., I, III, 6-8.
- (28) Dio, VI, 62.
- (29) That is human affairs and troubles.
- (30) That is the heaven.
- (31) The flower was gave with Hermes for the protection from the Circe's withcraft. (Homer. Odyss. X, 302-306; Appolod. Epit., VII, 16).
- (32) Leo Philosophys. Epicur.
- (33) The visit of Apollonius Tyanensis to Domitianus (Philostr. De vita Apoll., VII, 28).
- (34) The visit of Apollomius Tyanesis to Nero.
- (35) Philostr. De vita Apoll., VI, 36.
- (36) Homer. Odyss., IX, 364-408; Apollod. Epit., VII, 6-7.
- (37) Theophilactus Simocattas. Epist., XL.
- (38) That is the knowledge.
- (39) Ael. V. h., IV, 20.
- (40) Seneca. Epist. ad Lucil., LXXXVIII, 7.