

CLASSICS: APOCALYPSE NOW  
OR WORKING TOWARD THE FUTURE?

*Am I right or am I wrong?  
Am I goin' strong?  
Sound off!  
Sound off!*

Infantry Drill Song  
Tim O'Brien, *If I Die in a Combat Zone*  
(Delacorte: New York 1973) 50

When I was drafted to give a viewpoint on the future of Classics,<sup>1</sup> which I take to mean in practical terms sounding off about what things we are doing right or wrong and how we would define our strengths and weaknesses, I had given as little serious thought to the subject as typical midwestern high school juniors had in 1963 to the history, causes, politics, realities, and prospects of a war in Vietnam, or to the real possibility that they would one day themselves be fighting, killing, and dying in a remote and until then obscure southeast Asian country. Like most of those high school kids, I was preoccupied with my immediate life and assumed that the status quo would go on and on. War was far away.

<sup>1</sup>Here I shall offer a perspective on the future of Classics derived from my own experiences and focus on what the Classics department at the University of Texas at Austin has done in recent years to improve its undergraduate and graduate programs, to promote an understanding and appreciation of the discipline of Classics within a large state "flagship" university, and to increase enrollments and majors in all areas while also adding significantly to the number of permanent faculty lines and avoiding any move towards the use of part-time instructors. The program has also paid attention to the quality of undergraduate teaching in both general and specialized courses while supporting the research work of its faculty. It will be clear that there are special factors that make the situation at UT Austin unique and in some ways irreproducible. But there are also many aspects of the philosophy and guiding principles of the program that may be of use in programs of any size. It will be clear that we stand in opposition to criticisms over the last fifteen years of Classics as a dying discipline and classicists and Classics programs as ineffective and disinterested in quality education or their own fates.

My own situation has given me a global perspective on our discipline and I have been attentive to what is being done in our field in the USA and abroad. I serve as co-editor or on the editorial board of two Classics journals in Spain and a monograph series in Belgium. I am a member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and have been Fulbright Professor in 1992–93 at the Universität Salzburg. I hold an honorary doctorate from the University of Uppsala where I have taught three-week courses twice in the last seven years and lectured on other occasions. I serve as American

I had formed some dim impressions of the big picture of what I shall now call the Classics Civil War when I was called upon during the Bernal Offensive to engage in professional skirmishes about his interpretations of the cultural origins and ground principles of Indo-European studies, his ideas about the early Greeks and the invention of the Greek alphabet, and his meta-vision of the history of Classical scholarship. Already in the early stages of the Battle of *Black Athena*, it became clear to me that classicists could not escape entirely the effects of the war and would remain ignorant of what was at stake or coming down the pike only through the kind of academic 'ostrichism' associated, not without reason,<sup>2</sup> in the public imagination with Oxford dons, public school masters and teachers of Greek and Latin at any level. That does not mean, however, that I had any idea of how to devise effective counter-strategies or even then grasped how necessary it was to do so. I did my small bit in reviews.<sup>3</sup> I even took one on in a politically conservative magazine which I had never read, because I naively felt that it was important to speak seriously to what I imagined was its rich and influential readership about the issues raised in *Black Athena* and to try to avoid arch or inflammatory rhetoric in so doing. Broad lampoons validating good old values and established views were easy, but *cui bono*? Closely reasoned reviews that ticked off errors of fact and logic and spoke to the Corcyreanization of cultural values and educational principles were unfashionably hard, and, I now think, after surveying the current battlefield, *cui bono*? But let us stick with Bernalism a little longer.

representative on the UNESCO committee that guides research in Mycenaean studies and have served in various capacities on the Managing and Executive Committees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. I have established *ex nihilo* a successful graduate research program (The Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory) at UT Austin. I have served here for four years (1994-98) as departmental chair and now serve on the Faculty Senate and University Budgetary Advisory Policy Committee. As a national AIA lecturer, at NEH seminars and in other roles I have lectured at some forty North American universities and colleges and at over twenty universities in eleven European countries. I have seen Classics programs large and small, traditional and experimental, at major research universities and at small Liberal Arts colleges, moribund and vigorous.

