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JOURNEYS INTO THE ANCIENT WORLD

Classical Studies in New Zealand New Directions Along Ancient Paths

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ABSTRACT

Ancient World Empowerment: Classical Studies in New Zealand

The post-X generation, bribed by the cool of hot branding, gives its lifeblood in sacrificial tribute to the global tycoon. Its ambassadors are compulsorily released into a labyrinth engineered by a corporate Daedalus, and stalked by a minotaur machined and designed by unit-production architects. Now however the children of post-X are mapping the co-ordinates and confronting the minotaur, finding ways to manipulate the maze and get through it, coming back to the light a transformed stronger human being. But the way is fraught.

In my twenty-three years as a full-time performance storyteller, I have walked the mythologic path. I tell epics, drawing members of the audience into the story to become goddesses, heroes and lovers. During that time the subject Classical Studies has undergone a phenomenal ascendancy in secondary schools and universities, amounting to a red shift : a windfall for an epic teller. Why has it become so magnetic to so many young people, when alongside is the technocyber utilitarian culture they are expected to be expert in, a culture which can exert control at the expense of individual freedoms.

The ancient world is simply hot. Reasons: it offers an iconography, self-insight, big ideas. In the *Odyssey*, passion and empowering experience through contact with men and women of strength and creative action. But there are further and swiftly-flowing undercurrents. I argue that by treading the stones of the ancient world, the youth generation is accessing an ancient, alternative universe. *The Lord of the Rings* and the *Matrix* movies both use mythic framework. Are the eighteen year olds of 2003 seeking a way through a socio-psychological matrix-labyrinth by using keys and threads gifted from the ancient world? Philosophers and kings and daring women from those times are causing excitement and expansion of consciousness amongst the young and their mentors. That world has perhaps provided them with magic talismans, translated into thought and inscribed on thread around a spool, and as we unwind this clew we are weaving a way through demons and labyrinth, also knowing love and rapture. These thoughts form the focus of this thesis.

PRELUDE

On a Greek winter's afternoon in 1994 I waited at a bus shelter on the road to Delphi. Its opaque sides allowed no opportunity to see if the bus was coming except by stepping out into the icy wind. We missed the bus once because of reluctance to face cold wind. I stood out in the wind unsheltered after that. It was from the Helicon and Parnassus - off the mountains, and reminded me that I was out in the elements. I discovered from the guidebook that this bus-stop stood by the legendary three crossroads where Oedipus slew his father, and in that waiting time I became extremely aware of 'thereness' in 'otherness'. The frisson : two chariots converged - the one bearing Laius to his son, the other taking us back to Delphi. The icy wind began to feel like the whip of Laius striking the face of Oedipus.

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My wife, Pamela, and I went to South America in 1990 when we met. It was the most romantic journey either of us had ever made. We have been on many journeys together, outer and inner, and writing a thesis is an inner journey but it is outward too and it impinges on family and friends. She has shared my dreams, put up with my raves, has appraised my prose and challenged my arguments, which has enormously helped, borne hard moments, and given me space and time to write. Mowed lawns while I read. Loved me even though. I thank her for all that. I also thank my beloved for laughing, and for the acquaintance with rapture. Thus to the goddess belongs the first flavour of the wine.

I would like to acknowledge a number of people who have walked with me on this journey. I love them all and consider that it confers blessings and honour upon me, this travelling vagabond, to break bread with them and have conversation with them and share some life and marvel together upon love, magic, life, the universe and everything.

Primarily and primally is Dr Joe Grixti who has supervised me through this thesis. He has encouraged creative ways with presenting ideas, showed me how to frame my thoughts, and has immensely furthered my understanding of fine scholarship. He guided me through the twilight zones, and nudged me back into action in the gentlest, wisest, lovingest ways possible. He inspired me to have faith in my own work and talents, and to bring my own authority into an area where I hold authority. For all these things, my heartfelt thanks.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Prelude	3
Acknowledgements	4
Introduction	6
Chapter One : The Rise of Classics and Storytelling	11
Chapter Two : Performing the Story	38
Chapter Three : Passions, Demons and Monsters	63
Chapter Four : Classical Studies and Heroes	81
Chapter Five : Minotaur and Thread	101
Coda	136
Epilogue	137
References	138

INTRODUCTION

What I Am

For twenty-three years I have lived the life of a travelling storyteller, historically the first New Zealander to make storytelling his full-time living. It is learning stories, to the marrow. It is promoting who you are, that you tell stories, that to sustain body and soul, the performer must be paid. Paid to tell stories! In early years one parent complained about this - 'We tell them stories at home'. Storytelling parents in Television and Playstation world diminished, but perhaps the wheel has begun to turn again. Quests and legends illumine our cultural and now physical landscape, as tour companies show people where *Lord of the Rings* all happens. Hercules is a television star. Warrior Princess Xena enthusiasts come to New Zealand, don ancient costumes, and ride on chariots along beaches. *Lord of the Rings* dominates the news, towering above all other considerations in the capital as I write. The quest and bold deeds have taken hold of an entire country's imaginative life. It is a time for storytellers.

I have studied Early Irish literature at Trinity College, Dublin, drinking deep from the wellsprings of the Celtic story heritage, sent on an Arts Council grant in 1993. As a busking storyteller, I have told stories from the *Decameron* at 2.00 am in King's Cross, Sydney. I have told Dreamtime stories in India. Irish wonder tales from the stages of festivals in Australia and New Zealand. Setting off at 4.00 am for remote spots. Putting up the backdrop at 8.00 am in a school hall, doing a couple of ninety minute sweat-flying performances, then follow-up workshops. Students learn techniques telling traditional stories, and how to tell their own. Then take down the Celtic backdrop and pack everything away again, drive on, sleep in my van at a rest- spot beneath the pines beside a lake, a billy of tea and porridge cooked over a burner at

dawn, watching Canadian geese skitter onto the water in mist. The next two nights at a university conference, lecturing and telling, then more school tours. Four weeks of all that. Then back home for another week. Then away again for three weeks.

Now I am writing about it, I am reflecting and asking myself questions about the journeys and loves, deaths and passions in my own life. How it happens, why and if it matters. I have found that stories provide significance. I am a practitioner, wordmaster of heath, hall and hearth, bard, poet-storyteller. This investigation is therefore interwoven with what I do and have done as a performing storyteller, and cannot be divorced from that.

What follows therefore is far more personal than most academic writing. It should be recalled however that academia takes its name from Plato's garden, bequeathed by the hero Akademos, and within this garden learning and discovery happened through spoken dialogues. If the spoken register and the narrative form assume stronger prominence than is usual in a work of this kind, it is because I am a storyteller trying to engage in scholarly discourse within the garden of Akademos.

Within those surroundings, I am talking about Classical Studies, which has become a passion for many students and teachers. I am investigating what fires up this passion, and other issues ignited from that passion, including:

- epic presence in current culture, and why myth matters
- classical vocabulary in popular culture
- interaction of youth with technology and classical texts
- Utilitaria and Arcadia, and the soul in education

Little investigation has been undertaken in New Zealand into how Classical Studies is affecting students. Kathryn Sutherland in her doctoral thesis *Does Teaching Matter?* :

reconceptualizing teaching, scholarship, and the PhD programme in New Zealand university English departments, (Massey University 1999) looks briefly at curriculum developments in NZ, including classical studies. But my motivating question, 'Why is Classical Studies doing so well?' is outside the range of her thesis.

Methodology

My approach was experiential and theoretical. I draw from long experience as a performing storyteller. I have dipped into journal jottings, fragmentary notes made after performances, and my unwritten recollections. I felt it essential too to acknowledge what others had thought and written about the storytelling art and the structure of narrative. To order the pathway and establish sign-posts I have engaged in reading and research to clarify my thinking, to have a conversation with other minds and to support some of what I contend.

I have looked outside libraries and my own performance, and have observed and analysed populist cinema culture, which resulted in the *Matrix* connection. *Lord of the Rings* might in content seem an obvious choice for an example of populist cinema which projects the epic theme. But *Lord of the Rings* could have threatened the original purpose of this thesis, which was to examine the effect of Classical Studies. The *Matrix* movies with their classical allusions and mythic structure offer a more pertinent example. Finally, I interviewed students and teachers studying and teaching Classical Studies. Schools were approached after Ethics Committee approval had been given. (See copy of Ethics Committee letter, November 6 2002, MUAHEC No. 02/067, plus Information Sheet, Consent Form, letters of approach, etc., contained in separate Appendices folder).

Teachers were interviewed separately from students. The approach was qualitative rather than quantitative, thus only six students and two teachers were chosen from just one school. The students chosen were ones who enjoyed the subject. Normal procedures were

followed, according to standards required by the Ethics Committee. There were two days of interviewing - one for the teachers, one for the students. The two teachers were interviewed in a classroom, the six students in a vacant office. In each case, the device used was a Walkman-size portable recorder, with microphone attachment. I transcribed the interviews myself. The voices from these interviews I have woven into the body of the work as part of a conversation, in which digression moves to discovery, and is itself the structure.

Arrangement of Chapters

Chapter One focusses on the renaissance of storytelling and the classics with an initial analysis of the appeal of Classical Studies. Chapter Two devolves upon performing the journey of the story with examples from Homer's *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, and Virgil's *Aeneid*, with allusions to other epics. This chapter also includes detailed descriptions of performances and how they operate, with especial reference to Homer's *Odyssey*.

Following this I have devoted Chapter Three to the profound life themes that arise in Classical Studies, including the nature of the monster, as the Cyclops is a favourite story. Hard on the heels of the monster treads the hero, in Chapter Four. Epics are built around heroic characters who also take centre stage in cinema and television. They account for much of the fascination that students have for Classical Studies. Chapter Five is a deliberation on the bewilderment within the post-modern condition, and a discussion of the interaction of young people with technology and the Classics. I have called this chapter *Minotaur and Thread*.

For a moment I return to 'the lost ones'. In New Zealand historical discourse there is a 'lost generation' of youth, about whom Christopher Pugsley for example expatiates in his *Gallipoli*. I contend there is a generation lost to a more abstract war - cyberspace and technology saturation versus prior heritage and hearthside culture. (I do not intend by this to position myself on the same platform as F.R Leavis, whose uncompromising stance on mass

culture led to his belief that its consequences were catastrophic. The situation is now more diffuse, and there are by no means only two sides as suggested by the very title of his 1930 work, *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture*. I discuss this issue in Chapter Four).

Because New Zealand has been a guinea-pig for trialling technology now widely used in other countries, the young have been since surrounded by technology and screens, accompanied by concerns for neural and psychoemotive development. While this discussion is mostly beyond the scope of this thesis, I address it briefly in Chapter Five, supporting a humanist view that stories provide at least some strands to the thread leading out of the maze.

Classical Studies and its stories form a pivot in the present discourse, but because of the eclectic nature of the subject, I shall not shirk from following discussions arising from this exploration. Recognising these discussions is the purpose of the final chapter, during which I at last draw together the trails leading out from storytelling and Classical Studies. They wind into the deepest places of the human heart. They also run across significant current socio-political events and education dialectic, which in its present vocabulary seems to bypass rapture.

There are psychic nutriments not easily defined that defy assessment requirements, but that is no reason to ignore the roads to mysteries.

Chapter One

THE RISE OF CLASSICS AND STORYTELLING

'The story', the Bushman prisoner said, 'is like the wind. It comes from a far-off place and we feel it'

Title page, *A Story Like the Wind*, Laurens van der Post.

I have been stirred by the vibrant enthusiasm of Classics teachers, and moved by the revelation that here was a subject that allowed young people to passionately engage themselves heart and soul in discourse unavailable in most other subjects - love, heroic adventures, primal ideas. It was a revelation that I had experienced with students myself. Here is affirmation from teachers:

Teacher A: I think they get a richness from it, morals, messages, like we've just done the Aeneid, and they've been fascinated by Aeneas giving up all his own wants and desires all for the sake of his state and his destiny and his mission, the kids really latch onto that, and the heroic ideals, what should a hero be like, how should a hero act, how should a woman, I mean what are the roles of women and men, and it gives them that richness that they don't get anywhere else. All these cold dry subjects that are so useful to them for degrees don't give them that - what would you call it?

Teacher B: You only have to look at that Socrates one where we're debating, What is love? and they have never thought about these things before. It reveals a lot about other people's values when they start discussing it too, and makes them think about what they're doing, what their motives are in doing things, and makes them think about values I mean what is piety, and what does love mean, and what does honour mean, and hopefully they can then apply that to their lives. And what you do when you get them in stories is extraordinary, I mean they just become the identities.

The kids come in here and they actually say, This is so interesting, we've just been sitting in accounting or stats, and it's so boring, they come in here and there's always something to talk about. I mean the kids here are so busy working for their exams and this and that they don't often have time

to sit down and explore that type of thing.

Teacher A: Because we live in a world where you go out and you earn money and you try to get ahead in your career, you don't sit down and talk about morals and heroic ideals and things like that.

I think it's an attempt to find some meaning in life. '

Teachers' Interviews.

These words could be a proem for this thesis, touching on major aspects that I shall be focussing on, as well as concerns in current education. If test and use driven education largely prevents students from focussing on issues central to life happiness, then Classical Studies is not a frill. It is fulfilling profound and urgent needs upon which depend the sanity and life direction of thousands of young people. What follows is about that.

Classical Renaissance in New Zealand and the Emergence of Storytellers

While touring schools in my performance work as a storyteller, I realised that the senior subject entitled Classical Studies had by the end of the eighties become enormously popular. Frances Ryman, a Christchurch classics teacher, was quoted in 1989 in an article by *NZ Herald* reporter Marita Vandenberg : 'Unlike any other[subject] it deals with an entire culture, one that explains much of Western Civilisation's make-up. Students want answers to the question, Where do I come from? ' (Vandenberg Sec 2 p.1). Young people it seems want to pose big questions, and are looking for big answers. Reporter Vandenberg reflects that many pakeha are 'pondering the origins of their own roots' and offers a hypothesis with the finishing words, 'Classical Studies, in a sense, is taha pakeha' (ibid.).

Classical Studies was introduced into secondary schools at Form Six and Form Seven levels in 1980. Since then it has attracted large numbers of students. In 1992, for example, Classical Studies was taken by 1311 Form Six students, by 1998 this had risen to 1687. At

Bursaries Form Seven level in 1992, there were 3496 Classical Studies students, and in 1998 this had risen to 4546, in that year exceeding the numbers of Accounting students by 902 (Accounting had 3644 that year - NZQA official records).

Synchronistically, I left secondary teaching at the end of 1980 and began my storytelling career in January of 1981, an action independent of any knowledge of storytelling elsewhere. Apparently however, I was part of a wave. On August 3 of that year *Time* magazine published an article signalling to the world that a storytelling renaissance had begun. With a significant reference to burgeoning electronic technology, the writer says: 'It would be too much of a storyteller's exaggeration to suggest that in the middle of an electronic giant's blink - presto! - the art of the storyteller is about to recapture the castle. But certainly more things are happening on the stage of the Rockport Opera House, and elsewhere, than the programmers of the age of television ever dreamed of. This year is also the year of the First Storytelling Festival in New York City. Storytelling has become a respectable course in the college curriculum, without its old academic euphemism, the "Oral Literary Tradition". ' (Maddocks 44). We eventually established storytelling festivals in New Zealand too, including the biennial international festival in Masterton.

Meanwhile, though I had begun as a full-time storyteller in 1981, there were two women in New Zealand then already serving the storytelling Muse, albeit part-time. Elizabeth Miller as Young Peoples' Librarian in Invercargill had been storytelling in the library for decades, and is well-remembered by Invercargill people. As well, Mona Williams, a teacher in Palmerston North, was known for her storytelling in many places, dramatically retelling West Indian heritage. By 1984, when Television New Zealand broadcast a documentary about my work, storytelling in New Zealand had begun to be properly noticed. There are now a number of storytellers in New Zealand, and I honour their work. Their variegated histories and contribution to the culture of New Zealand are however outside the scope of this thesis. The

point to notice though is that the rise of performance storytelling and Classical Studies happened simultaneously.

We live in a business and technology focussed culture, yet Classical Studies, set entirely in the ancient world, is making headway in such a milieu. Does Classical Studies facilitate the unfolding of a map of life direction, through the stories of Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, offering paradigms of behaviour and thought no longer available in the newspeak of utilitarian masters? Has Information Technology disintegrated cyclic patterns, and have scholars and students gone looking for those? Is it just the love of a good story?

In the sixties and seventies, the teaching of Latin plummeted, and access to the ancient world in formal education was threatened. By 1969 Professor Lacey at Auckland University and John Barsby at Otago, Dunedin, had both noticed the trend in secondaries to phase out the teaching of Latin. Auckland's response was to expand the teaching of ancient history, and in 1979 officially changed the department's name to *Classics and Ancient History*. The following year saw the introduction in secondaries of a new subject, Classical Studies, that was at first seen by Latinists as hastening the demise of Latin. (While initially this appeared to be so, teachers interviewed told me that the teaching of Latin is now rising again, possibly as a roll-on effect of the rise of interest in Classics worldwide).

An initiative from John Barsby and colleagues in the Classics Department at Otago University, Dunedin, helped to save the ancient world from dwindling into a fading and untrumpeted *Götterdämmerung*. They created Classical Studies for New Zealand secondary schools - introduced at Form Six and Form Seven levels in 1980. Since then it has numerically eclipsed accounting at Bursary level. In a business and technology focussed culture this seems odd, and cannot be entirely explained away by saying that the market is saturated with accountants, which in the mid-late nineties was by no means true. Despite pressure from the realm of Utilitaria, Classical Studies expanded, and in a country so far from the Parthenon.

Classical Studies is extremely eclectic, and this is a major clue to its success. There are multiple pictures flickering in the flames of the fire which has heated those passions. In the 2002 review of Classical Studies from the *Australian Academy of the Humanities*, Richard Green writes: 'it is important to note from the beginning that one is not dealing with a single discipline. The area's strength...is its varied nature' (Green 1). It encompasses epic narrative, philosophy, philology, psychology, anthropology, history. No taste is uncatered for. At the least students 'are genuinely interested in at least one aspect of Classical Studies' (*Teachers' Interviews*). Analogous is an old Native American story, in which seven warriors on their journeys meet. They sit talking nightlong around the fire. In the morning each takes a burning ember, illuminating different paths, and the warriors separate to walk these trails. When they gather again they build from the still-glowing embers a fire of binding consummation, telling in its warmth their stories of seven different directions.

Classical Studies seems to contain the embers that ignite an ancient tribal fire of initiation. Initiation into adulthood primevally included gathering around a fire to hear old stories and to have visions. In the absence of lost initiation rites in present western society, noted by Robert Bly and commented on later, it may be that Classical Studies provides a gathering hearth in a rite of passage. To revisit the words of Ryman, quoted above in Vandenberg's article, 'unlike any other [subject] it deals with an entire culture, one that explains much of Western Civilisation's make-up. Students want answers to the question, Where do I come from?' Again, it may be, as Vandenberg reflects, that 'Classical Studies is taha pakeha' (Vandenberg Sec. 2 p. 1).

My involvement in Classical Studies is of course through the story component, and it should be emphasised that this is hugely prominent in Classical Studies. Homer's *Odyssey* is highly profiled, and later, the *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Then there is history. Alexander the Great is a popular choice, especially by boys with a penchant for military history. The study

of vases is story-based also. Greek theatre companies toured through provinces, local craftspeople saw the plays, and began to decorate their vases with images inspired by the plays seen the day before. Greek drama is in the syllabus, particularly Aristophanes and Sophocles. Even philosophy, another component, is narrative based, for to explain Plato's Cave one has to tell a story. Jostein Gaarder extended philosophy's storytelling potential in *Sophie's World* which tells how a young teenager receives a philosophy course from a mysteriously invisible stranger, which is in my knowledge the only time an introduction to philosophy has been palmed off as a cool story for teenagers. Ancient religion is another option, which demands familiarity with stories of gods and goddesses. As one of the teachers told me, 'a lot of [students] have come from childhood with a love of mythology and a love of the old stories' (*Teachers' Interviews*). I am from that childhood too, and it is from this love of stories that I find myself writing this thesis.

Initial Glimpses

Disney Comics were my first doorways into myth and legend. Donald Duck and Scrooge McDuck comics had their own 'classic' eras - Carl Barks in the 1940s and 1950s, Don Rosa in the 1980s. The scripting is witty, eloquent, and inventive. Donald and his nephews, and his Uncle Scrooge, engage in major adventures which frequently follow a mythic trail. For example, Scrooge McDuck, arch tycoon, desires a coat of gold, and flies on the Argonaut with the Harpies - disguised as Arab merchants - to Colchis. Or else he is searching for the Philosopher's Stone, taking him to the labyrinth beneath Minos's palace at Knossos, with brilliant panels of eerie tunnels and a terrifying statue of a Minotaur. History and allusions proliferate, streaming mainly from the three nephews' Woodchucks' Guidebook, which behaves like an updated version of the Library of Alexandria. It was from this fabulous tome at seven years of age that I first heard of Medea, Jason and the dragon, Theseus and the Minotaur, and

the adventures of Odysseus. Soon after, I read *Tanglewood Tales*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and thence began a lifelong myth immersion.

These first steps pulled me into myth and a fascination for big stories. During childhood, much of it spent at home recovering from severe asthma, I read voraciously, Enid Blyton, comics, Shakespeare, Dickens, collections of poetry, A.A. Milne, J.R.R. Tolkien, Richmal Crompton - herself a Classics teacher, ornamenting her *William* stories with classical and literary erudition. I also watched my mother rehearsing her parts for repertory productions and recitations, which were in modern terms solo theatre. The love of performance and stories and a certain madness led me at the age of thirty-three to the discovery that I could, like a bard of old, perform stories and make it an occupation.

Paths of Narrative

It seemed that from the mid-eighties everyone began talking about narrative. *NZ Listener* journalist Adam Gifford, reviewing a cabaret evening in the New Zealand Fringe Festival of 1986, petulantly complained 'Now everyone wants to tell a story' (Gifford, *NZ Listener* May 5 1986, 29). I had been making my living from it for a dozen years, now it was newly reinvented and awarded attention at universities, for example in the *Metaphor and Narrative* conference at Auckland University in 1996 where I was asked to present a paper. I entitled it *The Epic Map*, and spoke mainly about Gilgamesh. I was mildly surprised to be invited, since when I began my career in 1981, storytelling because of its connotative aura was looked upon purely as childhood's domain. While storytellers love telling to children, we struggle also to extend the art into the adult realm where it belongs to no less a degree. Storytelling festivals attract more adults than children, noticeable for example at *Glistening Waters* in Masterton. Activities with children have often been referred to demeaningly - 'Just kids' stuff' - symbolising a dissonance between innocence and worldliness. Thus 'narrative' is

often the word of choice for academic context. In this thesis, I tend therefore to use 'narrative' for theoretical discussion, and 'storytelling' for the practice.

Narration and Impulse

My passion, occupation and personality is telling stories. I am circumlocutory in answering questions - often, I find myself telling the story behind question and answer before reply emerges. Ink on paper is not enough. Tongues came before quills. Cicero told a friend in a letter that he went out into the forum one time to tell people about an issue, but no one listened. 'Then', he said, 'I announced to all that I would tell the story of the fox and the goose. Within seconds every ear was listening'. Nevertheless, before opening an exposition of Classical Studies and storytelling's role, I diverge to acknowledge what impels anyone to tell a story, and to acknowledge the discourse on narrative, to which I am neither blind nor deaf.

Narrative arises from every time and place. It seems impossible not to narrate. Listen to Joyce:

'Tell me all. Tell me now. ' (Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* 196)

'Tell me, tell me, tell me elm! Night night! Telmetale of stem or stone.'

(Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* 216).

The urgent insistence of Joyce's words is a child's voice, hungry for a story, with the incursion of a parental voice, bidding 'Night night!' the word that finishes that section which in mood hearkens back to Odysseus in the hall of the Phaiakians in Book 11:330-31 ('time now for my sleep') at a moment when the company clamours for more, a moment I shall return to.

The teller's impulse is to reveal by telling, and take delight in the telling. The acceptability of 'anecdotal evidence' - a phrase in common parlance only in the past decade - has

given respectability to remembered tellings, a credence long in the coming. Conversations cannot occur without the who, what and how of related happenings. The process causes considerable animation. People who would not consider themselves expert in mime begin to unconsciously display just how expert they actually are as they act out the story, walking about, drawing pictures in the air, changing voice for different characters.

Bizarre stories infrequently heard become the rare coins of narrative. They jingle uselessly in the pockets of trivia until at dinner in our cups we finger them and let obscure stories shine. John Chadwick, writing about the deciphering of Linear B, says: 'The urge to discover secrets is deeply ingrained .. even the least curious mind is roused by the promise of sharing knowledge withheld from others' (Chadwick, frontword). Not so much withheld as simply never to enter someone's culture world until that someone reads it or hears it. When we hold secret knowledge we hold power.

We hear secrets about each other sometimes translated into gossip. This word began as Old English in 1014 as *godsibb*, meaning the one who spoke as a sponsor at a baptism, but since 1627 refers to talking about 'other people's affairs' (*Chambers Dictionary of Etymology* 443). The way we perceive gossip is various. The word is often regarded as denigrating and pejorative, and is sometimes gender inflected as in 'gossipy women'. It is a concealed discourse told *in absentia* of the subject. It is however a way of sorting through our web of connection to those exterior to our inner world, and Harold Bloom points to its extended significance when he claims that 'Gossip grows old and becomes myth; myth grows older, and becomes dogma' (Harold Bloom, *Map of Misreading*, 28). Hyperbole is the yeast that proves the story, and in long nights in caves superb tellers enlarged a warrior's winter's journey into an epic of dangerous seas, deformed adversaries, demon fighting and daring *affaires d'amour*.

Lives become ordered through narrative, yet in some family cultures, there is no concept of narrative form. Life stories are excluded, there is no gathering of sequences of events and

cause, effect, consequences, conclusions which mark the various cycles of our life. If you have no storytelling, it means you are stumbling about in no-man's -land without milestones or closures, events appearing to occur randomly around you. A man is knifed in front of you. A fire begins behind you. You turn around, bewildered. It might help to know how you got there, and for this reason storytelling is an art form that has become a tool of therapy. Knowing how you got there is one of the great strengths of Classical Studies.

Location and Causation

To locate an event, to explain arrangements, referring to times and places, requires the ability to tell a story. I once saw a fisherman dragging his boat from the sea while shouting to a waiting friend, 'What was the story?' It turned out that events did not unfold the way he had them planned. Part of the story he was anticipating had vanished, affecting his behaviour and journeys. At the island the nets were not there. Neither was the can of fuel that he was expecting. He had fished for cod, returned home on a wing and a prayer. The story segment he intended to participate in had disappeared from the plot and his story had become another story altogether. He was therefore anxious to connect his friend's story with his own. It was important for him to establish cause, effect, and consequences. Knowing this banishes chaos and enables order to re-enter his world. Since arranged events are constantly changing, stories are constantly being re-told and reinvented, for the sake of ancient classical unities - space, time and action.

While writing we attempt to make coherent connections. Like the fisherman, we enter potential chaos, we return to solid ground to spread out the catch, we try to make sense of it. In doing so, we tell the reader where we are going, what happened along the way, what happened in the end, though not all writings perceptibly follow that path. Even in fiction where generally there exists a consciousness of a story to be told, there are works more chaotic than others. In

Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* we can confront the injunction 'mind the narrator but give the devil his [due]' (Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* 314) with an understanding that narration always contains the potential for extreme departures from linear structure into multilevel and tangential explorations of narration - the devil's due. Yet it is all storytelling: the body of the work includes space, time, action, even in the sprawl of *Finnegans Wake*, and similarly, I have in my own performances interrupted the telling with the words, 'But I should have told you before'. If I have forgotten a link, or the inclusion of a story within story, I feel compelled to insert that which I suddenly consider important for that part of the narrative. Or I must make up something more. Forgetting begets remembrance which begets invention.

Every page of words, or string of utterance, from whatever source, will respond in some sense to the fisherman's question, 'What was the story?' Namier the historian even gleans stories from a food list. But a narrative that becomes the kind of story that holds audiences enthralled is primal telling, and it is like the blood that Teiresias drinks, it gives us power to speak the truth. Like Sadko gazing on the golden fish in the nets of that Russian minstrel, I have drawn in epics, heroes, goddesses, histories and philosophies, all superconsciously bonded to the act of telling a story, and it is congruent and mimetic to that line of thinking that this thesis presents as narrative.

