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A HANDBOOK OF CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY WITH
SPECIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR LITERATURE
INSTRUCTORS IN THE PUBLIC JUNIOR
COLLEGES OF ALABAMA

Michael Hayes Beasley

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Doctor of Arts Degree


May, 1975

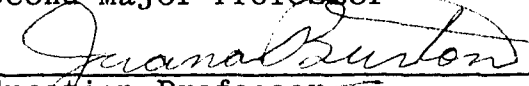
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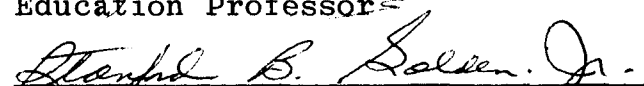
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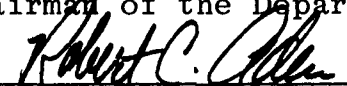

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ABSTRACT

A HANDBOOK OF CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY WITH
SPECIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR LITERATURE
INSTRUCTORS IN THE PUBLIC JUNIOR
COLLEGES OF ALABAMA

By Michael Hayes Beasley

This dissertation is a handbook of classical mythology designed to aid the college literature instructor who teaches classical mythology in undergraduate courses. Although the handbook has special implications for literature instructors in the public junior colleges of Alabama, much of the material is applicable to all literature instructors who teach classical mythology, especially in introductory literature courses.

Chapter one introduces the method and scope of the dissertation. Included are a statement of the problem, premises, background and significance of the study, basic assumptions, and procedures for collecting data.

Chapter two describes and analyzes the problem of teaching classical mythology in undergraduate classes. The first part of the chapter examines general problems; the second part includes a survey which examines the problems of

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teaching classical mythology in the public junior colleges of Alabama. The chapter closes with some implications of the survey.

Chapter three is a ten-day syllabus designed for introductory literature classes in the public junior colleges of Alabama. This chapter ends with a general examination of classical mythology.

Chapter four is a resource unit designed to aid the instructor of classical mythology in the selection of books, articles, and audio-visual material. The chapter concludes with a general commentary on the difficulty of finding articles suitable for the instructor who is not a classical scholar, and the suggestion that audio-visual filmstrips and cassettes are of dubious worth.

Chapter five is an essay which examines several major problems in the teaching of classical mythology, problems not mentioned directly in published literature. The chapter ends with the optimistic note that though there are significant problems in the teaching of classical mythology, the instructor who perseveres and systematically prepares himself with further study is amply rewarded.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this dissertation is to create a handbook that will aid the literature instructor to teach more effectively classical mythology in undergraduate introductory courses. Though the handbook should be of value to any instructor who teaches classical mythology in introductory literature courses, a section of it is designed primarily for instructors of literature in the public junior colleges of Alabama.

The first part of the handbook is an examination of the problems facing the instructor in teaching classical mythology at the undergraduate level, particularly in introductory courses. Also, the first section examines the results of a questionnaire sent to instructors of literature in the public junior colleges of Alabama. The questionnaire focuses on the teaching of classical mythology and the preparation in classical mythology of both the students and the instructors. The conclusion of the first part of the handbook evaluates the significance of the results of the questionnaire.

The second part of the handbook, a ten-day syllabus, is based in part on information and conclusions drawn from the questionnaire. The syllabus is designed primarily for the English programs in the public junior colleges of Alabama; however, such a structure does not preclude its use in other systems.

The third part of the handbook is a resource unit which will enable the instructor of literature to develop more satisfactorily his capabilities in the teaching of classical mythology. This section consists of an analytical survey of selected books, journals, and articles that have a special significance for the teaching of classical mythology at the undergraduate level. In addition, some attention is given to the examination of audio-visual materials.

The conclusion of the handbook consists of an essay on several of the most important issues related to the teaching of classical mythology. The essay should prove helpful to instructors concerned with the problems of teaching classical mythology.

PREMISES

1. Instructors of literature often realize the value of classical mythology, but they frequently assume that it is such a vast subject that organization of an introductory approach presents almost insuperable difficulties.

2. Instructors of literature often have some knowledge of classical myths, but they sometimes fail to see fully the significance of the relationship of these myths to British, American, or world literature.

3. Instructors who wish to study or to teach classical mythology feel the need for a handbook on the teaching of classical mythology that includes an evaluation of commonly used textbooks and mythological reference guides in addition to suggested approaches in presenting classical mythology.

4. A handbook on the teaching of classical mythology will enable any instructor of literature to enhance his teaching of the subject.

5. A handbook on the teaching of classical mythology can be structured with emphasis on the problems faced by the literature instructors in the public junior colleges of Alabama.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

Though I have taught classical mythology several times each year for the past four years in introductory literature courses, I have remained dissatisfied with the results of my approaches to teaching the subject. Realizing the necessity of the students' learning the significance of mythological allusions and mythology used as the basis for literature, I am aware of the need for a guide or syllabus to help organize the teaching of classical mythology.

