



NARRATORS OF EPICS: HOMER AND MILTON

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ABSTRACT—

The study focuses on two great epic writers Homer and John Milton. Both the writers were very famous in their time because of their works. When anyone talks about the epic poems, Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are considered unforgettable epics. *The Iliad* ancient Greek epic poem explains the ten years Trojan War in Greek. The second great epic poem of Homer is *The Odyssey* which is the sequel of *The Iliad*. In *The Odyssey*, Homer has focused on the Greek hero Odysseus who was the king of Ithaca. The narrative explanation of Homer is so effective that the reader can't stop to read the full epic poem. After many years in the 17th century, John Milton comes and presents the fantastic epic poem *Paradise Lost* in blank verse. *Paradise Lost* is written in twelve books by John Milton. The core idea of this great epic poem is disobedience against God.

KEYWORDS— Epic, Homer, John Milton, Narrative technique, Disobedience.

Literature is like an ocean which has been giving us many unforgettable and unbelievable works from the ancient time. With the help of literature we are learning and growing in this world. Literature is a medium of entertainment somehow it serves the knowledge. It depends on the readers that what they want from the literature knowledge, entertainment or anything else. Literature, word derives from the Latin *As per dictionary literature means, "Novels, plays and poetry are referred to as literature, especially when they are considered to be good or important"* (Collins dictionary). Literature includes maximum things which are written and read by the people to get knowledge related to their field or life. Novels, plays, poetry, biography, autobiography, memoir and short story are considered as a literature.

The important criteria for any work to consider as a literature is it should have a universal appeal or good things which can help to the people. In literature novels, plays and poetries these three forms are most read by the people. Literature had started with its first work *Epic of Gilgamesh* which was an epic poem. The world's best oldest poems *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were also written epic form. Narrating any epic poem is such a different task from the novel or short story. It is up to the poet that how he turns the situation and scenario in his piece of work. In this research paper researcher has taken two epic poets who belong to different eras. One is the great Greek epic poet Homer who has given his two master pieces *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* and the other is John Milton who had written an unforgettable work *The Paradise Lost*. Both the writers' narrating technique was outstanding which still connects the 21st century readers.

"A long poem, typically one derived from ancient oral tradition, narrating the deeds and adventures of heroic legendary figures or the past history of a nation" (Oxford). An Epic poem is one type of poem but it has more lines than any normal poem. It can be a too long poem that the reader will not find out directly that the difference between poem and novel. It is possible that the poet can include thousands of lines in it.

Every long poem can't be an epic poem. Epic poem's main concept should derive from the ancient tradition. It should be connected with the traditional myths or characters. One of the best examples for it is *The Mahabharata* which is based on tradition and culture of India.

Another characteristic of the epic is it should be in a narrating manner. For that the writer should have that master skill because it is a really very challenging task to write thousands of lines on one topic. Epic also presents the noble deeds of the characters which are recognisable in the society. Every long poem can't consider in the epic form like Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. No doubt it has seventeen thousand lines and most of the work is in verse form though it is not considered as an epic.

Homer's life is one type of mystery. In history there is no exact time of his birth or there is no exact information about the place of his birth. He was born between 12th and 8th centuries BC. He is most famous for his two epics *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* in which the story and the way of writing of were outstanding. Homer belonged to Greek era. These two famous works of Homer were considered in central Greek literature. *The Iliad* was based on Trojan War. The story focuses on the fight between King Agamemnon and Warrior Achilles. This work is beautifully written by Homer.

Homer's another great work was *Odyssey* which was based on its main character Odysseus's journey from his own home. He was the king of Ithaca. His life was totally after the fall of Troy. In Homer's works a reader can find out the best themes courage and virtue. His heroes are full of courage which also spread the same feeling everywhere. He had written his work in such a way that they are still famous in this 21st century. People are reading with full of enthusiasm. They get the courageous feelings from Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

Earlier Greeks were in the confusion about the great writer Homer. No any texts were survived before that. Homer's works were also in the confusing thing that they were written by them or someone else. Another rumour about his works was that his works were only the collection by him. Another rumour with his works is that the intellectual people had written these beautiful works and they had put all the works under the one name that was Homer.