Accessibility to another's experience occurs best through translation into a story, and story metaphors are common: 'I lost the plot last night at the end of the day. If we go down that path...let's not go there... let's imagine this scenario... End of story'. Nevertheless, however strongly argued that all writing and utterance has something to do with narrative, it is entirely another matter as to which stories will be considered worth hearing in open performance. It is a foolhardy storyteller who chooses to become over-esoteric in his choice and presentation of story. He will likely lose his audience.

The Power and Significance of Stories

'Storytelling, most spacious of all vehicles, heavenly chariot. Eye of my story, reflect me, for you alone know me and appreciate me. Story, give the letters another shake...order yourself into script, and give us, through your particular pattern, our common pattern' .

- Last pages of *Repetition*, Peter Handke (1988).

Anyone who has experienced the power of performance storytelling will testify to its beauty of sound. Both listener and teller get caught up in the loveliness of it. You feel the words vibrating in your larynx. Your chest bones hum with sound, particularly during a deliberate vowel-lengthening during a poetic or incantatory section in which time the words almost lift into song. In an Eisteddfoddian moment like this, when as the Welsh say, you are in a 'whyr!' , a moment of creative excitement, then you are operating intuitively. Even at a moment like this, the more disciplined part of your storytelling mind will occasionally say, *You have forgotten to mention such-and-such*, and you send thanks to Mnemosyne and make preparations. I might summon storytelling runs to do the linking, while another part of the mind properly assembles the remembered portion. Runs are patterns available to an oral storyteller that require no thinking, they are rhythmic tools ready for spanning and bridging while the mind readies other thoughts, for example: 'As she rushed through the forest there wasn't a tree that did not feel the brush of her skirts, as she panted over the rocks there wasn't a raven who did not smell the perfume in her hair'. In amongst speaking the runs I jockey into position connective phrases to ensure a smooth transition of story 'byte' into the body of the telling, refining it as I go. Reiteration in the telling also strengthens the links.

The remembered portion glides from mind through breath controlled by the diaphragm which regulates the outflow and inflow of breath. I never use clavicular breathing in the act of storytelling. It allows only for shallow breath and therefore shallow thoughts. When invoking the inspiration of the Muse, breath and thought work together in mystical fusion. As the words

enter the air they come in the form of sound. Here is where oddly lovely things can happen. I said earlier that forgetting begets remembrance. Indeed it does, and I have just described the process. But here is the oddity. As the words are sounding, sometimes their vibration in your body and space like the wind from the forge of Hephaestus cause something else to be begotten: invention. Words unthought-of tumble off the tongue, or if they have been thought, it is in some flashing crucible of cognition that has taken seconds to heat and create therefrom. This divine event can happen even when telling something that begins from a text.

Listeners will also testify to another quality in storytelling: its magical nature, commonly expressed by the words, 'spellbinding and enchanting', that is, binding the listener with spells through the chanting of magical formulae. They will testify to its physicality and thrusting gutsiness, its beauty and stillness, its wildness (stirring the blood with ululations during hunting sequences for example) and its ability to touch the human heart. Even the heart of a bird. I had a magpie walk into a performance once. It cawed when it entered, remained for half an hour by the door apparently listening, then cawed and exited.

Yet because of the dissonance between innocence and worldliness, between child and adult world, we seem now to have distanced ourselves from the storytelling role. Walter Benjamin addresses this slightly embarrassed attitude towards the act of storytelling in his essay, 'The Storyteller' within *Illuminations*: 'the storyteller in his living immediacy is by no means a present force. He has already become something remote from us. There is embarrassment all round when the wish to hear a story is expressed' (Benjamin 83). Yet there is no doubt at all of the power of the story that is told, when it happens. The storytelling renaissance of the Western world nearly a quarter of a century ago, referred to earlier, is an indication that the storyteller is no longer as remote as when Benjamin was writing. The 'living immediacy' of the storyteller gives us the most intimate and emotionally tactile access to human experience that we can have outside feeling our own tears of sorrow and laughter. But there is

no doubt that the act of storytelling despite its re-emergence, is more remote than it once was, and is connected to a feeling of loss within western culture. One of the impulses leading to towards Classical Studies and storytelling is I believe to regain lost treasures.

Sense of Loss

The story then becomes a talisman, that we turn in the hand of our mind, a lucky reminder of something we should not forget. It is unlucky to lose a talisman. The word originally meant an amulet that would pay your way into a sacred rite (*Chambers Dictionary of Etymology*, 1112). In meditating upon this idea, I am reminded of Walter Benjamin once more, who wrote 'It is as if something that seemed inalienable to us, the securist among our possessions, were taken from us: the ability to exchange experiences which passed on from mouth to mouth is the source from which all storytellers have drawn' (Benjamin 83-84).

Edward Albee in 1960 wrote a play called, *The American Dream*. One of the protagonists speaks a moving monologue in which he catalogues deep personal losses. It is another signal, in storytelling mode, of the sense of loss which began after the Reformation and intensified in the nineteenth century, when Nietzsche understood that in that increasingly material culture, when large numbers were freed from theocratic tyranny, God had become a dead thing. He articulated this in his *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. God, who in Revelation 22:13, declares 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end', had ceased, and the storyline itself ceased. Westerners were no longer bound by a common narrative. There was no beginning, no end. They had stepped outside any storyline and without the story of a vision, risked perishing. Mass bereavement and a mythic vacuum followed. Geering writing in 1994 in *Tomorrow's God* titles Chapter Three 'With Stories we Create Worlds', and desperately seeking tomorrow's God, in the last few pages concedes that we must return to 'language and story' (Geering, *Tomorrow's God* 233). Following Nietzsche's

thinking, he remarks 'many conclude that the God-symbol must be relegated to the burial ground for dead symbols' (Geering 221). He quotes Karen Armstrong: 'Human beings cannot endure emptiness and desolation; they will fill the vacuum by creating a new focus of meaning' (ibid.). Jesus recognised the peril of the vacuum in his parable of the room swept clean only to be filled by unquiet spirits. Increasingly, the modernist demons of alienation and dissociation inhabited the empty space. Grief counsellors acknowledge that this duo comes often to the bereaved, and may provoke new directions, but does not comfort. At sea with loss the quest for a new myth is rarely undertaken consciously and when it begins, proceeds slowly. As 'received' speech changes, so does the mythic content of received culture.

Though at the beginning of the twentieth century the new myth of science and technology partly filled the void left by a dead god, they did not bridge the gap that remained. This is the schism of the divided soul which haunted art and literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, exemplified by the fragmented figures of Picasso and the tormented and alienated characters summoned by Dostoyevsky and Kafka. The underground warning 'Mind the Gap' stamped now on T-shirts and posters has become part of populist iconography. Caught between the train and the platform, we risk destruction in the forbidden space between the static and the moving. There is a schism.

Ancient myths may provide the bridge. They have never been taken more seriously than in the last hundred years, notably from the latter part of the twentieth century when myths as courses of study began to be offered at universities. This has been stimulated by Freud's nomenclature of psychological states into an awareness that myth is not simply a collection of interesting stories but contains profound insights, assisting epistemological method. Split and wounded cultures tend to search for stories of origination, and currently there is a world-wide search for heritage - historic, mythic, musical, environmental and literary. Mythopoeic cosmologies that enabled ancient people to make sense of their lives are sought and taught with a

voracity unthinkable in the unified Christendom of the sixteenth century. A return to source myths is a tardy attempt to make sense of ruins. Assyrians scramble about the shards of clay tablets trying to add another chapter to *Gilgamesh*, to give their people a hold on a crumbling culture. In Russia folklorists and philologists hunt down octogenarian tellers of *skazki* (ancient stories) for the same reason. This is the search for foundation valencies that might steady shaking edifices.

While the response of some in a time of rapid change is to seek for heritage, others exist in a non-mythic non-storied state. This is a dangerous condition, for in that state there is no connectivity with stories that pass on insights, transformational experience, a journey into self-knowledge and inner worlds. Mythic awareness provides culture members with heroes gods and goddess who do and say astounding things that remain in the memory a long time. Jean Houston believes that in the non-mythic condition

'We have become autistic, as non-mythic, non-storied folk always do when they lose the ability to communicate with the inner life of the natural world, or with their own inner life'.

(Houston, *The Hero and the Goddess*, 11).

Story remembrance may change or influence the way we behave. In the wonder tale *The King of Leinster's Storyteller* a character called Angus of Brough, after helping the king, makes the king agree to share with him anything that might come to him thereafter. Later he finds the king drinking a cup of wine by himself and rebukes him, whereupon the king cries out, 'Would you call a trifle like a cup of wine a broken agreement?' - to which Angus replies, 'You went to war over a basket, and now you call a cup of wine a trifle. It is trifles that show the mind'. That reflection may afterwards recur, and might cause us to pause at a junction of roads in our own life. Stories behave sometimes as signposts. The sense of loss that Nietzsche articulated, becomes centered therefore on the sacred nature of *story*. If we lose that way of being, we

discover in a time of need that there are no lines to unravel into a map in the mind. Random events sit in a fuzzy memory untold and therefore unrelated, and when we come to interpret them it is like trying to read a blurred topography under a moonless night by the light of a dying torch.

Mark Turner in his *The Literary Mind* refers to Barrie's *Peter Pan*, calling it a 'touchstone text' for the view that 'knowing how to inhabit stories is the essential requirement of mature life - lost boys will always be boys, and always lost, as long as they don't know stories. They can't grow up because they cannot understand how to inhabit roles in stories, how to have lives' (Mark Turner 134). It is for the stories that Peter abducts Wendy, and I believe that Classical Studies and its teachers are the Wendy for the lost.

Interpreting Stories for Performance

What I know about a story, and its words, originates mostly in written texts, or transcribed versions, but then in performance texts are transformed. I work intuitively, my mind is afloat with available word-clouds and story-segments - from which I pluck what I have time for. Keeping to a span of given time necessitates rapid editing as you go, you have to shuffle around sequences, choosing like any artist what to include or exclude. You make up bits to expand text or to explain, even if working from a well-known classical text. You are opening the doors to the text behind the text, not barring the portals to protect a frozen museum piece, never again to feel the fingers of the craftsman upon its infinitely malleable form. This taxing question of texts cannot be put aside, as there are issues that must be thought through. The concept of the fixed or immutable text is supported by the class-set model, which has enormously influenced the way in which works are studied. The axiom of the class-set teacher is that the text can never change. If it cannot be put into a book that never changes, the class cannot study it. It is preferable too to have a *bona fide* author. A text that is fixed confers

respectability upon it and those who study it. Changing or adding to a text can attract condemnation rather than approbation - how can it be authentic? Textual vexation receives comment therefore in Chapter Two.

The performing storyteller works fast. Though you are not usually working from a written and unchanging script, or enslaved to text, nevertheless, you are in constant homage to the text, sometimes making verbatim lifts from favourite translations. For twelve lines it is pure Homer. Then I extrapolate in a Homeric fashion, that is, I tell the story the way I want to, with divergences, relating the story as I think a Homeric storyteller might have done. To rigidly keep to Homer's order of events in the text can be perceived by a storyteller as too much interference from the distant hand of someone who might have been more of a collater or participating facilitator of storytellers, rather than an original and exclusive author.

I discovered that following Homer's methods, I could rapidly solidify a character for an audience fresh from the rugby field with pithily evocative epithets, like his famed 'ox-eyed Hera' 'swift-footed Achilles' 'Hektor of the golden helm'. You are 'punching' out characters, as Christopher Smart expressed it (Hirsch 74). Sometimes, sensing the audience, you must rearrange a story in seconds, suddenly realising it would be better if you kept in the boar-hunt and left out the sea chase. During a lightning change, unnoticed by audience, you affably allow characters of three different voices coming out of your mouth to go on a bit. During this ten-second respite of solo theatre in automatic pilot, you consider in your more pro-active narrative mind whether an alteration will threaten the story's integrity. In practice the necessity to conclude the story before lights out overrides integrity, and the storyteller plunges on regardless, for the story must get to its finish. Odysseus, though, maddeningly refrains from finishing, saying to the Phaiakians in their hall, 'It is time now for my sleep', (11:330-31) although in that instance the unsatisfied listeners, 'held in thrall by the story' (ibid. 334) demand that he continue. Tantalising is part of the storyteller's art, and Odysseus is urged to go on with the

story of the underworld at any price.

By recording now the words of Odysseus in a long night of stories, I have summoned the firelit hall and the performance of epics. Ancient epics have provided me with the clay whose kneading and firing has resulted in some of the most inspiring and fascinating experiences I have had with the fabled art of storytelling. This kneading and firing of epic classics now leads me to clothe bones already revealed, with flesh, blood and inner organs. I talk about the workings of the process, and the decisions I must make to help it work. I describe the journey of the story, which invites heart and soul participation by listeners, who walk the trail of the story and learn the psychocartography of the human passage, of the journey and direction. I detail the physical nature of telling, and how that interacts with the lives of the participants.

Storytelling and the Classics

Stories of immense breadth and power arise within Classical Studies - Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, Virgil's *Aeneid*. They exert a peculiar fascination. For some students, the stories provide the most exciting and paramount experiences to be had in Classical Studies. They also contain incantatory rhythms, which excite the mind beyond cognitively based processes, and it is Mark Turner's view that 'Poetic meter mythical stories have deep neurobiologically based grammars by which a budding audience can be liberated into their human heritage'

(Mark Turner 9).

Myth

It is mythic experience that Classics feeds on. The word *myth* is from the Greek *muthos*, word made story. In the end it came to mean a story that goes out of ordinary realms, that attains a largesse with gods and goddesses and mortals surviving. In modern times myth also means a narrative fabric that grows up in repeated and exaggerative tellings around the

neighbourhood that becomes urban myth, urban legend. Then there is the narrative myth that a nation might live on, like the Boers' Great Trek. Or China's Long March. I am concerned here, however, with epic myth from mainly classic sources.

Joseph Campbell identifies four functions of myth, phases which I believe are important during the evolution of young people into adults. First there is the bridging, enabling the individual to attain connectivity with the whole environment of being. Then myth provides a revelation of awaking consciousness. After that it reconciles the differences between the individual and the environment. Finally it 'fosters the centring and unfolding of the individual in integrity' from microcosm to macrocosm. (Houston, *The Hero and the Goddess*, 5-6). Alberto Manguel in speaking of the same process calls myths mirrors, which 'if we wilfully abandon them, we will be left senseless' (Manguel quoted by Vardey 200). Myths are psychic sensors that enable us to sense significant events within us, but that also sharpen our sensory apprehension of what is happening around us.

This is confirmed by the experience of students who participate with me in physically enacting myth. During the performances of the *Odyssey*, and other classic epics, there is an intense involvement my audiences have with the story. They walk its path, they share the experiences, they feel the pain and joy, and in the words of Hyemeyohsts Storm : 'Everything we perceive upon this path or around it becomes part of our experience, both individually and collectively,' (Storm 16-17). Jerome S. Bruner extends this thought in his exposition of how myth functions:

'Myth provides a ready-made means of externalising human plight by embodying and representing them in storied plot and characters. By the subjectifying of our worlds through externalisation, we are able, paradoxically enough, to share communally in the nature of internal experience.'

(Bruner 32).

Moreover, entering the interior of an ancient epic through storytelling performance provides an experiential access to the story. By physically taking on a character, something happens. To become Athene, the gray-eyed goddess, you find yourself transforming into a powerful personality, projecting yourself into situations where you have a direct influence and a voice that is heard. Enacting Athene, you are able to sit beside Telemachos as Mentos, advising him in his search for his father. You are able to guide events wisely and inspire courage and a sense of identity: 'The gods have not made yours a birth that will go nameless' (*Odysseus* 1: 222) When you become the resourceful Odysseus, you become a shape-shifter, an adventurer, a charmer of women, a storyteller in the halls of kings. For a little while, we become heroes and powerful women, gods and goddesses, ranging from the embarrassment Odysseus feels at washing himself 'in the presence of lovely long-haired women' to the lovemaking of Zeus and Hera, with crocuses bursting from the earth around them, and the power of Andromache's tears, the terror of the Cyclops, the sacking of Troy. In performance the body undergoes a somatic reaction to the text. The stories exalt, the audience exults.

In my storytelling performances in schools, I tell mainly epics. Irish epics, such as Finn's Search for Wisdom, for eleven to twelve year olds, which lasts an hour, though Egypt: Osiris and Isis lasts longer, more like ninety minutes. If I have all day with a classics group, I can lead them through three hours of the *Iliad*. Sometimes the fire truly ignites, the Muse enters us, and the experience becomes electric. We gasp and shake our heads with wonder afterwards. Even when the fire only flickers it is still a special experience. Examples given are from exceptional moments.

Choosing the Story

The archaeology of the subconscious is revealed through the journeys of an epic, and it

is the epic that of all story types fascinates me most. Having made the decision to tell an epic, however, the storyteller must then deal with problems arising from length and structure. He must decide which threads to follow and which narratives within the epic to exclude.

Through its strata squeezed one upon the other, layer upon layer, the epic contains stories of birth and death, of celebration, heroism, the learning of secret knowledge and identity, origins, the accumulation of wisdom. It goes outside the 'comfort zone', its protagonists undertake monumental tasks, returning to enrich the people with experience and insights, summarised in the praise-song which opens *Gilgamesh*:

'This was the man to whom all things were known; this was the king who knew the countries of the world. He was wise, he saw mysteries and knew secret things, he brought us a tale of the days before the flood. He went on a long journey, was weary, worn-out with labour, returning he rested, he engraved on a stone the whole story'

(Sandars, 61).

He goes out and comes back, though the track is not quite cyclical. The hero performs his life by twisting in and out of multilevel experiences, thus rather shaping a spiral, and I am reminded of W.B. Yeats' *Sailing to Byzantium*,

'O sages...
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul. '

(Yeats 199).

which evokes the ancient spiral symbol which in its ribbon-twisted form is now verified as the shape of DNA, foundation molecule of all life. This is the shape of the hero's journey, the spiral's momentum moving him outwards and inwards, a journey from which he returns with truths to live by, conferring special knowledge upon the wider community. The hero becomes the 'singing-master', Muse-inspired, who infuses community individually and collectively with

the knowledge of mysteries and special experiences, facilitating initiations on the path of wisdom leading towards the Source. Odysseus himself is a singing-master who in his tellings leads his listeners through his life-journeys which turn out to be ours also, albeit obliquely.

Of discussions I participate in or observe, the life-direction discussion is commonplace. This discourse focuses on place, movement, and destiny. The question, *Why am I here?* provokes a consideration of talents and abilities that might suggest purpose and goals (destiny). Leading from this is the question, *Where am I going to have to travel to attain my purpose?* This includes, *Where will I make my home?*

Stumbling through the jungle of mythic knowledge, researching performance material, I quickly became aware that the life-direction discourse engaged in so often is paralleled in events and conversations within epics. It is metaphoric and symbolic enactment of the same discourse, providing clues to the psychic drive that moves these questions into the discussion that young people find so crucial. While I love the epics because they are brilliant stories, I became fascinated by the accuracy of their psychological truths. This may account for the force with which they strike a been-there nerve within us. For example, in the twenty-third book of Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus and Penelope sit looking at one another, following his return and the destruction of the suitors. She comes down into the hall and 'sat across from him in the firelight' (23: 89) while Odysseus sits by a pillar waiting for his wife to speak. It is the first time they have had conversation for nineteen years, and Homer tells us 'She sat a long time in silence, and her heart was wondering' (ibid. 93). Her son arrogantly upbraids her, asking her 'why do you withdraw so from my father?' (ibid. 98), to which she replies,

'the spirit that is in me is full of wonderment,
and I cannot find anything to say to him, nor question him,
nor look him straight in the face.'

(ibid. 105-107).

Then Odysseus tells Telemachos to 'leave your mother to examine me as she will' (ibid. 113-14).

Here is a man and a woman attempting reconciliation, and asking their son to give them the space and understanding to do it well. When I had absorbed this moment into my storytelling being, itself a mysterious process, happening over many tellings and reflections - I began to tell it. In many prior tellings I had excluded it. I became aware of intense concentration upon the faces of teenagers watching parents trying to understand one another once more, and how Telemachos, though nineteen years old, was for a time excluded from their sometimes silent sometimes vocalised interchange. I realised that some were watching their own lives, often confirmed afterwards in discussion with students and teachers. That realisation affirmed within me the importance of telling stories like this.

Homer's *Odyssey* is the archetypal epic of journeys and passions. From performance to performance, I often omit a certain segment to replace it by another, which depends upon my intuitive response to the audience. Yet it is only possible in ninety minutes to deal with a limited number of episodes, each of which in that brief and concentrated time, should mould keys to the unlocking of the Odyssean experience. In performance, the relationship with the audience affects what is told and affects the relationship the teller has to that moment of time within the narrative. Christopher Rawlence in talking of time and storyline has this to say:

'What separates the storyteller from his protagonists is not knowledge, either objective or subjective, but *their* experience of time in the story he is telling. This separation allows the storyteller to hold the whole together; but means that he is obliged to follow his protagonists, powerlessly, *through and across* the time which they are living and he is not. The time, and therefore the story, belongs to them. Its meaning belongs to the storyteller. Yet the only way he can reveal this meaning is by telling the story to others.'

(Rawlence 28).

Within active involvement storytelling, the protagonists come out of the text and out of the audience, and in the crucible of performance undergo a rapid transmutation into flesh and blood characters, a process described a few pages on. My relationship to the protagonists is therefore physical, because they are there beside me. They however have been flung into a different kind of time, a dimension which is controlled by myself, for no one but the storyteller can lead the protagonists through different times which must co-exist within ninety minutes. Those minutes contain stratified timelines within the same mythic space, where past present and future narratives move in a continuum.

Each segment that I choose works according to the dynamic ambience of that moment in the story, how it affects the behaviour of characters, how it affects narrative movement, or how it focusses on thematic insights. Each moment has a meaning, but as Rawlence is saying, it is the storyteller who unlocks the meaning for others by *actually telling the story to others*. The chosen moment is a key with intricate wards moving tumblers from which springs the eureka response. It is possible to take a fragment from an epic, an episode, and tell it as a complete story, but one cannot pretend by doing that to be telling the epic. Episodes chosen to represent the epic must be key episodes and must be unified. If they are not, the integrity of epic wholeness is threatened.

During an epic, there is a going out, and after huge experiences, a coming back. In hearthside culture, the telling of stories which complete a cycle was connected to the season and the earth-clock which regulated the rhythm, actions, rituals of their lives. In some societies, certain stories are only told at certain times. The cyclic nature of the story which starts and finishes at the same point completes the knot. Odysseus must come back to his house to restore order, for through the prayers of Polyphemus to Poseidon, his household falls into disarray. The audience hopes for resolution, and anyway will feel dissatisfied if there is no good ending. The storyteller cannot leave Odysseus in the underworld, or out in the open sea.

Despite the constriction of ninety minutes, Odysseus and Penelope must be reunited.

That is manageable, though barely. But just as the storyteller like the needle is pulling the thread through the fabric for the last time, preparing like Atropos to cut the thread and make the final knot, a last unwanted coda sometimes begins to speak in the back of my performing storyteller's mind. With any story of course there is always more to tell. While it is often impossible to respond to this insistent coda, owing to time pressure, occasionally there is no way around it. It is as if there is a goddess or choreographing storyteller or perhaps the blind prophet, which I can feel like a tingle at the back of my head. This commands me to tell the audience that the story is not yet over, that perhaps it never ends, like the end of Fellini's *Satyricon* where a ship sails across the screen while the narrator says, 'we came to an island, and then'. The stern slips out of sight to the left of the screen and we are left with the blue of the Mediterranean and the voice hanging in mid-sentence. In the case of the *Odyssey*, the coda comes from the prophecy of Teiresias. Odysseus must after returning, do a further journey carrying an oar until he comes to a country so ignorant of travel that the oar is mistaken for a winnowing paddle. His journey which he thought was complete is unfinished, though we never see him do it. There is no settling down until he reaches a place so far inland there are no waters to carry him anywhere, only stillness. In modern terms, it is the way of Zen - a moment of contemplation that releases a final insight within a deep interior.

The pressure to impart that last section of a major work is prompted by questions from students who in discussion afterwards ask me, Yes, but what happens in the very end? It is that 'very' end, the 'truthful' end, that makes another problem for a performance storyteller working within time constraints, where the internal editor must sometimes ruthlessly suppress the goddess and finish the story unfinished.

Texts

While I work mainly from Richmond Lattimore's translations of the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, and from Robert Fitzgerald's translation of the *Aeneid*, it must be acknowledged that there is a textual dilemma. Homeric texts derive from oral transmission, and while now written, were once fluid and open to alteration during performance. Ink on paper is not words on air, and in performance the poet-storyteller will feel moved to change words and phrases for the sake of euphony. Further on for example I have transcribed the opening invocation from the *Odyssey*, which began with Lattimore and other translators, but I have changed it to my own liking for certain word combinations and rhythms.

John Foley writes,

'So deeply ingrained is our basic predisposition toward the written, textualised word that we find it difficult to imagine a world of oral tradition where words are primarily sounded and heard and where performance is the chief medium for artistic discourse. We find it difficult to conceive of performance and sound as primary and of their textualisation as a loss rather than a gain. We are ..hard put to deal with works that survive only as texts but that we know have stemmed from prior or ongoing oral traditions.'

(Foley ed 4).

These are guiding words. Evidence follows in the collection which he edits, that 'the phenomenon of multiformity is the rule of thumb' (ibid.). Richard P. Martin (Foley ed. 339ff) presents five sources for the belief that Homeric writing derives from performance - internal, (frequent reference to singing and speaking, never to writing) , archaeological, (Greek alphabet post-dated the oral record), linguistic and metrical, (detected archaisms retained because they sounded better, eg *oinos* , wine, was originally *woinos*, and must be kept to this older form to make a line scan), poetic diction, (the famous repeated epithets, eg winedark sea, for mnemonic

and compositional reasons) and comparative evidence (Parry and Lord during fieldwork in the 1930s found that similar dictional systems were employed by nonwriting performers of traditional heroic poetry).

Awareness therefore that Homeric texts are open to change during performance is important if we are to avoid a pedantic insistence that lines and sequences are to remain as the text currently presents itself.

Understanding the Undertaking

I look now at what an interactive storyteller does, to succeed in doing the business with an audience. I will describe exactly what happens in the process of translating ancient world stories to a modern audience.

Tentativeness and 'yin-sensitivity' do not work. It requires a bold intention and a lucid vision. You are offering very old stories to an audience in the twenty-first century and you are wanting the audience to be part of the story, to feel also that the story has relevance to their own lives. You use high energy, you paint in the air a story that excites and stirs, whose words vibrate in incantatory rhythms, a story that lifts the mind to contemplate mysteries and makes the heart beat faster.

Chapter Two

PERFORMING THE STORY

Overview of Process

I move from the moment of introduction to behavioural steps leading into the performance of the story. I describe how the performer undertakes a transformational process, setting off triggers which activate archetypes within the listeners. This is a time of transportation. I take the audience from 'here' to 'other', moving them from an exterior view to a position inside that other world. There they can participate individually and collectively in an experiential story from ancient world culture with lightening shafts occasionally flickering from the sky of the modern world, which always hangs above an audience no matter how high their disbelief has been suspended. I intrude these modernistic shafts from time to time, moving rapidly out of the ritualised drama for a moment of connection to the 'here' with the intention of universalising the story and letting it exist outside time and space. Otherwise it risks immobilisation, frozen within a construct of the ancient world. This procedure changes from performance to performance, but the pattern of approach remains fairly constant.

First Steps

A man with gnarled staff steps out onto the stage, usually on floor level with a backdrop of Celtic designs behind him. I wear a sparkly belt, leathery pants, and a flowing shirt of white or many colours, and scarlet lined dun-coloured woollen and weathered cloak. There are seats arranged near the backdrop, covered with fabrics of strange designs, suggesting the Trojan court, or the palace of the Phaiakians.

I often step out into the space while the audience is still coming in, seating themselves on thin gym mats which are surrounded by a semi-circle of chairs. The audience will range from between seventy and a hundred. While they settle themselves I place my folk harp upon my lap and play snatches and fragments. Then I stand before them, introduce myself, invite them to lay hands on hearts, and we say 'Greetings to you' back and forth, opening up the arms in a wide gesture of welcome. In these moments my intention is to project the archetypal storyteller. Appearing in colourful exuberance and unusual clothes, radiating an unaccustomed energy, I lure them into giving me their rapt attention. After greetings, which generally finish with 'Cead mille failte', Irish for 'A hundred thousand welcomes'. I will tell 'about' the story for a few moments, the kind of landscape it exists in, and historical or supposed time.