Discussions with other instructors indicated that many of them also thought a handbook on teaching classical mythology seemed desirable but unavailable. Thorough research has confirmed a dearth of appropriate materials for guiding the instructor in the use of classical mythology in undergraduate introductory literature courses. Furthermore, a recently completed survey of literature instructors in the public junior colleges of Alabama revealed that the majority of instructors responding to the survey felt the need for some type of curriculum guide to enable them to teach classical mythology more effectively. Thus, a handbook was begun with the belief that it would benefit many instructors of literature.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Mythology. Anonymous story that deals with man's relationship to deities; also, stories that deal with the creation of the world, deities, or man.

2. Legend. An anonymous story which has a historical basis, although supernatural elements are usually also present.¹

¹ Harold O. J. Brown, "The Bible and Mythology," Christianity Today, 27 September 1974, p. 8. See pp. 38-39 of the dissertation for Brown's definition of and distinction between mythology and legend.

3. Classical mythology. That body of literature which deals with the myths of ancient Greece and Rome.

4. Handbook. A work constructed with emphasis on its use as a reference guide.

5. Resource Unit. A collection of materials selected to enable the user to choose more effectively additional instructional material or to use with greater effectiveness the material or knowledge he already has.

6. Introductory Literature Courses. Courses in freshman or sophomore English which require some composition skills but which also stress selections of literary work other than non-fiction essays.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The handbook is not a defense or a rationalization of teaching classical mythology but is concerned with the application of ideas whose worth has been ably attested to by other scholars and teachers. The myths chosen for detailed study in the ten-day syllabus are limited to those often noted for their allusive and philosophical richness.

Although much of the handbook, especially the resource unit, is applicable to many English programs, the ten-day curriculum unit (syllabus) is designed with special attention for use in the public junior colleges of Alabama. Though the

curricula of these colleges are not identical, their shared similarities invite a syllabus.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

I assume that a knowledge of classical mythology can aid the undergraduate student in having a significantly more rewarding experience when he encounters literature that contains mythological allusions. And, since the rich heritage of British, American, and world literature is filled with these allusions, a handbook seems justified that will better enable the instructor of literature to understand and to explain the significance of these allusions. Furthermore, the themes of the major myths--love, courage, compassion, rage, justice--provide the basis for outstanding literature.

PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DATA

Data has been collected from sources indicated in the following manner:

1. A thorough review of the literature concerned with the teaching of classical mythology, with special attention given to that literature on the teaching of classical mythology at the undergraduate level.
2. A review of commonly used textbooks and reference books on the teaching of classical mythology, such as Edith

Hamilton's Mythology or J. E. Zimmerman's Dictionary of Classical Mythology.

3. A review of selected books that deal with critical theories of mythology, such as Joseph Campbell's The Hero With a Thousand Faces in which is outlined the theory of a worldwide monomyth that lies beneath many of the major myths of various cultures throughout the world.

4. A selective search to locate undergraduate English courses in which the teaching of classical mythology, especially in relation to introductory literature courses, seems to be especially effective.

5. A careful analysis of a survey sent to instructors of literature in the nineteen public junior colleges of Alabama.

6. A selective search to locate syllabi on the teaching of classical mythological topics.

7. Discussions in person and by letter with colleagues on classical mythology and the construction of courses or units in classical mythology.

Chapter II

PROBLEMS OF TEACHING CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY

GENERAL PROBLEMS

Literature Describing Problems

While the field of classical mythology is rich, varied, and complex, there is remarkably little written about the problems of teaching it. In fact, specific problems encountered in teaching classical mythology are listed only in a study by Lloyd N. Jeffrey, to be cited at length later in this work.² Perhaps the best summarization of the problems peculiar to this subject is that of George Cameron Allen. Allen, a panelist on the 1966 Dartmouth Conference on The Uses of Myth, explains that two major dangers in teaching myth are its breadth and complexity and its subtlety:

The first danger with myth is that to study it or to introduce it into education may take up time which is not there; then the vision may atrophy. The second danger is that so much in such a field as myth is concerned with what Robert Lowe . . . called "impalpable essence." Myth implies more often than not an echo here, a veiled allusion there, something half-heard which you may fairly guess at but never quite master; it is often of a Delphic ambiguity. The overtones are important in

² "The Teaching of Classical Mythology: A Recent Survey," Classical Journal, 64 (1969), 311-23.

music precisely because they are overtones and the young ought to grow up with their sense of wonder unimpaired.³

Albert L. Lavin, also a member of the Dartmouth Conference, feels that while high school students may learn some mythological tables, few of them come to regard mythology as "a cohesive framework for the study of literature."⁴ This fault, says Lavin, is due to the belief of many instructors that mythology is a study so specialized that it has no place in undergraduate or lower level teaching, but should be left to graduate study alone.⁵

Though it does not fall into the category of literature on the problems of teaching classical mythology, a letter from Philip Mayerson, author of a college textbook on classical mythology, seems to support Lavin's contention. When asked if the teaching of classical mythology posed special problems, Mayerson replied in part that "Classical mythology is highly sophisticated. . . . A teacher should avoid

³ "What Are the Pitfalls for Teaching Style Which the Study of Myth Might Present?" in The Uses of Myth: Papers Relating to the Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching of English at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, 1966, ed. Paul Olsen (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968), pp. 36-37.

⁴ "The Position Paper: Some Meanings and Uses of Myth," in The Uses of Myth: Papers Relating to the Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching of English at Dartmouth College, 1966, ed. Paul Olsen (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968), p. 25.

