

Utopia, Kakotopia and Civilisation: a few more words on a well-worn theme

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If you have given any thought to the title of this session, you will, in all probability, have made some dismal predictions.

The next 20 minutes, you will have guessed, will see yet another analysis of why 1984 (actual) is, or isn't tending towards the *Nineteen Eighty-Four* of double-think, prole-feed, new-speak and the Ministry of Love. Then there will follow, you suppose, the *ne plus ultra* of civilised Utopias, in which, by contrast with the controlling principles of INGSOC, the records of the past are scrupulously preserved, the literature of the past is made universally accessible (and the Art of the past likewise) and our mother tongue is treated as a precious instrument to be kept clean and sharp for all the manifold purposes of language, including criticism of the ruling establishment.

And then, since this is a JACT meeting, and not just any JACT meeting, but, as it were, JACT's 21st Birthday Party, you will have predicted an invitation to believe that the best guarantee against Kakotopias of the *Nineteen Eighty-Four* variety is the continued presence of the Classics in the Curriculum; and the best guarantee of the continued presence of the Classics in the Curriculum is the sum of the activities of JACT. There will be a few intermediate steps, also predictable, and my 50 minutes will end with a flourish of Q.E.D.s.

Well, you would have been quite wrong. It is not going to be like that at all. It is going to be far, far worse. I am going to talk about God, Culture and Class: three words which should never be uttered in public except by professional theologians, professional social anthropologists and professional literary critics – people whose opinions are founded upon disciplined study, and therefore truly, or at least ostensibly, objective.

Why am I going to do such a foolish thing? Because, having accepted the invitation to speak on this occasion, I have no choice. If I do not ask myself what I believe about God and the nature of Human Existence, how can I ask myself useful questions about the nature and purpose of education? And without asking myself questions about the nature and purpose of education how can I decide, when I celebrate the 21st Birthday of JACT, whether I am applauding a stimulus or an obstacle to the progress, prosperity and happiness of mankind? It was not all that long ago that an Oxford scholar wrote a book entitled *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany*. In this she warned her readers that the dazzling enchantments of Hellenism had led, in the end, to some sinister perversions of German intellectual life. The significance of the book was not lost on the Nazis, who promptly banned it. And if Nazi Germany was not a Kakotopia, then what is? But that, you may say, was Germany and it is not the way of English intellectuals to devote their lives to doomed quests for Apollonian Serenity; and, anyhow, it was only Germans who ever believed this to be the secret ingredient of the Greek Creative Genius. True; but English classical scholars can develop strange ways of thought when they get into politics, and even without going into politics they have committed a certain amount of social

mischief: disparaging the study of science as illiberal, labelling technology banal, and sneering at commerce for being vulgar. For many decades of the last century they excluded women from learning Latin and Greek, and then patronized them for their ignorance. They have been known to equate democrats with demagogues; and it was a distinguished classicist who greeted the birth throes of the Trade Union Movement with the recommendation to do as the Romans did: flog the rank and file and hurl the ring-leaders from the Tarpeian Rock. More recently they were found guilty of educational misconduct by a newspaper columnist who signed himself Cassandra and denounced, in the *Daily Mirror* of 18 March 1966, the 'scholastic pterodactyls' who defended acquiring, and damaging the brain with, the stalactite stuff of Latin, in the middle of 'the greatest explosion of knowledge made possible to the human mind'; which had come about, he said, within the previous twenty years.

Could it be then that we are met here, a gathering of scholastic pterodactyls, to congratulate ourselves on promoting occupational snobbery, male chauvinism and reactionary politics, and on obfuscating the minds of the young while excluding them from precious and up-to-date knowledge?

I hope not; but what should (I ask myself) be promoted by a Joint Association of Classical Teachers? And are we promoting it?

First let us dispose of the amateur theology by posing the soap opera question: What is Human Existence for?

No one asking this in Britain today need go short of an answer. In our plural society there are, most obviously, Christian answers, Hindu answers, Muslim answers and Buddhist answers; but none of these are compelling to someone who, as a mere seeker, does not have faith already. Then a committed Marxist might tell us, I suppose, that we should find a meaning for our lives in cooperating, as far as our bourgeois backgrounds would permit, with the materialist dialectic. Equally, a scientist, if he did not consider the question nonsensical, might say that meaning was to be found in cooperating with the process of evolution – or at least that is what seems to have been implied in the concluding passages of Jacob Bronowski's BBC Programme entitled *The Ascent of Man*. I found Bronowski impressive, and was disposed to believe all he so brilliantly expounded, though I was bothered when he referred to Homer as a fossil. But I am still left with the question: What is evolution for? Or, for that matter, what is the materialist dialectic for?

The truth is that I have no idea what human existence is for: and this agnosticism, which I share with many others in this secular age, is something that educationalists must take account of. It has been expressed in the formula: God is dead – but this, to me, seems quite unnecessarily melodramatic. The point is not that God was formerly alive and is now dead: it is that God has become a much more mysterious entity to the majority of us today than God was to the majority of our grandparents and greatgrandparents a

century ago; and we can no longer plausibly invoke God or religion in support of this or that curriculum theory, in the way that Luther and Melanchthon prescribed Greek and Hebrew on the grounds that these were the languages in which God spoke to his people – while the English Reformers prescribed a judicious mixture of the Christian Fathers and the Pagan Classics, with a solid foundation of Latin grammar, designed to inculcate Godwardness and humanity as well as the Renaissance respect for the decencies of classical syntax. Nor can we easily share the belief of the great Dr. Arnold that the Greek and Latin languages were God-given for the purpose of educating Christian gentlemen. Nor easily sympathize with the eminent churchman and Headmaster who, so it is said, countered parental demands that their sons should be educated for life in the 20th Century by pronouncing that Education was not, in any case, for Life, it was for Death.

Nevertheless those parents were being very simple-minded if they supposed that what constitutes an education for life in the 20th century was self-evident.

May we consider, for a moment, the 20th Century; and may I begin by aping Galsworthy and giving you a small slice of the Sharwood Smith family saga. Retailing personal history is, I know, a very ill-regarded way of proceeding, and it will be proper for you to look down your noses at what follows and mutter disparagingly about anecdote and self-indulgence. On the other hand it has the advantage that I shall be talking about people I know – or knew – rather well, and not capriciously selecting or inventing characters, and then attributing to them experiences alleged to be characteristic of the century.¹

We begin with my father who lived 54 of his 89 years in the 20th Century. He had been born in 1865 in the vicarage of a slum parish in Birmingham, the vicarage being a chilly puritanical oasis in a desert of ignorance and squalor. When the 20th Century opened he had just been appointed to his first headship, at a sleepy country Grammar School in Shropshire. I have a faded photograph of the school, dating from his time there. It appears to have been taken at five to six by the church clock on a summer evening. The street outside the school is empty save for a small girl in a white pinafore, an unattended pony and trap, and a figure in a black bonnet, black coat and trailing black skirt. The scene would not, I think, have looked strange to Jane Austen a hundred years earlier, but in 1984 it seems like a peep into a lost world; a world which had only just emancipated the horseless carriage from the man on foot carrying a red flag; a world in which self-respect required the meticulous observation of social boundaries; so that the children of that grammar School's Headmaster could no more have played with the little girl in the white pinafore, nor his wife have invited the plebeian figure in the black bonnet into her drawing room than they – the Headmaster and his family – could have been entertained in the country houses of the local aristocracy, except on occasions of rare condescension.

As it turned out, that school and its governing body were too sleepy for my father's ambitions, and his next appointment coincided with Sir Robert Morant's 1902 Education Act. This enabled my father to build up a decayed Tudor Grammar School into a flourishing asset to the life of a busy Berkshire market town – just in time for World War One to kill off many of the most promising of his pupils.²

My brother, born the year before the century began, had been just old enough in 1917 to volunteer for the Royal Flying Corps, choosing that service because it was the

quickest way to get commissioned and out to France – my brother always being one for uniforms, authority, the call of duty, the Great Outdoors and the other manly things in life (a consequence, in his own opinion, of reading Sir Walter Scott and Kipling's *Kim* at an early age, and then anything he could get hold of on the British in India). Surprisingly he survived the air battles on the Western Front, and ironically it was in India, two years later, that he lost his nerve for flying. The picturesque savagery of the Pathan tribesmen and the craggy grandeur of the North-West Frontier, so fascinating in the pages of Kipling, were devoid of charm for a war-scarred pilot who, in the aftermath of an Afghan War, had to patrol the tribal territories in the 1920 version of the single-engined Flying Machine.

So he joined the Colonial Service, and thirty-five years later, at the time of prime Minister Macmillan's speech about a Wind of Change, he was to be found, on the eve of his retirement, administering a chunk of Africa not quite as large as France. I owe my belated arrival in this world to the feeling which my parents shared with many others at the end of World War One, that they had a duty to help replace the hundreds of thousands of young men slaughtered in the trenches. So I was precisely a generation younger than my brother and, on actuarial calculation, I am destined to live to the end of the century – merely on actuarial calculation, I repeat, for fear of tempting the Fates to scatter banana skins in my path from the moment I descend from this platform. Childhood memories include background noises from the slump and the General Strike and continuing reverberations from World War One.

At school I learnt of Signor Mussolini who made the trains run to time, of Russian treason trials in which everyone confessed to everything, and of Herr Hitler who one moment seemed to be shut up in a fortress and the next moment Chancellor of Germany and, soon after, vigorously shooting his own Brownshirts who were all found in bed with one another – a feature of current affairs that was explained to me with some embarrassment.

I was just old enough to entertain – but too timid to execute – romantic plans for joining the International Brigade to fight Franco and Fascism. Two years later, in wartime Cambridge, I found a safer outlet for my radical enthusiasms in organising sandwich-board processions round Market Hill to urge the immediate grant of Independence to India. I too had read *Kim*, but, unlike my brother, was of a generation to have supplemented Kipling with the writings of Gandhi and Nehru. Two years later still, it was in India that I found myself doing three out of my five years War Service, and discovering how truly compelling were the arguments for Indian Independence; but also the impracticality of implementing political ideals in the middle of a World War.

There were many other hard lessons to be learnt from those years, War being, as we all know, a *biaios didaskalos*. With the advantage of all the autobiographical literature of World War One, I did not, like my brother, expect war to be like the Waverley Novels; but, though literature is a help, there is much that you can only learn from the thing itself: strange discoveries about war and disagreeable discoveries about oneself. Not the least important discovery was that to be a 'southern, provincial, middle-class, boarding-school-bred, classically-educated Englishman was not the quintessence of being human, nor even the quintessence of being English, let alone British.³

In the post-war Britain of barbed wire and nissen huts – the Britain in which Orwell wrote Nineteen Eighty-Four – I

had to choose a career. To be a novelist required talent or inspiration: to be a don one would need high scholarship: a monastery would expect faith and celibacy; so I became a not very good teacher of classics.

The educational scene I entered in 1947 had changed since 1902, but not radically. The 1944 Education Act, with its Tripartite System, was a logical sequel to the 1902 Act, and the Grammar Schools still followed the Public Schools (as Morant had intended) in their ethos and curriculum.

Vastly different is the educational scene I shall shortly be leaving. If a visitor from Mars, inspecting Grammar Schools in 1947, had asked himself what appeared to be the function of schooling, the answer would surely have been that it was to inculcate academic knowledge: that is to say knowledge identified as useful for passing public exams. A Martian visiting an inner-city Comprehensive in 1984 would probably conclude that the functions of schooling were to ease the assimilation of ethnic minorities, to eradicate unfair discrimination by class, sex, race or religion, to compensate for economic or psychological deprivation, to integrate the handicapped into the ranks of normal children, to teach sexual hygiene and to divert the instinctual aggressiveness of the young from xenophobic stereotypes; redirecting it against Militarism, Exploitation and Injustice; also Nuclear-Power-Stations, Seal-Culling, Cruise Missiles, Mrs. Thatcher, Sir Keith Joseph, President Reagan and any other such wax figures to be found in this or that teacher's Chamber of Horrors.