Bridging Then and Now

Before invocation and sacrifice, I contextualize the experience for the audience by placing it in their minds geographically, drawing maps in the air, and telling them about Gallipoli, a short way from Troy. I briefly tell of the landings of New Zealanders and Australians on that April day in 1915, on the Western coast of Turkey, on the wrong beach. I speak Kemal Attaturk's words engraved on the slab above Anzac Cove, composed for the comfort of New Zealanders and Australians:

'Mothers who sent their sons to far-off shores to fight in foreign lands
Wipe away your tears
Your sons rest now in the bosom of our earth,
and have become our sons too'.

There is now a span connecting ancient Troy to New Zealand. It is like touching a chain belonging to an ancestor. I tell the audience that the blood of ancient Greeks and Trojans is mingled with the blood of New Zealanders and Australians, since they all fought on the same

beaches. This important link is now made. The audience is ready to step onto the same sands.

Invocations and Opening Rituals

I hold up a carven silver chalice to do libations to the gods and goddesses, explaining the nature of ritual sacrifice, that to the gods belong the first fragrance of meat and flavour of wine. I pour water onto one of the cloths extending out from the royal seats, to symbolise pouring wine onto the earth. Sensory experience in ritual is crucial. While I do this I invoke the Muses, referring to some of them by name, and asking that they may fill us with inspiration that we may tell a story suitable for the ears of gods and goddesses. The invocation of the Muses is significant. By referring to the muses, we refer to the art forms they inspire, like Terpsicore, Muse of Lyric Poetry and Dance, or Calliope, Muse of Epic Poetry and Eloquence. If I have time I invoke all nine. Joseph Campbell refers to the gods we create for ourselves within us, calling the gods 'personifications of the energies that inform life' (Campbell, *This Business of the Gods* 28). I am invoking archetypes and perhaps in Jungian terms awakening ancient hard drives within us that have lain dormant, 'archetypes which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents' (Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, quoted Vardey 198).

I turn away and put down the goblet. The audience is now charged with a special atmosphere, tense and expectant. I turn back, and orate the opening address to the collective Muse, for whichever linking stories a storyteller chooses to tell from the *Odyssey*, I regard it as essential to begin by speaking to the Muse, at the beginning of Book One:

Tell me, O Muse, of that man of many ways, Odysseus,
who after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy
was sent wandering over the winedark seas.
Many were the cities he knew,
whose minds he learned of,

Many the pains in his spirit
as he stumbled across Poseidon's seas,
struggling to survive,

ever seeking a good direction home
for himself and for his companions.

These words I ritually orate, loudly with an incantatory rhythm. At the end of that, I continue the text , 'From somewhere here, O Goddess, let us begin our story'.

There are different rituals. When the invocation of the goddess comes in the *Iliad*, for example, the libations that are spilt also become a sacrifice by sacred ritual for all those who have fallen in war or been scarred by war,

'Sing, goddess, sing
of the anger of Achilles, and its devastation,
which hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls'
(*Iliad*, 1:1-3)

The later *Aeneid* also opens with the poet in full song, addressing the Muse again,

'Tell me the causes now O Muse,
how this Queen of Gods compelled him' (*Aeneid* 1: 10-12).

By these acknowledgements, the message is clear: the Muse speaks through the poet-storyteller. Though I am about to lead the audience on a journey, the story comes from an 'other' source, from somewhere outside our familiar world. If we were Greeks, we would understand it to come from the lips of the goddess - we are but the carriers. At this moment, the air charged with ritual splendour, the audience is transformed into ancients, listening to stories in the hall of the great. The rituals now complete, I put down the goblet. I tell about what went on before the story begins. I mix humour and colloquy then engage in high classic mode which can sound Shakespearean. There are silences and sudden changes. Savage descriptions contrast

with poetic lyricism. I shift swiftly from character impersonation to straight storytelling.

As the atmosphere builds, the storyteller, by beckoning, invites members of the audience into the performance. Audience members are drawn in with a mostly irresistible gesture, the occasional reluctance is dealt with by charm. Soon, six or seven are there, transformed into characters, enacting the story with the storyteller.

Sometimes I pause, they are still, while I purely tell for ten minutes. Then the journey continues, whether through ocean or underworld. The team under my guidance treks physically across the space into the unknown while chanting, speaking and enlarging scripting that I whisper to them, while I elicit noises from the audience - eerie voices for the underworld, the sounds of storms when travelling over oceans. From the beginning, I encourage verbal response. I hand lines over to them. The impulse to animate is a characteristic feature of performers, and my purpose with involvement is to move from mimetic to immersive individual invention. In Tolkien's *Two Towers*, Fangorn observed that the elves wanted to let everything speak, they taught trees how to speak. There is an elven impulse in what I'm doing.

Voice

I believe by empowering participants into the use of their full voice, speaking rhythmically and making wild noises, hunting noises, ululations, transformations occur, people discover a vocal power they have perhaps never used, enabling them to speak out with fervour. This allows them to get an experiential understanding of how it feels to powerfully utter highly-charged words. When we are working in a classical context, that process puts them in close contact with the primal experience of oral interpretation which was very much a part of ancient world culture. A word, therefore, on affective voice theory.

In Sufi mysticism theory, three kinds of voice are named: the *jelal* voice, indicating power; the *jemal* voice indicating beauty; the *kemal* voice indicating wisdom. (Khan 93-94).

Power, beauty and wisdom are three qualities which emerge from classical texts and oral interpretation of voices 'heard' in those texts. I love to hear the deep magic of the story bring from their throats powerful voices of beauty and passion, surprising themselves with the blazing strength of their voices uttering the adventurous, the romantic, the philosophic. That this affects them shows in what they say:

'when we took part in the *Odyssey* when you came it was - you felt the passion, and you felt well you were that woman she was sort of part of me -- and she was I mean me when I did Penelope speaking from right from my heart and soul'.
(*Students' Interviews*).

I feed script by whispering lines into their ears, and indicating by grandiloquent gesture from the mouth that they should speak. Amazingly they do. I encourage them, and it is rare for them not to give it a go, even adding their own script, ad libbing in mode, and sometimes all nine muses are there in our midst and the story hums.

While the methods I use are different from psychodrama, there are parallels - though the roles are more oblique, in that we are not enacting people from our own lives, yet the events within the story reflect and give credence to our own experiences, and are therefore deeply stirring.

The Journey: Parting and Setting Out

Graham Greene, on a page preceding Part 1 of his *Journey Without Maps* quotes insightful comments by Oliver Wendell Holmes:

'The life of an individual is..like a child's dissected map. I find a certain number of connected fragments, and a larger number of disjointed pieces, which I might in time place in their natural connection. What strikes me..is the arbitrary and ..accidental way in which the lines of junction appear to run irregularly among the fragments. With every decade I find some new pieces coming into place. Blanks which have been left in former years find their complement among the

undistributed fragments. If I could look back on the whole, as we look at the child's map when it is put together, I feel that I should have my whole life intelligently laid out before me'.

Holmes' remarks are pertinent. I believe that the *Odyssey* is a primal narrative life-map, which stirs up profound psychological recognitions and resonances in the modern experience, where life is no less a quest than in the ancient world. But because the ancient world is there, flowing by like a loop movie without change, it is a way of obliquely and reflectively observing our own life patterns, and this method of observing ourselves I believe partly accounts for the present fascination in that ancient world. It is easy to identify with the women in the Welsh epic, the Mabinogien, that 'three there were, overwhelmed by bewilderment' (heard from a Welsh storyteller). This resonates with the modern and intensifying theme of alienation. Epic stories might provide a methodology for unravelling the threads of increasingly complex lives to make our own narrative lines coherent. I return to the unravelling of bewilderment in the last chapter, *Minotaur and Thread*.

With the *Odyssey*, after I have delivered the opening lines, I immerse myself and speak for a few minutes in the character of Odysseus - working from sources in Hesiod and popular folk memory, which was more embedded then. I take it from the moment he was ploughing in the fields, his wife standing by him with Telemachos in the nurse's arms. I say, 'And Odysseus was ploughing on his farm -' while beckoning to someone in the audience, and likewise I say, 'and his lovely, crafty, creative wife, Penelope'. I draw up a nurse as well. Then when they stand beside me, I say: 'I Odysseus did not even want to go to the war in Troy - my child, Telemachos, had just been born'. About here I pass the role to the student who has just arrived beside me to become Odysseus. Penelope and Odysseus stand in the fields, with the nurse holding the baby. When I tell how they embraced for a final time, they often do.

Parting is always significant, and forms some of the great moments of literature and

history. It may be that historically and ancestrally, we are touching a collective memory. As an immigrant society, isolated from original kinship societies, New Zealanders historically are sharply acquainted with partings. Our apartness is dramatically expressed in a line from *Auld Lang Syne* (In Times of Long Ago): 'but seas between us broad have roared/ Since auld lang syne'. New Zealanders are endlessly migrating, now engaging in a Kiwi diaspora - 500,000 of us have left since 1950 (*NZ Herald*, March 1 2003), and as well, we migrate within our own country - a quarter of our population stays less than a year at the same address, and more than half of the population live in one place for less than five years (NZ Census 2001).

Partings are a motif of any migrant culture. We have not only experienced voluntary migration, but we have experienced the involuntary migration brought about through war. New Zealand sent more young men per head of population to the two world wars than any other nation on earth. The departure of Odysseus for Troy therefore contains a terrible poignancy for New Zealanders. I now return therefore with this poignancy to the parting of the young mother Penelope, baby son in her arms, from her husband Odysseus. It happens in a farm paddock. Odysseus is working the plough when the messenger arrives. The images I invoke at this moment are drawn from the farms of New Zealand which I have known since I was a child.

In the form of a dramatic prologue, in the character of Odysseus, I speak the lines already begun, 'I Odysseus did not even want to go to Troy. I had no argument with the Trojans', and this is the transition, when I am handing the role over to the participant : 'but then I saw the messenger running over the fields calling out to me, reminding me of oaths'. Now, also from the audience, a messenger is running through the fields, calling out to Odysseus. I turn to the student to whom I have given the role of Odysseus, and give him the lines: 'I must go to Troy. I am bound by my oath'. He speaks these lines that I have whispered into his ear, then I say: 'Penelope gave her son Telemachos to the nurse, and turned to her young husband' - then I whisper her lines into her ear, 'What are you doing? Are you going to leave me here alone? What

about me? What about your child?' And by emboldening her, and him, with whispered encouragement, and whispered and determined cajolings, ('Use your BIG VOICE!! ') I enable them to summon the confidence and courage to take on the roles. She becomes a woman abandoned by her husband for the cause of war, and he becomes a man torn from his wife and baby, deserting his fields, to honour his oaths and leave for a war he does not even believe in.

By the time Odysseus parts from Penelope, I have handed the roles over entirely. When Odysseus and Penelope part, the moment is always powerful. It is symbolic of all partings. On one occasion, I was facilitating this enactment and standing between 'Odysseus' and 'Penelope' when I felt something splashing onto my hand in mid-gesture. They were teardrops from the girl doing Penelope. She recovered herself, and later told me that just the night before she had farewelled her much-loved elder brother who was leaving with an army unit for duty overseas.

I move from the parting of Penelope and Odysseus through swift narration to the moment nine years later when with Troy burning behind him he gathers his crew, cuts the cables and sails for home. By now, I have gathered a crew from the audience, established prow and stern, and as they row, I give them the following to speak in the manner of a Greek chorus:

Take us to our homes, Odysseus. No delays! We long for our women, we
long for our children,
we long for the fireside of home

It is an intense Greek moment. Sometimes it is as if Dionysus has taken hold of a male choir. When you have ten big-chested young men as the crew of Odysseus loudly and superbly incantating the lines as often they do, the air throbs with the power of a Greek chorus.

These lines are not Homer's, but my own, given to the participants as a linking chant to do while sailing between islands, while the audience antiphonally and alternately chants

Over the wine-dark seas did they sail
The wineblue seas of Poseidon!

Within epic storydrama, which is what my tellings often are, you begin to work on it with the mind of a Euripides, and Euripides makes people speak. The seven or eight students I have with me as crew need to address Odysseus in the manner of the chorus to Creon in *Antigone*, or to Hecabe in *The Trojan Women*. Once having chosen to use the method of participation story-drama then narration must occasionally shift from narrative monologue to dialogue, at the same time maintaining the integrity of the story by working from implied conversation. Odysseus is an autocrat and rarely allows his companions' voices to intrude upon his own, and Homer frequently takes over from Odysseus as narrator. Direct speech comes sometimes. Odysseus, in the house of the Phaiakians telling the story, relates how when he says to his men that far from going home, they must follow Circe's advice and journey to Hades:

'So I spoke, and the inward heart in them was broken.
They sat down on the ground and lamented and tore their hair out'
(*Odyssey* 10:566-7)

It is not hard to suggest dialogue to the participants from these lines, some are familiar with improvised theatre, one or two given lines is all they need for them to invent more of their own. The refrain ('No more delays!') comes easily as well. I have known them in this moment to sit down, clutch their hair, and scream, without my prompting, 'Not the underworld, Odysseus! Not the Underworld! Anything but the underworld! We want to go home!'

Speaking to the Dead

Love, passion, and strange wanderings clearly fascinate the students, but the realm of the dead has special significance. Students are always disappointed if, through time constraints, I am unable to include the journey to the underworld. They ask, Why didn't you do the part where he goes to see the dead spirits?

Speaking to the dead is a sensitive issue. Christian culture forbids it, associating it with seances, the calling up of spirits, and witchcraft, even though Christian folklore owes much to Homer and Virgil for popular images of hell and purgatory. There is nevertheless an atavistic need to commune with ancestors. We expect also from the dead that they will tell us the future:

'Death will come to you from the sea
in some unwarlike way',

Teiresias tells Odysseus (11:134-35). Proscribed by orthodox Christian practice, divination continues to fascinate. It is a short-cut to knowledge of hidden things. The dead we think must know more than we do, and we look to them for insights, we think they are wiser than the living. In fact Odysseus asks his mother for family gossip. 'Tell me about the wife I married, what she wants, what she is thinking' (ibid, 176-77). Odysseus believes that the dead can read minds, that they have the power to locate themselves in many places, where they can observe the lives of his son, his father, his wife, and is not disappointed.

Students have told me that the Christian teachings about death are disappointing, because they do not tell enough about what the dead do and where they go. Indeed, in the New Testament the information is scant. One student told me that when her grandmother died it was not enough to be told that she had gone to Heaven - she wanted to know much more. She felt that because there is not enough information, it was more likely that she would fear death, and felt that many people calling themselves Christian were afraid of death. I found the Greek myths more helpful, she said, in coping. They told me more about the journey of the dead, even if it was not factual. It is interesting to speculate on this. Why should a primitive myth give

more comfort than a myth which was promoted as the light of the world?

Joseph Campbell describes the way in which the folk myth deals with death as a passage: 'death, the ultimate disengagement. So myth has to serve both aims, inducting the young person into the life of his world then disengaging him. The folk idea unshells the elementary idea, which guides you to your inmost life' (Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, 70). The psychological satisfaction is greater. Joseph Campbell refers also to the Oedipus story, particularly to the story of the Sphinx: 'The riddle of the Sphinx is the image of life itself through time - childhood, maturity, age, and death. When without fear you have faced and accepted the riddle of the Sphinx, death has no further hold on you. The conquest of the fear of death is the recovery of life's joy' (ibid. 152).

I challenge Campbell's assumption in this section that death is as heavy a burden in the makeup of modern humanity as he makes out. Nevertheless dealing with death concepts and ridding the bond of fear frees and empowers. Underworld experiences become shamanistic initiations during which the journeying soul is able to imbibe insights available no-where else. Jung regarded it as the journey into the unconscious. Having developed his famous 'collective unconscious' theory, he used it to explain why some dreams included images from myth. Going down into dark places is the exploration of ancient memories that still exist, according to the theory, within the modern psyche through the reptilian brain. Campbell describes the shaman as someone 'who has an overwhelming psychological experience that turns him totally inward. The whole unconscious opens up, and the shaman falls into it. I enter the earth. I travel a long way. When I emerge, I'm climbing threads. Then you return to where everyone is ' (Campbell, *The Power of Myth* 85-7). Entering Mother Earth and re-emerging is the renewal experience, and this is why Circe commanded Odysseus to do this journey. This is why young people are fascinated by the underworld, and why they want me to take them there. It is a symbolic shedding of old skins and taking on a new one, and perhaps gaining insights obtainable in no

other way. Experiencing the underworld with Odysseus or Aeneas is the students' opportunity to enter that forbidden place, to take part in the curiosity the living have about life after death, witness and be a part of conversations with those whose earthly lives are over. When I do include it, the atmosphere alters to intense, quiet absorption. The audience become the shades of the dead, and I give them names of heroes and other departed to call out to Odysseus or Aeneas as they tread through the shadows.

Divination and prophecy are leading motives for having speech with the dead, for the living expect the dead to know much more. Teiresias does not disappoint expectations. He has to drink blood to prophesy, a bonus for vampires in the audience, although by the grace of Zeus he was at least left with his mind intact, more than was generally given to the dead. Some students take morbid delight in creeping about as shades, speaking in sepulchral voices that could only come from the grave. In the *Aeneid*, the underworld sequence seems to go on forever, about a thousand lines, a third longer than the underworld sequence in the *Odyssey*. There is high ritual, and girls who love performing give the Sybil of prophecy all they've got, standing within a vast dark cave, 'Her breast heaved, her wild heart grew large with passion' crying out in portentous voice, 'Now is the time to ask your destinies!' (*Aeneid*, 6: 46, 50). One or two students doing the Sybil have with high piercing tones caused goosebumps and tingling spines, while the audience 'with rushing voices/ Carrying the responses of the Sybil' (*Aeneid*, 6: 43) chant the destiny line back to her with eerie wails. From Virgil's descriptions, 'Earth rumbled underfoot, forested ridges/Broke into movement, and far howls of dogs /Were heard across the twilight' (6:255-7) interior atmospheres and decoration are melodramatic and gothically romantic. The students revel in the list of horrors that Virgil includes: war crouching on the doorstep, age and disease, false dreams, monsters harpies and ghosts, vipers writhing in Discord's hair (6:270-90). Because of the emotional involvement in the story, they are having close encounters with the stuff of nightmares, and I have had students use the phrase 'virtual

reality' for what went on in the underworld of their imagination. They seem to love 'playing ghosts' in Virgil's horror castle of an underworld, but it needs two hours if I am to include the underworld as well as the passion of the queen.

Homeward Journeys

Early in the story there are references to home. Odysseus regards no place on earth more pleasant than his home in Ithaca. The men echo the pain of being deprived of a return. I move the team working with me into drama and dance, as they ply the oars, and dance with the lotus eaters. I take an interlude here to teach basic Greek dancing. The audience does the la-la, and all in front of my backdrop do the dancing, arms on shoulders, feet stamping loudly. Then I go back to the script, after ad libbing about beautiful women with flowers in their hair - I have Odysseus crying out to his men, warning them of the euphoric phantasies of the lotus blossom

Do you want to lose your direction home?

Whereas the actual line is

'feeding on lotus, and forget the way home' (*Odyssey* 9:97).

Returning to the mourned-for home is one of the most ancient desires. Jack Kerouac in *Lonesome Traveller* writes 'I pictured myself with grave face pointed seaward through the final Gate of Golden America never to return...shrouds of gray sea dripping from my prows' (Kerouac 82), an intensely Odyssean image. Much modern literature concerns setting out maybe never to return, words that elicit a shriek from Bilbo Baggins while listening to Thorin outlining the dangers of the impending quest. In the Lotus Eaters episode, it is as if the

voyagers have gone to a party, have drunk too much and want to lie down with the women and never mind the consequences. To hell with getting home. Yet this is still their greatest inward desire.

Losing direction or 'losing the plot' as the idiom exemplifies, or 'losing it' is another resonance. Mark Turner talks about the spatial relationship of stories to life direction - 'The inability to locate one's own focus, viewpoint, role with respect to conventional stories of leading a life is pathological and distressing' (Mark Turner 134). Puzzling out directions forms a major turning point in thrillers - pursuit, detection, running, returning, running again. The theme of direction is announced in the invocation and several times the phrase occurs 'they lost their homecoming' where the homecoming is reified. Without direction, homecoming never happens.

The participants dance intoxicated, as the storyteller now says, with humour and merriment amongst the lotus eaters. The drug culture makes it into the classics, they're delighted by that, but they also hear the warning of Odysseus - 'you will lose your direction forever' - and sometimes wag their fingers at one another when he speaks it. When he drags them away from the girls doing the lotus eaters, I give them the following words:

You will regret leaving us forever!
In your time of pain, you will long for us!

Then I send the young women whooping, into the hills. Which means that the participants, enacting Dionysian maenads, dance through the hall where the performance is taking place, leaping on forms and benches, while the young men at the front gaze at them with longing, as I reiterate when the last maenad has fallen silent. It is the dreamed journey leading homeward to women that these men long for, despite the delays of random and transition goddesses.

Then to regain story momentum, I direct my Odysseus into reassembling the crew - they take their positions at oars and stern. They are rowing now, Odysseus is standing elevated on a box for the stern. I incantate words I have used before:

Over the waste of Poseidon's ocean they went,
until they were wrecked and perished,
Odysseus himself was saved -

I must bring him washed up on Calypso's shores even if we have not got there yet, or left those shores earlier. The story must move.

The Return

In performance, time goes by quickly. The seconds are ticking. The internal editor within tells me I must bring Odysseus back to Ithaca before the bell destroys the magic. The essential of course is returning to his house, drawing of the bow, his revenge, and recognition by Penelope. Her power is immense at this moment, and the girl doing the role knows it. With a good Odysseus he will mime the bending and stringing and firing of arrows swiftly and robustly. Then comes the moment when instead of saying 'My love! Come to my arms!' she offers to make up a bed for him on the porch. The uncertainty becomes clear. She is not sure of him. The Odysseus turns to me asking for guidance. I remind him of the proofs that Odysseus gave, the bed he made from the olive tree that only Odysseus would know about. The student smiles with relief and explains, 'You remember our bed'. She gives her acceptance and recognition then, 'only my husband could have known that' Then comes the embrace. I say, And they fell into one another's arms, and often, they do in fact embrace, and if they do, then I add lines,

'she could not let him go from the embrace of her white arms,
Dawn of the rosy fingers would have dawned on their weeping'

(*Odyssey*, 23:239-40).

On one occasion the students doing the roles were in fact an inseparable couple. The moment of return is visceral and in all of literature provokes a powerful response.

Going Places from Far Away

Moments like this in the narrative movement possibly stimulate a desire to travel through a vicarious evocation of the travelling experience, inward mind journeys and outward journeying. The first, focussed as it is on places where transformational events occurred, such as Athens, or Rome, prompts the urge to feel the aura of the mystery by standing on the very stones. That is when the external journey begins. Schools are arranging trips to Greece - as one of the teachers told me,

The kids are so thrilled to actually see - one parent said, Lizzie's still on about the Acropolis, she said, I can't believe I'm actually *standing* here, she'd studied the Parthenon in Classics, so the trips are a highlight - one student who's left school last year went to Italy and he emailed me and said, I have just seen the Francois vase!...another one, a boy, came to see me. After bursary he's just off, he's going to Italy'.

(*Teachers' Interviews*).

Journeys both metaphorical and physical are happening because of Classical Studies. Sometimes the parents through their student offspring become so enamoured of the subject that they want to go to Greece also - 'Well my Mum loves to talk about it too I mean she never took it but when she goes away she likes looking at all the old stuff' (*Students' Interviews*).

But journeys are not always what one expects or wants. Upon the journey, there is occasionally a place where you are stuck, where you seem to be going no-where, as in the Godot-like Waiting Place in Dr Seuss's epic journey for junior audiences, *Oh, The Places You'll*

Go!

The Waiting Place for Odysseus is the Isle of Calypso, where Odysseus experiences a seven-year delay before moving on. Jean Houston identifies the hero with the reader, placing the reader in that waiting space where you find yourself 'caught for a long time on the island of frustration that you realise only at the last moment was also a place of integration, of gestation' (Houston, *The Hero and the Goddess* 71-72).

This remark is peculiarly relevant to isolated New Zealanders. I refer back to a comment in my Introduction, 'It seems odd that Classical Studies should make headway in a country so far from the Parthenon'. There is an isolation felt in this country, exemplified in John Mulgan's *Man Alone*. Written in 1939, it expresses a feeling of isolation and aloneness which for New Zealanders has been ongoing, living in a Eurocentric world, on two islands that seem so far away. While glad to be where you are and glad of your culture identity, nevertheless there is a schism dividing your longings towards Europe, and, when you leave it, your own home. While post-colonial societies inevitably feel isolated, and illusory as that attitude can be, nevertheless we are closer to the South Pole than to the Mediterranean. Thus our antipodean diaspora. It may be that young New Zealanders still feel that they are marking time before leaving to face the big journeys and find directions in their own lives. In those journeys, they seek also to touch the stones of their cultural origins. This has happened too, but slightly differently, in Australia. When Ancient History was introduced into schools there, 'the subject benefited from the "ethnic" trend of the 1970s and 1980s in which the children of migrants of Mediterranean origin used it as a way of finding their roots' (Green 4). P.V. Glob was surprised that his published accounts of the long-dead preserved in bogs elicited such interest: 'Children wrote thanking me for a thrilling story and saying that they included me in their prayers at night' (Glob 16). In fact, the whole book as he explains is a 'long letter' in answer to questions from English schoolgirls in 1962 who became obsessed by bog people, for of course it

is a narrative of origin, the story of whence we come.

The slow growth of this kind of fascination led in the end to an increasing fascination with stories of origin, a theme that Classical Studies is steeped with, a gradual steeping which has made a heady brew. Books like Glob's *The Bog People* and Alex Haley's *Roots* (1976) were part of the yeast, which in the proving led to genealogical frenzy and the asking of big questions - *Where have I come from, who were my ancestors, who am I and where is it all leading me*, are questions that fertilise the ground for Classical Studies. Origin and search are integral to major epics encountered in the subject.

Epics in performance solidify the bones that hold the body of our culture. for imbibing these stories means further reflection on primal themes. Delving into history and myth, and reading ancient philosophy, stimulates the desire to face big questions on an inward level and prepares the psyche for beholding and understanding its various aspects. The student interviews confirm this -

'I'm also quite interested in religion. I go through periods of believing in certain things, seeing how people looked for answers and turned to their gods so long ago and how they answered their problems is quite fascinating how they had so many gods for so many different things, how their gods weren't perfect...actually more human than humans in some ways'

(Students' Interviews).

In analysing these remarks, one notices firstly that this student is interested in answers, which reinforces Ryman's comments in Vandenberg's article (see Chapter One) regarding the need of students to explore big questions. Without mentioning Socrates, this student implies the Socratic method in the phrase 'how people looked for answers', justifying Martha Nussbaum's sense of the need to push for teaching the Socratic method in colleges.

In his words, 'more human than human' he indicates that the gods radiated an 'essential'

image of what it is to be a human being, which opens up discussion on Joseph Campbell's perception that 'a god is a personification of a motivating power or a value system that functions in human life and in the universe - the powers of your own body and of nature. The myths are metaphorical of spiritual potentiality in the human being' (Campbell, *The Power of Myth* 22). The student in recognising that the gods were '*more human than human*' has indicated how easy he feels it is to establish a close rapport with these kinds of gods. Jehovah, for example, is not human. He comes from the desert, a patriarch who arose from a 'bearded legend' to quote words uttered by Rod Steiger in the movie, *The Pawnbroker*, 1964. He is far from human, and not easily loved. His wrath inspires fear and awe, but you do not feel intimate with him. This student felt the humanness of the Greek gods, who for him are expressing an essentialism of what it is to be human. With Jehovah and Jesus, we stand in a mimetic relation to them. This theme Thomas a Kempis developed in his *Imitation of Christ*, a position that tends to establish relationships through hierarchies, and to encourage the reader copy the virtues of Jesus. But this student saw the gods as an interior expression of who we are. It perhaps makes more sense therefore to journey with these gods who provide us with keys to unlocking our potential.

Classical Studies is sourced in Mediterranean culture, one of the many that claim to be a 'cradle of civilisation', or as a student expressed it, 'because that's what everything is based on, like everything in Europe is based on all this' (*Students' Interviews*). Rocking in this cradle, young people journey towards the Mediterranean metaphorically and later, physically - because many students are inspired to travel there. Before 'the big O.E.', stories are available as vicarious experience.