⁵ Lavin, p. 25.

interpretation unless he is well trained in psychology, or anthropology, or Classics."⁶

1969 Survey

The only other significant contribution on the problems of teaching classical mythology is that made by Lloyd Jeffrey in his study on the teaching of classical mythology.

Jeffrey's study, begun in 1963, included a test of mythological knowledge and a questionnaire. This instrument was given to one hundred informants in the area in or near North Texas State University in Denton, Texas. The informants were all college graduates with the following distribution of degrees: thirty-nine bachelors degrees, thirty-seven masters degrees, and twenty-four doctoral degrees. Most of the informants were teaching English or a foreign language at the time the instrument was administered. The results of this study are too complex to be properly summarized, and large portions of the study have no bearing on this handbook. Some parts, however, have special relevance to this handbook.

One part of Jeffrey's study that has special significance for this study is that portion which asked informants who taught classical mythology to describe special problems in the teaching of classical mythology. The answers were

⁶ Letter from Professor Philip Mayerson, Department of Classics, New York University, September 19, 1974.

grouped according to whether the informants taught in public schools (grades twelve and below), in the first two years of college, in advanced college classes (junior or senior years), or in graduate school. The results may be summarized as follows:

The public school teachers had quite a bit of trouble in teaching students to pronounce mythological names. Teachers of first and second year college students complained of the students' lack of knowledge in mythology and their "disinterest" in it. Advanced college students found mythology "archaic, childish, and grotesque." Also, it was noted that many of the students lacked the background in English literature which provided sources in which classical mythology was the basis. Finally, some teachers felt their own backgrounds were not sufficiently strong to enable them to teach the topic properly. This portion of the questionnaire did not report responses from graduate level teachers.⁷

An analysis of these results indicates two things. First, in all probability, the problems overlap the areas mentioned, so that while pronunciation is apparently more a problem at the pre-college level, it may very well operate as a factor which produces the "disinterest" in the freshman and sophomore student. Likewise, the freshman and sophomore

⁷ Jeffrey, pp. 317-18.

student, like his junior and senior counterpart, may find myths "childish." Second, teachers of literature will realize that these problems, except for pronunciation, are scarcely distinct from the general problems which plague all teachers of literature. Few teachers of British literature have not had to defend Beowulf against charges of being a "grotesque" tale, Paradise Lost as "archaic," and the works of Swift and Lewis Carroll as being "childish."

Survey of Instructors in the Public Junior Colleges of Alabama

The problems revealed in Jeffrey's study serve as a point of comparison to several specific items and to the conclusions reached in the following study. In an effort to examine the teaching of classical mythology in the public junior colleges of Alabama, a questionnaire was devised to elicit information from instructors and department chairmen on their attitudes toward the teaching of classical mythology, their selection of texts that deal with classical mythology, and their backgrounds or preparation in classical mythology. The questionnaire was based, in part, on Jeffrey's previously cited study.

The information gathered identifies some of the same problems that Jeffrey's study did, but it also reveals some problems that are peculiar to the instructors in Alabama's public colleges. The latter problems served as guidelines

in designing a syllabus in that they indicated certain broad areas or certain specific items that seem to call for emphasis or clarification.

In April, 1974, a packet of the questionnaires was sent to each of the chairmen of departments of English at seventeen of Alabama's public junior colleges. A revised list, obtained later from the Alabama State Department of Education, revealed two other such institutions, and questionnaires were sent to these. Follow-up responses were sent to all chairmen who did not respond within three weeks. A total of fourteen of the nineteen chairmen replied to all of the questions.

The questionnaire included two pages and a letter to the chairman of the department of English at each institution (see Appendices). One page of the questionnaire was completed by both the chairmen and the instructors who taught introductory courses. The brief page completed by the chairmen was designed to elicit some general information, such as the number of teachers who taught introductory literature courses and the names of textbooks used.

More germane to this handbook, however, were the responses of the chairmen to the question on the feasibility of offering classical mythology as a separate course. This study is predicated, in part, on the assumption, confirmed by the replies of the chairmen, that, if classical mythology

is to be offered on the junior college level, it cannot be properly offered as a separate course but must be taught either as a unit in a course or as the instructor encounters discrete mythological allusions in various contexts in the literature he teaches. The questions and answers which follow have been re-numbered to exclude introductory questions which ask for the names of the institutions, their approximate enrollments, and the number of English teachers in the department of English at each institution.

1. What texts are used in your introduction to literature courses? Approximately twenty-two different texts are used in courses of this nature. Some respondents simply gave the name of an author of several texts, making a firm answer impossible. Only two related textbooks appear to be used by more than three colleges. These are Sound and Sense and Story and Structure, both by Lawrence Perrine. Such a multiplicity of textbooks altered the previously conceived design for the plan of the syllabus in Chapter III of this handbook.

Informal contacts with instructors throughout the public junior college system of Alabama had suggested that far fewer texts were used in introductory literature courses. A tentative plan for the syllabus called for references to specific textbooks thought to be in more widespread use than the questionnaire indicated. Thus, the syllabus will not be geared to specific texts, but will have a broader design.