Lastly since most of what I shall be discussing pertains to a large program, I should single out the exceptional work of classicists like Hal Haskell at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, Tim Renner at Montclair State University in Montclair, New Jersey, and John Meny formerly of Phoenix College, as models, known to me, of what can be done through dedication to our field at places where a single classical voice must speak in the educational wilderness.

<sup>2</sup>After all one does not take up the study of dead languages and cultures in order to solve the major economic, social, and political issues of our time, to acquire high-salaried security, to gain skills at amassing a personal fortune in futures trading, or to confront on a daily basis the many cares of the seven-to-three or nine-to-five workaday world.

<sup>3</sup>M. Bernal, *Cadmean Letters* (Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake 1990) in *Minos* 25-26 (1990-91) 434-454; M. Lefkowitz, *NOT OUT OF AFRICA* (Basic Books: New York 1996) in *National Review* 48:5 (3-25-1996) 54-55.

I still remember on a trip to New York city talking late into the evening with two Aegeanist art historian friends who told me about the new book that had just appeared in the Big Apple, but not yet in the once independent Republic of Texas. They spoke in genuine intellectually excited tones about the alternatives and challenges the book posed to traditional views of the Greek past and its historical influence upon western culture. This was long before the face of Martin Bernal appeared on the cover of national magazines, the APA organized sessions on the crisis of *Black Athena* and journals like *Arethusa* published the papers of such sessions, school districts introduced mandatory teaching of alternative histories, and Bernal himself graced the Waggener 116 colloquium room at UT Austin with his presence at a two-hour informal question-and-answer (or question-and-back-pedal-and-blithely-concede-and-dodge-but-never-question-primary-assertions-and-assumptions) seminar with interested and sharp graduate students and faculty.

I read the first thirty pages or so of Ellen's copy of *Black Athena*. They made sleep difficult. The next morning I talked about *Black Athena* with Ellen at breakfast. She admitted that the author's pronouncements on many art historical and Egyptological matters were rather, well, *wrong*, but that the entire thesis that study of the past had been captured and continued to be manipulated by an elite, Aryanist and imperialist culture for its own ends made sense, so she was willing to tolerate in her own area of expertise "minor" mistakes of fact or glaring weaknesses in interpretive theory. It troubled her a bit that I, too, could point out significant problems with Bernal's pronouncements on the early language picture in the Aegean, but again interest in the general thesis and, to be fair, sincere and proper scholarly respect for alternative points of view prevailed. This experience was repeated and repeated and repeated in talking with other classicists, linguists, prehistorians, ancient historians. Each would recognize that the emperor was missing some articles of clothing and concentrate on the different pieces with which they were most familiar, but few would draw individually the conclusion that would have been drawn instantaneously by a collective mind: the emperor was buck naked.<sup>4</sup>

Even if they had, then what? I have begun here with the conceit of likening to something very, very serious, namely warfare, our debates about the place of Classics in American higher education and general culture and about who is to blame for the fact that Classics, except in the minds of the longest-necked and narcissistically deluded ostriches among us,<sup>5</sup> no longer has a privileged or central place in college and university curricula or even in intellectual discourse. I have done so with

<sup>4</sup>The conclusion has now been reached collectively in M. R. Lefkowitz and G. M. Rogers, *Black Athena Revisted* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill 1996).

<sup>5</sup>And they exist, as I know from serving recently on an NEH panel and reading a jargon-laden proposal for a conference that would discuss "Why Classics has a privileged place in academia." None of the panelists could detect any irony in the

a purpose. The induction letter that I received from Leon Golden changed my perspective in a hurry and promoted a self-interested desire to learn what we classicists were saying to one another about where we were, how we got there, and where we were heading. Most of the discussions I have read from the contributions in *Classics: A Discipline and Profession in Crisis?* to *Who Killed Homer?* have struck me as claustrophiliac in perspective even when they purport to address broader interests and trends.<sup>6</sup> Most contain ideas of considerable merit, cite statistics in support of their ideas and as a corrective to the statistics cited by others,<sup>7</sup> and, even when presenting an apocalyptic vision of the current state of Classics rivaling Hesiod's take on the Age of Iron, offer at least some ideas about "how at the eleventh hour we can and must (but will not) save this once noble profession."<sup>8</sup> Almost all have a clear view of where to locate fault and assign blame, and unsurprisingly it is always somewhere else than in the authors' own—take your pick—innovative, cross-disciplinary, rigorous and traditional, teaching-oriented, research-directed, and so on approach to Classical studies. Special approaches such as African-American studies, gay and lesbian studies, women's studies, comparative anthropology, and all forms of literary criticism from post-structuralism to "personal voice criticism" are either hailed as saving new trends linking the musty old field of Classics to vital contemporary concerns or are pilloried as self-indulgent, self-serving fads that are harmful to the well-being or the very survival of our discipline.<sup>9</sup> In sum, I had frequent Bernal-period "flashbacks."