The pulling power of epics for young people in New Zealand can possibly therefore be traced to a desire to explore the wider world before actually escaping these isolated islands. Houston uses the word *paligenesia* for this process, (Houston, *The Hero and the Goddess* 73)

which is life renewed and deepened. I believe that Classical Studies enables this process to begin in young people who have had little contact with inner development.

The stories are a training ground for the journey itself. Hyemeyohsts Storm in his book *Seven Arrows* makes a similar point:

'Whenever we hear a Story, it is as if we were physically walking down a particular path that it has created for us. Everything we perceive upon this path or around it becomes part of our experience, both individually and collectively'
(Storm, 16-17).

During the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad* or any of the epics I tell, the audience is hearing the story, responding antiphonally, and some of them are walking it physically, in the company of the storyteller. Physical activity does affect inner worlds, and in mimetic activities within storytelling it is highly effective in stimulating deep, loud and energetic responses. Kinetic experience is strongly linked to memory - action songs for example result in a powerful imprint which can be reactivated years later. Art forms involving movement were in ancient times synthesised. Story, dance, drama and singing occurred as an organic whole. Taking a Jungian approach, it is possible that through a kinetic approach to storytelling, ancient memories are reactivated within the collective unconscious. It becomes a ritual enactment, and Ernie Bradford, while discussing the idea that Greek aristocracy and intellectuals through philosophy had killed the Olympian gods, points out that ordinary people need 'ritual and ceremony to help transcend the apparent hopelessness of the human condition' (Bradford, 198). In fact it enables us to have dialogue about ourselves with ourselves, by presenting analogous ways of enacting or expressing our experiences. Without ritualised enactment, certain puzzling issues (relationships with elders, life directions) are much harder to accurately construct. 'Game playing' as a way of looking at interactions has already been a useful way of talking about human behaviour, thanks to sociologists like Goffman, and Geertz talks about the work of Victor Turner who 'developed

a conception of "social drama" as a regenerative process' (Geertz, *Local Knowledge* 27). This process dissolves blockages that prevent understanding, allowing us to move past the problem that has entrapped us in one place, because enacting a story means that you must move on to the finish, you must perform the work. Stopping to analyse only happens in rehearsal. Performance paradoxically is the 'real thing'. It completes the cycle and sometimes unleashes huge emotion allowing for truthful reactions which sometimes operate more covertly during distinctly cerebral analysis with expectations of objectivity. It transforms abstract across-the-table agonising about our plight into action that crystallises our experience into an observable shape. In the 'theatre-state' of Bali, all of life is expressed in story, dance and theatre 'namely, a replication of the world of the gods that is at the same time a template for that of men' (Geertz, *Local Knowledge*: 31).

Because of events in the story that parallel the lives of those who walk it - loss of fathers, the separation of lovers, searching for home - the story becomes a highly personal journey. From what students have said themselves, events along the journey echo moments in their own lives. I believe this is one of the keys to understanding their enthusiasm for Classical Studies. And in my presentations, they actually walk the path. For this reason, I take another path by way of illustration through the parallel line of *The Divine Comedy*.

Personal Journey Through Epic

A personal journey with epic movement is *The Divine Comedy* which provides us with fascinating perceptions about the psychology behind the preparation for a spiritual journey, the setting out and the continuance. In the *Comedy*, as in my performances, the narrative journey happens in the company of a guide. Virgil accompanies the hero (Dante) on his journey through the seven circles of hell, and Dante, beginning his journey that goes from Inferno to Purgatorio to Paradiso, addresses his guide:

'Are you indeed that Virgil, are you the spring

Which spreads abroad that wide water of speech?' (Dante, Canto 1, 79-80). Apart from the interrogative praise which fastens traveller to mentor, Dante's metaphor of speech as water bubbling from a spring is an important one. To lead a journey as metaphysical and cosmic as the *Odyssey*, or the *Comedy*, an advanced level of eloquence is required to guide, comment and inspire. The poet-narrator offers his mind and hand to those who set out on such a journey, a significant figure who possesses a Muse-inspired tongue enabling interpretive commentary on events and personalities encountered on the path. The speech of those accompanying and following the poet is released so that they at that time and in the future will be able themselves to describe, narrate and interpret in powerful language their own journeys. Hirsch quotes Emerson on this mimetic theme: 'In every work of genius we recognise our own rejected thoughts - they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty' (Hirsch 84). Thus it is that the travelling soul can hold discourse with epics.

Near the beginning of the second canto, the poet addresses the Muses, and directs the words also to himself, who is about to undergo the journey:

'O Muses! O profound inclination, help me!
O memory, which recorded what I saw,
Here will be shown what there is noble in you'
(Canto 2, 7-9).

The poet-storyteller, through whom the Muse speaks, channels memories which enable participants, listeners and future audience (who will read these words) to learn 'what there is noble in you'. Here dangles a carrot on the stick, indeed. If you undergo this perilous journey, you will become aware of the noblest parts of your nature. Even so, Dante speaks to Virgil with apprehension:

'Poet, you who are to be my guide,

Consider whether my strength is adequate
Before you trust me to make this terrible passage'
(ibid., 10-12).

In May 2000 I was preparing myself for the presentation of a plenary session for the winter Classics conference focussing on Greek and Roman drama, when I suffered a profound bereavement. I lost a close friend to sudden death. On that night when a voice on the phone gave me the news, I was also studying Joyce's *Ulysses*, bizarrely at that moment I was reading lines from the Hades section, 'He had a sudden death. The best death, Mr Bloom said' (Joyce, *Ulysses* 92). For at least half a year I felt that I had entered the underworld, that I was accompanying my friend through that 'terrible passage'. My strength failed utterly sometimes. Nothing in this world was real. Standing in front of audiences I saw them through a mist and was barely able to speak. My memory was affected, disastrous for a storyteller. I was somewhere else. Nonetheless, during that terrible journey, in a strange way, knowing the myths and the stories enabled me to reflect as through a glass darkly upon my condition. By observing shadows from mythic journeys, I was in my split and hardly sane self, able eventually to accompany myself into the world of light, slowly 'coming to my senses' from the experience and finding that my interior world had enlarged and that I knew my *self* better than before.

It takes courage to begin a journey of eschatological experiences and a journey in which questions of personal identity arise. The 'terrible passage' is a key to the journey, for a crossing over involves change and transformation, and to endure this requires strength of purpose and anyone who treads a long path must at some point face crossing over.

'Why should I go there ?' (*Divine Comedy*, Canto 2, 31).

The current idiom, 'let's not go there' , implies that to discover certain difficult truths a

journey must be undertaken - frequently with reluctance.

Continuing the theme of personal journeys - which is how I introduced Dante's *Divine Comedy*, an epic with a highly personalised style - it is worth pausing to briefly hear testimonies of personal journeys. The year before Classical Studies eclipsed Accounting at Bursary, a number of women in *Faces of the Goddess* published accounts of their own personal spiritual journeys in New Zealand. Lea Holford made an interesting remark:

'New Zealand is an extroverted society. People often don't believe in the inner life - that answers and action come from within. The education system doesn't teach it'

(Kearney ed. 37).

Holford's experience possibly comes from weariness with a muddy ball-kicking culture, and a disenchantment with a monetarist driven education system. Nevertheless, it seems that New Zealanders have awoken to the need to acknowledge inner as well as outer, and if she had been sitting in Classical Studies classes discussing Socrates she might well have changed her mind. Reading notice-boards outside supermarkets and community centres is also revealing. Experiential workshops are frequently advertised, and the words 'inner journey' are used often. While this phrase has become a cliché, it gesticulates to us from posters, brochures and books, telling us that this is a journey we must prepare for. Without map or guide we stumble like the blind one, along the way facing love, loss, and passion. This forms my meditation for the following chapter.

Chapter Three

PASSIONS, DEMONS and MONSTERS

Love and Passions

I mentioned to classics teachers I was interviewing, that other teachers had expressed concern to me that subject syllabuses are too loaded. The opportunity for focussing on big life issues and ideas was diminishing in New Zealand secondary schools. I got an immediate and impassioned response. The following remarks (quoted at length in the Introduction) came from a teacher in the interviews after I'd remarked that other teachers I had spoken to over the years felt that with the certificate and test driven education, students were not given the opportunity to talk about important ideas :

'that Socrates one, What is love? but the society we live in is so driven, I mean the kids here are so busy they often don't have time to sit down and explore that type of thing.'

(Teachers' Interviews).

The mystery of love is a crucible of human emotion, its flowering brings happiness, ignoring it means heartlessness. Love stories bring rivetted attention. I notice this when I vary my structure and start off with the isle of Calypso, immediately following introductions invocations and partings. Lovers are who they want to see! This is life! At other times I start with the point at which Odysseus is leaving Calypso. I have been giving this sequence more prominence because the audiences respond enthusiastically to Calypso, who makes love to Odysseus for seven years. Houston takes this seven-year period as the completion of a life cycle. During this seven years Odysseus was woven back together having been torn apart

physically and psychically by the terrible vicissitudes of war and absence. The sequence is often perceived as a frustrating delay for Odysseus, ensnared by a lustful woman. Houston gives us a different view.

However, for the audience, Calypso provides their first love story in the *Odyssey*. Later there will be more, with Nausikaa, and Circe's dark passion. But Calypso is a full-blooded nymph goddess of wood and isle, passionate and possessive. I have a Calypso with me by this time. Here are two teenagers standing side by side in front of maybe a hundred of their peers, uttering the ancient words of distraught lovers. Finally after years of love-making, Odysseus sits on a rock 'weeping tears he looked out over the barren water' (5: 84). When Zeus commands Hermes to tell Calypso to let Odysseus go, Calypso's reply seems to resonate with these young women, who often declare the words with bold passion to Hermes - 'You gods are so jealous! Just when I have a man to myself, you take him away...'

(Actual lines: 'You are hard-hearted, you gods, and jealous beyond all creatures beside' (118-9)

plus, 'I gave him my love and cherished him, and I had hopes also' *Odyssey* 5: 118, 135). They will sometimes add lines of their own fabrication. Some already know what it is like for a man to vanish from their lives.

Though Calypso is not with the audience for long, Odysseus lived seven years with her. Longer than he has ever spent with Penelope. He is the vagrant who finds a beautiful woman on the desert island, and she is the lonely woman who finds a young man lying unconscious on her shore. She is Lorna Doone awaking John Ridd with kisses. By this time, participating students are well in role, archetypal lovers in a well rehearsed scene.

This will not be the first time that Odysseus is cast up on a shore with a beautiful woman nearby. Nausikaa is next, though she has not the power of a goddess to confidently invite this stranger into the perfumed grottoes of passion. She must operate in ordinary social

structures. When the student doing Odysseus mimes holding a bough 'to hide his male parts' (*Odyssey* 6:129) in front of Nausikaa, there is a sense of camaraderie and fun. This is boy meets girl in embarrassing circumstances, cause for hilarity as Nausikaa and her friends watch Odysseus applying the limpid olive oil on his briny skin in the river, until he chases them away with the words, 'For I feel embarrassed/ In the presence of lovely-haired girls to appear all naked' (*Odyssey* 5: 221-222). The girls doing Nausikaa and her friends run away with glee.

Soon, Odysseus stands in the Hall of the Phaiakians with Alkinous and Arete. When he finally tells his story to them I look about for someone who can become Demodokus. He is a blind singer of the Phaiakians, and I tend to seek out someone who sartorially connotes a rock star. I say: 'The King called, Where is the blind singer, Demodokus?' I gesture to the inchoate bard, and when he gets up to come, I say, 'But he was blind - he needs a companion' gesturing to another to guide him. He walks as if blind to the front, where I give him an imaginary lyre, and I say, 'Demodokus, the blind singer, began to sing of all those young men who fell at Troy'. In these circumstances, the student doing Demodokus has sometimes burst into song, opera, rock mode, or rap. Some indeed have had theatre sports training. Since they have been reading the story prior to my arrival, some who sing manage to sing of Hector of the shining helm, and Achilles, and Helen who launched a thousand ships, and one got carried away enough to sing :

And millions of tears soaked the earth!
Millions of heroes fell to the earth!

while he strummed upon the harp I gave him, and when this happens, no one disbelieves in the Muse. During this, Nausikaa speaks to Odysseus, knowing that he will never marry her:

'Goodbye, stranger, and think of me sometimes when you are
back at home, how I was the first you owed your life to' (*Odyssey* 8:461-2).
Unrequited love and transitory men are themes ancient and current, and attract lively

attention from both sexes, but female students become highly reactive, and this is not uncommon when I am doing Virgil's *Aeneid*. Aeneas, hard at work building Carthage, is reminded of his quest by Mercury, and decides to abandon Dido for destiny. He gives orders to leave immediately, but delays breaking the news to Dido of his imminent departure. He comes across as a legless man 'He would look for the right occasion, the easiest time to speak' (*Aeneid*, 4: 295). I have heard the girls call out, 'Yeah, right!' and girls become thoroughly incensed when Dido speaks to Aeneas: 'Because of you, I lost my integrity...liar and cheat!' (*Aeneid*, 4: 324, 366) It is an ancient scene, yet modern. Students are now possessed of a vocabulary of conflict, and talk eloquently about it. They have seen it before on television, and some of them have experienced it for themselves. Desertion by men can bring despair.

It is this despair that takes us to the suicide of Dido. A tense time at the top of the pyre. Anna holds her sister, dying Dido, with the wind whistling in and out of the wound. I have often been moved by an awareness that in the audience at that second is a gathering together of young women, I become aware of a sisterhood, as they watch one of their number anguishing over a woman whose heart has been broken by a flint-begotten man suckled by tigresses, (*Aeneid*, 4:366) the love of her life who has abandoned her for something he calls destiny. How gently does the student doing Iris snip in mime the hair from Dido's head to release her tormented soul. What did this soul say to Aeneas in the world of the dead? Nothing. She turns away when he approaches. Rejection and unfinished business. The student doing Aeneas at this point has been known to call out in frustration - after imploring - 'Well say something!' Dido has nothing to say. Aeneas is the man who comes up to the door to apologise, and has the door shut in his face. The boys in the audience look glum at this moment. The girls grin.

Sons and Fathers

The demons we must do battle with are ancient and still arise. In the seventies and eighties men learnt about issues women have with men, and none are now repressed. Violence is one, and absence is another. Homer avoids neither. Classical Studies provides an informed forum where these urgent discussions may take place. Joyce in *Ulysses* follows a Telemachian trail - like Homer, he begins with the journeys of the young man, the son. There are others who express issues with an urgent voice, addressing male violence and absence of fathers. Nussbaum invokes the Socratean approach to establishing dialogues on issues: 'Socrates ' inquiry opens up questions that are of urgent importance for a culture committed to justice' (Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, 24).

Women's groups sprang up, while men were still into race clubs, barbers and rugby. But they learned. In 1990 Robert Bly wrote *Iron John* , which then became a widely-read work on maleness and mentoring. While I regard the story he chooses and the interpretation he places upon it as sometimes over-precious, it is an important comment on male issues. He writes directly about the destructive side of men but argues that wanton destruction is uncreative male strength, which presents as a wild man. He tries to persuade that the Wild Man should still be a mentor for men, and a source of strength, saying, 'The Wild Man, who has examined his wound, resembles a Zen priest, a shaman, more than a savage' (Bly, x). He sees the attack on masculinity as an offensive from the dark side of the matriarch, the poisonous octopusian side of the mother. From Bly's view, it is the domineering mother who looks for ways to tame the wildness of the 'hill-kept beast' she might see in her son. In the absence of a man in the house, there is a son-man whom she can love and rely on, though she is reluctant to give up power. This aspect of mother-son becomes visible when Telemachos cries out in the presence of his mother, 'I am the power in this house' (*Odyssey* 1:359)

Bly argues that many young males are ill-equipped to seize the rough-and-tumble of independent existence. He calls them 'soft' young men for whom the key is still lying under

their mother's pillow (an image from Grimms' *The Iron John*, which Bly uses as illustration). Bly believes that conscious awareness of wild strength within makes the man whole. Odysseus appears before Nausikaa as a 'hill-kept beast', an image Homer summons again when 'hill-kept' becomes the epithet for Polyphemus also. Naked and holding a branch over his pubis, the hero appears to this woman first as a wild man. Bly passionately argues that to remove this aspect from the man seriously damages a man's ability to express his maleness, and cites examples of boys with absent fathers who have no strength or are not able to express it.

Sons and fathers is one of the big issues under discussion in families today. The condition of absent fathers has been linked to youth suicide, to depression and instability. Bly refers to German psychologist Alexander Mitscherlich, who in his book *Society Without the Father* postulates the theory that if the son does not see what his father is doing through the seasons of the year, 'a hole will appear in the son's psyche, and the hole will fill with demons who tell him that his father's work is evil and that the father is evil' (Bly 21). Telemachos, son of Odysseus, at no time considers his father evil, but he is indeed utterly destabilised by his father's endless wanderings, for Odysseus though undoubtedly possessed of heroic qualities nevertheless is an absent father. Today's students are often children of absent fathers, with little father-son connectivity. There is the ancient doubt of paternal identity, despite maternal reassurance as we read in the words of Telemachos:

'My mother says indeed I am his. I for my part /do not know.
Nobody really knows his own father'
(*Odyssey* 1: 215-16).

Homer was not to know that the father-son relationship would be central to the religious myth that has dominated western culture for our past two thousand years, crystallised in the cry of Jesus to his father, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mark 21:34)

Telemachos pre-dated this despairing abandonment a thousand years before, suffering as a son does who needs to know where his father is - 'For a child endures many griefs in his house when his father is gone away, and no others are there to help him' (4: 164-5). Telemachos at least has the advantage of eventually experiencing the physical return of his father, while Jesus never does. Psychologically the Odyssean story is much more satisfying, because both Odysseus and his son meet their fathers once again, while in the Christian myth Jesus dies forsaken, with a vague promise of death releasing him out of body to an incorporeal father.

During the telling, I return to Telemachos on several occasions, swinging the camera back home, as Homer does often, where the suitors are demanding of Penelope that she marry one of them. Telemachos complains to Athene of the suitors, and speaks openly to his mother in the strength of his early manhood, in an attempt to usurp and depose her authority, saying : 'mine is the power in this household' (*Odyssey* 1: 359). I return to this theme in the chapter on monsters, where the cave is considered as a womb that can destroy as well as nurture. Maui the Maori hero in attempting to achieve immortality attempts to climb back into the womb, instead of attempting to achieve the independent existence of a young man. It is an Oedipal and insane act. There is something there that we need to know about, there is something we need to face. The destructive and devouring aspect of the mother, implicit for example in the Hindu goddess Kali who exercises both creative and destructive functions, is an issue for young men who must face the test of manhood. They arrive at this test without rites of passage which formerly eased them through that difficult time.

Telemachos in attempting to take power without the transition through the presence of a father, rebukes the suitors, telling them that they are 'eating up one man's livelihood, without payment' (*Odyssey* 1: 377). I remember how a student who did this role told me once that during the long-time absence of his father, his mother often turned to him 'as if I was my father' and at other times arguing with him saying, 'Don't you lord it over me' . It was through the

experience of becoming Telemachos within the telling of the story that he at last began to understand the dynamics that can exist between son and mother when the father is absent. The same student was interested in the double-edged 'Nobody really knows his father' (ibid 216) for in his case the father left when he was five and did not return until he was fifteen, when his parents were then reconciled. In all those years, at dinner-time his older sister set a place for their father. He recalls when he was seven that he 'ran away from home to look for my dad' not knowing where he was of course, and was picked up by a neighbour who found him by a river saying, 'I'm looking for my daddy'.

The author of the *Odyssey* must have considered this primal search of son for father significant enough for him to have placed it in Book One, which begins with Athene urging Telemachos to go and search for his father. He hears rumours of him everywhere, himself travelling for years in search of his father, returning to Ithaca at the same time as his dad comes back, thus sighting his father in his nineteenth year. Young people enacting this story might perhaps be enacting their own lives. By doing so it may help to weave together a holding pattern of their own existence, resolving a crucial issue in their own lives. Here, this happens in a psychodramatic manner, text-based therefore obliquely personal and not requiring the direct nakedness of personal vulnerability. And while Odysseus has no daughters, the father issue resonates profoundly for young women also.

The expression, 'I had it from my father' still exists in our idiom, and was used for example by Shakespeare in *Henry viii*, 1.iv.26. But if no father is around to give forth with tribal or accumulated personal wisdom, it ceases to have meaning.

The Monster in the Cave

The Cyclops sequence is a favourite, and Classics teachers often specifically ask me to ensure that I include it. Why?

The Cyclops story has the same relation to epic adventures as Noyes' *The Highwayman* has to poetry, a poem which though a classroom cliché, is always successful, probably owing to its rhythmically narrative power, high romance and blood. Similarly the Cyclops is the most famous of Odysseus' lunatical incursions into high-risk chaos fields, the one Odyssean adventure that is universally known, and I have confirmed this many times by asking audiences of eight years upwards if they have heard of it. The monstrous repels yet fascinates. An interviewer asked Maurice Sendak about his more bizarre illustrations in children's books, and he replied that 'I think children read the internal meanings of everything'. (Wintle & Fisher 27). What is the internal meaning then of the Cyclops story?

While gore and vomit are repulsive, there is a simultaneous fascination in beholding it. As John Cleese in his movie *The Meaning of Life* feeds a cyclopean devourer one last anchovy, Mr Creosote explodes in vomit which has been accruing in buckets throughout the scene. Homer is by no means averse to similarly playing up to his disgusted yet magnetised audience - 'the wine gurgled up from his gullet/with gobs of human meat. This was his drunken vomiting' (*Odyssey* 9: 373-4). The depiction of revolting body fluids has been notoriously exploited in horror and 'bad taste' movies, yet this is not the only aspect in the Cyclops episode that arouses fascination. Marina Warner in *No Go the Bogeyman* furthers the 'why the cyclops' discussion with the question, 'Who eats and who gets eaten?' (Warner 12) which she extends to ask, 'Who consumes and who is consumed?' (15, *ibid*). The hunter-gatherer survival society remains with us in economic terms, the larger corporation will gobble up the smaller rival, and monster metaphors are common enough in the business page. Hunting and pursuit have existed for fifty millennia, and in six millennia of recorded human history the threat of destruction by overwhelming forces receives frequent prominence. Those with large appetites appear to be winners.

Darwinian theory is tonic to the strong but a worry to the weak. From the troll under

the bridge ('I'm coming to eat you up!') to the boogeyman of American folklore, and children's stories told by nannies, the ever-lurking fear is being eaten by something bigger and more powerful than you. There is a degree of irony here, as 'nanny' derives from Latin and Italian, suggesting an old woman who sings lullabies. Why should we be sent to sleep with stories that have the potential to give us nightmares? Warner suggests it is a way of constructing defence against the unthinkable, and it is perhaps analogous to injecting a healthy organism with an ampoule of the threatening virus so the body knows how to deal with it. Warner also acknowledges the mourning and grieving voices of women, which call through the lullabies in mysterious ways.

The vaccine of fear is administered in repeated doses. In *Jack the Giant-Killer*, a giant utters the spine chilling 'Be he alive, or be he dead/ I'll grind his bones to make my bread' , a refrain also employed in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. And in the classic Croxall and L'Estrange edition of 160 Aesop's Fables, nearly a quarter of the tales concern devouring or the threat of being devoured.

The rise of the monster in children's fiction and the use of monster in SF indicates an acknowledgement of that amorphous deformed thing that assails us in the dark and can rip us apart. If monstrous forces control us, and enough perceive or believe it, then punk iconoclasm and neo-nihilism becomes an approved though negatively connoted art expression. There's nothing we can do - the monster is going to get us. The why of the equation is unknown. Only one thing is certain: we continuously reinvent monsters on both inner and outward levels. We have not ceased to be hunter-gatherers. There is always a destroyer that must in some way be dealt with.

Fascination with monsters includes facing monstrous parents or those who have become monstrous through abusive parents. The forest-roaming Humbaba appeals to Gilgamesh, saying: 'let me speak. I have never known a mother, no, nor a father who reared me. I was born

of the mountain' (Sandars 82).

The wild beast is a character in a story which continues to drive policy-makers of America - 'They [Iraq and other dictator states] are today's beasts in the forest, and they need to be tamed' (Elliott and Carney 101), suggesting that a sophisticated society like the USA is still enacting an ancient narrative. (Interestingly, *Gilgamesh* is a Middle Eastern epic - Humbaba has pursued kings into Middle America). There is always a threat, it is coming from some unknown and often dark place, and it is going to get us. In the 1950s and 60s it was the horror of Communism, in the late 1980s it was the chaos of destabilisation - communist regimes falling in Eastern Europe, the stock-market crashing - that threatened endless disturbance and change. In the 1990s, it was Saddam Hussein.

Yet it seems more likely that all this is simply the war conducted within our multiple identity natures, and that 'The enemy whom we force to wear the face of Death is a shadow-puppet, a necessary part of the staging of our mortality-immortality play' (Keen 136). If Keen is right, then we are inventing monsters to kill in order to protect our dream of immortality - if I can only destroy the monster, it means there is less threat of me being destroyed, and I might live longer if not forever. It is as well an affirmation that we are the fairest one of all, using the analogy of the mirror on the wall (Keen 109), and by inventing something so ugly as a witch or monster, the green-eyed monster jealousy is defeated, there is no need ever to feel envy again since no one can be envious of a monster.

Polyphemus is such a one - a drunkard, a greedy-guts and buffoon, as Warner explains to us. Later such characters in children's folktales become laughable giants, and the Cookie Monster of Sesame Street. Audiences enjoy the comedy of men escaping beneath the sheep, and laugh out aloud at the roaring of Polyphemus, his excess, and his deception by Odysseus - 'It is Nobody who is destroying me!' cries the cyclops to his friends.

But Polyphemus is by no means a laughing matter. For the loss of his eye he calls upon

his father Poseidon, god of the sea, to avenge him. The sea itself is of course the greatest swallower of all. Into the sea passes ships, men, treasures, lost cities. Interestingly, in early sculptures of Polyphemus, the eye is represented as concave, as a mouth. Charybdis is also a mouth, a localised vortex. Poseidon's ocean is a much larger one. Polyphemus is a child of the sea, the sea is a yawning gulf, like the eye portrayed as a lidless opening. It bears semblance in fact to his cave, like the eatery Mr Creosote inhabits where he functions mostly as an orifice.

The cave itself invites exploration. Along a seashore, children cry out, What's inside the cave? In its exploration, they are imitating ancient shamanic rituals in which the acolyte seeks esoteric knowledge within the secret spaces of the earth, wherein lie treasures, though the risk of destruction is present and acknowledged. The cave might collapse. There might be a dark horror waiting in the cave's maw to consume you, which though fearful may fascinate and draw you closer. The tide could rise and drown you. But the deep dark space of the cave ever draws explorers, in the same way that outer space itself invites exploration - for there is no bigger cave than space itself. Space travel is the cyclops' cave enlarged, to which Kubrick's voyagers travelled in *2001: Space Odyssey*, which finishes with a baby in a womb-bubble descending onto Jupiter. Therefore the cave is also a womb, a place we return to for nestling or to discover origins, or as Maui attempted in re-entering the vagina, to become immortal by re-entering the mother ship that launched us. Barbara Creed's comments on *Alien* project the view of the feminine monster as 'treacherous mother, the oral sadistic mother, the mother as primordial abyss'. (Creed 54). The explorers enter the body of the unknown space-ship through a 'vaginal' opening. Their journey inwards is the journey that Maui never quite made along a birth canal, right to the ovary itself. Maui was crushed by the contraction of the sphincter controlling entrance to the womb, the matrix, by the goddess when she was startled awake. Hine-nui-te-po crunched him in her groin with his legs wagging away outside, and no wonder for she awoke to find a man crawling into her womb. That matrix means womb must have given birth to a

clamour of comment from Jungians and Freudians about the matrix movies. Has the stance of Matrix protagonists become simply a wagging of legs? Is the womb a forbidden planet? Similarly, Oedipus could only enter Thebes where he sought his own origins by passing through a gap in the rock - suggestive again of a vaginal opening - but this gap was guarded by the Sphinx who posed a riddle which itself is a meditation on the three phases of life: babyhood, adulthood and old age. Therefore, the sight of a cave is more than the sight of a cave. It is the unknown of deep space, the birthing womb, the path to the source.