More pertinently to this meeting; when I began teaching in 1947, more pupils were taking Latin and Greek in School Certificate than ever before, and prophecies of the wrath to come if classicists failed to get on terms with the 20th Century were confidently disregarded. Now, when I am about to leave the scene, the wrath has indeed come to many classics departments, including my own; the GCE figures in Latin and Greek are best forgotten; many teachers have been overwhelmed, others have drawn new strength from adversity, while others still have put a toe into the 20th century, not liked it much and gone back to their North and Hillard in the brave hope that history will one day be re-run backwards.

What, then, could be said, with hindsight, about the first 84 years of this century that, if foreseen, might have helped educators to prepare the young for living in it?

Item One: violence and suffering – standard since the dawn of history and probably before.

Item Two: murderous cruelty, practised on a scale that would have impressed Tamburlaine and Attila.

Items Three to Seven: tawdry triumphs and cankered utopias, successes that turned to disaster, promises betrayed and ideals turned sour.

Item Eight: failure. Honourable endeavours in matters great and small, sustained in adversity, resilient in defeat and rewarded with the ultimate accolade of ignominy or oblivion.

We have seen pretentiousness and vanity posing as distinction; and heartless ambition disguised as patriotism or compassion. We have also seen heroic examples of courage, endurance, self-sacrifice, self-effacement and all the other shining qualities of which the human spirit is capable. In all this our century has not been much different from any other. Like the century before it, ours has seen rapid social, political and technological change; but our

century's changes have brought some quite new features of life to the Western world: increased leisure; much wider distribution of material comforts; greater longevity; and a shift in employment from unskilled to skilled occupations.

In the meantime Europe's four centuries of world supremacy have come to an end, and Britain has ceased to be an imperial power. If it was indeed God who made us mighty, then he must have had second thoughts about it, since 'Victory' in two World Wars has left us painfully learning that we must give up trying to behave like a first class power with third class resources. On the other hand, life in Britain is more comfortable and more secure for more people than ever before.

But it is not a century that one can trust. World-wide convulsions have twice destroyed all private plans and prospects with devastating suddenness, and could do so again; and even in peacetime most individuals probably feel less aware that they are relatively and statistically well-off, than that they are still vulnerable to sickness, pain, bereavement, poverty, unemployment and a hundred other causes of unhappiness.

Such then, is our habitat. How should our education have prepared us for it? And the adults of the future, how should they be prepared? My father, my brother and I were all beneficiaries of the Grand Old Fortifying Classical Curriculum. Were we fortified for the 20th Century?

Yes and No. In itself the diet was too restricted; short on modern ideas and ideologies, and on Modern European and American literature. But nothing except intellectual laziness need have prevented us from making up these deficiencies for ourselves. A more serious lack was enough science to enable us to take an informed interest in the brilliant discoveries of the century. Another serious lack was an education of the hand and eye. In our days Greek Art and Architecture were something to refer to occasionally, but not to look at, either in reproduction or actuality. And no one ever thought to teach us how to make or mend anything.

Today few children need suffer such deficiencies in their education – or, at least, educators would feel guilty if they did. I go all the way with Sir Keith, or with any other educational mandarin who thinks there should be a core curriculum to teach the skills of numeracy, oracy, literacy, graphicacy, computer manipulation and anything else that is needed if one is not to be an idiot in the world of today. But one of the functions of education, I believe, is, and always has been, that of helping human beings to answer the question: 'How am I to live?' – and, with acknowledgements to the eminent churchman, we might add, 'and die?', seeing that a great deal of premature dying was required of those of military age during the first half of the century, and the second half sees many of us facing a long drawn-out physical decline.

In my grandfather's parish the question of how to live scarcely arose for 90% of the parishioners – or at least it could only be answered within the very restricted limits imposed by economic necessity; and for women of any class the answer in the past has been narrowly circumscribed by social conventions.

However, as we approach the end of the century, with increased leisure, more widespread educational opportunities and the decay of traditional conventions and restraints, the choices for everyone in Britain have become wide and real – very wide and very real by comparison with 1865.

If anything in education helps to answer our questions

otherwise than as Big Brother might answer them (invoking The Party, The Fatherland – or God) it is not to be found in those curriculum areas which support the national economy. It is to be found, if anywhere, in the Humanities,⁴ which purvey Culture. I have now uttered my second taboo word: 'Culture' being so notoriously ambiguous that it immediately prompts awkward people to ask: 'do you mean Culture in the archaeologists' and anthropologists' sense; or do you mean High Culture, as in T. S. Eliot's *Notes towards a definition of Culture*; or again as in the ill-famed cliché of the Nazi era: 'When I hear the word Culture, I reach for my gun,' spoken as though 'Culture' were a portmanteau word for that effeminacy, dilettantism and affectation that must never contaminate the wholesome patriotic virtues of the Aryan Superman.

Perhaps I should have settled for the word 'Civilisation' rather than 'Culture'. The two words seem not identical, but to overlap. Would you agree that it is civilised to abolish capital punishment and to care for the sick and elderly, but that this is not a touchstone of culture; equally that one can be civilised but won't be considered very cultured if one doesn't give twopence for Shakespeare, Beethoven or Michelangelo? Or would you prefer to distinguish them by saying that, in the area of conduct, Civilisation is concerned with morals, while Culture is concerned with manners. On some such grounds many people might say that we ought to ask education merely to make us civilised, leaving it to individuals to decide whether or not they want to be cultured. However one can think of literature in which manners embody moral ideals; ideals which have become all the more influential because mediated through poetry and fiction rather than through dogma and homiletics.

Anyhow 'Civilisation' is itself an awkward word. Lord Clarke, in a series of 13 Television lectures bearing that title, never got round to telling us what it was, though he did tell us some things that it wasn't: nomads, for one; the Vikings, and the society depicted by Hogarth.

Bronowski's *Ascent of Man* series was the scientific counterpart of Lord Clarke's *Civilisation*. Bronowski named his theme 'Cultural Evolution' and gave us a forth-right definition of what Civilisation is and isn't. 'Civilisation', he said, 'is not a collection of finished artefacts; it is the elaboration of processes. In the end the march of man is the refinement of the hand in action.' It is good to be reminded that if we, as a nation, are civilised, it is not because we collectively own the contents of the National Gallery and the British Museum. Nevertheless I think there is something defective in a definition of Civilisation which does not touch on moral behaviour, and which would give the Vikings, with their wonderful craftsmanship, a place of honour, regardless of their brutality and destructiveness.

Of course there are today robust people – not all of them Nazis – who are themselves Vikings at heart and regard Civilisation in the same way that any self-respecting Viking would have regarded a monastery rich in treasures of art and devotion – as simply asking to be plundered. For these people Culture is contemptible it enfeebles the healthy masculine ego – acquisitive and self-assertive as Nature intended.

More dangerous to culture is the malice of those who regard it as indelibly tainted with privilege and exclusiveness. To puritans such as these, it is either an affectation adopted to make people of simple tastes feel inferior; or it is a baleful enchantment to seduce virtuous levellers from their noble task. In this case the malice is directed at the

'Civilisation as we know it is based on all the despotisms, the cruelties, the exclusions, the monopolies and the rapacities of the past.' At this point you are owed an apology. From my title you would be justified in expecting by now some words on Utopias and Kakotopias, but the words you are going to get are very few indeed. When I first planned this paper eight months ago, the title and the subject seemed wholly suitable for May 1984. So I duly read, or re-read, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Čapek's *RUR* (discovering, on the way, the origin of the word Robot), *Brave New World*, E. M. Forster's *The Machine Stops*, H. G. Wells's *Modern Utopia*, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backwards* and Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*: not to mention *Gulliver's Travels*, *The New Atlantic*, *The City of the Sun*, Sir Thomas More, and Plutarch's *Lycurgus*. And I duly learnt that the enemies of Civilisation and Culture, as seen by the Utopia-writers from 1870's onwards, were the Class Conflict and Technology – either or both. The first draft of this paper was full of Utopias and Kakotopias, of synopses and appraisals, and the second draft likewise. But with the New Year we began to get such a surfeit of Orwell and Orwelliana that, in the end, it was two novels of Henry James which helped me most to consider whether JACT was, like the Magna Carta in *1066 and All That*, a Good Thing, or a Bad Thing, like a Surfeit of Palfreys and the Beginning of Political Economy. Two novels of Henry James, and a passage from the most eminent of all Utopias – or Kakotopias, if you think that way – *The Republic of Plato*.

The quotation I gave you just now, on the disreputable foundations of Civilisation, came from Henry James's *Princess Casamassima*, and the words are the words of the hero, a bookbinder who is the bastard son of a dissolute English nobleman and a French milliner who died in prison, condemned for murdering her seducer. The words occur in a letter written from Venice, where the hero is spending the tiny legacy left him by his fostermother, a dressmaker, who has worked herself to death to bring him up as best she could, in her slum tenement: and the letter is addressed to a cosmopolitan princess who is involved with him in an international anarchist conspiracy which reaches from the depths of the London and Paris slums to the ranks of the nobility – a scenario which has been criticised as implausible, but effectively defended by other critics as wholly authentic, the 1880's having had to live with widely ramifying anarchist conspiracies, just as we in the 1980's are having to live with international terrorism.

The plot presents the hero (and the reader) with a dilemma. Granted the degradation, misery, squalor and hopelessness of the exploited classes, and the callous indifference of the governing élite, comfortably ensconced in their luxurious town and country houses, surrounded by armies of servants and the incidental treasures of an inherited culture; granted this, is it right to conspire for the destruction by violence of this ruling aristocracy, and with the aristocrats the culture which they preserve, but which most of them are too boorish to appreciate?

From the circumstances of his birth and his ambivalent heredity our hero has an inflamed sense of social injustice, but also an acute sensitivity to the charm and beauty of the aristocratic culture which he encounters in the age-encrusted country house where he visits the Princess; and, more overwhelmingly, in the palaces of Venetian noblemen. He is afraid that the Princess and her anarchist friends will want, in the interests of justice and equality, to burn down

In the 20th Century we have found ways of partially democratizing Culture without burning down country houses or cutting up Titians, but I suspect that a census of visitors to National Trust properties and to the Nation's museums and galleries would show the Registrar General's lowest social class categories to be seriously under-represented.

In *The Princess Casamassima* the passion for Culture is seen in conflict with the passion for Social Justice. In *The Ambassadors*⁵ James considers Culture in relation to moral conduct. If I may remind those who know the novel, and inform those who don't, the plot revolves round the question of whether a certain intelligent young American ought to go back to his small town in Massachusetts to marry the nice uncomplicated girl-next-door – to whom he is engaged – and become stinking rich manufacturing chamber-pots (or some such article); or, on the other hand, should he stay in Paris, cultivating his sensibilities and living in sin on a perfectly adequate inherited income with a highly civilised French Countess. As a plot-synopsis that might not earn many marks in GCE, but it is, perhaps, enough to suggest that being civilised in a James novel means having the capacity to respond to, and assimilate, the legacy bequeathed by centuries of culture and tradition. Culture is epitomized by Paris – a jewel which 'twinkled and trembled and melted together and what seemed all surface one moment seemed all depth the next' – and Paris is personified in the Countess, an exquisite creature whose life-style, manners, sensibility, and above all the delicacy of touch with which she has turned Chadwick Newsome, the young American – whom by the way, she desperately loves – turned him from a brash and callow youth into a charming, sensitive, polished young man of tact and *savoir faire* – these qualities and this achievement serve to challenge the moral preconceptions of the elderly American who has been sent from Massachusetts to fetch the young man back. He is further charmed by the courage, skill and dignity with which she fights to keep her lover in defiance of the vigorous campaign waged by his family to repatriate him in the interests of respectability and profit-making.