2. Do you feel it would be feasible for your college to offer a separate course in classical (Greek and Roman) mythology? Nine (64.3%) of the respondents said no; five (35.7%) said yes. Of those replying yes, two indicated that their institution currently offers such a course. Another indicated such a course would be desirable for English majors. Of those replying no, only one comment was received, and it was to the effect that such an offering would not be feasible because it would duplicate higher-level offerings.

3. If feasibility were no barrier, would you like to have your college offer classical mythology as a separate course? Thirteen of the fourteen respondents (92.9%) indicated that if feasibility were no barrier, they would like to have their college offer a course in classical mythology. Thus, most chairmen indicated they apparently felt the need for some instruction in classical mythology, but were also quite aware that the inclusion in their curriculum of a separate course in classical mythology might be justified only with difficulty.

4. Which best describes your feelings toward the inclusion of classical mythology in freshman and sophomore composition and introduction to literature courses? One (7.1%) indicated that inclusion of classical mythology was essential; ten (71.4%) indicated that it was highly desirable, and three (21.4%) felt it was somewhat desirable. None indicated that it was not desirable.

5. Other comments. The comments tended to illuminate responses to the previous questions. For example, one respondent commented on the difficulty of offering classical mythology as a separate course: "Courses in classical literature fall within the province of world literature, and might be offered in that context provided it were transferable to higher institutions as a sophomore level course. The State Board of Education restricts the level of courses offered at the junior/community college level in Alabama."

Another reply to this same problem offered a suggestion for a possible solution: "Several adult students recently expressed an interest in a mythology course. It seems to me that if such a course is not 'feasible' in the regular 'transfer' curriculum for junior colleges, it might prove highly popular as a community service course and thus attract students so dear to the hearts of administrators in this time of dwindling enrollments."

Two final comments indicate the divergence of thought toward the inclusion of classical mythology in introductory literature courses:

"We did study Edith Hamilton's Mythology in freshman composition. However, this last year the department agreed to discontinue the study because we did not have sufficient time for composition. And it was composition that the majority of students desperately needed. . . . Most members of

the department feel that mythology should be taught in a separate course for all English majors, and that such a course should be required."

"The study of mythology is extremely valuable within itself, and most of the students enjoy it. In addition, the study of mythology provides an excellent background for the survey courses in literature."

We may summarize the chairmen's replies by noting that while the majority of them feel that the study of classical mythology is highly desirable, most of them realize the difficulty of offering such a separate course at their institutions. More to the point of the curriculum unit of this handbook, the wide variety of texts used suggests that a handbook on the teaching of classical mythology cannot be geared to a few commonly used textbooks, inasmuch as no single text or group of texts is in wide use at the various colleges. Thus, while a portion of this handbook will evaluate books and articles that might be used by the instructor, neither the syllabus (Chapter III) nor the whole handbook in general will seek to be especially applicable for use with only a few selected textbooks.

The second part of the questionnaire was one which was completed by instructors, including the chairmen, who taught introductory literature classes. This questionnaire was designed to elicit from them some idea of their preparation

in classical mythology as evidenced by their having studied it in college courses. Further, the questionnaire sought to determine if their having studied classical mythology in formal college courses influenced their attitudes toward the inclusion of classical mythology in introductory literature or composition courses. Finally, since certain questions of this portion of the questionnaire closely approximate questions from Jeffrey's previously mentioned study, several parallels between the Alabama instructors and the Texas informants in Jeffrey's study will be noted. Replies in the following questionnaire are based on sixty-eight respondents in Alabama public junior colleges.

1. Do you include the systematic teaching of classical (Greek and Roman) mythology as a part of the courses you teach in composition or introductory literature? Twenty-nine (42.6%) answered yes; thirty-eight (55.9%) said no, and one (1.5%) did not reply. Some comments on the questionnaires indicated that some instructors who did not teach classical mythology systematically taught the individual myths when they thought them necessary to explain a certain work of literature. Preparation in college courses in classical mythology or the lack of it seems not to have been a factor in determining whether one answered yes or no to this question, as of the thirty-eight respondents who answered no,

nineteen (50%) had taken formal college study of classical mythology (questions 1 and 2).

2. Have you ever taken a course exclusively in classical mythology? Seventeen (25.0%) said yes; fifty (73.5%) answered no, and one (1.5%) did not reply.

3. Have you ever taken a course (in folklore, for instance) in which you made a serious study of one or more classical myths? Twenty-three (30.0%) said yes; forty-five (70.0%) answered no. It seems possible that some of the twenty-three respondents who answered yes to question three were those who had answered yes to question two, considering their course in classical mythology as the basis for their affirmative answer to question three. In fact, eight (34.8%) of those responding yes to question two also replied yes to question three. However, there is the possibility that these people had taken other courses, such as folklore or world literature, in which they made a serious study of one or more classical myths. It may be more accurate to say that of those responding yes to this question, fifteen respondents have made a serious study of one or more classical myths in courses other than a course specifically in classical mythology.

For purposes of further comparison throughout the remainder of the analysis of this questionnaire, the thirty-two instructors who responded affirmatively to either

questions two or three or to both of them will be designated as Group A, all of them having made some formal study at the college level on one or more classical myths. The remaining thirty-six respondents (52.9% of the total group) indicated on questions two and three that they had had no formal college training in classical mythology. This group will be designated as Group B.