If according to Ryman, speaking in the Vandenberg article referred to in Chapter One, students through Classical Studies are seeking answers to big questions, like Where do I come from? Where am I going to? then the pulling power of the Cave of the Cyclops becomes explicable in terms of mother-son relationships and the journey to the centre of Gaia herself. While monsters nevertheless have become a little ho-hum, even teenagers quail when in the narration I use Homer's lines verbatim: 'he caught up two together and slapped them, like killing puppies,/against the ground, and the brains ran all over the floor, soaking/the ground' (9: 287-291). Shuddering students have told me that it is somehow more real than television, despite the visually explicit nature of television. Firstly the storyteller speaks in the present tense, it is as if he has been there. He suspends time as well as disbelief. Then the listeners constructing images within the cinema of the mind must do it twice, fictively and by analogy. Simultaneously they imagine the killing of puppies by slapping them on rock, and then the killing of men by slapping on rock. The interior camera produces two merging images. Returning to the storyteller as 'timelord', he convinces the audience of the now-ness of the story, projecting narrative through a hypnotic and imperative voice. One does well to remember that it is not an inscribed text that the audience is experiencing, it is someone right in front of the audience telling them that these things happened thus. An image on a screen can be relegated to 'just television'. It is harder to dismiss the living and spitting mouth, with a directness one

student expressed like this: 'just because it's a spoken story, that's quite interesting how it comes straight through' (*Students' Interviews*). Not only is it direct and 'in your face', the audience experiences it as 'heart felt', and even though the reasoning mind might cognitively in reflection afterwards recognise the fabulous nature of the story, the psychological truth it imparts lodges internally and may well affect the recipient more than allegedly factual stories, since 'We are sceptical towards stories that purport to be true - but at the same time, we are seduced by the utterly fantastic' (Lumby, in Hopkins 178)

Monster men abound in the epics. Humbaba, the wild forest monster defeated by Gilgamesh and Enkidu, Homer's Cyclops, and in modern times, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, King Kong or the Incredible Hulk. From early images of monsters the meiotic development of monster culture has produced a vast monster montage in popular culture. These images, from the Cookie Monster to Darth Vader, all acknowledge the monstrous which on a scale can begin as a good-humoured beast yet can move to the destructive power of Siva in a devolving mood. Maurice Sendak talking about Grimm says: 'They work on two levels: first, as stories; secondly, as the unravelling of deep psychological dramas' (Wintle & Fisher, 28). Nothing new there. Cinema has affirmed for audiences how horrible monsters can be, yet the monster continues to draw crowds. Joseph Campbell analyses it like this: 'The monster masks that are put on people in *Star Wars* represent real monster force in the modern world. When the mask of Darth Vader is removed, you see an unformed man, one who has not developed as a human individual, a strange and pitiful sort of undifferentiated face' (Campbell, *The Power of Myth* 144). Campbell develops the idea that Vader is 'a bureaucrat, living not in terms of himself but in terms of an imposed system' (ibid.). He feels that we are increasingly being governed by masked monsters, and that we ourselves are being stripped of our humanity, and given masks not of our own choosing. Fascination with the monstrous includes the desire to peel the mask away, while acknowledging that the monstrous exists within us. In Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*,

Max, shut away supperless in his bedroom-cave by parents exasperated with his tantrums, and wearing his monster costume, leaves the last traces of restraint behind and gives himself over to a monster's fury. He enters a dream-fantasy, engages in a frenzied dance with monsters, feasts, journeys over a big sea, then returns to himself, his rage spent, his catharsis complete, he discards the mask. Polyphemus the Cyclopes never peels away his monster's mask - as Vader does, to reveal the hero's father. Polyphemus wears no mask - he is the monster. And while Polyphemus is not the father of Odysseus, nevertheless he is symbolic of that monster-aspect of the father-parent, whose role is often the one who punishes. In this case the over-weening Odysseus is punished for audacity and pride, two infamous flaws of heroes.

In choosing a student to become Polyphemus, I look for someone large and hairy. This role gives permission and indeed an opportunity to roar out aloud, and to mime the terrible acts of destruction that the Cyclops is famous for. For the participant, it seems cathartic, yet always performed with plenty of good humour and much laughter. For a while, the participant puts on the mask of a monster, inviting Odysseus and his men to submit and be eaten, then to resist. Campbell recalls a ritual in New Guinea where a boy is made to fight a man with a mask, and the boy is told that the masked man is a god. The man lets the boy win, then puts the mask on the boy. Campbell comments, 'it's important that the mask is in no way defeated. Rather, putting the mask on the boy means, "Now you're a man. You've broken past the image as fact and understand the image as metaphor." ' The mask represents the power that is shaping the society and is shaping the boy. After the mask is put on him, he is a representative of that power' (Campbell, *This Business of the Gods* 68). There is something rather different going on in Homer's story, yet Campbell's story is still relevant. The participant enacting Polyphemus allows Odysseus to put out his eye. Horrific as the moment is, the monster and the mask are defeated. From Sendak's point of view, a 'deep psychological drama' has unfolded. We defeat the monster lurking in the cave, which frees us to leave those shores and ultimately to return

home. Polyphemus of course wears no mask. He is what he is. The ritual has become a nightmare, the one in which the mask becomes alive and reveals the essential horror in the reality behind it.

It is an acknowledgement of destructive forces that can deform our nature and prevent the healthy evolution of personality. Fromm presents more clues to why monsters take form. He discusses separatism and the desire for 'interpersonal fusion', remarks in talking about negative action: 'The failure to achieve it [interpersonal fusion] means insanity or self-destruction or destruction of others'. (Fromm, 22). In this passage he argues that without the unfolding of personal fulfilment and harnessing of creative forces, a deformity occurs that warps our ability to forward life direction and achieve connectivity with the rest of the human race. Certainly the rather one-eyed Cyclopes are an isolated tribe. Polyphemus denies Zeus, and there is every indication he is unused to company. There is no discernible 'interpersonal fusion' and the less connection the less he will care what he does to you. A recluse troglodyte has always been someone to be wary of.

The Cyclops is an enormous character in human shape who delights in eating men yet possesses a sharp intelligence, whose father is a god. It is beholding these last two qualities while knowing what he did to Odysseus's companions that makes the horror expansive. In practice, students adore this sequence, which cries out for choreography and dramatisation. Opportunity for improvised dialogue occurs when Odysseus leads his men to the Cyclops and near destruction:

'my companions spoke to me and begged me
to take some of the cheeses and get back quickly
to the ship again, and go sailing off across the salt water
it would have been far better their way '
(*Odyssey* 9: 225-230).

Odysseus appears to submit to inevitable destruction, for by remaining in the presence of a creature like that, he is defying good sense and invoking chaos and disorder which is exactly the curse that Polyphemus invokes for Odysseus and his household -

'let him come late, in bad case, with the loss of all his companions,
and find troubles in his household' (*Odyssey* 9: 533-34).

Participants at this point often spontaneously script lines like, It would have been better our way! We told you so! You wouldn't listen, you crazy man , easily suggested by a line like 'It would have been far better their way' . Since they are in role, the inventing of lines happens - partly depending of course on the group itself. The intention is for them to own the story, not as a replication of Homer's words although there is definitely some verbatim scripting from me, but as a way of accessing the story through their own lives and accessing their own lives through the story.

Apart from Jungian interpretations already touched on, another appeal is the risk. Odysseus stands on the edge and still survives the terror: 'the inward heart in us was broken/in terror of the deep voice and seeing him so monstrous' (9: 257-58) Odysseus confronts death-dealing Polyphemus and speaks authoritatively, his courage holds us in awe. Whatever form a monster takes, we rarely escape unscathed. To do battles with monsters, dragons, demons seems however a necessary initiation before further movement in life quest is possible.

Myth and Community

Myth is something participative, whether in a country's narrative or urban myth where we participate by telling it - again.

In primal myth we ritualise the story together. An aspect of the performance experience I have been describing that is both exciting and heartwarming - I cannot find a better word - is the communal element. Reading a text is something we do alone. Sometimes we read

bits aloud, around the class. But in story participation, individuals together with storyteller for a time create a community with the purpose of living and breathing the text. The facilitated participation includes physical enactment, collective narration and vocal participation. The ones remaining on the floor, who might conventionally be referred to as audience, become an integral part of a holistic experience through their participation in choral chanting and sound effects. They become the thunder and the howl of Poseidon's ocean, they become the sirens and the whisperings of the dead, they become the suitors shouting at Telemachos and Penelope, they become the voices of the other cyclops calling to Polyphemus outside his cave demanding to know who is destroying him and laughing at his reply, 'Nobody'. They might be required to provide dance rhythms with the 'la, la, la-la-la-la-la la la ' of Greek dance-song when the companions of Odysseus dance with the lotus eaters. The 'audience' is not there to listen only. They are voices and elementals. They are living the original meaning of the word 'audience' from Latin, 'audientia', meaning 'a hearing' , an opportunity to be heard, and have ceased to be an audience in the conventional meaning.

They have become a community of people, gathered together for a short time, to experience something akin to what ancient peoples experienced in ritually participating in the ploughing of earth at spring through song and story. Telling it together provides collectively forged keys which release ordinary constraints and repressions, allowing for energy and rapture in the expression of some of the profound mysteries of our lives.

Chapter Four

CLASSICAL STUDIES and HEROES

'Furthermore, we have not even to risk the adventure alone, for the heroes of all time have gone before us. ' (Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, 123).

Heroes carry with them a magnetic attraction. Teachers interviewed felt that it goes back to childhood 'with a love of mythology and a love of the old stories, of heroism and military history' (*Teachers' Interviews*).

'There've been movies like *Gladiator*, before that *Clash of the Titans*, the old style gods and goddess movies, and the heroes - they love the heroes' (*Teachers' Interviews*). Heroes enact the poetic justice that we yearn for, the sweet revenge that it is now so un-PC to desire. They defeat evil tyrants when in our own world evil tyrants find any excuse to do exactly as they please. They do difficult things, often life endangering. They endure, they go places, they restore order and love passionately. Yet hero concepts change.

Who Are Heroes?

Odysseus is the perceived hero archetype, affirmed by one of the student interviewees -

'He [Odysseus] is the perfect hero really isn't he, he's a great example to man, I mean he learns his lesson from his arrogance as men need to and he's got integrity, he fights for his family, keeps his beliefs strong, he doubts, but he quickly remembers what he's living for and why, he does what he does and that's just such a great example from back then of how to behave, even now to people of how to behave, like hey that's a good example of how I want to behave.'

(*Students' Interviews*).

Yet Penelope is the one who holds on for nineteen years, enduring the anguish of the lonely bed, acknowledged by Odysseus himself on waking up after their first night together after his return: 'Dear wife, we both have had our full share of numerous trials/ yours have been here as you cried over my much-longed-for/homecoming (23: 350-52). Here is the heroic woman who does not need to travel adventurously in order to express heroic action. She has provided role models for such writers as Sean O'Casey, who in both *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plough and the Stars* echoes her strength in the force of female characters struggling with their obsessional menfolk.

By the stratagem of the weaving and coy delays, and courage in the face of discovery, Penelope prevents the suitors from possessing her. She performs her duty, holding in mind the words of her husband when he departed: 'here let everything be in your charge./You must take thought for my father and mother here in our palace' (*Odyssey* 18, 266-7), a strong injunction, to be fulfilled only by a character of a heroic and enduring stance. Even Hal (master computer in *2001: Space Odyssey*) broke down when programmed with parallel instructions.

Penelope usually is not however perceived as a hero. While she endures, she goes on no quest, she gains no arcane knowledge, she suffers no extreme physical privation at the edge of survival. Delphic self-knowledge seems insufficient to earn the title of hero. Nevertheless Odysseus is a sacker of cities, a gratuitous killer-warrior who barely escapes with his men after the piratical raid for example on the Kikonians. He needlessly risks the lives of his companions. Yet no-one questions that he is a great hero.

The Recognition of Heroes

John Lennon remarked in 1976, 'If the kids have nobody bigger to believe in than people like us, there's not much hope for them' (Colebatch, 8). How then can we recognise a hero big enough to give us hope?

During the post-war period - always a time when artists and writers express the despair of moral collapse - the sour taste of pervading nihilism made anti-heroes more flavoursome than heroes. Richard Aldington's *Death of A Hero*, 1929, Joseph Heller's Yossarian in *Catch-22*, 1961, Kurt Vonnegut's Mr Rosewater of *Bless You, Mr Rosewater* , 1964, and the anarchic and directionless rebel without a cause made cultist in the James Dean movie of 1955, made archetypal heroes unfashionable. In the same year that Lennon made his comment quoted above, a Jesuit, Malachi Martin wrote: 'In our mass entertainment there are no hero figures. We are shown human life as alternating between a bleak despair and a desperate struggle with banal forces against which our only allies are ourselves and our own resources' (Colebatch 8).

The anti-hero of disenchantment appeared better suited to the more sophisticated and cynical beatnik culture of the late fifties and early sixties, becoming a populist icon in the character of the surly and sneering establishment-despising James Dean. It seemed that the archetypal hero had been banished to fairyland.

The raw invincible hero had not however disappeared. In an increasingly bipolar culture, the hero and anti-hero strode and slouched along converging narrative lines. Batman, Superman and Wonderwoman had never gone away. Then James Bond, superhero of espionage, arose out of the Cold War and dominated cinema heroics of the sixties. Like his cartoon forerunners however, this hero works on a superficial material level. He does not struggle with metaphysical considerations, he does not do the long night of the soul or visit the underworld. While Bond is a hero, he remains an action hero, not a Promethean hero who pits himself against gods. Bond is a conqueror of villains and a dashing lover; his motif metaphor 'shaken, not stirred', is the closest he will ever come to engaging in metaphysics. The sage-mentor, present in all epic hero stories, exists also in the James Bond mythology, but only as an equipist of powerful weapons - multi-functional cars, guns, and clever devices, making Bond the first technophilic hero. The sage-mentors of other epic heroes dispense more than weapons. They

dispense wisdom as well. Rama from the *Ramayana* has Viswaamitra, who teaches Rama martial arts but also wisdom and attributes, enabling Rama to defeat demons. Odysseus has Athene for advice, advocacy and guidance, and Hermes, who gives him the antidote to Circe's potions. Batman, Superman and Bond possess only some of the hero attributes and accompaniments. They are not whole, and it is wholeness that distinguishes heroes in the ancient world.

Soon after Martin had made his 'no hero figures' claim, *Star Wars* was released. George Lucas had thrown out a life-belt. Anti-heroes became less attractive and heroes possessed of ancient heroic virtues sprang onto centre stage, equipped with magic weapons and a clear-cut quest. Technophilia abounds, but there are deep differences between Bond and Skywalker. Everyone's dress is robe or tunic based. Heroes use swords in their significant battles. Wisdom-sages make regular appearances. The hero is placed within a world of mediaeval construct carefully interwoven with masters of martial arts and Zen wisdom who are the mentors for heroes. This mediaeval construct exists simultaneously with advanced technologies. The timeless hero arises, one who could not operate in our world where rules are different and 'commonsense' denies the fantastical. A deeply embedded collective memory of the hero seemed to ascend from a quiescent crater pool of the unconscious to erupt with the astonishing vigour of resurrected gods. Hero merchandise suddenly permeated the toy-market. New state-of-the-art Superman and Batman movies appeared, prologued with origin and birth stories of the superheroes. Recent hero quests like *Lord of the Rings* find characters again dressed in robes and tunics, wielding swords and mentored by sages, but this world exists outside high-techno culture. Magic instead defies the need for technology. These classic heroes are romantic and exciting, otherworldly, and offer relief from marketplace forces and tedious utilitarian ethos. Recognising heroes still proves elusive however, and beloved as they are in the popular mind, they can become embarrassingly violent.

Characteristics

Houston acknowledges the hero's path as outlined by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, in which Campbell traces the hero's progress. He begins with the setting forth of the hero, moving to the 'threshold of adventure', to battles with adversaries, befriended by goddesses with whom he makes love, descending alive into a dark place, from which he re-emerges with expanded knowledge and powers, returning home with illumination and 'elixir' solutions enabling restoration for himself and community (Houston *The Hero and the Goddess* 75-76). Houston stresses that there are many variations, and she goes on to develop the psychology of the hero's journey and evolution under headings which she develops into experiential workshops for transformation of Self. In the participative process I have described earlier, students begin to experience some of these developments. Her phases include:

Sacred Wound

Mythic Journey of Transformation

Discovery of the Larger Story

Initiations into Our Own Depths

Partnership with Spiritual Allies

Union with the Beloved (Source, All-Being, Creator-Archetype).

(Houston, *The Hero and the Goddess*, 77-78)

I have indicated some of these paths, and will refer to them again. Below, I have outlined my own summary of the hero's evolution. For example, wounds (trauma) happen to all: pertinently, separation from parents, a process Telemachos must come to terms with, as do his current counterparts. Being involved with a story that allows echoes to sound within our own psyche assists in the smooth untangling of our own lives.

I have listed nineteen characteristics of the hero, as many as the years of Odysseus's journeys, though not necessarily correlative. I refrained from looking at other schemes until my own was complete. Then I looked at other cyclic descriptions of the path of the hero, but have

found it more useful to draw from my own experience in constructing the hero's journey from intuitive performance and contemplation of other heroes from other texts.

The characteristics I give are followed by examples and comments (all quotes are from the *Odyssey*).

[1] *When the story of a hero begins, the hero is almost always straightaway established as a powerful character, or originating from a powerful lineage.*

'that man of many ways, Odysseus, who after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy'

(1: 1-8)

[2] *His stature amongst community and friends is solid and respected.*

Menelaos the husband of Helen recalls Odysseus:

'In my time I have studied the wit and counsel of many men who were heroes, yet nowhere have I seen with my own eyes anyone like him, nor known an inward heart like the heart of enduring Odysseus'

(4: 267-70)

[3] *His stature, already high, will increase during the story so that he rises head and shoulders above the rest.*

Telemachos sees his father transform:

'For even now you were an old man in unseemly clothing, but now you resemble one of the gods'

(16: 199-200).

[4] *He contains destructive flaws. He is not perfect. These flaws may be openly spoken of by the narrator or characters within the story.*

Eurylokos condemns Odysseus:

'for it was by this man's recklessness that these too perished'

(10: 437)

- and Athene rebukes him for his deviousness:
'You wretch, so devious, never weary of tricks'

(13: 293).

a quality which though it saves him from Polyphemus nevertheless places unnecessary masks between himself and those he loves. Odysseus is a shape-shifter, 'man of many ways' who risks deforming his own personality by taking on so many disguises that self-knowledge wanes. He alters his masks to suit obscure purposes, even changing the story of his adventures until we are unsure as to exactly which story is the truth, after all what would have been the harm in telling Eumaios exactly what happened? Or did it happen? This duplicity for reasons which are obscure, happens within the orchard upon his return, where he deceives his own father into thinking he is someone else. A hero however is a trickster and impersonator.

[5] *He possesses redemptive qualities.*

Menelaos recalls how Odysseus kept his men steadfast inside the horse, preventing them from giving themselves away:

'but Odysseus pulled us back and held us, for all our eagerness' (4: 284).

[6] *He is courteous, charming, well-spoken, brave, hospitable.*

Penelope reminds the suitors of Odysseus's character:

'nor have you listened

to what you heard from your fathers before you, when you were children,

what kind of man Odysseus was among your own parents,

how he did no act and spoke no word./that was unfair

but Odysseus was never outrageous at all to any man.'

(4: 687-93)

Athene praises him for eloquence and reason:

'you are fluent, and reason closely, and keep your head always'

(13:332).

[7] *He admires hospitality and accepts it with grace.*

Odysseus speaks in the house of the Phaiakians:
'for he is my host; who would fight with his friend?'
(8: 208).

- and with Eumaios, the pig herder:
'May Zeus..and the other gods grant you
all you desire the most, for you have received me heartily.'
(14: 53-4).

[8] *He values integrity and honour.*

She [the ship] carried a man with a mind like the gods for counsel'
(13: 89).

[9] *While he is often an outsider, he is well-liked by many, and has multilevel connections and is on speaking terms with peasants and kings, with gods and enchantresses.*

Odysseus speaks in disguise in his own house:
'I will stay here on the outside.
I am not unfamiliar with blows, and things thrown at me'
(17: 282-3).

Yet before dining with princes, he has spent an evening with Eumaios, the swineherd, who points to his dog Argos on the dungheap. Odysseus speaks as easily to Eumaios as with Circe and Athene.

[10] *He is a great lover.*

He loved Calypso for seven years. He gave his love to Circe - albeit so that she would release his men from bonds of enchantment - and immediately entranced Nausikaa.

[11] *He is a superior warrior full of fortitude.*

Odysseus announces his superiority:
' But I will say that I stand far out ahead of all others

such as are living mortals now'

(8: 221-2).

[12] *Recklessness is a hallmark. This might however enable him to experience something that expands his world or self view.*

His reckless actions with Polyphemus have destructive results, and as well, Odysseus is facing an ignoble creature which is nevertheless capable of heroic acts, and fails to give due credit to his adversary. As well, Odysseus is facing what a hero can become. Herakles for example became used to victories. He used his brute strength too much, and becomes in the end a debased strongman, his arrogance leads to his destruction. Noble hero becomes the rending bully-tyrant.

Nevertheless, the recklessness of Odysseus does lead him to Circe who enables him to pass through the underworld and escape the worst of destruction between Scylla and Charybdis.

[13] *He possesses insights and wisdom, which increase after quests.*

On his return, Odysseus often reflects:

'There is nothing worse for mortal men than the vagrant/life

(15: 343)

'Of all creatures that breathe and walk on the earth there is nothing more helpless than a man is, of all that the earth fosters'

(18: 130-1).

Odysseus's is always a meditative nature, but increasingly so as each experience turns him in upon himself.

[14] *He tests himself with feats of valour and strength, and will often undergo special training in earlier days.*

From what we can deduce from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Odysseus's boyhood training

followed that of heroes - early physical prowess, as in the boar hunt that left him scarred. His later feats of valour with other warriors and later, monsters, are numerous and follow the pattern of heroic achievements.

[15] *He makes life-threatening journeys. He overcomes terrible dangers.*

Not only war but a soul destroying journey home - necessitating frightening experiences - causes the poet to give Odysseus the motif, 'the long-suffering, great Odysseus' repeated many times, as well as Odysseus himself admitting, 'I have endured much'.

[16] *The experiences on the way test his qualities and include profound discoveries about this world and sometimes other worlds.*

He spent a year with Circe, and is tested by Calypso, who wanted him to remain with her forever, and but tells the Phaiakians: 'but never could she persuade the heart within me', (9: 33) saying about his own country, 'I cannot think of any place sweeter on earth to look at' (9: 28). He passes through near-death experiences and enters the underworld, where he learns of his final quest, and the knowledge of his longevity and his own death from the sea.

[17] *He increasingly understands more about his own nature. His identity expands and becomes stronger.*

By the end, after all his deceptions, his identity asserts itself:
'Telemachos, it does not become you to wonder too much
at your own father when he is here, nor doubt him. No other
Odysseus than I will ever come back to you. But here I am'
(16: 202-04).

[18] *He becomes more focussed on order and hearth.*

Odysseus returns under the curse of Polyphemus to discover his household in chaos, but restores order by removing the suitors and establishes himself in his home, as Eurykleia the nurse proclaims to Penelope, 'your husband is here beside the hearth' (23:71) fulfilling Odysseus's own love of home and marriage when he speaks to Nausikaa:

'nothing is better than this, more steadfast,
than when two people, a man and his wife, keep a
harmonious household'

(6: 182-84).

[19] *He returns after long wanderings and attains fusion with family and community.*

Fusion for Odysseus occurs when he at last recognises his own seacoast. Recognition was delayed for some time. He wakes up in his fatherland 'and he did not know it' (13: 188). he spends friendly nights with Eumaios, identifies himself to his son and embraces him, and at last embraces Penelope and finally reveals himself to his own father. Recognition and acknowledgement are major themes in the hero's journey, and are there to remind us that after long absences, bonds must be reforged. The process is slow for Odysseus and his family, emphasising the psychological truth of what long absence can do to relationships.

Voytilla has produced a heroic cycle based on the Campbell model, and names a seventh phase 'Resurrection' for the time following his return. Odysseus has been buried, out of sight, out of mind, and passes through a slow unburial - recognition of home, the gradual removal of masks, climaxing in a complete unveiling when he takes up the bow in revenge. Even then, he must establish identity to Penelope through reference to their bed, and to his father by reference to remembered trees. Each act is an uncovering, also a loving alignment with trees including the olive that made their bed.

What elixir does he come back with? Finn McCool and Gilgamesh return with wisdom for their people. Odysseus returns with the promise of order and balance, harmonising a society which in his absence has become dysfunctional: strangers want his wife, his son has been out searching for his father, while the suitors eat up house and home.

The ordinary world hardly ever exists in a hero's life. He is always on a crossroads. Because he usually begins his acquaintance with the reader as widely-known and of extraordinary abilities, there is the ever-present potential for sudden change. While ploughing

his farm, Odysseus receives the oath summons and through a pre-Homeric story from Hesiod, we see Odysseus scornfully throwing salt under his plough in reply to the messenger's words. It is a symbolic gesture - my words at this point, as Odysseus before handing the role over: 'If we go to this war in Troy, many beautiful young men, salt of the earth, will lose their lives to dusty death'. Were he not oath-bound, refusal is possible, though not likely with the great resourceful Odysseus. But he cannot act alone. He belongs to his community and must respond to its needs. He has communal responsibilities and hall and hearth to maintain.

Meeting the Mentor : Teaching Parallels

Athene meets Odysseus at crucial moments on journeys, coming to him to chide, advise, encourage and inspire. His son meantime has Mentor himself, and on one occasion Athene as Mentos. It is when the hero is thrown into isolation, embarking on a dangerous undertaking that depends on his individual resources, that a mentor appears.

In Classical Studies, the students at the start often know nothing about the subject - are about to set off on unknown seas. The teacher is the mentor, particularly in Classical Studies, whose exponents are some of the most fascinating personalities in the teaching profession. I am certain this is a major factor in accounting for the popularity of Classical Studies.

'Classical Studies teachers are enthusiastic, they believe in what they're doing...it's not simply sitting down and writing notes...in class we use balloons to paint pottery things on, making temples, making masks. The more creative the better you can do anything' .

(Teachers' Interviews).

They offer directions -

'it's so far removed, as though it's like a fantasy the kids are studying, yet obviously, it's connecting to things that really matter, to heart stuff, and it's just really easy to make kids interested in that' .

The role of the Classical Studies teacher is not dissimilar from Athene, or the Wise Sage. The teachers encourage their students to immerse themselves in myth, to know about ancient sites, to study Alexander, consider this thought, act out this play, wear a mask, see how it feels. There are creative and permissive aspects to Classical Studies, and its teachers are guides and facilitators.

The Flawed Hero

Heroes are famous for pushing luck too far. Sam Keen laments: 'The ideal of heroic warfare is rooted in a metaphysic of struggle' (Keen 66) and in his dedication calls for a new breed of hero who will 'dare to struggle with the enemy within' instead of seeking out an enemy worthy of doing battle with. Keen's ideal hero is someone who can 'exorcise the ancient warrior psyche, to discover the power and authority of wholeness' (Keen 97). But in fact Odysseus though he seeks out struggle, does the inward journey also. This journey works on metaphoric levels, but he by no means ignores the inward world wherein he must fight his demons.

Odysseus is punished by Polyphemus and Poseidon, the father of Polyphemus, who haunts him and pursues him for the rest of his life as Nemesis pursues. There is a warning here. By undergoing many sea-changes, Odysseus risks losing his own identity. He allows the Protean persona to eclipse his gift of wisdom for which he is loved by Athene. One of the complaints I have heard from students is that their contemporary world changes so fast that it is difficult to maintain a central identity. There is the pressure to be cool. There is the pressure to be successful. To be you, even, whatever that is. While all the world's a stage, and many are the masks we are compelled to wear, still, this practice disengages us from presenting to ourselves and to others the character called by our own name. Who is Odysseus really? What kind of a hero denies his identity, albeit temporarily, even to his poor old dad when he comes upon him at the end, digging in his orchard? The game playing stops however when Odysseus sees how his

father in his suffering ' caught up the grimy dust/and poured it over his face, groaning incessantly' (*Odyssey* 24: 316-7). When his father asks for proof of identity, Odysseus remembers the trees his father planted when he was a child. He also points to the scar made by the boar, which Eurykleia his old nurse noticed when bathing him. Heroes identify themselves by their wounds, and the boar itself has a long association with heroes - Finn McCool was killed by a boar . It is like a tattoo - it is unique to the skin of that person, not easily removed even by surgery. Solid identity is elusive. Change is rapid and is accelerating, which causes confusion and suffering - 'What man that sees the ever-whirling wheele/ Of *Change*, the which all mortall things doth sway, How *MUTABILITY* in them doth play/Her cruell sports, to many mens decay?' (Spenser 394). Bruner extends the thought: 'a community washed by the currents of growth does not easily come to a sharing of its conception of origins or the meaning of events. And no man answers easily the questions: "Who am I, where do I belong, and of what am I capable?" ' (Bruner 43). Young people in an isolated country under the reign of change, which 'Pretends to be the Sovereaine' (Spenser 394), tend to look for anchors. A hero is something to hold onto. Literally. Penelope only takes hold of her husband when he describes the marriage-bed that he made from an olive tree bole.

