

# Introjection of fear - a significant change in human

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## Introduction

**H**istorical anthropology suggests not only that transformations of fundamental human structure exist, but also that they range a historical period, which means that the cultural formations of human being are very deeply grounded.

According to the results of researches, such transformations in our cultural tradition took place once somewhere between Homer and Plato (especially in V century B.C.), and second time during the forming of the contemporary human.

In this paper, I will especially focus on two researches, concerning the first transition of human. They clearly show the importance of historical anthropology, as well as they contain a thesis about a peculiar „introjection" executed on human kind.

First, I shall introduce the study by a German scholar, Bruno Snell. His research shows how the ancient human experiences himself. Secondly, I will give some critic of Snell's theory. Then, I will bring closer the thesis about „introjection of feelings" formed by other German scholar, Hermann Schmitz. Works of both philosophers concern Homeric and Platonic anthropology. And finally, I will give some summary.

## Homeric men

In his studies on the Greeks, Snell shows that from *Iliad*, through Greek tragedy and lyric, a peculiar transition of human experience and self-reflection took place. What he ventures to say is that „Homer's men had as yet no knowledge of the intellect, or of the soul, or therefore of many other things" [1]. Snell does not want to say that Homeric characters were not capable of joy or reflection, but wants to show that „they did not conceive of these matters as actions of the intellect or the soul; and it is in this sense that they did not know the two" [2]. Thus, Snell raises the essential question: „What did the Greeks at any given time know about themselves, and what did they not (or not yet) know?" [3]

The thesis that there is a fundamental human formation profoundly different from ours, namely „the Homeric human", is based mainly on deep analysis of some Greek words, used by Homer. According to Snell, there is no one word for naming the human body as the whole. „Of course the Homeric man had a body exactly like the later Greeks, but he did not know it qua body, but merely as the sum total of his limbs" [4] — claims Snell. He also writes that Aristarchus was the first one who noticed a specific use of the word *sîma* (soma) by Homer. And so, soma was never used to refer to a living body, it rather meant the corpse; lifeless remains. Instead, the word *dmaz* (demas) was his expression for the live body. But Snell doubts that this is true in every case.

„Demas, however, is but a poor substitute for 'body', seeing that the word occurs only in the accusative of specification. It means 'in structure', 'n shape', and consequently its use is restricted to a mere handful of expressions, such as: 'to be small or large, to resemble someone', etc." [5] — we can read in *The Discovery of Mind*. Instead of using the word 'body', Homer has an inclination to use the word 'limbs', along with some others, i.e. *chros* or *derma*.

Snell makes a conclusion that the early Greeks did not, either in their language or in the visual arts, grasp the body as a unit.

Furthermore, there is no one word for the inner wholeness of human, as well as there is no central instance organizing human desires, aspirations and thoughts; there is a lack of will. In mental and spiritual acts we can discover the influence of external factors, and man is like the open target for many forces which impact on him.

When returning to the soul and intellect, we discover the same situation as in the case of the body. For describing the soul, Homer uses mainly three words: *ČŁÇŽ* (psyche), *ĹŽĚĀ* (thymos), and *ĚžĀ* (noos).

*Psyche* means the force which keeps the human being alive. „Homer says that it forsakes man at the moment of death, and that it flutters about in Hades; but it is impossible to find

out from his words what he considers to be the function of the psyche during man's life" [6]. Homer also mentions that the psyche leaves through the mouth, through the wound, and flies to Hades.