Nevertheless she has a husband and a daughter and her love-affair is immoral, and not only by the conventions of Massachusetts at the turn of the century; so the point is quietly made that to be cultured is not necessarily to be moral. Furthermore she is older than her lover, and there are hints that he will soon leave her, and maybe has already another mistress hidden away elsewhere. So culture does not lead to happiness either, but rather to a refinement of unhappiness.

Why, then, does one feel with the elderly American that one would rather be as the Countess, than enjoy affluence with the conventionally moral, self-assured, imperceptive and insensitive family of Chad Newsome – even if it were to turn out that the article of manufacture were not a chamber-pot – for we are never specifically told – but some other helpful artefact that might in a small way increase the hygiene or comfort of the firm's customers? Why do we persist in teaching classics, when we could convert to teaching technology, or if we couldn't, why don't we make way for those who could?

To this second question there may, of course, be some very banal and utilitarian answers; but these I will pass over and assume that we teach classics, not from incompetence to do anything else, but because either reason or instinct tells us that technology is not enough. Should we go further and become a Joint Association for the Advancement of

Classics and the Retardation of Technology, declaring with Paolo Freire – or was it Ivan Illych – that technology should have been stopped after the invention of the bicycle?

As I dutifully read my way through *Looking Backwards* (Boston, Mass. in the year 2000), *News from Nowhere* (The Thames Valley, sometime after 1962), *A Modern Utopia* (a parallel, but perfected, world to that of 1905), *The Machine Stops* (the world thousands of years on from 1914), I was interested to note how technology alternately appeared as the ruin or the saviour of Civilisation. But with *Brave New World* came genetic engineering, and with *RUR* the elimination of the Human Race by the more functionally efficient Robots – which suggested that by the 1920's technology was causing more alarm than optimism, and fore-shadowing our post-atomic fears that our brilliant scientists may have been, and still be, a horrifyingly irresponsible bunch of Sorcerer's Apprentices.

Nevertheless, if we cast our minds back to that faded photograph of the street outside the Shropshire Grammar School, we should be reminded by the pinafore and the trailing black clothes that in 1900 it was virtually impossible to have the leisure to be cultured without at least one housemaid and one 'Cook-daily'. Even in my childhood, when every middle-class household had its Hoover, one 'maid of all work' was the absolute minimum. Now we have, *inter alia*, automated washing machines, deep-freeze food storage, micro-wave ovens, non-iron clothes, convenience foods and the Chinese Take-away. Add to these the invention of the disposable nappy and the *au pair* girl and who, this side of the Landed Aristocracy, the Higher Bourgeoisie and the Industrial Tycoons still needs domestic servants to exploit?

Let us look back for a moment over my devious progress towards a verdict on JACT as champion of the classics. We are agreed, I trust, that, on the one hand, technology has diminished, if not abolished, the incompatibility between culture and social justice that on the other hand technology cannot help us to decide how we should live and die in the 20th or 21st century, but that culture can; and could perhaps help us to control technology before it takes over our lives in the fashion of Čapek's Universal Robots. We now have the problem of what the late Schools Council might have called the take-up factor. We ourselves may wish to order our lives by the light of our culture, but we cannot be unaware that many of our pupils are quite content to order *their* lives by the wit and wisdom of their pop-group Idols, their *Daily Prolefeed*, their *Women's Very Own Weekly* and by the subliminal ethics of TV commercials and Hollywood films. And there will be those pupils who are congenital Vikings, and the children of Vikings, and the brothers or sisters of Vikings, to whom the problem of Chad Newsome in *The Ambassadors* is no problem at all. Of course he should have gone home and got stinking rich, and then he would have been able to buy up any number of French countesses, and all the French culture he wanted: Louis Quinze furniture and a chateau to put it in, and the classical French authors in superior bindings, and some Manets and Renoirs, whose market value has so spectacularly risen. And a latter-day Chad could have all this while commuting with his countesses between the ski-slopes of Europe and the surfing beaches of Australia, still keeping in touch with the stock-exchanges, the commodity markets and his own chamber-pot empire, thanks to the marvels of modern communications technology. Some years ago the friend of a friend of mine who was teaching at a very superior Public School was approached by a pupil of this sort and asked,

with every appearance of sincerity, 'Surely, sir, you wouldn't be here teaching Classics if there were anything else you could be doing?'

Such things will happen, but times could be worse. They were worse in 1940, when an eminent novelist and critic wrote an essay entitled, 'Does Culture Matter?' 'Our problem, as I see it,' he wrote, 'is this. Is what we have got worth passing on? We inherit a tradition which has lasted for about 3,000 years . . . in the past culture has been paid for by the ruling classes . . . as a form of social snobbery. Today people are coming to the top who are, in some ways, more clear-sighted and honest . . . and they refuse to pay for what they don't want. When they are hurrying to lead their own lives, ought we to get in their way like a maiden aunt, our arms, as it were, full of parcels, and say to them, 'I was given these to hand on to you . . . Sophocles, Velasquez, Henry James . . . I'm afraid they're a little heavy, but you'll get to love them in time . . . and if *you* don't take them off my hands, I don't know who will . . . please . . . please . . . they're really important, they're culture.'

Nineteen-forty was, of course, a bad year for maiden aunts. From June onwards the people on top were wholly occupied with designing strategies to repel the German armies from the shores of Britain and the evacuee-billeting-officer from their country homes; so whether or not they cared about culture it did not get much of a look in. Towards the end of his essay our novelist becomes plaintive. 'Without bitterness,' he writes, 'let us drink the wine – no one wants it, though it came from the vineyards of Greece and the Gardens of Persia. Let us break the glass – no one admires it, no one cares any more about quality or form. Without bitterness and without conceit let us take our leave.' But 'the difficulty here,' he concludes, 'is that the higher pleasures are not really wines or glasses at all. They rather resemble religion, and it is impossible to enjoy them without trying to hand them on.'

That was E. M. Forster in 1940. *Our* problem, as I see it in 1984, is not so much how to persuade the people on top to subsidise culture – even with Arts Council cuts, culture does a great deal better than it did in 1940. Rather it is how to convince the children of Everyman and Everywoman that quality and form are not aspects of intellectual snobbery and social exclusiveness, but of the uniquely human capacity to order the values of our world, and that the experiences of the Greeks and Romans can illuminate life in Birmingham and Bermondsey as well as in Bloomsbury and Oxbridge. No small problem we have here, you may be saying. But let us not approach it in the spirit in which middle-class relatives used to tell me in my childhood that slum-clearance was largely a waste of time if it meant putting baths in working-class homes, as they would only be used for keeping coal in. There is no reason to suppose that a feeling for form and for the taking of baths are exclusive to the upper and middle classes now and forever.

Still, that there are a great many difficulties is not to be denied; but we can, at least, tackle them with imagination and humility – qualities not often shown by the High Priests of the Grand Old Fortifying Classics. The Grand Old Fortifying style was too much like the version I know of the party-game of Passing the Parcel. In this, when the music stops, the holder of the parcel is forbidden to take off more than the outermost wrapping, which reveals merely another wrapping beneath it; then the process is repeated, and repeated – and repeated – until eventually the lucky last player takes off the final wrapping and walks away with the present inside. The wrappings, in the Grand Old Fortifier,

were (give or take a wrapping) Kennedy's *Shorter Latin Primer*, Ritchie's *First Steps* in Latin and Greek, North and Hillard, *Fabulae Faciles*, elementary Prose Composition, School Certificate, Entrance Scholarships and finally the Tripos parts I and II, or Mods and Greats, as the case might be.

Somehow, towards the end – or maybe years later – one discovered what was in the parcel – what classics was all about; not just an intellectual discipline which qualified one for superior forms of employment (such as governing chunks of Africa) but about the mysteries of existence and the many ways in which one could be human: about language and its power to explore the extremes of human agony or to distil the experience of six centuries of dynamic civilisation: and finally it was about choice and the consequence of choosing this way or that.

But not many of those who were given the parcel to unwrap ever got beyond the first few wrappings, especially not in those Grammar Schools set up or resuscitated by the 1902 Education Act: and of course the great majority of young people never saw the parcel at all.

If Classics is to play its part with the other Humanities subjects in helping people to live and die, then Classics must be offered in some other way than as a parcel with many wrappings. By those who say that Classics is 'necessarily elitist' it is assumed that there *is* no other way, and that maybe the wrappings themselves are of value – they teach you how to spell, or to think straight, or to cherish accuracy and shun carelessness.⁶

I am going to invoke educational theory to suggest that this is wrong and there is another way.

This theory – the theory of the spiral curriculum – rests on the belief that the grand concepts, the truths about human existence, which lie at the heart of the academic disciplines, can, without falsity or distortion, be presented to children from quite a young age in spirally ascending stages, each return consolidating and enriching the previously acquired understanding.

The implication of this theory is that the teacher must think deeply about the subject-matter of his teaching, both at course level and at topic level, to identify the essential elements – the elements which must be grasped if the pupils are to understand what the topic or subject is, fundamentally, about. When the teacher has identified what seems to be essential, the task then remains to distil this element in such a way that something of it can be assimilated at the first encounter, something that can form the basis for a gradual enrichment of understanding each time the topic is revisited on the ascending spiral.

Metaphors of parcels and spirals and distillations are all very well, you may think, but some sort of practical illustration would be helpful. Well, Roman Gladiators, The Roman Army, Greek Religion, Greek Drama and Greek Architecture are – are they not? – stock topics in any Classical Studies course. I offer as the essence of the topic 'Gladiators'⁷ *Collective Sadism* (by which I mean public enjoyment of the sight of sentient creatures in their death agony), of 'The Roman Army' *Military Discipline*, (which includes *Morale* and *Esprit de Corps*), of 'Greek Religion' *Rituals and Beliefs about Death and the Afterlife*, of 'Greek Drama' *the Mysterious Effects of Someone Embodying an Identity other than his Own*. All these offerings are tentative, and I would be willing to be talked out of them into other diagnoses. The topic 'Greek Architecture' I will try to deal with more fully. It is not, to me, fundamentally, about the three orders, nor about the composition of a

Doric entablature, nor the techniques of the Greek stone-masons, though these are important, not to say necessary aspects of the subject.

'Greek Architecture' is about what is pleasing to the Human Eye, and why; and about the relationship between form and function. Some of those present may have heard me praise a course on Greek Architecture given in an inner-city comprehensive. It began by convincing the pupils – with some difficulty – that they had bad visual memories. This was a step towards persuading them to look at the houses in which they live, then at other houses in their street. Later they identified neoclassical features in the architecture of their neighbourhood and discussed what they found pleasing and what displeasing and why. Only when pupils had learnt to look at buildings intelligently did the course consider the conventions of Greek Temple architecture and their relation to the functions of a temple, going on to discover how the architects and sculptors tried to solve the decorative problems created by the conventions within which they were obliged, or chose, to work.

I repeat that better scholars might identify different essences in any given subject; but I think all aspects of Classics will have, *essentially speaking*, one common characteristic – they will all have reference to the Here and Now as well as to the There and Then, thus becoming a source of illumination for the Present and the Future as well as for the Past.

When this or that Eminent Scholar seems to be telling me, or my students, that the essential thing to realize about Roman poetry is that it has nothing to do with real life, but is a formal exercise in narrowly defined *genres*; or that the essential thing to perceive in Roman poetry – the perception, for lack of which we misconceive everything, is that Virgil, Horace and Ovid are busy signalling their intention to write a pastiche of some archaic or Hellenistic poet – when we seem to be being told such things, I recognise two possibilities, one highly likely: that I, or my students, have misunderstood the Eminent Scholars; the other, very unlikely, that the Eminent Scholars are wrong. You may say that there is a third possibility: the scholars are *not* wrong and we have *not* misunderstood them. This possibility I am reluctant to admit. If correct, it would mean that Virgil, Horace and Ovid have not, and never had, anything to contribute to the education of the young, and that the learning of Latin, as part of a general education, is a scandalous waste of time, and Cassandra *rediviva* has hit the nail on the head and we are indeed scholastic pterodactyls.