During the search by Telemachos for news of his father - a search which is itself an heroic quest - he travels to the house of Menelaos. Menelaos tells him of his own quest for truth wrestling in the coils of Phorkys's transformations, the Old Man of the Sea, who is compelled to tell the truth when the truth-seeker keeps hold of him through his chosen changes. Phorkys changes from lion to serpent to leopard to boar to water to tree, each of these a treatise. Then Menelaos is able to elicit the truth.

Heroes seem then to be associated with change, or many parts, while paradoxically are called upon for reliability and integrity. An obvious parallel to be drawn between the comic heroes and Odysseus of course is their common obsession with concealing who they really are,

and rarely do the Phantom or his heroic counterparts doff their masks. Their catch-cry seems to be, 'Keep them guessing! ' Why then must the real 'you ' of the hero be kept concealed at all costs? In my section on hero characteristics, I have pointed out that Athene, maker of many masks, loses patience with her protégé and chides him for dissembling even to her, 'wretch, never weary of tricks' (*Odyssey* 13: 293). Odysseus who is the archetypal hero carries many masks, each reflecting a different identity. It is because he contains many identities that many can relate to him - he is all things to all men. Odysseus through giving signs and proofs of remembrance is not listing kingly or necessarily heroic virtues, 'but rather links him with a hunter, a carpenter, a gardener' which gives him universal qualities (Calvino 14).

In his delay-ridden return he must face enchantresses, monsters, and devourers. He endures privation, the underworld, the loss of all his companions. One can argue that this is a procrastinating adventurer, putting off the obligations of family duties, but for Odysseus to become heroic this journey is necessary. It raises him to the level of an epic hero whom we can feel for, one who has wholeness and shows, ' his true modernity, which makes him seem close to us, even our contemporary. Ulysses is all these things [traditional epic hero] but in addition he is the man who withstands the harshest of experiences, labours, pains, solitude' (Calvino 17). Calvino shows that Odysseus leads his audience into a dreamworld, but one which harshly reflects the real world, our world, permeated with pains and terrors, 'in which man is immersed without escape' (Calvino 17).

Definitions of heroes undergo mutations as change accelerates around us. Christopher Reeve who starred as the movie Superman says, 'My answer [to "what is a hero?"] was that a hero is someone who commits a courageous action without considering the consequences. Now my definition is completely different. I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles'. Clearly Reeve, who has struggled with a life crippling accident, has projected heroism onto his own persona. This echoes a notion

of heroism expressed by Robert Louis Stevenson, when he said 'yours [your heroism] is not the less noble because no crowds shout about your coming when you return from your daily victory or defeat'. However, Bernard Malamud in *The Natural* opts for a definition of relativity: 'Without heroes, we're all plain people and don't know how far we can go' (These quotes come from Quote of the Day Home Page, quotelady@quotelady.com, September 9, 2002).

Who does not desire to come from a land of heroes? The iconography of legendary heroes is widely used in designer labels, and naming of cars and shoes (*Nike*, *Victory*). Classical Studies invites us into the ancient world, where the heroes and goddesses awaken the matching attributes and events within us, as Joseph Campbell believed, an idea that Jean Houston in *The Hero and the Goddess* developed.

I conduct storytelling workshops with pupils after main sessions. The Homeric atmosphere that develops during students' own tellings of memories and fragments of traditional stories is mesmerising. On one occasion an eleven year old boy from Macedonia sat in my storytelling chair and with the bearing of a king began proudly with the words,

'I come from a land of heroes. My grandfather was Alexander the Great.'

By calling Alexander his grandfather, this Macedonian boy was telling us he felt so close to Alexander it was as if he were his grandfather. Lysander in that culture has become everyone's grandfather. Similarly, I have met young Afghani men who have spoken as if Jingiz (Genghis Khan) lived yesterday, that he left behind his horses for them to look after. Joseph Kessel in travelling through Afghanistan, researching for his book *The Horsemen*, had heard the same thing, and found that in that country the title for addressing traditional storytellers was 'Grandfather of all the world' (Kessel 60).

This represents the primal ancestor who imparts to the descendant intimate access to heroes.

The atavistic hunger for heroes continues unsated in popular cinema and television, media which have plundered the ancient world for heroes transcending the ordinary. I discovered the front cover of a 1998 Hercules and Xena Yearbook, showing television pictures of the two heroes overwritten with the words: *HERCULES AND XENA: Ancient Heroes For a New Day*, echoing my subtitle for this thesis, *'New Directions along Ancient Paths'*.

This front cover announces a redefinition of heroes for a new age that appears to yearn for heroes transcending the mundane. These two while contexted in the ancient world are modernist in expression:

The girl hero appeals to a new generation of young women who want it all - including the kind of violent action which used to be reserved for men. Today, Xena the warrior princess is knocking out male barbarians and Buffy the Vampire Slayer is stabbing demons through the heart. Princess Fiona from *Shrek* is a martial arts hero, *Mulan* is another one'

(Hopkins 109).

Hopkins in her discussion of female heroes with reference to the Spice Girls and Madonna develops a narcissistic theory. Women formerly were accused by the feminist movement of playing into the hands of men by dressing sexily and looking glamorous. Now, Hopkins contends, that era is bygone days. Women want to look great now to please themselves. Being a famed idol or even looking like one is the path to power. 'Odysseus was not pure or perfect, but he was able to use what was near to him as a tool with which to find his way forward. These days, Odysseus is Buffy the Vampire Slayer, who also uses what is near to her creatively, productively, to find her way forward. And so might anyone who watches Buffy, who hears her epic stories, and rediscovers through the seemingly contemporary drag of post-feminism that ancient art of becoming the hero of one's own epic' (Hopkins xi). While I can agree that Buffy displays some heroic attributes, I cannot liken Buffy to Odysseus. As I have said, Buffy goes on no heroic quest. She is covertly nocturnal. There is no recognition by

the wider community, who cannot even see her enemies.

But we should pay attention to the phrase 'hero of one's own epic', for here is an important clue to students' entrancement with the ancient heroes: they provide psychological keys to empower their own lives. One of the female interviewees when I asked about the position of women in the *Odyssey*, while not using the word 'hero' , did define the women as powerful:

'it's got powerful women, it doesn't just show sweet little girls, and when we took part in *Odysseus* when you came you felt the passion, and you felt you were that woman she was sort of part of me' .

(*Students' Interviews*).

Here a young student feels that her own personality is potentised through Penelope's presence within her own. She has spoken Penelope's thoughts. She has taken on her character. It is a strengthening and uplifting experience, and demonstrates the optimism that stories can generate, a thought that Frederick Turner pursues in his *Culture of Hope* : 'The way that art changes society is through hope. We organise our actions according to a flexible set of stories or myths; and hope is the attractive force of every story' (Frederick Turner 28). This line of thinking recurs during the interviews. One of the male students spoke enthusiastically about his Greek Cypriot grandfather, who is clearly a strong and influential member of the wider family - 'it's been quite interesting because I've got a grandfather who's Greek and you know he's always told me some of the myths and I think it's quite a big thing in Cyprus but it all seems to come through' (*Students' Interviews*). While cognitively these words might not say, 'I think my grandfather is like one of those heroes' the body language when he spoke of this man was vivid: flashing eyes, big hand gestures, his voice carrying great affection. He was inspired by his grandfather who gave him stories to live by. Later, a male Australian student who was delighted to be able to take Classical Studies, as it wasn't offering in the state he came from, talked about

leadership:

'I think it's great that NZ being a smaller place finds its feet in the world. It's good that young people who are going to be the leaders of the future are able to take pieces from all these different cultures and put them into their own lives and help impact their own society with the stuff they've learned'.

(Students' Interviews)

A key aspect of a hero is being able to impact on their own society. Joseph M. McCarthy found while teaching Classical studies that he began referring to leadership theory 'to explain or illuminate the behaviour of various characters' (McCarthy 3), and his students began to notice 'examples of the *gestae* of ancient leaders popping up among case studies of contemporary academic and business leaders' (ibid.).

These young people are finding within Classical Studies paradigms that enable them to energise their lives and their own societies. It is a subject that appears to invigorate. Heroic behaviour seems more possible because of it. Other subjects at least for these students seem not to offer similar potential. A female student interviewee made a remark that needs to be carefully considered by utilitarian educators:

'Nothing at school is going to be valid really I mean school is just to teach you the skills and how to absorb knowledge so you might as well do something you enjoy, something that's interesting'.

(Students' Interviews).

It is timely at this moment to let Frederick Turner speak again:

'For a young person waking up in the morning, there seems nothing in this regime [marketplace economy, levelling of higher aspirations, instabilities produced by rapid economic and technological change]...to inspire the fierce loyalties and high aspirations which the young feel so ready for: it appears to be a base and ignoble system, compelling the young aspirant to years of work, rewarding the money

grubber and discouraging the hero.'

(Frederick Turner 32).

To awaken to a land of heroes is a consummation most devoutly to be wished. It is too simplistic however to keep saying 'people need heroes' without engaging in some critique of the concept, for the '[heroic fantasy] genre's potential as a force of inspiration is habitually undercut by its self-referentiality' (Grixti 207). Let us then set aside the heroic construct : that well-trodden hero's pathway - the journey outwards, defeating catastrophes, coming home - and instead consider what comes out of the hero's mouth. A distinguishing feature of Odysseus as a hero is that he says things that matter. This is true also of the pre-Homeric *Gilgamesh*, but Odysseus beats Gilgamesh in the competition of significant utterances, (*muthoi*) for additionally, he is much more eloquent, he is loquacious, wooing women for example with poetic language. He is crafty, a man of ideas - it was from the mind of Odysseus that the Wooden Horse emerged. While doing everything that heroes should - defeating monsters and sailing seas with minimal resources - he has a completeness that plastic action heroes cannot achieve. While flawed with arrogance and waywardness, he is not flawed emotionally he weeps tears into the sea while thinking of Penelope. He is not afraid to enter the mysteries of the underworld. As lover, warrior, sage and poet- storyteller, a voyager, he transcends bronze age heroism, steps outside time and becomes transcendent.

Chapter Five

MINOTAUR and THREAD

I said, 'Ben there a strait story past down amongst the tel women?'

She said, 'There bint no tel women time back way back. Nor there aint never ben no strait story I ever heard. Bint no writing for 100s and 100s of years til it begun agen nor you wunt never get a straight story past down by mouf over that long. Onlyes writing I know of is the *Eusa Story* which that aint nothing strait but at leas its stayd the same.'

Riddley Walker, Russell Hoban.

'an endless train into an endless graveyard is all this life is, but it was never anything but God.'

Jack Kerouac, *Lonesome Traveller* 1960.

This chapter begins at the entrance to a labyrinth, a morph which describes mocks and mythologises post-modernism. Yet the ever-eclectic Classical Studies is already post-modernist in mood, the most pluralistic subject in the senior curriculum, which is one of its most attractive features. My opening question in the student interviews was, 'Why did you want to take Classical Studies?', and the first answer was, 'It just seemed such a mix of history, English, Art, a total sort of mix of all those subjects' (*Students' Interviews*). Another commented, 'history and art history and classics complement each other, and a lot of the things I do in art history cross over in classics and like it helps your understanding' (ibid, 26). Another student said, considering what to take at university, 'I looked at Sociology and Psychology, and Classics seemed to fit that' (ibid. 26). It is a subject that rides well in an accepting and multitextual and multilayered culture, and though labyrinthine in depth and possibility, contains lanterns and signposts which illumine and direct.

The Metaphor of the Labyrinth

A labyrinth with its plurality of directions is one we recoil from and peer into, simultaneously. We are frightened of its potential for polypathed oblivion, but there exists a creative excitement in multiple possibilities. A labyrinth also contains danger. The very word 'labyrinth' collocates with 'minotaur'. Were there no minotaur, however, being in a labyrinth one still risks stumbling lost and blind and going no-where. It is now a dominant metaphor. The landscape has been cut up into a maze of motorways. Corridors within buildings are mazes. Television is an audial labyrinth of powerful voices. Internet is cyberspatial landscape, a labyrinth of tunnels and choices, red herring signs, sirens, brief encounters. Electronic games are an extension of the maze - the player must find the way through, to a goal or a destination. Games are frequently structured as mazes.

The metaphor of the labyrinth has attracted plenty of interest. Mary E. Clark in her book *Ariadne's Thread: The Search for New Modes of Thinking* (1989) for example, uses it as an image of sociologic and political morass. J. Hillis Miller in his book *Ariadne's Thread - Story Lines* (1992) sets it to work in shaping narrative theory. Both approaches are useful. Miller despite the etymology of *labrys* suggesting the double-axe for royalty (construction of labyrinths being a royal prerogative) says that 'labyrinth' means 'rope-walk' or 'coil-of-rope-walk', its first syllable the same as 'Laura', 'the path' (J. Hillis Miller 1), and opens the first chapter by quoting George Grosz, 'Line is the thread of Ariadne, which leads us through the labyrinth of millions of natural objects. Without line we should be lost' (ibid.). While this seems obvious, it still needs saying. Successful direction-finding relies on finding a line that leads us along to a way, whether physically holding a line, as Theseus held did, or on a map, or through the pursuit of iconic symbols, as in 'Let's find a MacDonald's - then we'll know where we are' - words I overheard from American tourists in Auckland streets. A hamburger palace is a destination however, not a destiny, and without a chain of symbols that speak to us as knots

used to on the old navigation strings used by ancient sailors, then charting a way through the complexities of global culture is much harder. Neil Postman, communications theorist, who in recent years held the Chair of the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences at New York University, is famous for naming the controlling high-tech culture 'technopoly'. He refers to the destruction of guiding symbols in a chapter entitled, 'The Great Symbol Drain' , saying 'Symbol drain is both a symptom and a cause of a loss of narrative' (Postman 173).

In this chapter therefore, I am commenting on the post-modernist labyrinthic condition, and the way in which Classical Studies and its participants interact at major junctions.

Zeitgeist

In recent times a significant ideological junction has occurred - an encounter of ancient world, myth-pool, and post-modernist romanticism, which cinematically, crystallised into the *Matrix* movies. Rupert Sheldrake might call this 'morphic resonance', which is a concept developed in his 1988 work, *The Presence of the Past: Morphic Resonance and the Habits of Nature*. His concept is that causal influences are formed from previous structures of activity influencing subsequent structures, which he calls 'morphic units' , ranging from crystals to movements in cultures. In culture mode, he compares it to 'Zeitgeist' , the spirit of the time (Sheldrake, *Rebirth of Nature*, 33). What then forms the current *Zeitgeist* ?

Indicators include preoccupation and obsession, which recently have embraced a global search for purpose, survival, and direction. This is expressed in doomsaying language of chronological finitude like 'time is running out'. The claim of finite narrative on a global scale began in the seventies, with global environment discussions. Then the 'Millenium Bug' threatened to collapse technological control, and it was this threat that intensified the air of *fin de siecle* paranoia. Ironically, this scenario was not constructed by the spiritual inheritors of Leavisite attitudes, like Neil Postman, author of *Technopoly*, but the computer industry itself.

It hypothesised that computers had been integrally programmed and timed up to the year 2000 and no further. Unless computers were reprogrammed, claimed computer pundits, their inability to change their time would revert their time sense to the year 1900, resulting in dysfunction of computer-controlled devices, including nuclear missiles. The ensuing global panic characterised the closing months of the twentieth century. Robin Williams, the American actor, spent New Year 2000 in New Zealand, believing that we were least likely to be affected by catastrophe if it came. The big questions, *Where is the world going, what am I doing here, and who is in control*, which had hitherto been the realm of philosophers, became everybody's questions.

I would like to argue therefore that at a time of intense reflection on life journeys, psychological and sociologic paradigms, a quest began for different ways of thinking, which increased interaction with ancient world and classical texts. As part of the *zeitgeist*, or *morphic resonance*, the *Matrix* movies arose. These take the major metaphor of the labyrinth from classical sources, using it as a vehicle for important insights about our sociological, technological and directional condition. These are not the only movies which are inhabited by classical stories - the Coen Brothers' *O Brother Where Art Thou?* consciously reinterprets Homer's *Odyssey*. But the *Matrix* movies were targetted at a youth audience, and are a populist platform nailed in place by classical enthusiasts.

Classical Studies in New Zealand, is thus part of a wider ancient world movement. There are other junction points of origin and identity that we have found special focus for, and being New Zealanders and not Europeans, we have constructed our own Platonic 'forms'. But we have also been attentive to outside voices.

The Discourse

There are as many voices as turnings in the labyrinth. At the threshold, it is appropriate

to listen to some of the major speakers in this discourse.

Textually, I have for much of the time focussed on one of the key players in Bloom's Canon of the Theocratic Age: Homer. At times I have spoken like an acolyte of Leavis or Harold Bloom. However, it was my fascination in why teachers and students liked the ancient world and its echoes that led me into these reflections. While both F.R. Leavis and Richard Rorty believe that classical texts improve the chances for elevation or betterment, I have been more interested in their performance. In the participation I described in Chapter One, the enactment of role identities approaches psychodrama. I am interested also in the role Classical Studies has to play in the interaction of youth with the labyrinth of technology, life movement, and popular culture.

The labyrinth is an ideal structure for Richard Rorty for example who recognises the ambiguity of the world, denies any absolute truth, believing in a multitude of relative and contradictory truths. Yet accepting pluralities is in Rorty's words lighting a candle for increased ability to tolerate diversity. This leads to *Solidarity*, which is

'created by increasing our sensitivity to the particular details of the pain and humiliation of other sorts of people. This is a task not for theory but for genres such as ..the docudrama, and the novel. Fiction gives us the details about what sorts of cruelty we are capable of, and thereby lets us redescribe ourselves. That is why the novel, the movie, and the TV program have replaced the sermon as the principal vehicles of moral change and progress'

(Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*

xvi).

Rorty's view of literature as a collection of utility vehicles for the moral gain of humankind is one that risks reducing the whole of fiction to elucidating moral tales. It is an alluring view however for the humanist teacher seeking to provide improvement for mind and

soul.

In his *Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Kundera introduces a taxi-driver who tells him he is writing his life story - 'The story of a man who swam in the sea for three days and three nights, who had struggled against death, who had lost the ability to sleep but kept the strength to live' (Kundera 126). It has the feel of the *Odyssey* which 'has been interiorized. The islands, the seas, the sirens...nowadays they are the voices of our interior being' (ibid., 125). 'I think it could help a lot of people', says the taxi-driver (ibid. 126) and Rorty could agree. He has far more faith in the long story - the novel and the literary imagination - than philosophy, as a means to changing society. In nineteenth century London and Paris, Dickens and Hugo activated a social conscience, and brought about change for chimney-sweeps, miners, and others disadvantaged in a primitive industrialised culture. Philosophers could not do that.

Rorty, the humanist philosopher, is pragmatic enough to accept that if the only absolute is uncertainty, and if quantum is trumps, then the uncertainty principle is more likely to be describing the true nature of how events unfold. Nussbaum supports Rorty's claim that novels and theatre facilitate social change. She takes us back to Sophocles' play *Philoctetes*, and tells how Odysseus treats the suppurating Philoctetes merely as a poison-arrow production unit, showing no interest in the man himself. The chorus does however. The chorus are the voices of common soldiers who respond to Philoctetes differently from their commander:

'For my part, I have compassion for him.
Think how with no sight of a friendly face,
wretched, always alone.
How, how in the world does the poor man survive?'
(lines 169-176).

Nussbaum comments: 'The men sympathetically imagine the life of a man they have never seen. In the process they stand in for the imaginative work of the audience'. The audience

is awakened to the plight of Philoctetes, and Nussbaum believes they should emerge feeling that 'good will not be well-served if human beings are seen simply as instruments of one another's purposes' (Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, 86-87). Nussbaum is terribly interested in the effect of the narrative imagination: 'This means the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story' (ibid. 11). The narrative path teaches us to look at the stories inside other human beings, a process which works towards Rorty's concept of solidarity. Voyagers on that quest are drawn to the ancient world which through its philosophy and stories seems to focus on important questions in life like the Delphic challenge to know yourself. Who am I? Why am I here? Or what is right. The individual decision by Creon to put Antigone to death results in his own son immuring himself with Antigone, and the community falls apart. You cannot have contact with texts like this without consequent reflection. Alexander too continues to fascinate, not only for his breadth of geographic vision, but also for the lucidity of his lateral insight on the day he took his sword to the Gordian knot. For classical enthusiasts, the ancient world is a magnet that forms the needle of their compass. Rorty and Nussbaum are in agreement so far. It is when Rorty claims that philosophers are powerless to effect social change that Nussbaum bridles. Having defended the power of the Muse, she now flies the flag for philosophy. She gives several examples in her Introduction to *Cultivating Humanity* of college student's involvement with philosophy. The Socratic ability to question and to justify she believes is beneficial to those training in law and politics. Her views are plain: 'It is not good for democracy when people vote on the basis of sentiments they have absorbed from talk-radio and have never questioned. We need argument, an essential tool of civic freedom' (ibid. 19).

Harold Bloom background is literature not philosophy. As Belsey in commenting remarks, he takes the view that 'if what makes literature strong, deep and dark is not a matter of content, morality and ideology, then the value that elicits his passionate defence, literature's

aesthetic autonomy, must reside elsewhere' (Belsey 129). For Bloom, the signifier is in the words, and this is different from Rorty's position and from Nussbaum who is halfway in between, arguing for both the moral effect of texts and their aesthetics, and their mysterious power upon the 'liberal imagination' (Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, 90).

Having a less behaviourist and more aesthetic stance, Bloom's response to his awareness of heritage is to protectively gather an index of texts. Though to him the texts are sacred he still warns the reader not to expect the Canon to incarnate the virtues :

'This is palpably untrue. The *Iliad* teaches us the surpassing glory of armed victory. If we read the Western Canon to form our social, political or personal moral values, I firmly believe that we will become monsters.'

(Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon* 29).

He who calls all of us the sons and daughters of Homer (Bloom *The Western Canon* 29) here makes a dark and violent claim. His boldness invokes the protesting lady. Are the heroes all such beasts as Bloom, and Blake before him, would picture them? He may be showing us that he maintains Arnold's detachment and is not besotted. Even though he might adore the classics he sees in them monstrous models of behaviour. The monstrous are not exonerated because they occur within a revered text, and if we base our own behaviour upon Homer, 'we will become monsters'. An extreme position. Yet an illustration of this is Valmiki's *Ramayana*. When this epic became myth, it was read, recited and enacted as part of religious festivals, like coinciding Eleusian rituals with drama competitions. While the epic forms a wonderful cultural experience, Indian women have been enchained to Sita's example of relentless wifely virtues. It is a story which has nurtured the attitude of mind that turns a Nelson's eye to bride-burning. This illustration vindicates Bloom's claim.

It seems unnecessary to claim however that the moral pattern of classical texts would

eventually make us monsters. What if we were to read the wrenching moments between Andromache and Hektor in Book 6 of the *Iliad*, for example? We would weep at the pity of war. Book 6 might make pacifists of us all. It depends which granules you pick up, in the words of Rorty's response to Jacques Bouveresse, *comme le blé pour mon propre moulin*. (Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* 156). This returns us to a the whimsy of post-modernist selectivity. It is not quite random.. It is picking up out of the heap what delights us.

Geography

Oliver Taplin observes in his book *Greek Fire* : 'Greece is the geology underlying the mental landscape of Western civilisation' (Taplin 4) and he believes that in changing times we tend to re-visit enduring questions by returning to the source.

Here then is the clue to the question I began this investigation with - why is Classical Studies receiving such vigorous attention in New Zealand? A student once told me, 'Ancient history is just there. It never changes. But modern history's changing all the time'. Historiographical perceptions and new discoveries can alter even ancient history, of course, but modern history and culture appear to be for some students a labyrinth of rapid mutation. How we interact with and map our own internal dragons or demons that we must confront is difficult enough. Interacting with and mapping an external world of increasing complexity and multiple choices requires enormous flexibility.

While many young people demonstrate their willingness to adapt, the sociological problems increase - high rates of juvenile insanity, teenage suicides and drug problems are indicators. Within Classical Studies possibly exist the lanterns and signposts that enable the voyager to enter the maze, achieve apotheosis, and exit transformed.

'To find our way through these coexisting elements of ourselves the clue, the guiding thread, may be myth, a way of shaping chaos and of giving significance

to aspects of the human condition which cannot be reached by objective or scientific discourse.'

(Taplin 109).

It is a shamanic journey to that magic grotto wherein shines some sage-guarded jewel, that as a lodestone enables the holder to pass unscathed through to the upper world.

Martha Nussbaum is a warrior for Socrates, and promotes with ardour the philosophic jewels that Greek philosophy bequeaths to us. Writing enthusiastically about the introduction of 'nontraditional' studies in the curricula of the mid-nineties, she claims these studies 'are supplying essential ingredients for citizenship'. (Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity* 13). She speaks of questions not simply as interesting discussions, but of 'urgent importance'.

In a state of urgency, when you are looking for clues as tools to serve a pressing purpose, you become an exasperated bricoleur until something shines under your hand. It might be the tool you need. Amongst what lies in the available heap, luminous leftovers from the ancient world have in recent years been sifted out and taken in hand. Who has done the sifting? Temple servers from Bloom's inner sanctum? Partly. But I believe there is something else happening.

Survival and Exploration

We are in a primal exploration phase. Classical Studies is about our own remains and their continuance. I have already contended and shown that students of Classical Studies find upon entering the ancient world that, further informed, they are enabled to confront current issues both directly and obliquely.

Philosophic, cultural and political ideas can be examined through a seemingly unchanging context, a convenient 'other dimension' which allows for comparison and contrast with our own world. L.P. Hartley opens his novel *The Go-Between* with the words, 'The past is a foreign

country - they do things differently there'. The 'foreign country' of the ancient world is a Moebius strip elliptically encompassing our own world. By using it as an overlaying grid, I argue that we are better able to plot our movements from place to place and establish target co-ordinates in a global city which not only changes more quickly than it used to, but is frequently infected by viral disorders. These *dei ex machina* bring about sudden explosions of change within the world system, and because that system is now mobile and integrally engaged, viral infections both literal and figurative have a far wider reach now than in pre-internet days. Never has John Donne's 'no man is an island' sermon rung more true.

Participants in Classical Studies therefore, through using multiple geographies and vocabularies, are constructing new designs and methodology for the maintenance of equilibrium and fulfilment, and survival, in a sociologically labyrinthic condition. (Searching is what being on the net always is). Teachers bear witness to the effect of topics accessing multiple directions of thought during classic immersion :

'Like this year I've got Alexander the Great fans who've come in, and they are just so interested in military history, last year David came in because of the philosophy, and he's gone on to take that at university.. . A lot of them love mythology and they are just so fascinated by the link of the past to present'
(*Teachers' Interviews*).

Classical Studies is a provider of vocabularies, powerful tools for intercultural understanding. Rorty refers to 'vocabularies of moral deliberation' in *Freud and Moral Reflection* , which he believes will come from influential literature rather than from philosophy. Engagement in new vocabularies creates a new community of classical culture. It contains stories, histories and symbols which seem esoteric, yet these stories, histories and symbols form international vocabularies for psychology and philosophy. This harmonises with the canonical view of Harold Bloom, who places constructions

upon mainstream culture, believing that there is a body of fine works that is our canon of literary heritage. Nussbaum though is drawn to something Epictetus said, about books becoming 'objects of veneration and deference, sitting in the mind without producing strength in the mind itself, especially likely to happen if they are introduced as cultural authorities, ...as in 'Western Civilisation' or 'The Great Books' (Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, 35). She urges a Senecan approach, saying we're on the right track if we simply title it 'useful and nourishing books that help you think for yourself' or following Epictetus 'Training weights for the mind'. Our mood must now be the mood of a Theseus.