*Thymos* is introduced as the source of motion or agitation. Several times *thymos* occurs with connection to death which is described as a departure of the *thymos*. This fact provoked some scholars to interpret *thymos* as a soul. However, Snell is not among them. He proposes to translate *thymos* as 'organ of (e)motion' which justifies above interpretation of *thymos* as a soul. Accepting Snell's translation, *thymos* in fact, among its other functions, determines physical motion, which allows us to say that the *thymos* leaves the bones and the limbs. Nevertheless, Snell clearly denies that the *thymos* exists after death. "It is true that there remain a number of passages in which *thymos* is the eschatological soul which flies off at the moment of death; but in each case it is the death of an animal which is so described - the death of a horse (Il. I6.469), of a stag (Od. IO.I63), of a boar (Od. I9.454) or of a dove (Il. 23.880). I have no doubt that the origin of this usage was as follows: evidently people were averse to ascribing the *psyche*, which a human being loses when he dies, also to an animal. They therefore invented the idea of a *thymos* which leaves the animal when it expires." [7] - convinces Snell.

The difference between *psyche* and *thymos* seems to be fairly clear and trenchant. But yet, we cannot say the same about the line between *thymos* and *noos*. While the *thymos* is said to be the mental organ which causes emotions, the *noos* is responsible for ideas and images. Although Snell says that these two overlap in many aspects, he gives some examples which make the distinction between *thymos* and *noos* sharper.

Ordinarily the *thymos* is something which puts man into action, but in *Iliad*, I4.6I f., we can read Nestor's words: "Let us take counsel...if the *noos* may accomplish anything". This quote suggests that *thymos* is here not necessary and fairly useless. Further, the sensations such as joy, pleasure, love, sympathy, anger, merely all mental agitation, were associated with *thymos*. A lot of examples of using *thymos* in the above context can be found in *Iliad*. Also, *thymos* may be used as the name of a function, in which case we connect it with 'character' and 'will'. As an example, Snell cites the words of Odysseus: "Another *thymos* held me back" [8]. From given examples about *noos* we can separate different uses of this word. It occurred as 'to see', 'to acquire a clear image of something', 'thinking', and 'understanding'. Snell writes: "*Noos* is, as it were, the mental eye which exercises an unclouded vision" [9]. Therefore, *noos* covers what we can call mind, soul, or intelligence. The same is true about *thymos*.

Thus, Snell says that what we call soul, in Homer was split into three parts, *psyche*, *thymos* and *noos*, defining each by the analogy of physical organs. He writes: "Our transcription of *psyche*, *noos* and *thymos* as 'organs' of life, of perception, and of (e)motion are, therefore, merely in the nature of abbreviations, neither totally accurate nor exhaustive; this could not be otherwise, owing to the circumstance that the concept of the 'soul' — and also of the 'body', as we have seen — is tied up with the whole character and orientation of a language. This means that in the various languages we are sure to find the most divergent interpretations of these ideas" [10].

## Intervention of the Olympian Gods

The second observation about Homeric men is connected with their actions. Nowadays, we seem to believe that a man changes the situation by his act of will and by his own power. From what we can read in Homer, it has not always been like this. It is not hard to notice that the great heroes, Achilles, Hector, Odysseus, etc., do not effectuate their great acts with help of their own force and ingeniousness. Snell lays out the issue this way: „Whenever a man accomplishes, or pronounces, more than his previous attitude had led others to expect, Homer connects this, in so far as he tries to supply an explanation, with the interference of a god. It should be noted especially that Homer does not know genuine personal decisions; even where a hero is shown pondering two alternatives the intervention of the gods plays the key role" [11]. So it seems that the gods are the ones who interfere into events, or all the time, or at the final stage.

At the beginning of *Odyssey*, the gods decide on the return of Odysseus; further, it is the goddess Athena who makes Odysseus "*polypragmatos*" with her hints. In *Iliad* we witness a quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles. Agamemnon uses his higher position and demands