Two world's famous works are on the name of Homer *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Both were such famous works that they have still the same popularity in the world. Both were the poems and epic poems.

The Iliad is some time known as *Song of Ilion* and sometimes it is known as *Song of Ilium* it is ancient Greek epic poem written by Homer. This poem was set during the Trojan War. Trojan War was one of the famous events from the Greek mythology. This War was between Troy and Achaeans. This event has been noticed by many writers and it was included in their works. This story is about the few days of the war. This epic is widely accepted by the western civilised people. The *Iliad* has been admired by the people from the centuries. The *Iliad* presents the heroic deeds and way of positiveness. It is shown very witty fully. In this poem the great Greek warrior is shown by the Homer. His bravery is shown very fantastically by the writer. Epic's main subject is just projected the heroic and mythological thing through the work but in this epic poem with that fate, human nature and human urges is given which leads reader to the different direction of thinking and learning. At the end the hero get the good things which happens in every epic. This epic is one of the master pieces of Homer. It has a different directions and concepts in it which affects everywhere.

One controversy is connected with *The Iliad*. It is belief that the Homer had not written it fully. The *Iliad* was narrated by the local people and Homer had just collaborated it and make a book. Approximately 15000 lines are there in this epic poem. It is divided into four books.

Homer's another very famous epic poem is *The Odyssey* which was very famous in that time till today. In this poem *The Odyssey* tells the story of Odysseus. The story was on the struggle of Odysseus. He came to his house after ten years. He was missed in the Trojan war. His wife married with other person. He destroyed Odysseus estate and ate his food. Penelope tried to stop her to marry and told her to wait of conformation of Odysseus death.

Odysseus had a son. His name was Telemachus. He found the information about his father. Menelaus told that his father Odysseus is caught by Calyso. His opponets planned to kill Telemachus. The Phaeacians helped to Odysseus help to return to his home. Odysseus disguised himself and planned to take revenge. He became a beggar. He took the help of Telemachus his son and killed Penelope's suitors. At the end of this great epic both Odysseus and Penelope reunited.

John Milton was born in 1608 in England. By profession he was a poet, prose polemicist, civil servant. He was very intelligent. He knew many languages like English, Latin, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Spanish, Aramaic, Syriac. He was known as the man of letters. Because of his over the many languages he got name and fame in the other countries. After completing his graduation he stayed at his father's home. Later on Milton went to Horton village which had 300 populations. He went there in 1632. At that time he had written his great work *Comus*. In 1637 Milton's mother died because of the plague. In that same year one of the best friends who were studying with him in Cambridge died in boating accident. The classmates had decided to write poems on the memory on his friend. At that time Milton's poem was untitled in that Volume but later on that poem was published under the name of *Lycidas*. After that it became one of the famous elegies of English.

John Milton mostly known for his master piece named *Paradise Lost*. It was written in English. It is epic poetry based on Christian Mythology. The great work was published in 1667. After this epic he had written another epic was *Paradise Regain*. The beginning lines of *Paradise Lost* which shows the idea of the poem:

OF Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,

(Milton 1)

Beginning lines present the complete understanding of the poem. Milton had used Disobedience which presents the core idea of the poem. Milton had created an epic in such a way that the story gives the idea of good and bad. He had started with the ancient time. He had taken a topic of religion. He had known that the people will be affected by the God's story.

In the *Paradise Lost* the most different and somehow famous antagonist character which is also pictured by Milton very intellectually. He was thrown from the heaven to hell though he did not lose his willpower his words show his inner strength, "All is not lost, the unconquerable will, and study of revenge, immortal hate, and the courage never to submit or yield." (Milton)

Both writers Homer and John Milton are very famous until today because of their masterpieces. Their narrating style was too good. It was directly affected to the readers. Another important thing is that they have given the message in the society with the help of epic. Still today both are famous. When discussion about poetry is done by anyone these two writers' masterworks come first in the row.

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