That said, I will return to the subject of choices and leave you with a reminder of Er the Pamphylian, who was left for dead on the battlefield, but did not die, being miraculously carried down alive to the Underworld in order that he might report back for the edification of mankind. The last sight he witnessed was that of the purged spirits being marshalled for their return to the upper world. Before them was spread out an array of lives from which, in the sequence of the lots they had drawn, they could freely choose. Great was the eagerness for the lives abounding in power, wealth and glamour, regardless of the moral degradation they entailed. Only the heroes of myth and legend had been sufficiently schooled by their sufferings to ponder before they chose and then they made some bizarre choices. Finally Er the Pamphylian watched the spirit of Odysseus searching patiently and persistently until he found a calm, obscure and uneventful life.

The moral of this story, according to the Platonic Socrates is that we should all of us learn without delay to discriminate

between the truly good and the truly evil; to understand the effects of physical beauty (*alias* sex appeal) on those who have it and on those who cannot resist it; to be aware of the consequences of wealth and poverty, of strength and weakness, of cleverness and stupidity and of the complex interplay of heredity and environment.

In Plato's myth the purged spirits had to make their choices once and for all before they emerged from the Underworld. In our reality significant choices have to be made by the young, not dramatically but in a hundred subtle ways as they begin to shape their personalities. Later they may regret the drift of their choices, and if they are true children of this age they will then blame social determinism, parental shortcomings, their genes or their childhood traumas. But, in the words of Socrates, the responsibility rests with the chooser, neither God nor Determinism is to blame. And, in the words of common sense, even if God or Determinism were to blame, blaming will do no good; we still have to make the best of what we have chosen, for the choices do not stop with maturity; they go on until death. So we who are here today have not yet reached exemption; we still have an infinity of choices to make – including the choice between Passing the Parcel and the Spiral Curriculum.

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Notes

- 1 This is a less frivolous point than might appear. Close acquaintance makes it possible to conjecture the relation between our lives (professional and personal) and our education (not merely schooling). It seems to me to have been intimate.
- 2 He wrote of his ideals and achievements in *The Faith of a Schoolmaster*, Methuen, 1935 o.p.
As a lonely child (his mother died when he was two years old and his step-mother took a Calvinistic view of childhood) he discovered consolation in Chamber's *Cyclopaedia of English Literature*, found in the Vicarage's glass-fronted bookcase, sandwiched between theological tomes of rebarbative aspect and repulsive contents. At school and Cambridge he found his antithesis to loveless anglicanism in an idealized view of the Greeks, and a meaning for his life in Greek Philosophy and Literature, especially after he had discovered a vocation for teaching.
- 3 My brother learnt this lesson in a very different sense, since these (or most of them) were precisely the first credentials looked for in a candidate for the Colonial Service – a Service which gave to quite young men immense responsibilities for the welfare of peoples of diverse races and religions.
If any reader happens to be interested enough to pursue this point, there is much of interest in Heussler R. *Yesterday's Rulers*, OUP 1963. For a rather superficial view of the subject see Wilkinson R. *The Prefects*.
- 4 It will not escape the notice of readers that I go on to imply two unargued assumptions:
(i) that Classics can perform the functions I claimed for Humanities,
(ii) that Classics can perform them in a special way which makes a Humanities course defective without a Classics component. If I had been speaking to an uncommitted audience, I would, of course, have had to make my case for these two assumptions. If any members of JACT find they cannot accept these assumptions, I think they should be teaching something other than Classics.
- 5 It was with a feeling of misgiving and awe that I discovered I had been unwittingly treading in the footsteps of a master. John Kekes, Professor of Philosophy at SVNY at Albany, contributed an article on the nature of

morality to *Philosophy* (Vol 59, No 227, January 1984) using *The Ambassadors* as a point of reference. He argued that morality is more a matter of moral sensitivity than of moral choices.

On the possibilities and limitations of literature for teaching morality see Gribble, J. *Teaching Literature CUP*, 1978.

- 6 The only case for Elementary Latin *language* as a self-contained course that I find at all convincing is that of David Corson (see *Hesperian* V, 1982), and his thesis has yet to be established beyond legitimate doubt.
- 7 For a sophisticated discussion of Gladiatorial Combat see Chapter I of Hopkins K. *Death and Renewal*, CUP 1983. Hopkins refers to cock-fighting in Thailand: another, more obvious comparison would be with Spanish Bull-fighting. From the viewpoint of the Historian (and Classical-Studies-teacher) it is the differences, in origins and justification, that are particularly interesting.

Some people think that blood sports in general, and even motor-racing, could be usefully brought into the discussion.

CRUX. ESSAYS PRESENTED TO G.E.M. de STE CROIX ON HIS 75th BIRTHDAY

Sixteen essays on ancient Greek social, economic, political and intellectual history by former pupils of Dr Geoffrey de Ste Croix will be published as a special number of the journal *History of Political Thought* Vol. VI no.1 (Feb. 1985), edited by P.A. Cartledge and F.D. Harvey. Contributors are: V. Bers, P.A. Cartledge, W.W. Charlton, P.D.A. Garnsey, F.D. Harvey, E.L. Hussey, G.L. Huxley, T.H. Irwin, R. Just, E. Kearns, R. Lane Fox, R. Macve, M.M. Markle III, R.C.T. Parker, J. Rowlandson, C.J. Tuplin; with a Foreword by P.A. Brunt.

Available at **special pre-publication prices** of £9.95 hardback, £4.95 paperback (incl. p. & p.), to those ordering before 31 December 1984 from Imprint Academic, 61 Howell Road, Exeter EX4 4FY, Devon. The names of persons ordering in advance will be printed in the Tabula Gratulatoria if they so request. After February 1985 the volume will be available from the usual booksellers.

CROOM HELM

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October 84

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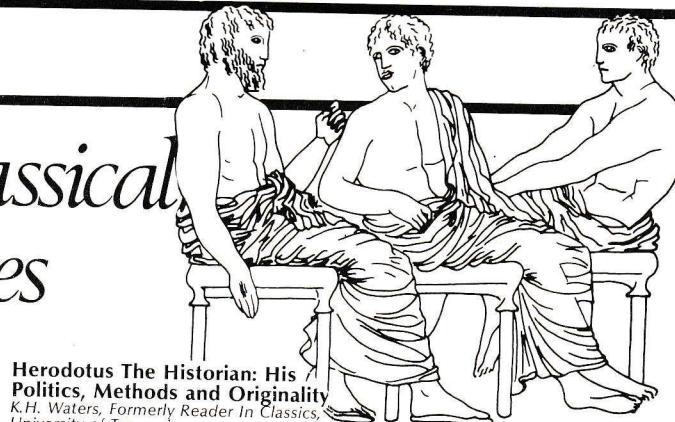
David Braund, University of Exeter

The years from the Battle of Actium to the death of Nero (31 BC-AD68) stand at the very heart of Roman history. Yet all the sources for this key period, particularly the inscriptions, papyri and coins, are by no means readily accessible: crucial new discoveries remain buried in learned periodicals, while many older documents have still not been translated. Now that the study of the ancient world is becoming ever more widespread among those without Latin and Greek, the lack of such translations is proving a serious handicap.

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K.H. Waters, Formerly Reader in Classics, University of Tasmania

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Stagecraft in Euripides

Michael Halloran, Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut

The stagecraft of the Attic dramatists has been the subject of renewed scholarly activity in recent years, spawning a number of detailed discussions concerning the art of practitioners. Michael Halloran now treats the stagecraft of the most extensively preserved of the three Attic tragedians.

Owing to the greater number of available plays, the author does not analyse each play in detail, but takes three *Heracles*, *Trojan Woman* and *Ion*, in order to illustrate and substantiate his findings. Surveying Euripides' treatment of the particular problems of dramaturgy, he shows how dramaturgy and literary interpretation interact. *Orestes* and *Bacchae* are chosen to represent the later plays and are analysed in some detail to demonstrate the extreme development of some of the dramatist's techniques. This book constitutes an important and extensive contribution to Euripidean studies.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction. 2. Entrances and Announcements. 3. Preparation and Surprise. 4. Entrance and Songs. 5. Three Plays (*Heracles*, *Trojan Woman*, *Ion*). 6. The Last Stage (*Orestes*, *Bacchae*). 7. Conclusions. Index. Appendix. Bibliography. £15.95 0-7099-1273-0 272 pages November 84

Causidicus

P. V. Jones

We have problems with our language courses at school. Let us restrict the argument to Latin.

Proposition A

In order to survive, we must offer Latin (i) to a broad intellectual band of pupils lower down the school, (ii) with increasingly fewer periods to teach it in (even more true if Latin is begun in the sixth-form). Consequently, we produce courses for these conditions. Excellent. But Latin is a very difficult language, its literature highly sophisticated and allusive. If we offer concessions lower down the school, we pay the penalty higher up.

Proposition B

We rightly emphasise that it is the literature that counts and strive to get on to it as soon as possible. Excellent. But given (A), the students are not equipped to deal with it satisfactorily when they come to it.

Proposition C

Examination Boards, responding to (B), make set-books in the original a major part of their examinations. Excellent. But given the difficulty of the literature (A), Latin becomes a brute of a subject at 'O' level. Indeed, quite recently it was conclusively shown that Latin was the most difficult subject to get an 'A' in at 'O' level – and it may still be the case for all I know. *This cripples all our efforts to make the subject attractive.*

Conclusion

You'd be mad to do Latin at school. And if you do, and you proceed with it to 'A' level, your grip on the language will be fairly shaky and therefore your capacity to respond intelligently and sensitively to the literature hobbled.

Solution

Break the grip of set-books on the examination. To do this, jettison the current pattern, which is (i) learn Latin with a course-book, (ii) read set-books for the examination. Instead, adopt the following tack – base examinations on a course of *which an already integral part would make a challenging set-book at a fair i.e. achievable level*. Example: CLC. Scrub the set-books, and say the examination will be based upon the whole of the CLC up to and including Unit 5 (possibly Unit 4). Example: *Reading Greek*. Scrub the set-books and say the examination will be based on RG as it stands (possibly 1-16, + 19).

Advantages

The texts can be covered easily in the time, so that due weight can be given to linguistic thoroughness and effective literary response. No more frantic rushing through badly understood set-books; no more examinations encouraging guesswork and knowledge of background in place of sure grip; but students with a firm grip on what they are supposed to know, a better chance to respond intelligently to the literature, and a better chance to do well in the examinations. With CLC, all the paralinguistic work of the earlier Stages can be examined in its original context.

Disadvantages

Same boring old set books. But with CLC, for example, one could substitute for Unit 5 passages of equal length and coherence from existing 'O' level texts.

Implications

Examinations would now have to test very thoroughly indeed what was supposed to have been covered, rather than (as at the moment) offering life-lines to students with woolly knowledge of too-large a syllabus: that means, thorough (let us call it traditional, if you must) testing of language and background. We aim for detailed knowledge of slightly less rather than hazy knowledge of too much.

Why will the suggestion not be adopted?

Examination Boards, especially the dons on them, will start screaming about 'lowering standards'. I make two points. First, they need to be lowered (see above). Second, the proposal offers a serious chance of attracting both *more students and* who have a better linguistic grip. Would a don rather teach someone whose background has been woolly knowledge of what has not been done thoroughly or precise and confident knowledge of the slightly less that has been done thoroughly? To put it starkly, would a don rather have as a pupil someone who sort of knew 600 lines of Virgil for an examination demanding straight translation, a few comprehension questions and an essay, or 200 lines of Virgil with complete linguistic thoroughness and knowledge of context?