My basic training and my experience in the Bernal Wars have left me with the impression that classicists of different intellectual persuasions

proposal or any indication that the proposer and the proposed conferees knew that the place to beginning looking for this particular horse was anywhere but the barn.

<sup>6</sup>V. D. Hanson and J. Heath, *Who Killed Homer?* (Free Press: New York 1998). For those with less time or inclination, a reading of "Who Killed Homer?" *Arion* Third Series 5.2 (Fall 1997) 108–154, will suffice for the authors' views of the problems. A more balanced presentation, now a decade out of date, is found in the essays in P. Culham and L. Edmunds eds., *Classics: A Discipline and Profession in Crisis?* (Lanham, MD 1989). Cf. also now the review of *Who Killed Homer?* by C. G. Thomas in *Archaeology Odyssey* (Winter 1999) 56–57, with whose views I am in nearly total sympathy.

<sup>7</sup>E.g., Hanson and Heath, *Arion* (*supra* n. 6) 152 n. 5, take issue with previously cited statistics of a 25% increase in Latin enrollments between 1992 and 1994 by citing an 8% drop between 1990 and 1995. This kind of apples-and-oranges statistical spinning is familiar to all who have held at least the position of chair within college and university structures and indicates that many classicists have acquired computer data-crunching skills to complement their expertise in more traditional methods of studying ancient literature, history, or material culture.

<sup>8</sup>Hanson and Heath, *Arion* (*supra* n. 6) 152.

<sup>9</sup>Cf., e.g., T. K. Hubbard, "From Personal Voice to Personal Agenda in Classical Scholarship," *CJ* 93.4 (1998) 435–446, for a critique of "personal voice criticism" as "disappointing when the approach is judged as a hermeneutic tool for understanding the classical texts" and for a critical review of statistics concerning the place of feminism and gender studies in Classics programs.

are again waging an uncivil war against one another over different ways of thinking and teaching about classical cultures that is much more destructive than the old traditional divisions between philologists and archaeologists and art historians. The viewpoints expressed seem alternately self-obsessed, tunnel-visioned, factually distorting, semi-hysterical, and deluded about the importance of the issues at hand. Hence my opening analogy to warfare and my metaphor of civil war. Young men and women going off to war is serious business. Civil war in Bosnia is serious. Discussing the future of the discipline of Classics requires some comparative perspective. It is a different kind and a lower order of serious. Secondly, I used the analogy of Vietnam and selective service and talked about the exhilarating high times of Bernalism to make the point that there are forces at work in society at large and in academic circles that have led to the current situation of Classics as a discipline and which go largely unacknowledged in the old-testament-prophet exhortation of classicists themselves for having "abandoned the wisdom of the Greeks in favor of a hypocritical careerism," for having "ditched classes and ignored students," for writing too much scholarship,<sup>10</sup> for enjoying Classics as "a passive, intellectual pleasure," for buckling under to Bernalism, and for grappling in print with "fragmented, disparate, feminist, split, psychoanalytic, gender-troubled and adrift selves."<sup>11</sup> We are supposedly

<sup>10</sup>The charge is not a new. We should note that William Arrowsmith in "The Shame of Graduate Schools: A Plea for a New American Scholar," *Harper's Magazine* (March 1966) 51–59, was already citing (pp. 52–53) remarks made by Emerson in 1837 in support of Arrowsmith's own view of the "waste and detritus" of the scholarly industry which had consumed graduate programs and its resultant "self-perpetuating and self-regarding scholarly bibliolatry." I personally never fail to be amazed at such suicidal and one-sided pronouncements. The discipline of Classics that I know and love accepts and respects the reality that individuals who collate manuscripts, edit papyri and inscriptions, date coins, analyze metrical structure, identify and date pottery, or work on narrow philological and historical topics provide the underpinnings for scholars with genius and talent in general literature and translation.

