

p. 138 . . . No scholar who has set out to gather Homeric inconsistencies has ever returned empty-handed, . . . All these are freely admitted, they are many, ~~the~~ they are found throughout the Iliad and the Odyssey, and they cannot be removed without destroying the best of both poems.

p. 139 Fifty years ago most believers in Homeric unity defended that belief by the assumption that all these contradictions had been added to the poems by interpolators. They believed that by removing these suspected passages harmony and unity might be restored, an assumption that has led to the rejection of practically every verse in Homer. No one has ever given a satisfying explanation of the origin of these interpolations, or of their acceptance by bards and public. The whole scheme of higher criticism involves the existence of a group of poets determined to give up their own individuality and to merge their own work into that of another. They have so completely mastered his language, his meter, his style, that their work cannot be detected. Yet they were so ignorant of the very writings they imitated and into which they were eager to merge their own efforts that they made, unconsciously, these contradictions. Certainly the imitator would above everything strive not to betray himself by inconsistencies. But to the original genius, the creator, such things would be of no moment; he has nothing to conceal and he need never fear that a slip may betray him. Even counterfeiters are detected by the very consistency with which they follow the writing of the names they forge. A recent expert has said that no man ever writes his own signature twice in exactly the same way, while the counterfeiter exactly repeats the signature he is imitating. These inconsistencies in Homer are proof that they come from an original genius, from one who is himself, and not from one who is following the style of another or who is interpolating his own into another's poetry. All these contradictions or shifts of poetic purpose may be explained on the theory of one creative genius, but are impossible of explanation on the assumption that different parts were added by servile imitators or followers.

Arthur S. Chapman, American Magazine, May, 1923.