PETER JONES

lectures in classics at the
University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Mythical Meanings: Greek Myth in the Classroom

N. P. O'Brien

In Advent 1855 Charles Kingsley, completed his new book, *The Heroes* described by the author as 'a little present of old Greek fairy tales to my children Rose, Maurice and Mary'. There is a certain Victorian quaintness about the justificatory preface and the presentation of the stories as a whole. Yet Charles Kingsley's *The Heroes* has retained its popularity for nearly a century and a half. The subject-matter of the book is quite simply the traditional stories of three Greek heroes: Perseus, Jason and Theseus. Kingsley makes no excuses for his choice of material:

There are no fairy tales like these old Greek ones, for beauty, and wisdom, and truth, and for making children love noble deeds, and trust in God to help them through.¹

Despite its moralistic tone (not unfamiliar to readers of the same author's *The Water Babies*) Kingsley's claim is striking for its insistence upon something more than the straightforward entertainment value of the stories. Kingsley is not justifying his enthusiasm for these 'old Greek fairy tales' by simply saying that children will enjoy them or that they will be fun to read. Instead he is maintaining that their preservation in the literary heritage of the adult to the child rests primarily upon an educational justification: children will be significantly better off by virtue of the fact that they have been exposed to these stories in an appropriate and sympathetic way.

If there is then a *prima facie* case, albeit unsubstantiated at this stage, to be made out for the use of these stories in the education of our children, it seems clear that their more widespread resuscitation might prove in the long-term to be one of the more obvious blessings of the decline of Latin and Greek. It is increasingly the case that such traditional subjects are being replaced in the secondary school curriculum by a rather more comprehensive introduction to the ancient Greek and Roman world. No longer is what used to be called a 'classical education' confined to the mastery of the grammar, vocabulary and syntax of Latin and Greek. Even in schools where Latin and Greek might be taken as examination subjects at 'O' and 'A' level it seems sensible that pupils should be encouraged to learn these languages by at least one academic year's introduction to the Greek and Roman heritage in general, especially where later exposure to Latin and Greek is not compulsory. In such cases, it seems necessary that material used in Classical Studies or Classical Civilisation courses should both stimulate interest in the Romans and Greeks, in such a way that the acquisition of Latin and Greek might become a genuine aspiration, and at the same time serve some worthwhile educational purpose. It is the contention of this article that the reading, telling and recreation of traditional Greek tales should constitute an invaluable element of any such course. It is maintained that the educational purpose of these tales does not simply depend upon their use as a preparation for the more thorough appreciation of European art and literature; it is not simply a question of ensuring that in later life people will be able to 'get the

reference'. Rather it is to be argued that these tales have intrinsic educational merit which enhances their claim to a place in a Classical Studies introductory course. As Elizabeth Cook remarks in her book *The Ordinary and the Fabulous*:

The inherent greatness of myth and fairy tale is a poetic greatness. The best stories are like extended lyrical images of unchanging human predicaments and strong unchanging hopes and fears, loves and hatreds.²

The stories that we are concerned with here are firmly rooted in the realm of the fantastic, and as such are counterpoised to the ordinary world of common-sense 'reality'. For the sake of convenience we can classify them together as a unit under the title of 'Greek Myths' but the distinctions to be drawn between myths, legends and folk tales are not always clear. We might have an intuitive feeling that myths are somehow connected with gods or the supernatural in a religious context, that legends are primarily the domain of heroes and perhaps the occasional heroine, and that folk tales are rather more likely to be concerned with magic. In fact, many of the stories we are likely to regard as Greek myths will contain elements taken from all three of these categories. For the most part then, the expression 'Greek myth' will not be used in any technical sense. It is assumed that the sort of stories we are considering for inclusion in a Classical Studies course will include a broad range of elements that might in a more technical context be assigned to several specific pigeon-holes within the general framework of fantastic literature.

Whilst there has perhaps been a recent tendency for children's literature to become more 'realistic', to deal explicitly with the sort of environment and problems that are likely to be confronted by a child living in an industrial world in the 20th century, myths and fairy tales stand out at the other extreme as examples of literature, and not necessarily children's literature, that do not seek to confine themselves in their context and imagery to the familiar. Some might suggest that this is a deficiency, that the latent assumptions such stories betray are reactionary and insidious, that their failure to address the child in the concrete realities of his own familiar environment represents a conclusive argument against their use. It seems possible however to make out a case in opposition to such critics. The attempt to appeal to a child's imagination through the medium of the familiar and what passes as his own experience of reality seems to rest upon the mistaken assumption that in an increasingly fragmented society the experience of thirty schoolchildren is sufficiently homogeneous to render that sort of literary realism practicable. It is surely not fanciful to suppose that the breakdown of the collective imagination that has attended this increasing fragmentation of society has left us with Eliot's 'heap of broken images'³ and it seems misguided under such circumstances to consider that the path to psychological salvation lies with the literary equivalent of 'Grange Hill'. Explicit references to particular problems,

thought to be appropriate, may in fact strike discordant or in some cases uncomprehended notes with a class from varying social and ethnic backgrounds. Nor is the argument in favour of myths or tales of fantasy of the sort that says it is better that everybody should be kept in the dark by introducing stories that are totally inaccessible to the whole class. On the contrary, the argument in favour of the deployment of such stories asserts their universal applicability. As Elizabeth Cook points out, myths deal symbolically with the perennial human predicaments, including those that confront the child at each stage of his development. To that extent, such stories transcend the particular and therein, paradoxically, lies their essential relevance. For it might be agreed that such stories, if handled sensitively, do more than simply scrape the surface of the developing personality. Instead they might be seen as an important factor in the eventual psychological integration of the individual, and such integration might equally be regarded as the most valuable asset in the inevitable human confrontation with adversity that more overtly 'realistic' children's literature might seek to particularise. As Antony Kenny has shown, the integration of Freud's three psychic elements, the ego, the superego and id, might not be so dissimilar from the Platonic ideal harmony of

τὸ λογιστικόν, τὸ θυμοειδές, and τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν and certainly Plato was no stranger to the idea of using myths in the Utopian Republic as an educational device to foster that psychic harmony.

Our treatment of the educational value of Greek myths, then, is becoming 'psychological'. That is to say, we are beginning to face the essential educational question of what exposure to this particular body of material is likely to be doing to the children for whom it is intended, what it is doing to their minds, their emotions, their personalities as a whole. The answers to these questions seem to depend upon what we think myths are and what function we feel able to assign to fantastic literature in general. The specialist material dealing with these problems has become increasingly complex and diverse, a nexus of issues embracing psychology, anthropology, and linguistics. Nevertheless it seems possible to draw some conclusions.

One such conclusion has already been indicated: that myth provides representations of certain fundamental unconscious fantasies common to all mankind. It is then no coincidence that different mythologies disclose the recurrent themes of parricide, castration, incest and monsters since in psychoanalytical terms the prevalence of such themes represents the surfacing of primitive wishes and fears repressed in the course of man's socialization. Nor are such representations confined to myth, but occur in disguised form in religion, art, and most importantly in dreams.

I should like you to notice too, that the analysis of dreams has shown us that the unconscious makes use of a particular symbolism... This symbolism varies partly from individual to individual; but partly it is laid down in a typical form and seems to coincide with the symbolism which as we suspect underlies our myths and fairy tales. It seems not impossible that these creations of the popular mind might find an explanation through the help of dreams.⁵

Psychoanalysis proposes to provide the tools for deciphering the coded messages of the unconscious, and it is with these tools that subsequent theorists from Jung and Rank to Barthes and Lévi-Strauss have found themselves working. We might expect then our myths and fairy tales to

confront in symbolic terms areas of conflict arising out of repressed wishes and latent fears. The notion that the function of fantasy is to provide an outlet for wish fulfilment is an appealing one and has been exercised this century to good effect by writers such as Tolkein, C. S. Lewis and more recently Richard Adams. Tolkein it is, who in his essay *On Fairy Tales*⁶ provides the theoretical background to stories of the 'happily ever after' variety with his consideration of the elements of recovery, escape and consolation as contributing to what he calls the 'eucatastrophic' dimension of fantasy. But if we are to remain true to our Freudian model, then we must also recognise that fantasy is not only consoling but also dislocating in its exposure of the repressed.

As Rosemary Jackson remarks in her book *Fantasy – The Literature of Subversion*:

Fantastic literature transforms the real through this kind of dis-covery. It does not introduce novelty, so much as uncover all that needs to remain hidden if the world is to be comfortably 'known'. Its uncanny effects reveal an obscure region which lies behind the homely and native.⁷

But this is not the end of the story, as Jackson points out a few pages later.

Fantasies are not however, countercultural... On the contrary they frequently seem to re-confirm institutional order by supplying a vicarious fulfilment of desire and neutralising an urge towards transgression.⁸

In other words, in those cases where fantasy does not simply embody a relatively straightforward wish fulfilment or 'eucatastrophe', it instead provides for the process of catharsis; after the dis-covery of the unseen there is recovery; the wounds which have been opened are now healed and through the symbolic exposure of the latent forces the conflict is at least partially mediated.

An analogy may be drawn between this descriptive psychoanalysis of fantastic literature and the therapeutic psychoanalysis of neurotic patients. Neurotics may be seen as people plagued by manifestations of areas of their personality that seem to them alien. An important function of psychotherapy is to dispel this feeling of alienation by making the neurotic symptoms comprehensible in terms of the subject's past history. It might be maintained that what Freud was doing in his consulting room was explaining his patients to themselves by making a coherent story out of their lives.

From the complex material concerned with myth and fantasy then, we are trying to retrieve a general and minimal principle that will substantiate our intuition that such literature makes a special contribution to the confrontation of human anxieties as they emerge at different stages of development. It is suggested that we can at least say that myth, in common with other literature, orders our experience, but that because of its very nature it has a peculiar capacity for mediating social and psychological contradiction: the essence of that nature is that myths represent fundamental expressions of certain properties of the human mind and even of basic mental or psychological human organization. In myth and fantasy in general, our deepest wishes and fears are symbolically disclosed and the conflicts attendant on their repression are at least partially mediated. Impressive claims have been made on behalf of the therapeutic properties of fantasy. In his book *The Uses of Enchantment*⁹ Bettelheim refers to the Hindu practice of treating psychological disorder by telling fairy tales to the

disturbed patient. Through such stories, so it is alleged, the patient is led to visualise the real nature of his problem and the possibility of its resolution. Bettelheim remarks, 'From what a particular tale implied about a man's despair, hopes and methods of overcoming tribulations, the patient could discover not only a way out of his distress but also a way to find himself, as the hero of the story did.'⁹ So, in other words, the patient is encouraged to find his own solution through seeing what the story implies for him at that moment in his life; the story should not however be in any obvious way didactic; its main concern is not information about the external world but rather an exposure to life 'divined from the inside'.

Such an example is reminiscent of, and supported by, Jung's observation of the mediation of psychological conflict. Jung describes how some of his patients, faced with what appeared to be an insoluble conflict, solved it by 'out-growing' it, by developing a new level of consciousness'. He writes: 'Some higher or wider interest appeared on the patient's horizon and through the broadening of his outlook the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms, but faded out when confronted with a new and sharper life urge'.¹⁰ The citation of such an example seems in accordance with the Hindu example and it seems plausible to maintain that the Hindu case exhibits a particular technique for the induction of the general resolution of conflict as prescribed by Jung. The conclusion has been accurately drawn by Ted Hughes in his essay *Myth and Education*:

The inner struggle of worlds, which is not necessarily a violent and terrible affair, though at bottom it often is, is suddenly given the perfect formula for the terms of a truce. A single tale told at the right moment, transforms a person's life with the order its pattern brings to incoherent energies.¹¹

Once this sort of psychological interpretation of the nature of myth is conceded as at least a plausible hypothesis, we are enabled to look in more detail at the sort of enrichment that Greek myths might offer to children's lives. It would obviously be dangerous to exaggerate the sort of significance that only limited exposure to such stories might have on a child's development, but for a teacher to behave responsibly he must work on the assumption that he has some control over the effect of his material upon the experience of the child.