In this chapter I have therefore chosen the story of *Theseus, Minotaur and Labyrinth* as a template metaphor while I discuss the labyrinth, its constituents and behaviour.

Heroic path and labyrinth are connected. Joseph Campbell believes that through the hero path we find the thread:

'Heroes have gone before us. The labyrinth is thoroughly known. We have only to follow the thread of the hero path, and where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god. Where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our own existence. And where we had thought to be alone, we will be with all the world.'

(Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, 123).

I proceed with this discussion under three headings:

[1] Technological and Global issues

Internet, the biggest globalising accelerant we have ever known, is enacted through technology. Internet, technology and globalisation is a symbiotic triangle. Alongside globalisation pressures runs the identity discourse. Are we to be global citizens or New Zealanders? Are we risking dichotomy, can we forever accept pluralities?

Technology is relevant also. It is youth who largely participates in the Classical renaissance, taught by some of the most interesting, charismatic personalities in the teaching profession. Youth's interaction with technology affects some of the issues. Since the Greek discovery of *techne*, there has been a shift in our understanding of technology. Nussbaum observes,

'Athenians were gripped by the idea that progress might bring about the elimination of ungoverned contingency from social life'

(Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness* 89).

- having begun that chapter with a quote from a Hippocratic treatise from the fifth century B.C.E:

'They did not want to look on the naked face of luck (*tuche*), so they turned themselves over to science (*techne*). ' (ibid).

Our present time appears to have reverted to that Athenian preoccupation.

The deification of the computer, correspondent with its priests (technogurus) and temples (cybercafes and computer game parlours) sees the construction of technomyth. How far previous myths interact with technomyth or are at war with it is the subject of this chapter, a theme which continues in the *Matrix* discussions.

[2] The Matrix Myth

The *Matrix* movies, repelling in some ways, nevertheless provide us I believe with clues as to why Classical Studies and the Ancient World have achieved a populist appeal. The enthusiasm for Classical Studies worldwide has in the last two centuries gained a rising momentum worldwide. Delphi was almost lost in memory. Globally, Classics in its eclectic nature appeals to the freeranging movement of the post-modernist mind. In talking then about the mythopoeic nature of current populist culture, which echoes so many voices from so many

times, I am impelled to argue that we have arrived in a landscape where the myth that we live by now co-exists with myths that have gone before. Connection with past and present, and what affects people in different time cultures, fascinated all of the students I interviewed, one of whom told me:

'Well I'm interested in people. How people were two thousand years ago, relative to how they are today and how people change and the way they interact with each other in the past and present'

(Students' Interviews).

The *Matrix* movies are an expression of that perception, working through ancient world culture and symbols (names, Socratean allusions, and costumes). The search in the *Matrix* is symbolic of the quest by students and teachers of Classical Studies for source myths and their reinterpretation in the skein of our tangled time.

Also apparent is an urgent need for young people to be able to co-exist with multiple realities (exemplified in the *Matrix*) in a time when many young males in New Zealand are overwhelmed by madness, drugs or suicide. One such said to me, 'I'm caught in the Matrix'. There is therefore an urgent need to provide pathways.

[3] Pathways through the Labyrinth

Pathways through these issues are considered. Does Classical Studies hold out a furled clew, offering a thread through the uncertain choices and shifting sands of rapidly changing cultures?

Technological and Global Issues

When Diogenes, the barrel-dwelling cynic philosopher, (d. 323 BCE) was asked, What country are you a citizen of? he replied, I am a citizen of the world. In the late twentieth

century Internet connected the world in a manner unprecedented. Marshal McLuhan's phrase 'Global Village' became an internet icon, and global discourse increased. Concurrently and previously, discourse on *identity* became intense. In New Zealand the reassertion of Maori culture in the seventies and eighties became a search for the answer to *Who am I?* and those with European descent began to ask the same question evidenced in unprecedented levels of genealogical research. Tribal identities re-emerged in Eastern Europe, displaced populations and exilic and diasporic conditions increased, catalysing globalisation. In his article 'Home is Where the Hatred Is' George Lipsitz says, 'Millions no longer feel 'at home' in their homelands. They flee to seek a better life someplace else' (Naficy 193). Identity confusion is an upsetting side effect of globalisation, and Simon Schama in *Landscape and Memory* makes the point that 'unstable identities are history's prey' (Schama 24). I argue too that having reached an identity crisis in New Zealand and other parts of the West, the ancient world has become a refuge for those seeking stable identity in a world which threatens a clear answer to the question, *Who am I*. Jane Kelsey, legal scholar and opponent of globalisation, said recently, 'cultural identity is a resource profoundly endangered by trade liberalisation regimes' (Kelsey 10). Ethnic and cultural origin appears more important than world citizenship. Few seem to be answering like Diogenes.

Fear of Total Control

Orwell's title has entered our unwritten dictionary. I can say: 'Very 1984' and be understood. I remember the chill the book, as a class set, sent through us, I recall our horror at constant screen surveillance, now commonplace. Since total control was possible only through screen technology, western readers growing up in the sixties and seventies were technophobically imprinted by *1984*. Technology was presented as a sinister aid to a soulless government desiring conforming citizens. It facilitates control.

In current discourse, George Grant writes in *Technology and Empire*: 'the curriculum is itself chiefly determined by what the dominant classes of the society consider important to be known' (Armstrong & Casement 1999). Control strategy for totalitarian governments includes strict control of the education system. And in an article entitled *The Merger of Education and the Private Sector: Panacea or Pandora's Box?* (1993) Maddux writes:

'They [corporate leaders] often say that they want critical thinkers and problem solvers...but, as I talk to business leaders, I frequently get the uncomfortable feeling that what they really want are more compliant worker bees.'

(Armstrong and Casement 1999).

The rise of use-driven education in the New Zealand of the nineties accompanied attempts at total control of education. Maurice Williamson, then Information Technology (I.T.) Minister in Shipley's National Government, while promoting I.T. in secondary schools told students to 'forget the past'. These words entered like daggers unto the ears of history teachers who were teaching the effects of forgetfulness epitomised through George Santayana's adage, 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it' (Santayana, ch. 12). By advocating the deletion of history, Mr Williamson was in role as an emissary from Orwell's Truth Ministry. Further, in respect of the introduction of technology by reluctant teachers he advised parents to 'sit in the classroom and MAKE them do it', a remark reported to me anecdotally by a Board of Trustees member in the late nineties.

The totalitarian mind also monolithically ignores the liberating effect of the post-modern condition which allows us to live simultaneously on several timelines at once, permitting an intermingling of many cultures, many modes, which Classical Studies is so good at. Through many slogans, young people are fed the message that computers are the portals through which you access received culture and power. Anti-tech 'Luddites' in the no-man's land of the 'digital divide' are treated as non-complying heretics. Freedom to think divergently is part of the

democratising power of Classical Studies, and should not be underestimated. One student in talking of the difference between this subject and other subjects said,

'Rather than just being told how to do something, there's a right and wrong way, in Classical Studies you're open for analysis'

(Students' Interviews).

This remark suggests the existence of an autocratic mood in some subjects which denies choice, favouring prescription and control above freedom of thought. Two things historically accompany attempts at total control: denigration of books and denigration of the past. Classical Studies is sufficiently subversive to have issues with both.

Education, Morality and Technology

Richard Rorty and Martha Nussbaum, major voices in education philosophy discourse, both accept that culture should disseminate a moral foundation. Bloom's view is adjacent but not identical. He would possibly quote Wilde's 'Well-written or badly-written' comment on books and morality. He praises the aesthetics of literature, but doubts the efficacy of literature to establish a moral evolution, despite strong persuasion by Rorty and Nussbaum.

Then in the late seventies, super silicon binary technology emerged and a new discourse emerged with the interaction of education and technology. Education applications became apparent. A large proportion of the budget was moved to machine learning. Cautionary voices did arise. In her *The Real World of Technology* Ursula Franklin remarked, 'In school, there is no argument or negotiation with the computer' (Franklin 51). In Nussbaum's terms, it removes the possibility of Socratic dialogue.

Yet the internet seemed like an educator's dream - opening keys to multiple possibilities. Yet Katherine Montgomery warns that the internet raises safety issues for children, including

commercialism, child abuse, chat rooms and distractions - 'In many ways the Internet in the school is like a Trojan horse' (Armstrong & Casement 127). Note her metaphorising Internet as the wooden horse. Unwittingly dragged into the city by Trojans who believed it had been left as propitiation to the wisdom goddess Athene, it turned out to be filled with covert agents whose business it was to destroy the city while pretending to offer it a tribute to wisdom. Under cover of darkness they crept out, opened the gates and let in the waiting army. Considered like this, the Web might destroy more than it gifts.

Information Technology was pushed through without much public debate. The cautionary voices forced a discussion however. The late Neil Postman 'formulated accessible, thought-provoking warnings on the ill effects of television and other mass media' (*Time*, October 20, 2003, 12). In his introduction to *Technopoly* (1992) while praising technology's gifts, he warns of its costs: 'the accusation can be made that the uncontrolled growth of technology destroys the vital sources of our humanity. It creates a culture without moral foundation' (Postman xii).

It is even harder arguing for a 'moral computer' than for a 'moral book'. It is like arguing for a 'moral gun', and the gun itself has been a major role-player in computer technology (through games and cybergraphicalised movies). The collusion of computers and guns means that moral debates are not far from either. Postman places at his book's doorstep Paul Goodman's words: 'Whether or not it draws on new scientific research, technology is a branch of moral philosophy, not of science' (Postman, Frontword).

One of the effects of so-called 'Rogernomics' in New Zealand, commencing in about 1985, was the promotion of technology and assessment in education, which underwent major reforms over those years.

David Lange became Education Minister, and produced a new brand in education, *'Tomorrow's Schools'*. Modernisation of education was accompanied by a push towards unit

standards and increased programmes of assessment which are now entrenched and controlled by the Education Review Office and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

Utilitarian Attitudes

Test-based teaching has increased, sharpening the risk of narrow learning. Numeracism in education according to Neil Postman had its origins in the recommendation of William Farish, tutor at Cambridge University who in 1792 recommended affixing number grades to students' work. Postman remarks: 'When Galileo said that the language of nature is written in mathematics, he did not mean to include human feeling or accomplishment or insight' (Postman 13). Russell Hoban in his *Riddley Walker* presents a catastrophe aftermath caused by 'numeromania': 'Counting counting they wer all the time...They had machines et numbers up. They fed them numbers and they fractiont out the Power of things' (Hoban 19). The de-humanising effect of numeracism causes some students to see in Classical Studies a more democratising environment.

Dickens dramatises pedagogic utilitarianism in his *Hard Times* published in 1854, which is set in the classroom of 'Yesterday's Schools':

'Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else and root out everything else. Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic.'

(Dickens 1-2).

In the current reactionary and conservative phase of education, we have in the language that assessment employs, returned to 1854. Dickens in these opening chapters is discussing Fancy, imagination. 'You are never to fancy!' cries the Board member present, to the trembling

Sissy Jupe. At the end of Chapter Two, which Dickens calls 'Murdering the Innocents', Dickens suggests the dark and terrible consequences of the suppression of imagination: '..dost thou think that thou wilt always kill outright the robber Fancy lurking within - or sometimes only maim him and distort him!' (Dickens 7). This is melodramatic extremity. Yet in present schools, invention and imagination are at risk because of the rigidity of assessment practices. Utilitarians do not prioritise imagination. 'Business ethics' come before creativity in expressed expectations of employers, according to a recent report (*NZ Herald*, October 20, A-1). Subjects combining disciplined learning with imagination are rare.

Classical Studies offers a realm for the exercise of both these qualities. Ironically, Classical Studies contains all of Dickens' satirical list of accomplishments proceeding from Gradgrind's cold fingers: 'Orthography, etymology, syntax and prosody, biography, astronomy, geography and general cosmography' (Dickens 7). Fancy - imagination - is not included in the list of accomplishments. Yet it is Fancy that still lures the innocents. It is understandable that some students will cast about for a subject in the curriculum that will allow for free-ranging discussion of important albeit insoluble questions. Why am I here? Where am I going? What is love? What is truth? What is justice? What is heroic? By the nature of its eclecticism, and its emphasis on philosophy and contemplation, Classical Studies draws to it those who desire to think and feel more freely and profoundly.

One student of Classical Studies discovered a shelf of books on classics in his home that 'I've never really paid much attention to' (*Students' Interviews*). He found

'I actually knew a lot about these statues and paintings, even though it was in the house, I didn't know it was there, I just began to wonder how often I will be exposed to it'

(ibid.).

This shelf of hidden treasure the student discovered in his home became his counterbalance to

more 'useful' components of the curriculum. That he discovered it in his home affirmed for him its significance. It is a shelf that while still hidden to many is undergoing excavation.

Culture is disseminated largely by education. The State since the days of *Tomorrow's Schools* in the mid-eighties has taken considerable initiative in the direction of education. An urgent issue as perceived by the State became the new technology.

Rise of the Machines

Technology has brought instruments and inventions into our homes that are new enough to be still called magic. Fine music at the touch of a button. Machines wash clothes. I can retrieve an email from my daughter travelling in Asia. Technology is a benison. That it can also be a malison however is hardly ever questioned.

New Zealand has been an international guinea-pig for trials of electronic devices, like eftpos, computerised banking, smartcard. New Zealand took computers into the banking system in 1976, the first country in the world to do so. New Zealand as electronic guinea-pig is confirmed by a U.S. based report entitled *Computers, Ethics, and Society* : "The American owners of [NZ] Telecom ..use New Zealand as a test market, giving its people early access to new equipment and services. New Zealand's investment in IT was an extraordinary 2.7% of GDP in 1992' (Erman Shauf and Williams, 1992). The obsession with the electronic, youth interaction to it, and resistance to it has therefore crystallised here into the 'digital divide' . It is in New Zealand that we have the opportunity to observe a microcosm of what is about to happen in the rest of the world.

One Classics teacher following a visit from the I.T. Minister Mr Williamson in the 1990s quoted Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* to me, saying: 'As I listened to him, I felt "a drowsy numbness pain my sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk...and Lethewards had sunk" . I was thinking of the paralytic effect that computers were beginning to have on some of our students.

I felt that he wanted us teachers to lie down like Socrates and drink his cup of hemlockian technology which for me would be suicide and forgetfulness'. In the mind of that teacher were the tyrants who forced the suicide of Socrates in order to control the ideology of the population through the education system. The worm turned on Bastille Day in 2001, when the *NZ listener* published an article questioning computers in learning, accompanied by strong comments from Professor Hattie, Head of Education at Auckland University, and ERO who said: 'Many schools are unable to point to specific improvements that have been brought about through the use of Information and Communications Technologies' (*New Zealand Listener* July 14 2001).

Books and Information Technology

By the late seventies, computer pundits predicted that by the year 2000, books would have been abandoned. Technology in fact has resulted in more books being written and published, to the extent that Milan Kundera believes that we now have a mania for writing books, which he calls 'graphomania' (Kundera 127). (Along with much else, classical texts previously hard to access have proliferated). Yet Williamson de-emphasised books by encouraging the denotation for libraries as *Information Centres*. For schools taking this action, there were fiscal rewards. Those anti-book pro-I.T. measures sent a clear message: *Information Technology is the economy of now and future - books are unimportant*. The apotheosis of this struggle occurred in 2003, when Cambridge High School, seduced by I.T. ethos, closed their school library. Anti-book moves like this diminish the power of the book as a symbol and for what it contains. In his *History of Reading* Manguel observes that books are perceived as threatening, subversive, part of an 'evasive dreamworld' (Manguel 21) Those in power encourage an 'artificial dichotomy between life and reading' and that 'Demotic regimes demand that we forget, and brand books as superfluous luxuries' (ibid.). The Minister of Information Technology wanted to replace books with information. But what about fiction, myth and

legend? How can you put that luminously crazy Russian witch-woman, Baba Yaga, into a box called *Information*? The information box cannot contain Baba Yaga. Such stories inform us on biopsychic events through the stimulus of storied imagination, but to call them information offers them ridicule rather than reverence. In Baba Yaga's house on chicken-legs, wisdom comes before knowledge.

Information Technology and its institutionalisation, in the manner of Orwell's Truth Ministry, polarised past and present. Ancient and ancestral knowledge was downgraded, became even subversive. Oddly, the acceleration of IT ran parallel to the Ancient World renaissance, for the nineties was the big leap forward for Classical Studies. During the height of IT demagoguery, thousands of students had found and entered a main gate to the Ancient World : Classical Studies. As one student remarks, 'Like they're going to find new technology, but this [classics] will always be important' (*Students' Interviews*).

Plato's *Phaedrus* might give technophiles pause. Thamus the king tells Thoth that he is mistaken if he thinks his invention of writing will aid memory and wisdom:

'Those who acquire it will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to remembrance by external signs instead of by their own internal resources. What you have discovered is a receipt for recollection, not for memory. And as for wisdom, your pupils will have the reputation for it without the reality: they will receive a quantity of information without proper instruction, and in consequence be thought very knowledgeable when they are for the most part quite ignorant.'

(Postman 4).

The discussion continues. Michael Heim writing in 1993 parallels Socrates' thoughts when he says 'Infomania retards rather than accelerates wisdom' (Armstrong & Casement 111). Dussault, an education consultant in Montreal, looked at 1000 students who were supposed to be using the internet for study. 'In an hour they will visit fifteen or twenty Web sites, and they

are unable to deal with the information they find there. They get lost, look at the images more than the text, and learn very little' (ibid. 113). The cornucopia of technology holds elusive fruits.

A reaction occurred in 1998. In New Zealand the police computer *Incis* failed and lost \$125 000 000. Computers were called into doubt. In the months following, global Web companies crashed. The effectiveness and power of Information Technology was questioned. The cash cow had become a mechanical minotaur, now loose in the maze and out of control.

Caught in the Web

The voyager through Internet can be crippled by the burden of too many threads. For some it becomes a way of life. Cruising the multidirectional net can become a feckless Grail quest through an endless forest. In the process, technokids lose their readiness to respond as human beings. There is no physical activity, and less time for imaginative evocations. '...mind and movement are parts of the same entity and the child who has less opportunity for sensorial activity remains at a lower mental activity' (Montessori, quoted by Armstrong & Casement 48). Armstrong & Casement quote Whitehead on the disembodied dissociative method that some educational processes pursue: 'I lay it down as an educational axiom that in teaching you will come to grief as soon as you forget that your pupils have bodies' (Armstrong & Casement 37). Much of their time investment goes to acquiring a working relationship with machines, a mode which corporate governments might find expedient for managing their populations, but as Sam Keen laments: 'Technology has brought in its wake a widespread destruction of the human spirit. Never have so many had so much and felt so little. Affluence and nihilism have gone hand in hand' (Keen 40).

'Matrix' Connection to Classics

The *Matrix* movies are patterned like quest stories. These movies are also examples of technological interaction with mythic paths, and form evidence of a populist expression of the classical renaissance. That they can also dangerously destabilise psychiatric patients already having difficulty coping with other realities is clear from my own experience and other anecdotes. How much more urgent then becomes the necessity of finding pathways.

I believe that participants in this process of classical renaissance are raiding ancient world for paradigms and insights no longer available in utilitarian and labyrinthic sociologies. These become tools to enable a reconstruction of a fulfilling sociology within post-modernist bewilderment and loss of pathways in the technomaze. The issues Classical Studies raises are, in Nussbaum's word, 'urgent', and include justice and human freedoms. Students of Classics will be scathed, but better equipped in finding paths. I am therefore looking at the *Matrix* myth as classical stories reinterpreted but intact with themes I have been pursuing - origin, primal ideas, heroic behaviour, identity, homecoming.

'Matrix' derives from an old Latin word meaning 'breeding animal', but because of the late Latin word *mater* meaning *mother*, came to mean 'womb'. It is where we come from, and mythically, we return to it by being buried in Gaia earth mother when we die. Lichtenberg-Ettinger, working from Plato's concept of *Khora*, (original receptacle), and writing years before the *Matrix* movies, uses the matrix as a model implying 'a special connection between the *I* and the stranger/Other on the cultural or sociological level' (Robertson 44). This returns us to the quest for self, a recurring theme in classical philosophy and drama, and a major attraction to students - the opportunity to ask big questions.

Ancient world and ancient civilisation have become popular brands of alternative virtual world, or a world with different boundaries. It is a world increasingly referred to in design and labelling.

'They're always coming to us with examples, like someone on TV said, maybe a reference to Aristophanes, and then in the advertising and brand names they notice adverts that use classical names'

(Teachers' Interviews).

Ancient world dwellers walk the pathways of myth and legend, and Classical Studies people are ancient world dwellers. They are accustomed to fighting monsters in the tunnels, since enduring the cave with fatal Odysseus, and possibly understand the *Matrix* better than most. The *Matrix* movies can be seen as a post-modernist interpretation of Theseus and the Minotaur. They owe their populist appeal to a perception that we are being cruelly manipulated into a state of powerless submission. The idea the movies imagine is that people's perceived reality is a computer construct while our real selves - our bodies - have become an energy source for a soulless machine race. We see ourselves living, working and travelling. All is illusion. These are virtual realities, programs fed in by computer matrices. In reality the bodies of humans have become an energy source for manipulating, soulless aliens.

It is a paranoid scenario seeded by the knowledge that economists refer to people as 'units of production'. These units are often young people who must confront the corporate minotaur to whom they have been sacrificed, in an increasingly cyberspatial maze which pervades our working life and surrounds our leisure activities. And since it is now a given that computers benefit children, children are encouraged to connect themselves into their machines. The *Matrix* movies are brutal scenarios of where the game might lead.

But the movies often present as Greek tragedies in utterance, choric in form:

Smith 2: It is purpose that created us

Smith 3: Purpose that connects us,

Smith 4: Purpose that pulls us

Smith 5: That guides us

Smith 6: That drives us

Smith 7: It is purpose that defines

Smith 8: Purpose that binds us.

(Matrix Reloaded 6)

This antiphony is spoken in the movie by a phalanx of Smiths, choreographed as a Greek chorus.

Epic language dominates important sequences:

Oracle: Where the Path of the One ends...You've seen it in your dreams. You have the sight now, Neo. You are looking at the world without time. You're the One. You can save Zion if you reach the Source' .

(Matrix Reloaded 6).

Epic vocabulary and heroic structure provide framework, with key words - path, dreams, source, triggering within audience archetypal associations, and as Wittgenstein has it, 'language is not merely a vehicle of thought but also the driver.' (Postman 14). The owners of the event themselves think in mythic structures. The movies are made by classics enthusiasts and teachers like mentor Cornel Wilde, who performs the Sage archetype in *Matrix Reloaded*.

The robotic Smith chorus, while presenting Orwell's nightmare of a mechanised emotionless society, pursue Neo in the manner of the Eumenides though without their kindness. Neo also, like Orestes, seeks to destroy the mother - the matrix - though for different motives.

There might be no escape however from an over-functionalised society, entrapped in a narrative of pursuit - from control, from machine minds, from shadowy threats. The Matrix movies are plotted by escape and pursuit, and audiences may have seen in these movies a reflection of their current condition. In Richard Corliss's words 'Arriving in March 1999 with no special fanfare or pedigree, and thus no outsize expectations, the Wachowskis' movie rose like a surprise sunrise' (*Time* May 12, 2003, 52). The first Matrix movie unexpectedly achieved cult status. Alexander Pope explains this response in 1711, in his *Essay on Criticism* : 'what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed' (l. 297). The cinematic expression of modern man controlled by some outer omnipotent designer, machine in nature, touches a naked nerve.

Machine people are no longer content to be subterranean like the invisibly nocturnal Morlocks in H.G. Wells' *Time Machine*, maintaining machines that enable the beautiful people to live an Arcadian existence on the surface, underneath the skies. Technology attained hegemony, for as the narrative of the twentieth century unfolded, machines ascended to the surface.

The perception that too much technology can inhabit us, as we inhabit technology, had its beginnings in texts like *Phaedrus*, was made eloquent by Luddites and their descendants like Neil Postman. The underworld the human race inhabits in the *Matrix*, like shades of the dead, is an image of technology's oppression.

Pulling out Threads

I am looking now at the connection between *Matrix* and Minotaur, thence feeling my way to my assertion that Classical Studies is the Ariadne's thread that offers a way out. From conversations and anecdotal evidence comes my claim that the *Matrix* movies hold strong attractions for devotees of myth and legend. The pattern of the hero myth emerges. A destructive monstrosity - in this instance a machine race - takes control, without mercy. A hero is born. The developing hero is guided by fellow adventurers to an Oracle. The hero and fellow travellers must enter an intricately programmed construct in order to free the innocent human race, the majority of whom meantime suffer a sleeping exploitation from which there seems no escape. The hero is pursued in the computer labyrinth by Smith, a human morph sent in by the machine mind to prevent the hero from deconstructing the maze.

Here from the pool of myth has arisen a cinematic post-modern expression of the ancient story of the Minotaur, the symbol of a destructive force concealed within a maze of endless choices wherein the innocent are compelled to wander. In the context I symbolise the Minotaur as malevolent technology colluding with corporate interests who seek to destroy texts and make humans into production units for the corporate machine.

Originally, Minos of Crete demands from Athens fourteen youths and maidens as tribute, to be released into an intricate network of tunnels designed by archetypical engineer, Daedalus. Daedalus had constructed a mechanical cow within which Pasiphae, wife of Minos, was inseminated by Poseidon's bull from which union sprung the soulless hybrid of the minotaur - Minos's torment for a conquered people.

Theseus breaks the pattern. He enters the labyrinth, destroys the minotaur and leads the human sacrifices out of the labyrinth to freedom. Neo of the *Matrix* parallels Theseus. The thread that leads Theseus out of the maze is his secret weapon.

Matrix and Ancient World

The makers of these movies, the Wachowski brothers, are ambassadors of ancient world culture. The *Matrix* movies are a cinematic interpretation of our sociologically labyrinthic condition made by classical enthusiasts.

Cornel West, who teaches at Princeton University, was invited to the film set by the brothers, and says: 'We talked about the history of the epic, from Homer to Kazantzakis. The brothers are very into epic poetry and philosophy' (*Time*, May 12 2003 , 58). The clue is *epic*, which always includes travel. Bracha Lichtenberg-Ettinger returns us to ideas of how myth affects us: 'Mythological travellers' tales are analogous to psychological experiences, to identity transformation, to artistic processes and patterns of cognition' (ed. Robertson 50).

Myth and legend are stamped into the movies through names which though sometimes connotative rather than representative are nevertheless flags that fly for cultures embedded in these movies and in our lives. While there is a risk of monolithic interpretation, I contend that without mythic structure, these movies would collapse into loud music and slo-mo bullets.

In following this claim, I find, for example, Morpheus - named from god of dreams, his dark glasses also suggesting Teiresias - urging Neo to find the Oracle. She presents as a kindly

and knowing crone who reveals to him how to know his 'Oneness' and which direction to take. Marie Louise von Franz believes that there is only one 'psychic fact' that everyone is seeking through fairytale and myth: the Self, 'the psychic totality of an individual' (von Franz 2). If the mythic way is a path to the Self, it supports my contention that in Neo is a hero who seeks in mythic stories a track to self-knowledge and therefore self-empowerment.

The mythic parallel continues in the Key Maker, a construct of Daedalus who knew the secret of the maze, for which Minos sought his death. In the search for the Key Maker - whose death is similarly sought - Neo's guide is Persephone, named from the goddess of the dead. Persephone is a symbol of resurrection, a process Neo hopes to achieve for himself and his people, through attaining the key to the matrix.

The second *Matrix* movie weaves philosophy through myth. Morpheus posits, 'Everything begins with a choice' (*Matrix Reloaded* 7) to which Merovingian replies, 'Choice is an illusion, created by those with power, and those without', which argues for randomness, whereas the classical philosopher Zeno argued against chance. Again, the Greeks began the discussion. The *Matrix* is mimetically set within the randomness of a post-modern condition, possible only by admitting the principle of uncertainty, introduced by Werner Karl Heisenberg, (1901-76), theoretical physicist, in 1927. It became a major theorem of post-modernist culture. Then in 1958 Heisenberg and Pauli attempted a unified theory to remove uncertainty - but the principle had taken hold. Resistance to it however perhaps drives the search for solid principles discoverable in ancient world paradigms. The labyrinth of uncertainty is now embedded in post-modern thinking. And when the lights go out in the maze, what terror assails us most? It is that we may never get out, that we will suffocate in a tunnel, that something will attack us if we get out and walk.