4. Have you found that students who enter your classes with some knowledge of classical mythology are better able to understand literary allusions than those lacking such knowledge? Sixty-six (97.1%) said yes; none answered no, though two respondents (2.9%) declared that they had encountered no students who entered their classes with any knowledge of classical mythology. In response to a question of similar intent, eighty-five percent of the respondents in Jeffrey's previously mentioned study made an affirmative reply.⁸

Of the thirty-two respondents in Group A, all responded yes. Of the thirty-six respondents in Group B, all replied yes with the exception of two respondents who indicated that they had found no students who had entered their classes with any knowledge of classical mythology.

⁸ Jeffrey, p. 313.

5. Do you feel that non-remedial English composition courses or introduction to literature courses should include some systematic approach to the classic myths? Forty-nine (72.1%) answered yes; sixteen (23.5%) said no; three (4.4%) did not reply. There is some slight indication that those who answered no to this question objected to the teaching of mythology in courses that were primarily composition, but not in courses that normally included more literature. For example, one respondent crossed out the phrase "non-remedial English composition courses" and answered yes. As a later look at the respondents' comments will indicate, many believe a study of mythology is valuable, but that in the basic courses in English composition other things must take precedence.

There was little difference in response to this question by Group A and Group B. Of Group A, twenty-three (71.9%) felt an introductory literature or non-remedial composition course should include some systematic approach to classical mythology. Of Group B, twenty-five (69.4%) also responded affirmatively to this question.

6. Of what value has your knowledge of classical mythology been in your teaching of literature? Forty (58.8%) replied much; twenty-six (38.2%) replied moderate, and two (2.9%) said slight. In a question of somewhat similar intent, Jeffrey asked the respondents to his questionnaire

to give an affirmative or negative reply to the question of whether or not their knowledge of classical mythology had been "distinctively helpful" in their study of literature. Seventy-eight percent of his informants replied in the affirmative.⁹

In comparing the results of Jeffrey's study and the results of the Alabama questionnaire, the problem is a semantic one: If one's knowledge of classical mythology has been of "moderate" value in his teaching of literature, is that to be construed as "distinctively helpful"? One answer is that twenty-three percent of Jeffrey's respondents did not find their knowledge of classical mythology to be "distinctively helpful," while in the Alabama study only a very few of the respondents indicated that their knowledge of classical mythology had been of "slight" value.

As might be expected, differences were found in the responses between Group A and Group B on this question. Of the respondents of Group A, 65.6% replied much, 34.4% moderate, and 5.6% answered slight. One cannot tell, of course, whether those with formal training in mythology (Group A) have more knowledge of mythology than Group B; the responses to this question, though, seem to indicate that one's finding mythology useful in teaching is directly related to exposure to the subject. Whether this finding has any

⁹ Jeffrey, p. 313.

special bearing on a study of mythology is a moot point, since common sense dictates that familiarity with any subject should increase the likelihood of its being found useful.

7. Of what importance is classical mythology in the study of literature? Forty-three (63.2%) said much; twenty-four (35.3%) said moderate, and one (1.5%) said slight. As in most of the previous responses, there was little difference between the answers of Group A and Group B. Of Group A, 62.5% answered much, in comparison to 61.1% of Group B. Of Group A, 37.5% answered moderate, 36.1% of Group B did so too; and while none of Group A answered slight, 2.8% of Group B did. This comparison of the responses of the two groups provides an excellent corrective for impressions that might have developed from the previous question. Whether or not the respondents studied classical mythology in a formal situation, most still thought it was quite important in the study of literature.

8. Approximately what percent of your students enter your composition or introductory literature classes with a knowledge of at least six major myths (e. g., Homer's Iliad or Odyssey; Vergil's Aeneid; the deeds of Hercules or Prometheus; the names and characteristics of most of the Olympians)? None of the respondents thought that over fifty percent of their students entered with such knowledge. Six (8.8%) indicated that between 25-50% of their students

entered their classes so prepared; and sixty-one (89.7%) indicated that less than 25% of their students entered their classes with this background of knowledge.

The results compare quite closely with a similar question on Jeffrey's survey which reads as follows:

If you are a teacher, which of the following figures is nearest to the percentage of your students who have a passable knowledge of classical mythology (e.g., can read Paradise Lost without being seriously handicapped by Milton's use of mythological names): 50%, 25% or 10%?

Jeffrey notes that fewer than 3% of the respondents chose the maximum figure (50%), and over 84% chose the minimum figure (10%), with several respondents writing "less" after the 10% figure.¹⁰ Again, there was no major difference in attitude between the responses of Group A and Group B to this question. Slightly more of Group A respondents than Group B respondents (9.4% vs. 8.3%) checked the 25-50% answer; their answers to "under 25%" indicated only a slight difference, with 90.6% of Group A checking this answer and 88.8% of Group B doing so. Of the Group B respondents, 2.7% did not answer this question.

9. What value do you feel you might derive from a carefully designed syllabus on the teaching of classical mythology? Thirty-eight (55.9%) said much; twenty-one (30.9%) answered moderate, and nine (13.2%) said slight. There was

¹⁰ Jeffrey, p. 313.

a substantial difference between the responses of Group A and Group B to this question. Of the Group A respondents, 63.8% replied moderate, while 40.6% of Group B respondents made the same answer; and 13.8% of Group A replied slight, while 12.5% of Group B made this response.