In his recent book *The Christian Neurosis*¹² Pierre Solignac has examined at length the phenomenon referred to in the title – a condition induced, so it is proposed, by a particular style of moral education typical of overtly Christian, or more specifically, Roman Catholic, schools and colleges. Anyone who has read James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* will appreciate the sort of psychological torment that can be created by the relentless exhortation to an unattainable moral perfection. In the Christian 'mythology', the heroes to be emulated are the saints, and the legends that depict their lives serve an overtly moralistic purpose. It might be proposed that, in Freudian terminology, such stories do not help to mediate contradictions created by Id, Ego and Superego conflict, but instead pay dangerous lip-service to Superego requirements. That is to say, such stories continuously, and often in an uncompromising fashion, pose a set of standards or an ideal towards which the child is encouraged to strive, inevitably without success.

If it is plausible to suggest that Christian hagiography has

helped create a specifically Christian neurosis, we must now ask what contribution non-Christian Greek mythology can make to redress the balance in favour of psychological integration. The case for the use of other fantastic literature in the education of children has been well made. Notably Bruno Bettelheim in his *Uses of Enchantment* draws widely upon his work with disturbed children in providing a psychoanalytical critique of folk fairy tales. It is Bettelheim's contention that much children's literature remains unsatisfactory for the task it is required to accomplish. That task, as explicitly formulated by Bettelheim is a daunting one:

For a story truly to hold the child's attention, it must entertain him and arouse his curiosity. But to enrich his life, it must stimulate his imagination, help him to develop his intellect and to clarify his emotions, be attuned to his anxieties and aspirations, give full recognition to his difficulties, while at the same time suggesting solutions to the problems which perturb him. In short it must at one and the same time relate to all aspects of his personality – and this without ever belittling but, on the contrary giving full credence to the seriousness of the child's predicaments, while simultaneously promoting confidence in himself and in his future.¹⁴

In the technical language of Freudian jargon, then, for a story to be truly enriching it must address all levels of the human personality, must address itself to the budding Ego, relieving unconscious pressures, it must give credence to Id pressures and at the same time show ways to satisfy those that are in line with Ego and Superego requirements. In ordinary language, the child (subject and victim) will simply be finding such stories more deeply satisfying than any other.

What, then, can we say in particular about the use of Greek myths? It has already been stressed that the term 'Greek myths' is being used in such a way as to embody what might in a more technical context be referred to as myth, legend and folk tale. Certainly we can detect traces of all three not only within the entire corpus of Greek myths but on occasions in one particular tale. We can divide up these Greek myths into four sections: first there are the stories of the two doomed royal households of Mycenae and Thebes the first descended from Tantalus and inheriting the curse placed upon him, the second descended from Cadmus, offending against Tantalus' son Pelops and inheriting a curse from him; secondly the stories of the Trojan War about nobility in battle being challenged by disloyalty and spite; thirdly there are the stories of explorations and quests and magical adventures; and finally, there are the other shorter myths about the dealings of gods with men, stories such as those of Orpheus and Eurydice, Prometheus and Phaethon. If we now look more closely at some of these Greek myths in the context of what has already been said in general about the 'uses of enchantment', we may be able to draw certain conclusions about the use of particular stories or types of stories in a Classical Studies course.

We may begin then with our first category, that is to say the stories concerned with the doomed households of Mycenae and Thebes (and a collection which Bettelheim explicitly excludes from use with his younger disturbed children.) The atmosphere that pervades these stories is one of guilt, retribution and pollution. As such, it is unlikely that these stories, even on a superficial level, are to be considered suitable for younger children. It seems preferable to follow Elizabeth Cook's example in suggesting that these stories be introduced in the Sophoclean original to older pupils in the Sixth Form where the complexity of the

issues involved and the idiosyncracy of their presentation might be more fully appreciated. It is not, however, simply the fact that Oedipus, Antigone, Agamemnon, Orestes and Electra are all born to a life of misery that might discourage the teacher from exposing younger children to such stories. In fact, it is being suggested that the repressed fears and anxieties of children should, where possible, be confronted. But if we are to take the psychological implications of the use of myth seriously then it seems that a more serious criticism can be made against these particular stories. The case can perhaps be best illustrated by reference to the myths of the house of Thebes, to which the story of Oedipus is central. Bettelheim remarks by way of summary of this cycle that it deals with every variety of oedipal dilemma and consistently ends in death and destruction.

In contrast, certain fairy tales, for example 'Snow White', 'Rapunzel', 'Cinderella', 'Beauty and the Beast', suggest that potentially destructive infantile relations can be integrated in maturity; despite her stepmother's jealousy Snow White not only survives but finds great happiness, as does Rapunzel, whose parents had given her up because satisfying their own desires had become more important to them than keeping their daughter and whose foster mother tried to hold on to her too long; Beauty, in 'Beauty and the Beast', is loved by her father and she loves him, but neither of them is punished for their mutual attachment; on the contrary Beauty saves her father and the Beast by transferring her attachment from father to lover; Cinderella, far from being destroyed by sibling jealousy, emerges victorious. In other words, in each case a potential contradiction is mediated. The message of these stories is that oedipal entanglements may seem to be insoluble, but by courageously struggling with these emotional problems, one can achieve a better life than those who are never confronted with severe problems at all. By contrast, in the Theban myths there is only death and destruction; instead of accepting his son, Tantalus sacrifices him to his own ends; so does Laius in respect of Oedipus; both fathers die as a result. Again Oenomaus dies because he is possessive of his daughter, so does Jocasta, who attaches herself too closely to her son; killing the parent of the same sex brings about the downfall of Oedipus, as it does that of his sons who desert him in his distress, and so on, right down to the deaths of Antigone, Haemon and Creon's wife. The only one to survive is Ismene, sister of Antigone who does not attach herself too deeply to either of her parents, nor to her brothers or sister. So according to this cycle of myths, whoever remains too deeply entangled in an 'oedipal' relation, is destroyed. Whilst this cycle then is pessimistic about the consequences of failure to resolve the oedipal complex and so may not be suitable material for children still in the grip of infantile conflict, it might be proposed that the adolescent mind, moving towards a mature independence of parents might be better able to accommodate this sort of material and assimilate, at least unconsciously, the warning these stories contain. Potentially disturbing forces have been defused and the turmoil and anxiety of childhood ordered and located at a safe distance.

We might turn now to our second category of Greek myths, that is to say the category that embraces the stories of the Trojan war. Our main source for these stories is the *Iliad* and it may be appropriate to cite the conclusion of a recent commentator on the Homeric epic of Troy:

As far as possible everything is cleared away which could distract attention from the terrible contrast of life and death. The hero represents the summit of human greatness and his

struggle to face death is fascinating enough to attract the gaze of the immortal gods and so to exalt human life to a level at which it achieves significance and becomes a fit subject for the song which celebrates its fragility and its greatness.¹⁵

The *Iliad* undoubtedly ranks among the great works of European literature but that is clearly not in itself a commendation for its use with younger children. The story is long and complex and frequently stark in its dignified pessimism. It is also however, a story that embraces compassion and pathos, particularly in those episodes that concern Hector and Andromache, and the addition of extra-Homeric episodes, for example, the judgement of Paris or the tale of the Wooden Horse, may serve to lighten the texture. It might be argued that there is a danger that heroism of the sort embodied in warriors such as Achilles and Agamemnon, Ajax and Hector, is so overwhelmingly inaccessible to us that a subconscious preoccupation with it can only confirm the traits of the Superego to the detrimental exclusion of the Ego and Id tendencies. It is perhaps for this reason that there is an overriding pessimism that pervades stories of this sort. We can never live up fully to what the Superego, as represented by the gods, seems to require of us. When a mortal incurs the displeasure of a god, even when he had done nothing wrong, he is still destroyed by these supreme Superego representations. But once again it might be argued that these stories do give shape to the human experience of frustration and to the sense of injustice and permanent loss attendant upon the tension of the life and the death instinct, Eros and Thanatos. The pessimism of the story is always dignified and consistent with its heroic theme, yet through the formal resolution of the underlying conflict it might be suggested that the story of the fall of Troy provides a cathartic expression of our deepest fears and anxieties. We do not, it is maintained, leave the story downcast nor belittled, but, instead, sustained by the achievement of a degree of insight.

The two groups of stories we have looked at so far – the stories of Thebes and Mycenae and Troy – are demanding and seem to address the needs of older children as they begin to develop a mature sense of self-esteem and so are better able to enter the emotional experiences offered by the stories. At such a stage of development, it is suggested, the reader might leave the stories strengthened rather than bruised.

If we turn to our other two groups, those tales that deal with the explorations of the heroes and the shorter stories about the dealings of men with gods, then we find ourselves faced with very different considerations. Perhaps the most familiar examples of the former category are the legends of Perseus, Jason and Theseus. Perseus and Jason are both heroes who pose a threat to a king who is related to them. Acrisius, the king of Argos, is told by an oracle that his grandson will kill him. He therefore puts his only daughter Danae in prison where she is visited by Zeus in the form of a shower of gold. As a result, Danae gives birth to a son, Perseus, and Acrisius responds by putting them both out to sea to avoid the curse; Perseus is looked after by a kindly fisherman, Dictys, on the island of Seriphos and once again becomes a threat to a king, this time Polydectes, the brother of Dictys. Polydectes wishes to marry Perseus' mother Danae, but feels that she is inaccessible whilst under the protection of Perseus. He therefore tricks Perseus into undertaking to cut off the head of the Gorgon, Medusa, in order to prevent the king from marrying his mother. Perseus, however, is offered supernatural aid: a shield from Athene, winged sandals and a sword from Hermes, a helmet

of invisibility from Hades. Perseus succeeds in his task of cutting off Medusa's head and also saves the maiden Andromeda from an unjust death and falls in love with her. Perseus returns to Seriphos, Polydectes is turned into stone when he sees Medusa's head and Dictys, the kindly fisherman, is made king. Danae is set free, and to all intents and purposes good has triumphed over evil. There is however a twist in the tail of this story, for while Perseus is returning to Argos he competes in games that are by chance being watched by his grandfather, Acrisius. The original prophecy is fulfilled when the discus thrown by Perseus hits and kills Acrisius.

Jason, too, poses a threat; Pelias has seized power from Aeson in Iolcus and is told by an oracle that he will be killed by one of Aeson's sons. Jason is the son of Aeson, so Pelias tries to kill him. Jason, however, is smuggled out of the city and educated by the magical Centaurs.

Jason meets the goddess Hera, who offers to help him. In order to prove his claim to the throne of Iolcus, Jason is sent off in search of the Golden Fleece. He receives assistance from the sorceress Medea who helps him to accomplish his mission. Once again all seems to be well, but the numerous activities of Medea cast a shadow over Jason's triumphant return and he himself dies many years later, struck by falling timber from his famous ship the Argo as he sits on the prow, an old man, dreaming of the past in desolation.

Theseus travels to Athens to lay claim to kinship with his real father, Aegeus, king of Athens. On his way to Athens, he frees Attica from the danger of a variety of robbers and brigands. He receives a welcome from Aegeus and earns the chance to exhibit his courage by going off to Crete to kill the Minotaur. He succeeds in this aim with the aid of Ariadne. However, once again a shadow is cast over the story as Theseus abandons Ariadne on Naxos and Aegeus prematurely commits suicide in response to a careless signal from Theseus' approaching ship. Nevertheless, Theseus becomes king of Athens and Attica.