<sup>11</sup>Hanson and Heath, *Arion* (*supra* n. 6) 109–111, 113, 117–118, 121. In *Who Killed Homer?* (*supra* n. 6) 170–177, the authors put forward Colin Edmonson (whose name they misspell throughout, including the book's dedication, as Edmondson) and Eugene Vanderpool as models for what classicists ought to be doing. I was a student and admirer of both men in Athens for a number of years. These choices not only illustrate the authors' *nephelokokkygiac* outlook, but also do disrespect to these two Hellenophiles and what they stood for. Both clearly recognized their own limitations—the authors allude to the personal troubles that such a realization caused for Edmonson—and valued the contributions that scholars of much different temperaments and backgrounds made to the field. I am convinced that both would be shocked to have their names and lives used to attack, even by implication, fellow Hellenists and Classicists who might be narrowly specialized, undramatic in teaching style, incapable of or uninterested in learning modern Greek or understanding modern Greek culture, or governed by institutional or personal responsibilities that kept them stateside. The dictum *nil nisi bonum de mortuis* precludes my listing many reasons why Edmonson should never, never be taken as a model. Vanderpool led a life as a distinguished and humane expatriate scholar in a now-vanished Greece. He was an

"dodo birds of academia" and our positions are doomed for extinction. More dedicated and aware, but unemployed and starving, recent Ph.D.s mill around the APA job board while we cancel classes, jet-set to international conferences focused on scholastic *inania* or meaningless self-directed forms of criticism, and train the anointed few to take up the rare faculty positions that, when we retire or die, unaccountably avoid the institutional grim reaper.

Although there are pellets of truth in such cheaply satirical buckshot, my main reaction can also be drawn from the sphere of warfare: *Nuts!* My senior-level classes in Horace and Roman Comedy at Boston College in 1972–73 had six or so participants, including two graduate students and I read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and Euripides and Aristophanes in single-student conference courses. I did not think then that Classics was or ever would be at the center of any universe or microcosmos, scholarly or otherwise. The *New York Times* recently focused on one of the last top-flight institutions to offer as little as a two-year set of undergraduate core courses in humanities, social sciences, mathematics and physics and the problems even this degree of standardization and rigor is causing in attracting students. I have found nowhere a better encapsulation of the current state of American higher education: "colleges today [are] increasingly viewed as employment credentialing stations, students as customers and learning for its own sake as a quaint idea whose time has passed."<sup>12</sup> This is a hard environment in which to succeed for any of the traditional humanistic disciplines, but it is especially challenging when the price of admission to adequate direct understanding of what the classical past has to say to us is three years of two difficult ancient languages. The cost of each of those years even at one of the traditional *Parade Magazine* undergraduate high-quality bargains (UT Austin) now ranges from \$13,500 to \$18,000.<sup>13</sup> Elsewhere the cost is much, much more.

Instead of blaming declining enrollments in classics courses on scholarly self-pleasuring and neglect of teaching commitments by tenured faculty—I presume always by "those other guys,"<sup>14</sup> we should

extraordinary human being and devoted Classicist worthy of emulation. I treasure my memories of his walks, the copy of *Palace of Nestor* he nonchalantly gave me, and the time he devoted to showing me how to present historical sites to students in the summer of 1984. But the circumstances that made his life possible cannot be duplicated by most classicists. It is telling that Hanson and Heath offer no idealized models of bygone classicists at work in the very programs we are supposedly killing.

<sup>12</sup>Ethan Bronner, "Winds of Change Rustle University of Chicago," *New York Times* (12-28-98) A1, A18.

<sup>13</sup>The recent statistics for indebtedness for students finishing UT Austin graduate schools reveal an average financial burden of ca. \$15,000–25,000.