Achilles to bring along to him Briseis, Achilles' captive. This makes Achilles so angry that he is close to using his sword against Agamemnon. Again, at the critical point, the Olympian god appears. Athena appears to Achilles, holds him back and warns him. Achilles obeys the goddess and laces his sword back in the scabbard. „Homer, [...], could not do without deity. We might substitute a decision on the part of Achilles, his own reflection and his own incentive. But Homer's man does not yet regard himself as the source of his own decisions; that development is reserved for tragedy. When the Homeric hero, after duly weighing his alternatives, comes to a final conclusion, he feels that his course is shaped by the gods" [12] — comments Snell. But Homer's audience did not consider this peculiar dependence of heroes as something bad, rather contrary, the Greek heroes were considered great because the gods performed through them. The Greek god does not strike men with thunders up from the clouds; instead, like Athena in the mentioned scene, speaks to the hero: follow me, if you wish. And Achilles follows her, since he knows that when a man is in the state of anger, it is generally better to listen to the gods.

## A Criticism of Snell's theory

Hermann Schmitz gathered different observations, finding an interesting thesis which can explain them. But before I will bring this thesis closer, I shall present a criticism of Snell's theory made by Schmitz.

Schmitz focuses his critic mainly on the word ἄνθη, which as we already know, means *thymos*. According to Snell, an organ is just a tool, used for carrying out a job. When something is acting on its own, it can therefore never be an organ. From this view Schmitz raises a question: is the *thymos* in the *Iliad* just a tool carrying out a job?

What Schmitz says is that this relation between *thymos* and a person is in the *Iliad* a partnership, in which *thymos* is more often the higher than the lesser partner. Apart from this partnership, evolving itself next to the person, *thymos* has a little meaning. Schmitz notes that almost every time when the *thymos* is named in the *Iliad*, it is described as the self-conscious, energetic engine from the person whom it is tied to. Moreover, in case of a conflict between the person and his *thymos*, it is the *thymos* which prevails. Thus, Schmitz makes an obvious conclusion, namely that *thymos* can never be an organ in the way Snell meant it. Finally, by fitting *thymos* to such an easy word as 'organ', interpretation of the *Iliad* will be only more difficult and unclear, instead of becoming easier.

## Schmitz's complements

What Schmitz is attempting to prove is his thesis about „introjection of feelings". It is a peculiar and decisive process which took place somewhere between Homer and Plato. Schmitz describes it as discovering the soul and, at the same time, suppressing the body, and names it the „introjection of feelings".

Schmitz claims that primarily a human experienced feelings as forces coming from outside. Feelings were described like a force of moods, aiming at human beings directly, and bodily. They took a place in the heart, in the chest, in the guts. Human attempted to find a counterpoise to this situation, and as a result he created a certain autonomic internal instance. The instance we call „the soul".

The soul, itself having no particular place, took a function of absorbing the body emotions and transforming them into „the affects of the soul". From this moment on, feelings were perceived as the affects of the soul, the moods of the soul and its states. The old way of perceiving feelings as outside forces vanished and was forgotten. In other words, Schmitz understand the „introjection of feelings" as a process of putting a centripetal impact by outside forces of feelings into internal area of the soul.

## The external „force of feelings" in the *Iliad*

The first example showing in what way the Homeric man perceives and experiences things is taken from the scene of the *Iliad* and is presented by Gernot Böhme in his article *Historical anthropology. Pragmatic aspect* [13]. In this example Paris meets Helene after his duel with Menelaus. Before Homer gives the description of how Aphrodite leads Paris in the mist, when he lost his hope to win with Menelaus. Now Paris turns to Helene in these words:

But come now, let us take our joy, bedded  
together in love, for never yet has  
desire so encompassed my mind — not  
even when I first snatched you from  
lovely Lacedaemon and sailed with you  
on my seafaring ships, and on the  
isle of Cranae slept with you on the  
bed of love — as now I love  
you, and sweet desire seizes me [14].

But as Schmitz notices, the contemporary translation obliterates the original Homeric words. The contemporary translation says: „desire so encompassed my mind", while Homer wrote that Eros darkened, or dimmed down the *phrene*, the area of midriff.