If you teach classical mythology in your courses, please note the texts you use. (Percentages shown are in terms of sixty-eight respondents.)

1. Hamilton's Mythology, 39.7%
2. Homer's Odyssey, 17.6%
3. Homer's Iliad, 13.2%

None of the respondents indicated they had used H. J. Rose's A Handbook of Greek Mythology. Works used by the respondents included Bulfinch's The Age of Fable, and Vergil's Aeneid. In addition, several non-classical works were mentioned, including Dante's Divine Comedy and the Epic of Gilgamesh. Several respondents stated that they used films, filmstrips, records, and materials reproduced from various sources to supplement their explanations of the various myths.

It should be noted that although Hamilton's Mythology and Homer's Iliad and Odyssey were reported to be used with some frequency, in only a few cases did the respondents specify whether they assigned these works for the whole class to study or whether they were used as reference works. In

the case of Hamilton's Mythology, several specified that they used it as a reference work rather than as an assigned text. It was hoped that the questionnaires completed by the department chairmen might specify the titles of collateral works used by the instructors. This was, however, not the case. Inasmuch then as one might infer that instructors are free to supplement the basic texts with works of their own choosing, it cannot be ascertained whether the Iliad, the Odyssey, or ~~Hamilton's~~ Mythology are used as assigned classroom texts, as reference guides, or some combination of both. In an informal comment to this question, one literature teacher discerned a possible ambiguity in the use of the word "text" in the questionnaire, pointing out that the Iliad and the Odyssey are properly poems rather than texts: Hamilton's work is more correctly identified as a "text." And as this teacher further noted, though one may infer some mythology from the poems, they are unlikely sources for a systematic approach to classical mythology; therefore, while they may function as "texts," such a use is of dubious value in the teaching of mythology.

What then is the significance of this survey? Several things are revealed, others suggested. Instructors are in agreement that the great majority of their students enter their classes with what is to the instructors an appalling lack of knowledge of classical mythology. Further, the

instructors were in nearly unanimous agreement that a knowledge of classical allusions helps students to understand more fully literary allusions. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents indicated that the study of classical mythology is of significant importance in the study of literature. One might think that in the face of this evidence more of the respondents would make some systematic approach to the teaching of classical mythology in introductory literature or composition courses.

Such is not the case, however, with less than half of the instructors indicating that they teach classical mythology systematically in these courses. Furthermore, nearly a fourth of the respondents felt that a systematic approach to classical mythology should not be included in non-remedial English composition or introductory literature courses.

In spite of these apparently divergent responses, certain conclusions seem justified. First, whether or not one has formal courses in classical mythology or has studied one or more myths seriously in college seems to have little impact on the answers given in this survey, with the two exceptions previously noted.

Those who have had exposure to classical mythology (Group A) tended to think to a greater degree than members of Group B that their knowledge of classical mythology had been of benefit to them in their teaching (Question 6).

Also, this same group placed a noticeably higher value on a syllabus to help them in their teaching of classical mythology (Question 9). Even with these two differences of opinion, the survey suggested that students in Alabama's public junior colleges were ill-prepared in classical mythology, and that most instructors expressed a need for a syllabus to guide them in their approach to mythology. These conclusions are the premises of this handbook, and further chapters will endeavor to present material to make the teaching of classical mythology, deemed so worthwhile, somewhat easier.

Chapter III

SUGGESTED TEN-DAY SYLLABUS FOR ALABAMA

PUBLIC JUNIOR COLLEGES

INTRODUCTION

Though a syllabus could address itself in much detail to specific items in a few commonly used textbooks, such a plan is not suitable for this study. The questionnaire for the Alabama teachers revealed the use of such a multiplicity of books that a less specific approach seems called for. Since many Alabama instructors reported using Hamilton's Mythology, if a text is required for general class reading, this one should be considered.

The scope, organization, and content of the syllabus have been likewise influenced by the results of the survey. The results of the survey indicated that very few of the students in the Alabama public junior colleges entered into literature courses with any significant background in classical mythology. This should be kept in mind if the whole syllabus or parts of it seem somewhat elementary. Furthermore, since the majority of the instructors surveyed (64.3%) felt a full-term course in classical mythology would not be feasible, a longer syllabus does not seem practical. A short

syllabus is also strongly suggested by the exigencies of the system under which classes are developed and must operate.

All public junior colleges in Alabama are governed by the State Board of Education, which regulates both the number of hours required for degrees and also the areas from which one must choose in working for a degree or in certain programs. All public junior colleges operate on the quarter system, and the requirements for degrees are stated in quarter hours. The inherent limitations thus tend to limit or restrict course offerings. For example, the Associate of Arts degree, requiring ninety-six quarter hours, allows only twenty-four quarter hours of elective credit from which the student may choose.¹¹ Of these twenty-four hours, many are taken by the student in areas strongly suggested or required by the student's advisor for proposed field of study. Thus, an elective course, such as classical mythology, may tend to attract only those students who think that the course will be one which can be transferred with ease and which will fit the curriculum requirements of their prospective fields of study. With these restrictions in mind, it was thought that the suggested syllabus, limited to ten days, will better fit the needs of students and instructors.