<sup>14</sup>The UT Classics department has 24.5 full-time tenured or tenure track faculty lines. 23.5 are filled, and six of these lines *have been added* during the last fifteen years, i.e., the department is moving concertedly away from extinction. There are in addition two classical art historians in the Art Department and two ancient philosophers in Philosophy. To speak candidly, in my four years as a diligent chair, I learned of one case of a professor cutting classes and failing to hold office hours—and

take the advice of Deep Throat and “follow the money,” and the students. It hardly surprised me when crunching numbers for our annual instructional reports during my four years as chair of Classics at UT Austin that even our department, which is highly successful in terms of majors, minors, and faculty/student ratios, was outstripped in the Liberal Arts numbers game by sociology, psychology, government, and political science. Add in the various majors in the Schools of Business, Communications, and Education, and you see the results of what my Jesuit Greek mentor, Carl Thayer, referred to as the “barbarian invasion” of colleges by such disciplines in the period after World War II.

Within the last decade we have also witnessed the imposition of the corporate model upon institutions of higher learning in subtle and overt ways. The *New York Times* speaks of colleges as “employment credentialing stations” and “students as customers.” Ford Motor Corporation has flown nearly two hundred academic administrators from UT Austin up to its Dearborn headquarters for three days of seminars on how to run our institution. Guess what model is used? Hint: its prototype was the Model-T assembly line. Students are not only viewed as “consumers” who can dictate what they want to do with their education, but they are also viewed by administrators and, in state institutions, by legislators as assembly-line commodities. Understandably then the length of time these commodities have been staying on the undergraduate or graduate conveyor belts has been a serious political issue in Texas over the last five years. Texas legislators have imposed a 5.5-year post-M.A. limit on graduate work, after which graduate programs are financially penalized for their supposed student laggards.<sup>15</sup> Time limits have been proposed for undergraduates, too, with the ostensible purpose of eliminating the infamous Austin “slacker.” It seems not to have been contemplated in the capitol building that students might use their undergraduate years to explore what areas might make them happier human beings and consequently more productive contributors to society at large throughout their later lives and that such exploration might entail shocking actions like “switching majors” or taking more electives. A

it had nothing to do with his ‘trendy research’ or ‘jet-setting to conferences’—and one where preoccupation with research negatively affected classroom performance. Both were addressed and corrected. All 28 of these professors (see below) regularly teach a mixture of large (ca. 80–250 students) undergraduate lecture courses, smaller writing-component courses that treat topics in and approaches to ancient culture, language courses from beginning to advanced levels, and graduate seminars. There are no ‘ivory-tower’ research professors who could get away, as reported in Hanson and Heath *Arion* (*supra* n. 6) 146, with holding office hours for a half hour a week in an inaccessible location on campus.

<sup>15</sup>I recently (2-1-99) sat as an examiner at the defense of an excellent dissertation on Mycenaean prosopography at the University of Uppsala, Sweden, by a scholar who was a doctoral candidate for eighteen years—she was during that time and still is mother of three children and wife of a Swedish diplomat. This kind of full-life approach to humanistic scholarship is being made impossible by ‘corporate-minded’ management of our colleges and universities.



chassis frame on a conveyor belt cannot decide somewhere along the assembly line that it would rather be a Mustang than a Bronco. We yearly have excellent fifth-year students who have come to Classics late and stay on in order to solidify their languages, ancient and modern, or to work in specialized areas with distinguished faculty. Here also legislators and their advisers and constituencies choose not to "follow the money" or take into account how long some students must stay in college while taking reduced course loads as they work to pay the increasingly high costs of higher education.

A twenty-eight-paragraph "vision of the new century" written by the chancellor of the UT system William H. Cunningham just appeared in the *Austin American-Statesman*<sup>16</sup> where it was given real prominence as the headline story of the Sunday *Insight* section and as the first in a series of such planned vision statements by leading figures in the state. He writes of higher education as having been transformed from "mostly elitist roots into a system of wide educational opportunity," of the need to create a better-educated work force, and of knowledge as the "new engine of economic prosperity." His vision concentrates almost exclusively on education as a process that gives future employees technical job skills. This is consistent with the cooperative programs that UT Austin has developed over the last decade and more with the high-tech industries and other businesses. The vision speaks nowhere to humanistic concerns and slips in the arts in a one-sentence paragraph which encapsulates what I think is a typical vision of the future of higher education in the twenty-first century: "These universities also serve as great centers of research, scholarship and the arts—activities which expand the frontiers of knowledge, spur the development of new industries, serve as powerful magnets for business and enhance the quality of life for all." This is the corporate environment in which classicists and Classics programs have been operating for some time. It is also the environment in which programs are funded, faculty salaries and merit raises are determined,<sup>17</sup> and graduate and undergraduate educational priorities are set. It is the recent past and foreseeable future. Where does Classics fit in?