According to Schmitz, *phrene* was the source of emotions in the center of the body. The ancient man felt the *phrene* in the situation of concern, worry, fear, shame, or even in thinking. Thus, it is not the matter of deterioration of the mind or senses, but the matter of a change in the center of the body.

The last verse of cited fragment from *Iliad* can also provoke to some remarks. The words „sweet desire seizes me" do not render the function of Eros properly. Eros was not perceived as something inner, not as an urge which needs to be externalized. Schmitz claims that it is a surrounding force. Paris does not follow some inner desire, but is captivated by external charm of Helene or by the power of Eros. Schmitz underlines that it is a **physical** enchantment. He says that it lead to something like a change in the body balance (*innerhalb leiblicher Ökonomie*) — as Böhme names it.

Let us recall already mentioned scene from the *Iliad*, where Achilles feels an enormous anger towards Agamemnon. We read: „While he pondered this in mind and heart, and was drawing his great sword from its sheath, Athena came from heaven" [15]. Schmitz argued that this „pondering" is a physical phenomenon. Homer himself mentions that it is connected with *thymos* and *phrene*. *Thymos* is considered by scholars as some sort of organ of the soul; it can also be translated as „courage". Schmitz says that *thymos* was linked with spirituality, because it can be placed either in the chest, or in the *phrene*. And the latter, as it has been already noted, is physical.

## Development of self-reflection and self-control

The beginning of the Introjection — the transformation of an actual physical 'inside' into a spiritual one — can be found in *Odyssey*. Schmitz says that this is also a sign for our view on the body. Physical feelings start to loose their importance, although they become a source of a metaphorical way of speaking about the inner self. And thus, we „lose our mind", our „heart is bleeding", etc.

Schmitz distinguishes three phases of the creation of psycho-somatic dualism, considering the human as consisting the body and the soul. He writes that the first stage was connected with Archilochos who did not recognize neither the Introjection, nor dualism, though. The second stage is connected with Pindar who does not mention the Introjection, but talks about dualism. Finally, the third stage belongs to Plato, in whose works not only the Introjection, but also a dualism, can be found.

Schmitz shows how a personal emancipation led to the concept of Introjection. He regards it natural for humans to want to have more control over themselves, instead of being controlled by physical and demonic impulses. The ego, "I" tries to be no longer a prisoner of its own feelings or organs. The process is slow, since Homer's „dictates of feelings" cannot be overcome easily and to gain the control over one's *thymos* is difficult to accomplish. Schmitz in a very convincing way shows that only first in the works of Plato this process of emancipation of "I" is completed. And as Homer identified the dead corps and regarded them merely as bodies, Plato reached the very opposite. The spirit of Platonic human lives on, even when the body passes away. In this way a person cannot die at all, as the soul is what is the most important.

## Summary

As I attempted to show, the period between Homer and Plato was a time when a very significant transition in human beings occurred. The researches by Bruno Snell and Hermann Schmitz let us see how deeply the human is historical. And common statements about the lack of the „essence" in human, something unchangeable and everlasting, appear in a different light when we realize that, in fact, the human is not the same, and that a change occurred even in his deepest structures.

And as Dilthey claimed, we do understand people of other époques, but not because we are the same. We need the same ability to understand, but for the need to understand to arise, first a difference needs to occur. And this difference definitely had occurred.

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Przypisy:

- [1] Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of The Mind*, "The Greek Origins of European Thought", translated by T. G. Rosenmeyer Harper Torchbooks / The Academy Library, Harper, Introduction xi
- [2] Ibidem, Introduction xi
- [3] Ibidem, Introduction xiii
- [4] Ibidem, pp. 8
- [5] Ibidem, pp. 5
- [6] Ibidem, pp. 8
- [7] Ibidem, pp. 12
- [8] *Odyssey*, 9.302
- [9] Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of The Mind*, "The Greek Origins of European Thought", pp. 13
- [10] Ibidem, pp. 15
- [11] Ibidem, pp. 20
- [12] Ibidem, pp. 31
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