¹¹ Policies and Procedures Manual Governing Alabama Junior Colleges (Montgomery, Alabama: State Board of Education, 1967), p. 28. Supplements are published at irregular intervals.

In deciding to tailor the syllabus to a ten-day program, two things were taken into consideration. First, insofar as a study of the catalogs of Alabama public junior colleges indicates, all introductory literature courses are designed for five quarter hours credit, with most such courses meeting fifty minutes daily for five days. There are variations, of course, such as in the night courses, but the fifty-minute class, five-day week is the rule. The exact number of class days each quarter varies slightly, but averages fifty days per quarter. Thus, quarter-length courses are commonly planned for a fifty-day syllabus.

Second, as recorded in the previous chapter, comments by several respondents indicated that, while they felt the study of mythology to be valuable, other more basic studies should take precedence. Thus, it was thought that, although a longer syllabus might ideally be more worthwhile, few instructors could devote more than two weeks of a quarter to such a study. In selecting ten days as the length of the syllabus, an arbitrary decision has been made, but it is one dictated by past experience in teaching classical mythology in introductory literature courses.

In designing the syllabus, primary problems were those of selecting the materials to be presented and organizing the materials thus selected. In order to accomplish better these two tasks, syllabi of classes in classical mythology were

solicited by writing the chairmen of the four major Classical Associations throughout the United States. These chairmen were contacted by letters which outlined briefly the nature of this study and also requested information on innovative programs in classical mythology. From suggestions made in the replies thus obtained, other people were written and the same information requested.

Next, the Center for the Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies at the University of Michigan was contacted. The Center distributes each month a Newsletter of interest to scholars of classical studies. In addition to announcements of scholarly meetings to be held, discussions of books and other materials of value to scholars, the Newsletter publishes items for classical scholars seeking information on topics in various fields. The editor of the Newsletter was asked to insert for future publication a request for syllabi of classical mythology. Accordingly, the June, 1974, issue of the Newsletter carried the following item:

Classical Mythology

Michael H. Beasley, Dept. of English, Box 2400, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130, is compiling a handbook for the teaching of Classical mythology in introductory undergraduate courses (especially to help teachers with limited backgrounds in the subjects), and would be grateful for relevant materials: course syllabi, bibliographies, etc.¹²

¹² Newsletter, 5, 4 (June 1974), 11.

The syllabi thus obtained were of limited value. They varied from the very detailed to the somewhat sketchy. All were designed, however, for full-term courses in classical mythology rather than for units in that subject. More helpful in the task of designing the syllabus were selected books which, according to John Peradotto, were designed for the teaching of undergraduate courses in classical mythology.¹³

The two texts which Peradotto cites as being designed especially for freshman and sophomore mythology courses are Philip Mayerson's Classical Mythology in Literature, Art, and Music,¹⁴ and Classical Mythology by Mark Morford and Robert Lenardon.¹⁵ It should be emphasized that since these were designed as textbooks rather than as reference works, their organization of material tends to follow a format acceptable for class presentation. Peradotto notes that both of these texts are more logically organized than are other books which might be used for the teaching of undergraduates.¹⁶

¹³ Classical Mythology: An Annotated Bibliographical Survey (Urbana, Illinois: The American Philological Association, 1973), pp. 12-13.

¹⁴ Classical Mythology in Literature, Art, and Music (Lexington, Massachusetts: Xerox College Publishing Co., 1971).

¹⁵ Classical Mythology (New York: David McKay Co., 1971).

¹⁶ Peradotto, p. 13.

However, Mayerson's book provides in the introduction a rationale for his organization that applies especially well to this unit of the handbook. Consequently, the following rationale and plan of organization were based in large measure on the plan of organization Mayerson discusses in his book:

The mythological material itself is treated systematically: chronologically (if that word can be applied to mythology) and genealogically. It begins with the creation of the primal powers, their offspring, and the struggles for power which ultimately lead to the victory of Zeus and the Olympians. From heaven we go beneath the earth and examine the topography of the Underworld and the lore of the gods of death, Hades and the others. Dionysus and Orpheus are given a special place of their own since they bridge the gap between heaven and earth, between life and death. Having explored the various divine regions and given the biographies of the gods, we pick up the tales of the "older" and "younger" heroes, that is, those who preceded the great Trojan War and those who took part in it. Like the gods, the heroes are treated genealogically, house by house, or family by family. Whatever logic there may be in such a treatment, practice has shown that it is an effective way of understanding a much tangled collection of tales.¹⁷

Mayerson then concludes by stating the next two sections of his book deal with the Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Aeneid, respectively.¹⁸ Based on Mayerson's logic of structuring his textbook, the following day-by-day schedule for a ten-day course is suggested:

¹⁷ Mayerson, Classical Mythology, p. x.

¹⁸ Mayerson, Classical Mythology, p. x.