I hope it is by now clear that I am convinced that there is no place in Classics for internecine warfare of the sort that *Who Killed Homer?* tries to foment and that was clearly manifest during the Bernal Offensive. While not dodo birds, classicists are and will remain an academic species on World Watch. At large state institutions, we are also working in

<sup>16</sup>*Austin American-Statesman* (1-24-99) H1, H5.

<sup>17</sup>At UT Austin there are no across-the-board pay increases for faculty. Yearly pay raises are determined by merit. There is also no sabbatical system, so periodic leaves are predicated entirely upon competitive research proposals. Both these factors put pressure on humanists to conform to the models of research which the University uses for the sciences and professional schools. A positive step has been the recent introduction of a small number of yearly "dean's fellowships" which can be given out for purposes of pedagogical enhancement and broader intellectual development.



environments that view the traditional liberal arts as service departments to provide some humanistic “training” to students who are engaged in more practical kinds of studies. This is no small challenge and provides ample reason for us to lament bygone days. But lamentation and narrow-minded finger-pointing will get us nowhere.

Methodological diversity and experimentation within Classics in many ways mirrors the interests of and the new diversity among our students. The students I teach in basic language courses and undergraduate lecture classes come with a range of experiences and from a variety of educational and cultural backgrounds that would have sent the system of education in place at Boston College in 1969–1973 into critical malfunction. At UT Austin in recent years all undergraduate research specialty courses (Homosexuality in Antiquity, Parageography, Women in Antiquity, Greek Law, Archaeology of Greek Colonization, Jesus in History, Wit and Humor, Mycenaean and Hittite Societies, Barbarians and Greeks, Ancient Political Thought, War and Violence in Ancient and Modern Cultures) have not just reached minimum enrollment standards, but have met targets that confer bonus instructional points for numbers of students. Students in Mycenaean and Hittite Societies, with whom I am familiar because I team-teach the course, come from Classics, art history, linguistics, anthropology, Middle Eastern studies, archaeology, and history. One can say that such teaching arises from a consumer-oriented approach to our discipline, and that the new academic marketplace will test their viability. If the courses are substantial and interesting and add to the overall preparation of the students for their post-baccalaureate lives, they will succeed and continue to be offered. If not, not. One can condemn such courses for being trendy sell-outs to “consumer-market ideology.” One can also teach them because they offer students and instructors insights into different methods of interpretation, new perspectives on their own fields, and an understanding of what is shared and what is unique in ancient societies.

In the last four years I have presided over four major job searches. These were for a position in post-Augustan Latin literature and culture and for three other positions combining Classics with religious studies, comparative literature, and ancient history respectively. I am willing to give a deposition in the Starr chamber that no more than two percent among the large applicant pool and perhaps two of the interviewees could have killed Homer.<sup>18</sup> My impression from such activities and from traveling broadly to universities and colleges in the US and Europe is that in general the field is in more capable, alert, and dedicated hands than it was twenty years ago and, moreover, that many of these hands are properly busy grappling with the contemporary realities I have outlined

<sup>18</sup>And their murderous propensities could only have been indulged in the environment of UT Austin where their personal or scholarly quirks would have made them unhappy and ineffective teachers. In other smaller programs, they would be and I hope are now productive and contented.

above. I also took the precautionary measure of flipping back through our colloquia and AIA lectures for the last four years, some hundred in number. I could find few at which one could direct a *Who-Killed-Homer?*-style jeremiad.<sup>19</sup> I invite readers to page through the programs of the main yearly meetings of the AIA/APA and regional organizations like CAMWS and see what small percentages of talks even potentially fall into Homeric categories.