Pathways through the Matrix

The matrix is the metaphor for any set of symbol and image that we live by - the current mythic structure to which we adhere, lest chaos overtakes us. There have been many previous matrices. The Greek matrix of gods, goddesses and heroes was superseded by the Judaeo-Christian construct, which however was overlaid through the church's pre-dated acceptance of Aristotle as a saint. Through this curious iconic anachronism, former gods and figures of the ancient world became part of Judaeo-Christian 'matrix'. Reference to biblically originated betrayal by women - 'woman, you will be the end of me' (*Matrix Reloaded* 8) are an acknowledgement of myths running parallel in the same matrix. The keymaker himself says: 'Once the door is unprotected, the connection will be severed, but another connection must be made' (*Matrix Reloaded* 9). No myth is destroyed or forgotten, it is only temporarily banished. There is always a heritage. In the words of the Oracle: 'a program chooses exile when it faces deletion' (*Matrix Reloaded* 6). Exiled programs may be submerged and barely remembered, but their continued existence is guaranteed in a post-modernist world where the New Man (Neo) is 'looking at the world without time' (*Matrix Reloaded* 6) where all times are contiguous. Nevertheless, the Oracle urges Neo to find an original condition of being, the 'Source' wherein lies the secret which will enable him to save the survivors who hold out against the machines. It is as von Franz says, the Source of Self which forms the major search for psychic identity.

Classics Goes Underground

In the *Matrix* movies an underground civilisation of exiled people, beaten but biding, forms the Resistance, as it always has, and historically underground movements must exist prior to revolution. St. Paul took his beleaguered congregations into the underground cities of Cappadocia to escape the heel of the Roman military machine. Resistance to occupying forces are referred to as 'the underground', and in the communist blocs of Eastern Europe writers used to pass carbon copies of their books around the artists' 'underground'. It is strange however to

think of Classical Studies occupying this position, yet this is exactly how one Classical Studies teacher expresses it:

'And then word of mouth spreads, it's a very underground sort of a thing,...the kids tell other kids and you don't even hear officially that one should do Classical Studies, it comes from the people who've done it, and they start whispering to the others saying, You must do this, and it spreads from there.'

(Teachers' Interviews).

Why should Classical Studies become an underground movement? I have already described it as 'subversive' , since its very existence in the curriculum challenges received the utilitarianism of mainstream culture. Socrates, Sophocles and Aristophanes all raise important issues: the domination of the State, (Antigone) identity questions in the face of globalism, (Socratean questions) and revolutionary ideas that threaten the structure of family and society (Aristophanes' satire in *The Frogs* and *Clouds*). The stories of the *Odyssey*, *Iliad* and *Aeneid* while not revolutionary, simply do not fit the machined mind of corporate interests. Classical Studies has become a resistance movement.

While Classical Studies and Ancient History are titles rather than names, they are still summoning a mythic path from the matrices of the past which allow the voyager to travel back to an original Source. As Neo-Theseus searches for the Source, he must travel to 'a level where no elevator can go, and no stair can reach'. Yet the Keymaker returns the searchers to structure: the weakness of the system lies in the knowledge that 'The system is based on the rules of a building' (*Matrix Reloaded* 9) which means that each frame relies on another system built around it. As soon as Neo-Theseus destroys Smith-Minotaur, then the Escher -like stairs turn from a dead end into a portal, 'That door will take you home', (*Matrix Reloaded* 10). In the original story, after Theseus had finished with the minotaur, he followed the thread out of the labyrinth, leading the sacrificial victims safely back home. In the final *Matrix* movie, Neo-Theseus

destroys Smith-Minotaur, making peace with the machine race, which permits him to return the humans to a construct of blue sky above green earth - though its reality is still not certain.

In *Matrix Reloaded*, Neo-Theseus meets the Architect of the Matrix, a parallel to Daedalus. The architect like the original Daedalus is the master craftsman who has constructed the matrix, not one but many, and predictably, refers to the first as 'a work of art - flawless, sublime' (*Matrix Reloaded* 11), as in a similar manner modern voices despairing of their age, refer back to the Golden Age of Greece. We see it as a Source, a perfect place, to which culturally we constantly return as a paradigm of fine living, artistically, politically, socially. Neo's first question to the Architect is the existentially primal: 'Why am I here?' again confirming Ryman's view referred to in Chapter One, that youth seeks answers to big questions. Had Theseus been able to confront Daedalus with this question, knowing the mind of Minos, Daedalus could well have replied, 'You are here to learn how to find a way out'. What else do we do in a maze? Here is a young man from our time lost in a maze wanting to know why he is there. He is the voice of youth seeking answers to the biggest question, and is to be deeply disappointed. Daedalus-Architect, the mouth of technology, is to reply with a cold formula - to someone desiring a connection to one of the profound mysteries. How then does the Architect reply? 'Your life is the sum of a remainder of an unbalanced equation inherent to the programming of the matrix' (*Matrix Reloaded*). This enunciates a machine consciousness that has invaded the modern mind which now regards individual as production units. The great difference between the original Daedalus and the Architect is that Daedalus had a son, Icarus, to whom he felt responsible, for whom he made wings. He was a flesh and blood personality. The Architect has aligned himself with the machine ethos and displays no psychoemotive connections. Is the Architect responsible to anybody? Is the Architect not simply a virtual construct without physical origin? While machines are physical, they do not have bodies. They do not bleed or feel pain, or blush with pleasure. From this episode it is not hard to understand why some young people are so

attracted to Classical Studies. As one of the teachers I interviewed says about Classical Studies 'it's connecting to things that really matter, to heart stuff, and it's just really easy to make kids interested in that' (*Teachers' Interviews*).

The youthful voyager does not want to be told that he is simply an unbalanced equation, part of a mathematical formula. Neo's response, rightly, is rage, and reflects the seemingly inexplicable rage of young men for whom there are no answers or attempts at answers. It is not enough to suggest another course of training or certification without touching the heart. Resonant is a scene from James Joyce's *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, where another Daedalus, trying to make sense of his universe, listens to his professor expounding mathematical constructs which seemed to further separate him from reality: 'It seemed a limbo of painless patient consciousness through which souls of mathematicians might wander, ...radiating eddies to the last verges of a universe ever vaster, farther and more impalpable'. The professor speaks of ellipsoids, the students think of gonads. The body makes things palpable. (Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist* 207).

Indeed, the universe of our current matrix is becoming less touchable and merely virtual. Eventually, one must return to the referent from which the simulation was made. During the dialogue between Neo and the Architect, the latter announces: 'The function of the One is now to return to the Source' which is exactly what participants in Classical Studies are doing. They seek the touchable, like the excited student who emailed his classical studies teacher to say, 'I have just seen the Francois vase!' (*Teachers' Interviews*) or the girl who phoned her parents to say she was actually 'here on the Acropolis' (*Teachers' Interviews*). To cite an early example of this response, Taplin tells the story of Clearchus who went all the way to Delphi 'to copy with his own hand the words of wisdom which were inscribed around the great temple of Apollo's oracle so that he could take them back to his fellow-citizens. Clearchus went to the Source' (Taplin 2). The words were 'Know Thyself'.

Taplin points out that the Delphic injunction 'has not been static' (ibid.). In the ancient world it meant, 'know that you are mortal, know that you are not a god', reinterpreted by the Architect's declaration that choice is a human delusion. Freud probably looked on it as the search for our own deep motivations, while 'in the post-modern era it has also come to mean "know where you have come from, since the past cannot be destroyed and should be known'. (ibid. 3). I am reminded of the last when I recall one student saying 'it's been quite interesting because I've got a grandfather who's Greek, it all seems to come through, like he knows the same stories'. (*Students' Interviews*)

Within the *Matrix* movies, there is a recognition in a maze of symbol and image, that classical stories provide the spool of thread enabling a way through.

Touching the Thread

By returning to source myths we can like a braille reader experience palpable connection to an atavistic power inscribed in the stones of our ancestors' pathways. We can construct a referential map. Without connection to these pathways, we feel loss which we cannot rationally account for. In the groping darkness of loss, without a story to follow, and not knowing who in the wilderness holds our individual or collective identity, we are prey to the half-beast of the minotaur human only in its genitalia, without imagination, kindness or love, notable only for rending innocent youth in a dark maze.

I refer again to Alberto Manguel, who wrote about myths as a corridor of mirrors:

'When we enter them, they become systems of thought branching towards the outer world and tunnels of enlightenment rooting towards the unconscious soul. We have constructed them to lead us back and forth from dream to vigil and from sensation to experience'

(Manguel, quoted by Vardey 200).

His phrase 'tunnels of enlightenment' significantly reaffirms myth as illumination.

CODA

As I was concluding this thesis, a hikoi - a walking journey with special purpose - was underway. These people began from Cape Te Reinga (Place of Flowering Spirits) carrying ancient seeds to Wellington uncontaminated by genetic engineering. Their purpose was to convey to central government the idea of the source of life and its sacredness. They were doing this by physically treading a long and painful path, carrying baskets of old seeds. As I spoke at a gathering to welcome them on their way, I told how, when the call came to Odysseus to go to war in Troy, he was ploughing his land and planting seeds. It was many years before he could return to harvest that planting. It took a long journey. As I spoke I looked in front of me at what the hikoi people had arranged on the floor, big stone bowls filled with ancient seeds of many hues and sizes. These had been carefully inherited from many centuries, garnered and gathered before us. I put my hand into a great urn of rich chocolate-coloured seeds, turning to one of the hikoi seed-carriers and saying, 'Can I touch these seeds?' 'Yes, yes, we want you to!' he smiled. The touch of the seeds was smooth and lovely in my hands and my spine tingled. I spoke then of ancient knowledge as one of the baskets of ancient seeds we carry to our children. The tendrils trailing from these germinating seeds weave an unwinding thread through the labyrinthine matrices of our current construct.

EPILOGUE

I have heard lately of several young men and women dying from overdoses and suicide. I hope these finishing words offer a clue to how to keep the young alive.

The Ancient World dances like a helix of psychic symbology. Walking the symbols with goddesses and heroes along the coils of the maze activates creative impulses, and maps important locations that enable the traveller to find her way around.

I have argued for Classical Studies because there is space in its forum for dialogue about love, life and self-knowledge. It facilitates speaking aloud with classroom community about primal questions. Gathering to talk about big questions was a rite of passage once. It was an invitation into the wisdom talk of the elders, bringing a feeling of inclusion and wholeness, holding back the march of bewilderment. Classical Studies is one such gathering, offering contact with fascinating minds and deep transforming learning. Within that gathering Dionysic dance with drums and flutes and lyre is never far away. There is time here to become acquainted with rapture.

'For among all mortal men the singers have a share
In honour and reverence, since to them the Muse
Has taught the pathways.'

(*Odyssey* 8:479-81).

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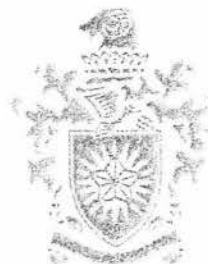
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APPENDICES

- **Copy of MUAHEC approval**
- **Ethics Committee requirements
(Information Sheet, Consent Form,
etc.)**
- **Script of *Matrix Reloaded***



Office of the Principal
Massey University
Albany Campus
Private Bag 102 904,
North Shore MSC,
Auckland, New Zealand
Principal: 64 9 443 9700 ext
Regional Registrar: 64 9 443
ext 9516
Facsimile: 64 9 414 0814

6 November 2002

Derek Gordon
C/o Dr Joe Gixti
School of Social & Cultural Studies
Massey University
Albany

Dear Derek

HUMAN ETHICS APPROVAL APPLICATION – MUAHEC 02/067
“Journeys into the Ancient World”

Thank you for your application. It has been fully considered, and approved by the Massey University, Albany Campus, Human Ethics Committee.

If you make any significant departure from the Application as approved then you should return this project to the Human Ethics Committee, Albany Campus, for further consideration and approval.

Yours sincerely



Associate-Professor Kerry Chamberlain
Chairperson,
Human Ethics Committee
Albany Campus

CC Dr Joe Gixti
School of Social & Cultural Studies
Massey University, Albany

SEPARATE ATTACHMENTS - INCLUDING:

(1) Letters to:

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Principal

Teachers

Students

(2) INFORMATION SHEET

(3) CONSENT FORM

Chairperson,
Board of Trustees,
.....School

Dear Chairperson,

As part of my M.A. thesis, I am investigating Classical Studies in New Zealand secondary schools. Since this subject was introduced, it has experienced a remarkable rise in popularity. I have my own ideas on why this might be so, but the only way to truly know what the students and teachers like about this subject or what they think it is giving them, is to ask the students and teachers face to face.

I am therefore requesting permission from you to interview students and teachers at your school about Classical Studies.

This would happen at times agreed to by Principal and teachers, in consultation with students.

This research has the approval of the Ethics Committee, Massey University, Albany.

I enclose an Information Sheet.

I shall be in touch again soon.

Regards,

Derek Gordon.

Principal,
.....School

Dear Principal,

As part of my M.A. thesis, I am investigating Classical Studies in New Zealand secondary schools.

Since this subject was introduced, it has been remarkably popular. While I have my own thoughts about why this should be so nevertheless of course I do not know what the students and teachers think until I ask them.

I am therefore requesting your approval for the interviewing by me of some of your Classics students and Classics teachers.

This would happen on-site, at times agreed to by yourself and the teachers in consultation with students.

The name of the school will not be used within completed research. This research has the approval of the Human Ethics Committee, Massey University, Albany.

I have written also to the Board of Trustees, and teachers will receive a letter as well.

I enclose an Information Sheet.

I shall be in touch again soon.

Regards,

Derek Gordon.

Teacher of Classical Studies,
.....School.

Dear Classics Teacher,

I have good memories from performances and workshops I have done with Classics classes, and often the responses have been inspiring.

I continue to hear insightful and inspiring remarks from teachers and students about what has arisen from Classical Studies.

It is because of those experiences that I have chosen to write my M.A. thesis on what it is about Classical Studies that fires up the passion that some of you and your students clearly have for it.

In doing so of course, I will need to know the thoughts of yourself and your students, and the best way to do this is by simply sitting down and talking with you.

I am therefore writing to you with a formal request to actually interview you and some of your students. Interviews would be recorded for transcribing later. This project will therefore come to you with the approval of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee approval.

I enclose an Information Sheet which tells you about the thesis topic, and the way in which I would conduct interviews, the rights of interviewees, how the information is protected, and other issues.

If after reading this you would like to go ahead, and I would be most grateful if you could, you will need to fill in the enclosed consent form. I shall then arrange to myself pick this up along with the consent forms of the students. At that time we can work out times for interviews.

I look forward to hearing from you.

May the winedark sea be salted to your taste.

Regards,

Derek Gordon.

Student of Classical Studies,
.....School

Dear Student,

My name is Derek Gordon, also known as Bringwonder the Storyteller - it's possible you have seen me telling stories or have taken part in my presentations.

At present I am proposing for my MA thesis that I write about Classical Studies in New Zealand secondary schools. I am interested in why it has become so well liked by many students and teachers.

In performances over the years of the Odyssey of Homer, and the other epics, I have had amazing experiences with students and teachers of classical studies. I have heard many of you exclaim that this has been a subject like no other.

Yet very little research has been undertaken on Classical Studies and why students take it and their responses to it.

This time it amounts to somebody actually asking you, which means sitting down and talking face to face about what is going on.

I would like to invite you therefore to take part in this research which I am undertaking, hoping that talking with you will help me to see the bigger picture.

I envisage this happening by sitting down in a smallish group of say half a dozen people, and talking about Classical Studies with some directed questions.

The session would go for perhaps an hour and a half, at a time the school thinks best, and would be audio recorded, and transcribed onto paper later on.

There's no obligation at all to take part, but if you can, I would much appreciate that, as I would really value your words and thoughts.

You can read all the conditions on the Information Sheet, which will answer a lot of your questions, but if there's anything you'd like me to clarify, please email me, d.gordon@xtra.co.nz, or write P.O. Box 67, Waiwera, North Auckland.

If after reading the Information Sheet, you would like to proceed, then fill in the Consent Form and hand it to your Classical Studies teacher who will forward them. I shall then make arrangements for options of dates and times to be considered.

Whether you are able or not able to take part in the research, I salute you, and hope that through Classical Studies you will receive inspiration.

Regards,

Derek Gordon

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the the study explained to me. I understand I may ask any questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study up until one week after the completion of interviews.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used.

I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

SIGNED:

NAME:

DATE:

INFORMATION SHEET

JOURNEYS INTO THE ANCIENT WORLD

CLASSICAL STUDIES IN NZ UNDER RESEARCH: NEW DIRECTIONS ALONG ANCIENT PATHS

RESEARCHER: Derek Gordon, P.O. Box 67, Waiwera, North
Auckland, d.gordon@xtra.co.nz ph 09 426 7032

Name of my supervisor:

Dr Joe Grixti : J.A.Grixti@massey.ac.nz

This sheet explains what I am researching, why, and how.

I warmly invite you to take part in this research, because I believe you have valuable information and insights to contribute to this research. But of course there is no obligation - you do not have to take part.

Please read this Information Sheet however. Thank you.

1. Introduction - description of research - reasons for doing it.

My name is Derek Gordon, but for over twenty years I have worked as a storyteller specialising in ancient tales, in epics and legends, calling myself Bringwonder the Storyteller. In recent years I have been doing a lot of work in the Classics domain. Teachers, students, and myself, have had fine experiences together.

Because of these experiences, and because I found that the numbers of students taking Classical Studies was rising dramatically in secondaries, I became curious as to why it had become so successful.

Enthusiasm for the subject was often high in discussion with students and teachers. This is a relatively new subject with plenty of client interest. What has ignited the interest?

2. Nature and Duration of Participant's Involvement.

This includes one discussion session about Classical Studies with six students and a separate discussion session with two teachers.

The session would last about an hour and a half, and would be conducted

at times the school feels is most appropriate.

The discussion will open about Classical Studies in general terms, but directed questions will be put out for comment by the group.

The interview will begin as informal discussion, moving to questions such as what first caused you to take Classical Studies, your attitude to the Ancient World, if you are fascinated by aspects of Classical Studies in particular, and whether they are important enough to affect your life, the way you think, and so on.

3. YOUR RIGHTS

While you are warmly invited to take part in this research, it must be emphasised that there is no obligation at all to participate. Participation is voluntary.

Once you have agreed to take part you have the following rights:

- * the right to withdraw from the research up until seven days after the interviews have been completed.
- * You can refuse to answer questions at any time during the research period
- * You have the right to ask about the study at any time
- * Your name or name of your school will not be mentioned within the completed research or written thesis.
- * Your taking part in this research will not be a part of your own school assessments or course.
- * A summary of research findings when concluded will be available to participants upon request. The research findings contained within the completed written thesis will be available to other students as is usual in the University Library.
- * Our discussions will be audio recorded, and transcribed later by a professional transcriber. But the transcriber will be signing a Confidentiality Agreement so that confidentiality is assured.
- * When the research is complete, the participants can have the tapes returned to them if they wish. Transcripts will be archived for 5 years at Massey University and then destroyed.

MATRIX RELOADED - Transcript

Credit Acknowledgements.

The transcript below contains parts of a script written by the Wachowski brothers, Larry and Andy. It was provided by <http://www.screentalk.org/> , and does not intend copyright infringement. The transcript is intended for educational purposes only, falling under the U.S. Code 17/sec. 107 - Limitations on exclusive rights: 'Fair Use'.

In entering the script, I have edited the transcribed version. Exclamations, repetitions, action and astronomical commands mainly. {} indicates bits omitted. Original page numbers appear at the beginning of each block of text quoted, and are in accord with in-text referencing.

Page One:

Trinity: I'm in.

Link: Sir, are you sure about this?

Morpheus: I told you, we're going to be all right.

Link: I understand, sir, it's just that...I'm scoping some serious sentinel activity up here.

Morpheus: Link.

Link: Yes sir?

Morpheus: Given your situation, I can't say I fully understand your reasons for volunteering to operate onboard my ship.

Link: What's that, sir?

Morpheus: To trust me.

Link: Yes sir, I will sir, I mean I do, sir.

M. : I hope so.

Trinity: Still can't sleep? You wanna talk?

Neo: They're just dreams.

Trinity: If you're afraid of something...

Neo: I just wish...I wish I knew what I'm supposed to do. That's all. I just wish I knew.

Trinity: She's gonna call. Don't worry.

Link: There you are.

Trinity: Are we ready to go?

Link: We're late already.

Niobe: These geotherms confirm the last transmission of the Osiris. The machines are digging. They're boring from the surface.

Tirant: Mutha...

Neo: How fast are they moving?

Niobe: Control estimates their descent at a hundred meters an hour.

(Offscreen) Shit.

Captain: How deep are they?

Niobe: Almost two thousand meters.

Tirant: What about the scans from the Osiris?

Ajax: They can't be accurate.

Niobe: They may be.

Neo: What?

Ajax: It's not possible.

Kali: That'd mean there are a quarter of a million sentinels out there.

Niobe: That's right.

Page Two:

Ajax: That can't be.

Morpheus :Why not? A sentinel for every man, woman and child in Zion . That sounds exactly like the thinking of a machine.

Hector: Squiddies got all our best spots.

Ghost: And if Niobe's right, in 72 hours there's gonna be a quarter of a million more.

{ }

Niobe: { } We'll evacuate broadcast level and return to Zion.

{ }

Morpheus: I must ask one of you for help. Some of you believe as I believe.

Some of you do not. But those of you who do - help me now. If we return and recharge now, we can b e back with inside 36 hours. Well before the machines have reached Zion.

Niobe: Do you understand what you're asking?

Morpheus: I am asking that one ship remain here in our place just in case that the Oracle should attempt to contact us.

Ballard: You're asking for one of us to disobey a direct order.

Morpheus.: That's right, I am. But we well know that the reason most of us are here is because of our affinity for freedom.

{ }

Smith: I'm looking for Neo.

Corrupt: Never heard of him.

Smith: I have something for him. A gift. You see, he set me free.

Corrupt: Fine, whatever. Now piss off.

Neo: Who was that?

Wurm: How did you know someone was here?

Corrupt: He gave you this. He said you set him free.

Wurm: Is everything all right, sir?

{ } of Zion: Neo, please. I have a son, Jacob, aboard the Gnosis. Please, watch over him.

Another old woman: I have a daughter on the Icarus.

Page Four:

(At the gathering. Hamman, the wise counsellor, makes a speech.)

Hamman: Tonight, let us honour these men and women. These are our soldiers, our warriors.

Morpheus: Zion! Hear me! It is true. The machines have gathered an army.

{ }

Tonight let us send a message to that army. Tonight let us shake this cave!

Tonight let us tremble these halls.

Niobe: I remember you used to dance.

Morpheus: There are some things in this world, captain Niobe, that will never change.

Lock: Niobe!

Morpheus: Some things do change.

{ }

Page Five:

{ }

Kid: Neo! You're going to see the Oracle, aren't you? I just have to give something to Neo. A gift from one of the orphans.

{ }

Seraph: You seek the Oracle?

Neo:

Who are you?

Seraph: I can take you to her. But first, I had to be sure that you are the one. The Oracle has made enemies. I had to be sure that you are the One.

{ }

Neo: How do the doors work?

Seraph: The code is hidden in tumblers. One position opens a lock. Another position opens one of these doors.

{ }

Neo: If I had to guess, I'd say you're a program from the machine world. So is he.

Oracle: So far so good.

Neo: But if that's true, that can mean you are a part of this system, another kind of control.

{ }

Neo: But if you already know, how can I make a choice?

you didn't come here to make the choice, you've already made it. You're here to try to understand the choice.

Neo: Why are you here?

Page Six:

Oracle: I'm interested in one thing, Neo. The future...but look: see those birds?
At some point a programme was written to govern them. {} Every story you ever heard.

Neo: Programs hacking programs. Why?

Oracle: They have their reasons, but usually a program chooses exile when it faces deletion {} maybe it breaks down, a better program created to replace it {}

Where you must go is where the path of the One ends. You've seen it in your dreams {} You are looking at the world without time. {} We can never see past the choices we don't understand. {}

Neo: What happens if I fail?

Oracle: Then Zion will fall. Our time is up. Listen to me, Neo. You can save Zion if you reach the Source, but you must find the Keymaker. {} He is being held prisoner by the Architect {} Want? What do all men with power want? More power.

Smith: Mr Anderson! Did you get my package?

{}
you. But as you well know, appearances can be deceiving, which brings me back to the reason why we're here.

Smith 2: It is purpose that created us,
Smith 3: Purpose that connects us,
Smith 4: Purpose that pulls us,
Smith 5: That guides us,
Smith 6: That drives us,
Smith 7: It is purpose that defines,
Smith 8: Purpose that binds us.

Smith : We're here because of you, Mr Anderson.

{}
Morpheus: Now there's more than one of him. {} - somehow he's found a way to copy himself.

{}
Morpheus: Now there's more than one of him. {} - somehow he's found a way to copy himself.

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{}
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Page 7:

{}
Lock: Be hard for any man to risk his life. Especially if he doesn't understand the reason.

{}
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{}
Lock: Be hard for any man to risk his life. Especially if he doesn't understand the reason.

some things never change, Jason, and some things do.

{}

Merovingian: Neo, the One himself, right? And the legendary Morpheus {} I am a trafficker of information.

M.: We are looking for the Keymaker. But this is not a reason, this is not a 'why'.

{ } You are here because you were sent here.

M.: Everything begins with choice.

Merovingian: No. Wrong. Choice is an illusion, created between those with power, and those without. {}

Persephone: If you want the keymaker, follow me {}

Neo: What?

Persephone: A kiss {} I want you to kiss me as if you were kissing her. {} If I don't deliver you to the Keymaker, she can kill me.

Neo: All right.

Persephone: But you have to make me believe that I am her.

Neo: All right.

Persephone: Terrible. Forget it.

Page 8:

Persephone: It's all right boys, they're with me. These fellas work for my husband, they do his dirty work...

Cain and Abel: Yes mistress.

Persephone: They come from a much older version of the Matrix, but like so many back then, they caused more problems than they were worth.

Neo: My name is Neo.

Keymaker: Yes, I'm the keymaker, I have been waiting for you.

Merovingian: God, Persephone, how could you do this? You betrayed me! Nom de Dieu..

Persephone: Cause and effect, my love.

Page 9: A page of pursuit action.

Page 10:

{}

Smith: The best thing about me - there's so many of me.

{}

Architect: Hello, Neo.

Neo: Who are you?

Architect: I am the Architect. I created the Matrix. I've been waiting for you. You have many questions..

Neo: Why am I here?

Architect: Your life is the sum of a remainder of an unbalanced equation inherent to the programming of the Matrix

Page 11:

Neo: You haven't answered my question.

Architect: Quite right. Interesting. That was quicker than the others.

Neo: Others? How many others? Answer my question!

Architect: The Matrix is older than you know. {}

Neo: There are only two possible explanations, either no-one told me or no-one knows. {} You can't control me! I'm gonna smash you to bits! Choice! The problem is choice.

Architect: The first Matrix I designed was quite naturally perfect, it was a work of art - flawless, sublime. {} You are here because Zion is about to be destroyed.

Neo: Bullshit!

Architect: Denial is the most predictable of all human responses. {}

Neo: Trinity.

Architect: Apropos, she entered the Matrix to save your life, at the cost of her own. Which brings us at last to the moment of truth, wherein the fundamental flaw is ultimately expressed {} Hope. It is the quintessential human delusion

Morpheus: That's impossible, the prophecy tells us...

Neo: It was a lie, Morpheus. The One was never meant to end anything. It was all another system.

{}

Morpheus: I have dreamed a dream, and now that dream has gone from me.

Link: Was it an accident, some sort of malfunction?

Neo: No-one knows.

Roland: Someone does.

Morpheus: Who?

INΩΘI ΣEAYTON

INΩΘI ΣEAYTON

KNOW THYSELF

INΩΘI ΣEAYTON

INΩΘI ΣEAYTON

**This project has been reviewed and approved by the
Massey University Regional Human Ethics Committee,
Albany Campus, Protocol MUAHEC 02/067. If you have
any concerns about the conduct of this research, please
contact Associate-Professor Kerry Chamberlain, Chair,
Massey University Regional Human Ethics Committee,
Albany, telephone 09 443 9799,
email
K.Chamberlain@massey.ac.nz**