These three stories share certain common elements that seem to be of value in the psychological integration of the child's personality. In each case there is a hero who is isolated for much of the time and compelled to face considerable adversity before he can win assurance of legitimate acceptance by an ambivalent or overtly hostile society. In facing that adversity successfully the hero receives assistance, divine or human or both. In each case there is a figure who suggests a resolution to a prolonged separation-anxiety: Perseus has his Andromeda, Jason his Medea and Theseus his Ariadne. In each case, an awesome obstacle has to be overcome, normally in the shape of an inhuman monster. The existence of evil is acknowledged. In each story there is overt suffering, anxiety about death, but endurance in what is largely represented as a legitimate cause, results in success.

These features recur to a considerable extent in what is perhaps the most valuable source of stories in this context—the *Odyssey*. Once again it is worth noting the observation of Jasper Griffin:

The *Odyssey*, less intense (than the *Iliad*), more inclusive, with its wider range of interest in the world and all its variety, has a different conception of the gods and of heroism. Gods and heroes alike need and receive moral justification, of a sort much closer to our ideas. Odysseus, the hero of endurance and guile, replaces Achilles, the hero of openness and dash, in a world grown full of treachery, deception and complexity; and he must contend with disloyal subordinates and exotic monsters. We find a different kind of realism, and

also a sort of escapism.¹⁶

Odysseus is an accessible hero in a way that many of the others are not. He is not particularly awesome, but he is reflective, self-restrained and 'much-enduring'. He is often alone in the face of adversity; permanent separation from home and family is a constant fear, though various female figures emerge as partial sources of comfort: Calypso, Nausicaa, Circe. In the end, justice prevails against the suitors in the palace of Ithaca and there is an overtly 'happily-ever-after' ending: 'The grey-eyed goddess Athena had a new thought. She made the long night delay, and held back the morning, while Odysseus and Penelope went joyfully together to their bed and satisfied themselves with love and sleep at each other's side. Then at last Athene roused the dawn to bring light to the world, and dawn climbed out of the ocean and glowed on her golden throne.'

The tale of Odysseus represents more of the traditional elements of the folk fairy tale than perhaps any other of the Greek myths. It is a world of magic and monsters, of princesses and trickery and happy endings, though only after a struggle. Reality is constantly juxtaposed to fantasy, and Odysseus himself is a hero who accommodates both worlds. At the same time, the story of Odysseus in no way conceals from the child the threat of desolation, of separation from security, of contemplation of death itself; Circe is at first represented as an embodiment of evil, but this evil is palliated by a superior force; the Sirens pose a serious threat in the form of seduction to Odysseus and his men, and the virtue of self-restraint is practically demonstrated; Scylla and Charybdis pose immediate danger to the life of Odysseus but he is saved and cast out to sea alone, a powerful image of his desolation. In the Cyclops we have a giant overcome by the hero's cunning. It is worth noting at this point an illustration about the evocative force of the giant in the child's imagination: Bettelheim refers to the remark of a five year old in response to the tale of 'Jack and the Beanstalk': 'There aren't any such things as giants, are there? But there are such things as grown ups, and they're like giants'.¹⁷ Bettelheim draws the conclusion that the message of the story to the five year old is that although adults can be experienced as frightening giants, a child with cunning can get the better of them. The story therefore, offers the reassurance to the child that he can grow up to be like the giant and acquire the same powers. This then is an element common to the tales of Perseus, Jason and Theseus as well as that of Odysseus and is perhaps indicative of the general way in which these stories are likely to be found more suitable with younger children than the others so far considered.

The theme of separation and restoration is recurrent in this group of stories. Psychoanalytical theory concerned with separation anxiety is particularly, though not exclusively, associated with Otto Rank. Rank maintains that the birth trauma, the essence of which is separation from the mother, produces as it were a reservoir of anxiety in the individual which is reactivated by all later experience of separation. The assertion is that all situations involving separation from a loved person or object are the basic and universal cause of anxiety. It might be agreed then that those episodes in the tales of Perseus, Jason, Theseus and Odysseus that point towards romance and the conventionally happy ending show the way to escape from the separation-anxiety that allegedly haunts the child. They are, then, in effect calls to the child to relinquish his infantile dependency wishes and achieve a more satisfying inde-

pendent existence. Autonomy in the context of mutual interdependence is the goal. It might be argued that there is increasingly less security as the 20th century draws to a close and that the young adolescent, like the hero, is frequently isolated. The stories to which the child is exposed must, in that light, provide examples for him to follow of heroes going out into the world, albeit reluctantly, in search of security promoted by self-justification.

Our final group, the tales of Gods and men are perhaps better classified as fables, being more explicitly moralistic in their content and presentation. In many ways, such stories seem to balance the autonomous individualism so apparent in the tales of Perseus, Jason, Theseus and Odysseus. All speak of retribution expected for vanity and lack of self restraint and many have become almost platitudinous as moral paradigms. Daedalus and Icarus, Prometheus, Phaethon, Midas and Epimetheus retell within a different tradition the Genesis story of The Fall, yet remaining as they do outside the Christian conceptual framework of sin and redemption they are perhaps devoid of the more ponderous associations of the biblical stories. They nonetheless remain sober and intuitive in their underlying exhortation. In Freudian terms, perhaps this exhortation might be translated into a warning that Id tendencies are given a free rein at the agent's peril.

These stories then may be read as an expression of the conflict in human experience between nature and culture, the 'pleasure principle' and the 'reality principle', and upon the resolution of this conflict rests the entire process of socialisation. Perhaps more than any others, these shorter stories are analogous to the fleeting images of dreams, condensed, displaced yet so organised as to point beyond the explicit conflict to a deeper resolution. As Ted Hughes remarks:

A child takes possession of a story as what might be called a unit of imagination. A story which engages, say earth and the underworld is a unit correspondingly flexible. It contains not merely the space and in some form or other the contents of those two places; it reconciles their contradictions in a workable fashion and holds open the way between them.¹⁸

There is a sense then in which the stories provide us with a vicarious fulfilment of repressed wishes, tempered by the censorious verdict of an unyielding reality. In them we are shown to ourselves and made to sit uncomfortably in the presence of our contradictions until the story and the conscious reflection upon it is ended and the pathway to resolution is disclosed to the unconscious. At that point the story has imposed order upon confusion and made articulate that which had been repressed. By condensing and displacing its materials, and by finding intelligible ways of representing it, the story has not so much reflected reality as reorganised the material drawn from reality. The potential conflict has in this way been symbolically mediated.

In this article then, we have tried to look briefly at Greek myths in the light of psychoanalytical theory. It has been suggested that Greek myths can play an important part in leading children beyond themselves and the problems of their immediate environment. As such these stories may serve as one source among others for the stimulation of the imagination, suggesting new and vital images by virtue of which the child can structure his daydreams, and with them give better direction to his life. It has further been argued that this retreat to the remote world of fantasy does not represent an abdication of responsibility. On the contrary, it

has been suggested that Greek myths may, by virtue of their form and content, contribute towards the resolution of conflict within the development of the personality, addressing, as they do, in symbolic terms our repressed wishes and deepest fears. This resolution is achieved through the experience of either eucatastrophe or catharsis, and it has been proposed that in either case these stories may help to mediate psychological conflict and so contribute towards a sense of well-being.

In a world of increasing fragmentation and insecurity it seems reasonable to consider that one of the most valuable gifts that formal education can offer is, perhaps against all the odds, a fundamental trust in life upon which all personal happiness and progress must be founded. In the end the myth of Sisyphus might seem the most authentic to our experience of 'real life', but hope of something better still persists.

It is the contention of this article then, that the perennial value of Greek myths for the children we teach rests not upon a clear representation of every-day reality. Rather, like all literature of value, these stories confront our ordinary experience of reality and recreate the world we live in. It is suggested that through the insights of psychoanalysis we may appreciate the significance of that re-creation and find in Greek myths a lasting meaning and a sort of truth. As Charles Kingsley wrote, sitting in his study in Advent 1855:

These stories are not all true, of course, nor half of them, you are not simple enough to fancy that; but the meaning of them is true, and true for ever.¹⁹

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Latin and Computers

J. J. C. Fenton

At first sight, Latin and Computers seem strange bedfellows: what has Virgil to do with VDUs? Cicero with silicon chips? Ablatives with ASCII? Computers have been used for Latin word-counting and style analysis; and it has often been said that ability in Latin produces – or at least diagnoses – a good computer programmer. But can the computer be of any help in teaching Latin? Hybrid words like 'hexadecimal' and 'micro-computer' may be sufficiently off-putting to Classics teachers, but many have shown interest in computers and started to write their own programs. As an introduction to the subject for those to whom it is strange, usually very strange, it may be of some help to hear of the experiences of one such animal.

My first close encounter with these machines was when a colleague brought his Pet into school: intriguing, but largely incomprehensible. Then the first relatively cheap computer appeared – the Sinclair ZX-80, and I took the plunge and bought one. The surest way of learning to program, I suspected (and still believe), is to have one's own home computer and work through the handbook. As a hobby it proved to be absorbing and even additive, and when I reached the limits of the ZX-80 (not far with only 1k of program memory – about 1000 letters), I moved up to a 16k 'Video Genie'.

Pictures and games were the first and most obvious projects. But a computer is a versatile machine: what it does basically (so to speak), is to handle numbers, letters, words and shapes at unbelievably high speeds and with total efficiency, and produce the results on a television screen. Given a list of stems and a set of endings, for example, it could surely make up tables of nouns and verbs: FOR Person = 1 TO 6: PRINT Stems Endings (Person): NEXT. With DATA, Multi-Dimensional Arrays, Loops and StringHandling – much of the jargon is unfortunately necessary, and it is easily learnt – the computer could become an instant accident-machine. The regularity of Latin might make it, not the least likely, but the most likely candidate for 'Computer-Assisted Learning'. Vocabulary learning was another obvious field: a computer could tirelessly produce lists of words, flash them up on the screen, correct the typed answer, and so on.

But all this was rather routine and old-fashioned. Grammar *in vacuo* is frowned on these days: could the computer teach pupils to handle actual Latin better? The main problem is that a computer is (at present) very unintelligent: it only understands sensibly a vocabulary of perhaps 150 words – in schools usually the language called BASIC – and is quite unable to decide what is or is not sensible English, or whether one translation is as good as another. It might be programmed to recognise 'videbat' as Imperfect, 3rd Person Singular: but the twenty or so different ways this verb can be translated are too many for practical programming, and the computer could not be taught how to select the best.

So computer translation must be rigid – no alternative versions, idiom, finer points of emphasis and word-order.

All the same, I decided to try a translation program. The simplest method would be to type into the computer a list of sentences in Latin and English, which it produced one by one and asked you to translate. But this would use a lot of computer memory, and would be a once-only exercise: when the pupil had done it once, there would be no point in repeating it. Could the computer compose its own sentences? Give it lists of possible subjects, verbs and objects and let it choose one of each at random. The boy/girl/slave/master sees/hits/wants/hears the food/garden/stick/bird. Owing to the low intelligence of the computer, the sentences it composed would range from the reasonable to the surrealistic, but at least they would be grammatically feasible. The idea might be extended: random choice of number, tense, voice; a transitive or intransitive verb; an optional adjective or genitive with the subject and/or object; a preposition phrase; a dative noun with suitable verbs.

After digesting the ideas for a while I tried writing the program: it proved to be a long but not too difficult process, and resulted in such fascinating sentences as (from a vocabulary of about 100 words): 'The masters hide the letters of the boy in the gardens' or 'The girl had been handed to the guards'. The computer composed the English and the Latin together. The pupil chose to translate from English into Latin or vice versa, and typed in his translation word by word, constantly corrected by the computer. Instructions on what to do next were always given on the screen.