There are aspects of our large Classics program at UT Austin that certainly cannot, and perhaps should not, be reproduced in other smaller programs (cf. *supra* n. 1). Because of our size, we can stress an area-center approach to the discipline of Classics that covers everything from Mycenology and Etruscan studies to translation theory and ancient homosexuality. Still doing so requires wise management, self-policing, and awareness of our somewhat hostile surroundings.<sup>20</sup>

I have mentioned (*supra* n. 14) that we have added six permanent faculty lines in the last fifteen years. Homer is not dead, and we are still applying CPR to the blind poet's body. We have maintained steady and healthy enrollments in lecture and language classes and teach between six and seven thousand students yearly in our Classics and Classical Civilization courses. In addition, we make a concerted effort to involve faculty in honors and other programs. This has been a key factor in maintaining our visibility as a strong and active department and in building a viable case for expanding the number of faculty lines in order to benefit programs with which we maintain strong pedagogical ties, e.g., comparative literature, women's studies, Middle Eastern studies, religious studies, history, three different Liberal Arts Honors Programs, writing and rhetoric. We have also dramatically increased the numbers of majors and double majors, and diversified the topics and methods covered in our undergraduate lecture courses.<sup>21</sup> These are all vital for the health of our

<sup>19</sup>Two of twelve lectures in spring 1999 might be viewed by Hanson and Heath (*supra* n. 6) as the wrong kind of feminist or self-directed approaches. Their titles are "Building Identities: Architectural Patronage and Women in the Early Roman Empire" and "The Philosopher as Narcissus: Vision, Sexuality, and Self-Knowledge in Classical Antiquity." I have no idea as to their contents, but they seem interesting to me. Most of the talks have a broad appeal that cuts across disciplinary boundaries and invites students of all levels: "Oedipus in Art," "Balloon Archaeology: Minoan Crete from the Air," "Wills, Friendship and the Fourth Gospel," "Dynastic Art and Propaganda in the Early Roman Empire," "Vergil's Satan" and a keynote address by Bob Connor to a graduate student conference on the topic of ancient religion. All are by prominent and even to some extent globe-trotting scholars. Perhaps there is a reason why scholars and students elsewhere want to hear and talk with certain key thinkers and speakers among us!

<sup>20</sup>The myth that the Liberal Arts departments at UT Austin are rolling in money should be dispelled. Budgetary strictures made it impossible for Classics to use any vacant lines for full-semester visitors from 1990 until Spring 1999. During this time we acted resourcefully by proposing short-term two-week visitors and by working with African-American Studies and the Liberal Arts Dean's office to bring over Prof. Jerry Ifie from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria to teach Classical and African mythology. These appointments collectively did not amount to half of a vacant line.

graduate program, which we ourselves in the early 90s restructured and reduced in size to meet concerns about employment and financial support for our students.<sup>22</sup> The latter comes mainly in the form of teaching assistantships, so our graduate students throughout their training understand that it is a responsibility and for many a real joy of classicists to teach large lecture courses and basic language courses and to teach them well.<sup>23</sup> They see their faculty mentors doing this. None expects life after graduate school to be lived in a studentless ivory tower. One of my predecessors as chair, Karl Galinsky, in the mid-70s established the principle that all faculty members in Classics at UT Austin would, except in exceptional circumstances, teach at least one large and successful undergraduate lecture course a year and have a repertory of two or three such courses in order for the program to be able to staff them in rotation. He led and still continues to lead by example, and this criterion is weighed heavily in making decisions about tenure, promotion and merit raises.

This serious and successful teaching is done while maintaining high standards for research (without a formal sabbatical system and with ever-tightening research budgets and with faculty salaries that compare

<sup>21</sup>We now have ca. 117 undergraduate majors or double majors in Classics, Greek, Latin, ancient history, and classical archaeology—not Classical Civilization. I do not want to bog down this paper with statistics, but so that skeptics will not think we are cooking the books I shall give some data 1992–present:

yearly introductory Greek enrollments in 2 or 3 sections as warranted (+ summer intensive Greek in parentheses): 31 (+22), 38 (+23), 41 (+28), 49 (+24), 46 (+29), 59 (+25), 63;

yearly junior/senior Greek enrollments each in a single section per semester: 12/11; 10/7; 13/3; 8/6; 13/7; 15/9; 15/7; 17/7; 22/8;

yearly first-semester Latin enrollments (number of sections in parentheses): 238 (14), 224 (16), 268 (15), 240 (15), 300 (15), 287 (16), 318 (15);

yearly junior/senior Latin (number of sections in parentheses): 93 (7), 106 (9), 78 (9), 74 (6), 104 (7), 124 (7), 96 (6).