It was satisfying to write. Programming, for those who take to it, can easily become an obsession: ideas for programs are not hard to come by (I usually start from the screen end – what result do I want to appear on the screen?), and once an idea has come it is hard to rest until the program is written. It provides all the satisfaction of a creative art, and the discipline is akin to that involved in translating into Latin. The problem has to be precisely analysed, broken down into its component parts, translated into computer language (which has a very limited vocabulary), and put together into the finished program. This seems to me to be more a linguistic than a mathematical skill, although some understanding of mathematical concepts, particularly algebra, is needed.

But did my new random-sentence program have any value as a teaching aid? The computer in itself is no mere gimmick, but the accusation of gimmickry might be a fair one in the context. At first I had no chance to answer this question, as the school possessed no computers compatible with my own: a program written for one type of computer will not work on any other. But then, in 1982, the school bought a set of eight of the new BBC computers, probably the best of its kind now available and at present the most popular in schools. I soon acquired one myself, and set to work translating my programs for it and trying them out with classes: at first the random sentence program, then one giving practice and tests on nouns and adjectives, and one

on vocabulary.

No proper research has yet been devised or done on the results, but I have found that the computer, as a kind of interactive text-book, has (apart from the pedagogic advantage of self-correcting exercises!) five main advantages over the ordinary text-book:

- 1 Each individual pupil is kept hard at work: more actual Latin is done per person per lesson than in the classroom.
- 2 The computer can correct mistakes instantly and individually.
- 3 The computer can give detailed help on any word, producing, for example, all the cases of any noun (a grammar book only gives one paradigm).
- 4 The computer demands absolute precision and shows up ignorance and bad habits mercilessly: it was interesting to see how badly even the most able pupils fared when faced with this demand.
- 5 With good programming, learning can be made enjoyable. There is a danger of gimmickry here: many educational programs have, I think, too small a proportion of education to recreation. I succumbed to this temptation briefly with a program called 'Latin Invaders'. Instead of spacecraft, the words of a short Latin sentence descend the screen in a jumbled order; you have to shoot them down in the order needed for English translation before they reach the bottom of the screen. It was fun, but the benefit to actual Latin translation was minimal. Another program gave a more useful way of practising word-order: it printed a passage on the screen, then invited the pupil to indicate the order in which he wanted to take the words: if he chose correctly, the English would appear. This proved a valuable and popular exercise, although of course it demanded an inflexible response: only one word-order was accepted.

Next I faced the challenge of the Verb, and produced the longest program so far. This, given the Principal Parts of almost any Latin verb including Deponents, 'sum' and 'eo' and their compounds and other irregulars, listed up to 16 Tenses, Indicative and Subjunctive, and set tests on them. Latin was indeed proving to be a rewarding subject for 'computerisation'. Its systems of endings and its regularity, its relatively small vocabulary and shortage of idioms, its flexible word-order – all these complemented the computer's ability to handle tables of data and repetitive tasks at very high speed.

A letter to the JACT Bulletin asking if there was any interest elsewhere produced a dozen or so replies, mostly enquiries, and one in particular bore fruit. Oliver and Boyd, the publishers of *Ecce Romani*, were just along the road in Edinburgh, and their parent company, Longman's, were very much engaged in software production. It was agreed that I should attempt to write a set of programs to accompany *Ecce Romani*, and a meeting was arranged with the authors of the course, the members of the Scottish Classics Group, at which I showed some programs.

The meeting was most revealing. The three exercises which I had found most suited to computers were all rejected as being contrary to the spirit of *Ecce Romani* as a reading course: sentences of doubtful sense, routine grammar tests without any context, and picking out words in translation order. The translation technique recommended by the SCG involved taking and studying the words

of a Latin sentence strictly in their Latin order, deducing as much as possible about each word as it was met, and putting the words into an English order only as the final stage: no 'look for the verb' or 'find the subject'.

Some six months later a set of eight programs was complete and approved. Each was based on a particular chapter of Book One, and each the result of a few weeks' planning and pondering, between ten and forty hours' writing the program, and then testing in class with pupils. Pupil-proofing is a vital part of educational computing: careless or mischievous fingers on the keys can produce all kinds of undesirable results, which must be anticipated as far as possible; and a program must be robust enough to keep working without errors or breakdowns.

Two of the *Ecce Romani* programs simply revise and test vocabulary: each deals with about 120 words, taking them in groups of ten; after a chance to revise them, three tests are set in which you have to indicate the meaning by pressing a number, or shooting the right word, or typing it in (the first three letters only) – each with a time limit. The score is kept.

Some of the programs are mainly demonstration: a lesson in subject, verb and object; the formation and use of noun cases; the present and imperfect tenses of verbs. All the pupil has to do here is press a key and watch (and if possible anticipate) whatever happens on the screen. Testing in the noun and verb programs takes the form of shooting or moving, with a time limit.

It is of course important that computers be used to do things which can not be done as well with OHP or blackboard. For example, endings can be shown on their own, and can then move across the screen to meet a stem and form the complete tense; or all the cases of any verb or noun can be shown instantly; or as each word of a Latin sentence is translated, it can change colour, thus highlighting the remaining words. But one advantage that the computer always has over the blackboard is that it works at the pupil's own pace: individual teaching is given.

Two of the programs use 'graphics'. In the very first program, accompanying Chapter 3, small figures move about on a crude diagram of a field, garden and villa, and a Latin sentence describes what is happening: e.g. 'puella in horto ambulat', or 'puer sub arbore sedet'. In the other program, practice is given in identifying the case to be used after a preposition: again a small figure moves around, this time on a detailed picture of the villa and its surroundings.

One program was especially challenging to write – and has inevitably not proved entirely successful. To accompany Chapter 7, I decided in a rash moment to attempt a proper translation program, which would be able to translate into reasonable English anything typed into it up to the standard of Chapter 7. This would demonstrate to pupils the proper technique for translating, and incidentally prove that Latin (at this level) is a very regular language which even a machine can translate. The vocabulary involved was about 100 words. I soon decided to limit the program to the 3rd Person of the Present Tense and the Nominative and Accusative Cases (a few examples of other endings occur early in the book), and to exclude any Direct Speech. This still left enough complications: subordinate clauses, ambiguous -ES endings, the verb 'to be' (with a complement), negative verbs (with auxiliaries: 'he does not see'), the multi-purpose comma (introducing or finishing a clause or a phrase in apposition), the different uses of 'et' (joining words or clauses), unattached or separated adjectives, adverbs (which can come at several points in the

sentence), and so on. As an illustration of the problem, take the following sentences from Chapter 7, and try to work out a totally mechanical, automatic method of translation: 'arbores pueri saepe ascendunt' or 'Sextus, qui servos saepe vexat, respondere non potest et miserabit.' The method evolved for the program was something like this: as each word is typed in, the computer looks it up in its word list and deduces as much as possible about it (and prints this on the screen). When it meets a full stop, it takes a few seconds to process the sentence, working through it word by word, pausing to think about commas, conjunctions etc., and splitting the sentence into clauses. By now it has assigned to each word a number giving its position in the translation of its clause – e.g. 1 is assigned to a conjunction, 2 and 4 to certain adverbs, 3 to the subject with a possible adjective, 5 to the verb, and so on up to 10. Finally, the main clause is translated, with interruptions to translate any subordinate clauses immediately after the word they follow.

The use made of such programs by a teacher is largely up to him and depends partly on the situation in his school. Typically, the teacher would decide to use a program on a certain day, book the computer room, make time himself to try out the program beforehand and read the instructions. He would need to know how to load the program into the computers. With disc, this is simple: insert the disc into the system, press two keys, and he will see on the screen a list of the programs; he simply presses the number required. With tape it is much slower, less reliable, and more complicated – but still not too difficult. When the class comes into the room, the program will have been loaded into all the computers, and the pupils will watch as the teacher demonstrates and tells them about the program; then they will sit down, from one to three at each keyboard, and start working at their own pace. The teacher may have to advise on any technical problems (but most children seem to be able to handle computers better than their elders), and he can wander around making comments, asking questions, offering help, checking that careful work is being done – perhaps telling when to move on to the next section – and helping to drive home the lessons. If all goes well it will be a stimulating and valuable session, with much Latin done, pupils' interest held, and the teacher's time constructively used. The programs could also be used to help a pupil who has been absent to catch up, or (where only one computer is available) in front of the class as a centre for discussion.

Finally, to return to the charge of gimmickry. The computer is a means to an end, like the course-book, the blackboard, or the OHP. It is up to each teacher to judge whether it is a valuable teaching aid. It does not have to be used simply because it is there, and it would be wrong to jump on the bandwagon in an attempt to make Latin look more up-to-date. But 'bandwagon' is misleading, because computers are not yet being used in many subjects: there is a chance for Latin to lead the way, and incidentally to contribute to pupils' knowledge of computers. Because of the nature of the language, Latin and computers are natural partners, and the benefits can work both ways: programming skills and Latin linguistic skills are similar. But there is a danger: because of the nature of computers, it is tempting to use them too much for routine drills. Properly programmed, they have great potential for individual, intensive and enjoyable teaching – and they are certainly here to stay: it is an opportunity that Classics teachers should not miss.

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Five Latin Programs (for BBC 321 Microcomputer)

BY J.J.C.FENTON

To load and run a program:

(a) DISC: while holding down SHIFT, press and release BREAK. A list of programs will appear: press the required number. Alternatively, type CHAIN 'program name' – RETURN.

(b) TAPE: programs 1-4 are on side 1, 5 on side 2. Set the recorder to Play. Type CHAIN 'program name' – RETURN. Wind the tape forward or back if necessary to the start of the program. Loading times for the 5 programs are (mins, secs) 2-15, 1-10, 3-45, 1-50, 1-20 (45k in total).

The Program Name is given in brackets after each title below. To stop a program, press BREAK; to re-start, type RUN – RETURN.

1 Sentence Translation (SENT)

The computer makes up random sentences (which may not be very sensible, but are grammatically correct); these may use any noun case and any verb tense, with adjectives and prepositions. The translation, either into English or into Latin, with or without the Passive Voice, must be typed in; help can be asked for with any word (e.g. all cases of a noun); a list of the words used and the required meanings can be seen between sentences. A mark is given. By small program changes (details early in the program) the help facility can be stopped, or the number of tenses used can be limited.

2 Translation (passage) (TRANSL)

A Latin passage is displayed section by section; the computer produces the translation of each word if the correct word is indicated – i.e. if the right word-order is given (but note that the computer only accepts one order, although other orders may also be correct). A passage is included; instructions are given in the program (as REM statements) on substituting or adding a passage of your own choice.

3 Verbs (VERB)

The computer lists up to 16 tenses (Pres, Impf, Perf, Plup; Indic and Subjunct; Act and Pass) of almost any verb typed in, including deponents and most irregular verbs, but not semi-deponents. Three tests are set on the chosen verb. The computer will select a verb itself if required. It can also translate any part of the selected verb from or into Latin. Subjectives are translated in the same way as Indicatives, but the meaning is put in brackets. To stop the program, use CONTROL-BREAK (or on OS 0.1 press BREAK several times); type OLD – RETURN before re-starting.

4 Nouns and Adjectives (NOUN)

After revision of a selected Noun and Adjective, the computer sets a series of tests. Each test can be done up to 3 times; then a new noun and adjective are chosen. The last test alone involves speed. The score is kept as a series of white blocks at the bottom of the screen.

5 Latin Invaders (LATINV)

In this game, the player has to hit the words (actually the asterisks in front of the words) of a Latin sentence in the right order for English translation, before they reach the bottom of the screen. There are 6 levels of play (2 or 3 recommended). Sentences can be added or changed as required.

It is recommended that you make a back-up copy, but please do not allow other copying (except, e.g. program 2 with other passages).

If you have any problems with these programs, please get in touch with the author at 2 Royal Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 6PZ.

Cost: Tape £7.00, Disc £7.50.