During the same period, courses in topics such as Introduction to Greece have increased (number of sections in parentheses): 131 (2), 189 (2), 160 (2), 307 (2), 277 (2), 369 (2), 352 (2), while each year 7 or 8 sections of mythology average 120 students and ancient medical terminology now requires two classes to serve over 420 students total. Even technical introductory lecture courses such as Introduction to Classical Archaeology yearly attract 110–130 students into single classes. I mentioned above an adequate sample of “writing-component” classes which draw 18–30 students each into special subject areas relating to ancient Greek and Roman culture. None of these courses is “bogus” or “soft.” The department eliminated one course which was viewed by deans as problematical in its level of intellectual challenge.

<sup>22</sup>Of our twenty-two Ph.D.s granted since 1990, seventeen are teaching on the college or university level, four at the secondary level and one has finished law school. The majority have tenured or tenure-track jobs. None is killing Homer. Several have helped to revive moribund programs.

<sup>23</sup>Here again see the prescient comments of William Arrowsmith (*supra* n. 10) 56: “Personally I have always preferred teaching undergraduates to candidates for the Ph.D. This is because I find the undergraduates generally more serious.”

unfavorably with those of the lowest-paid Classics faculties in the Big Ten) and conscientiously cultivating links with high schools across the state. Three of our faculty, Tim Moore, Bill Nethercut, and Andrew Riggsby, continue the momentum established by Karl Galinsky, Douglass Parker, and the late Gareth Morgan in actively promoting and directing the activities of organizations like the JCL and the Texas Classical Association. Latin recently moved into second place behind Spanish in popularity among languages taught in Texas high schools. We think about the general public through events like our recent *Celebrating Homer* week which brought in two noted translators, Stanley Lombardo and Robert Fagles, and two interesting scholars, Jonathan Shay (on Homer and Vietnam) and Steve Shankman (on Homer and Alexander Pope) for a week of public lectures, seminars, and readings. News of the Fagles reading was greeted by local high school students and teachers who use his translations in their classes like the coming of Dionysos or Mick Jagger or whoever has taken their places now in the rock and roll pantheon. We had to turn down requests to bring busloads of students, because the auditorium would only seat three hundred.

The future of Classics at large state universities will remain healthy as long as dedicated faculty continue to teach well and innovatively, work hard at transferring to their undergraduate teaching the positive energy that comes from research, respect the attempts of their colleagues to bring new perspectives to bear on old subjects (even perspectives that they do not consider particularly appealing or worthwhile), establish useful links with other programs, and make sure that the broader public and the university at large is served by what they do. It is also important to be self-critical and self-aware about what kinds of courses and approaches are working, which are not, and base decisions on the overall health of the program. Our egos must be pragmatic, not tender. We classicists should also be aware that no one can bring back the good old days of elite or immediately post-elite education, when four years of study at the college level could be devoted essentially to finding out what it means to be a human being. That is still the ultimate value of Classics, whether one is discovering what motivated a Mycenaean scribe to write tablets in the order that he did, reinvestigating the music of Roman comedies, reconstructing the history of the Cretan *poleis*, defining Augustan culture, or reassessing the work of Philodemus. In order to transmit an appreciation of the value and values of classical culture, we must now often work in smaller sound bites, in semesters instead of years, and in single elective courses instead of core curricula. We should also recognize the fact that many undergraduates have serious interests in classical mythology, history, literature, and archaeology and are receptive to both traditional and new approaches. At UT Austin we particularly prize our graduate students, not only because they yearly rank collectively at the top of students in all graduate programs at this large flagship university, but because they see the real value in our discipline

and want to follow our lead, not to be able to jet-set in a David Lodge world, but to pursue and communicate their own developing life passions for all aspects of classical culture.

As a vision of the future of Classics, I would not choose a Hesiodic *Apocalypse Now*, but rather the sage admonition of *Works and Days* 382:

ὦδ' ἔρδειν, καὶ ἔργον ἐπ' ἔργῳ ἐργάζεσθαι.

I think this translates nowadays to "Just Do It!" We should stop fomenting civil war and focus on doing what we do at the level of special intensity that Michael Jordan brought to his own chosen discipline.

THOMAS G. PALAIMA  
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