1. Myth, legend (saga), folktale; the nature of mythology; the ancient Greek world (maps); major writers
2. Creation myths; Prometheus
3. Olympians
4. The Greek Underworld
5. Demeter and Dionysus
6. Famous love stories
7. Famous heroes
8. The Trojan War
9. The Odyssey
10. Examination

Although the major organizational structure was derived from Mayerson's book, several changes were made. First, since the battles of Zeus and the Titans are of lesser consequence in subsequent mythology, little class time need be spent on those struggles. Next, in a departure from Mayerson's organization, Dionysus, the god of wine, will be presented with Demeter, goddess of the harvest, inasmuch as both were agricultural deities, widely worshipped throughout ancient Greece. This grouping is consistent with Edith Hamilton's Mythology, which treats the two deities in the same chapter. Following Hamilton's organization further, the syllabus incorporates several well-known love stories; in Mayerson's text, love affairs are treated in the chapters dealing with specific gods and goddesses rather than being

grouped together as in Hamilton's book. Finally, this syllabus omits a study of Vergil's Aeneid to which Mayerson devotes a chapter.

Organization of topics is but a part of the solution to the problem of teaching mythology in an introductory literature course. A problem of even greater moment is that of deciding how the selected topics are to be communicated to the student. For the introductory material dealing with Greek geography and the creation, it does not seem necessary that the students read Hesiod's account of the Titanomachy in his Works and Days, or even a summary of the creation. This material may be easily summarized and illustrated by the instructor on maps and a chalkboard. But even though the transmission of mythological tales was once a verbal art, reading lectures each day with accompanying notes on the chalkboard, or reproducing sections from books on mythology can be most unwieldy. A textbook seems the best solution for this problem, though a far from perfect solution.

As the Alabama survey indicated, Edith Hamilton's Mythology is the most widely used text in the teaching of classical mythology, with translations of the Odyssey next most frequent. Furthermore, Hamilton's work is available in an inexpensive paperback edition, making it readily accessible to students.¹⁹ For these reasons, as well as other

¹⁹ Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes (New York: New American Library, 1942). The current price is \$1.25.

equally significant ones, it is recommended that Hamilton's Mythology be the textbook assigned as the basis for an introduction to classical mythology in introductory literature courses.²⁰ If Hamilton's Mythology is used as the basis for the reading, the instructor may wish to assign the first four parts, covering, respectively, the deities, the creation of the world and man, some early heroes, myths of love and adventure, major pre-Trojan War heroes, and the story of the Trojan War and its effects.²¹ This assignment will provide an excellent background for the proposed ten-day syllabus, and its pattern of organization follows very closely that of the syllabus.

If the instructor feels that such an assignment covers too much material which is not directly applicable to the purpose of the syllabus, he may instead wish to make only specific assignments in Hamilton for each day's work. To this end, each day's suggested lesson includes references to the pages in Hamilton which best apply for that day's study.

FIRST DAY

In several respects the first day of the unit of classical mythology may prove to be the most demanding one to teach

²⁰ For a review of Hamilton's Mythology and recommendations for its use, see Chapter IV, pp. 77-79 of the dissertation.

²¹ Hamilton, pp. 1-235.

since several items must be presented. The nature of mythology in comparison with other types of stories should be explained. Also, since classical mythological stories usually take place in real areas, the major areas of ancient Greece should be pointed out. Finally, some mention should probably be made of Homer, Hesiod, and Ovid, the three writers whose stories the student is most likely to have occasion to read.

Myth, legend (saga), folktale

One of the first things that must be explained is the distinction between mythological stories, fairy tales, and tales based on actual events. Harold O. J. Brown explains the difference among these genres:

In common speech, when we say that something is a myth we mean--among other things--that it is not true in a literal sense. In everyday conversations we might apply the word myth to different kinds of concepts (e.g., the "myth of Horatio Alger," the "myth of American military invincibility"), but in all cases the implication is that what is mythical cannot be true in a literal or historical sense. Scholars in literature and comparative religion make a technical distinction between myth on one hand and saga or legend on the other. Myth, dealing with the gods, does not refer to historical persons and events; the saga or legend, although seldom strictly true, does refer to actual historical persons and events. In Homer's Iliad, the account of the Trojan War is legendary (there was certainly at least one fought between the Greeks and the Trojans), but the stories of the direct intervention by certain gods in the battles involve unreal persons (the gods) and unreal incidents (their intervention) and therefore represent mythical elements. This example also shows how

myth differs from fairy tale: the fairy tale has a time all its own, not related to our historical time ("Once upon a time there was a king . . ."), but the myth has a contact point in history. Creation myths describe the beginning of our time; the Germanic Gotterdammerung myth describes its end. A myth may be tied to a real place, as the program festival at Eleusis in Greece, celebrating the mythical visit there of the goddess Demeter.²²

The nature of mythology

After the distinctions among myth, legend, and fairy tales have been made, the instructor faces perhaps two of the most difficult questions he must deal with: how myths arise or evolve, and what they mean. The latter question is by far the most perplexing, and the instructor who attempts to explain what a myth "means" wrestles with a truly Protean problem. The famous twelve labors of Hercules, for instance, are seen by some critics to represent the signs of the zodiac, and Hercules a sun deity.²³ Other critics see Hercules as an early Christ figure who harrows hell and conquers death.²⁴ It seems best to admit that no one theory can possibly be used as the basis for explaining or analyzing

²² "The Bible and Mythology," Christianity Today, 27 September 1974, p. 8.

²³ Charles Mills Gayley, The Classic Myths in English Literature and in Art (New York: Ginn and Co., 1939, p. 520.

²⁴ Michael Grant, Myths of the Greeks and Romans (New York: New American Library, 1962), p. 239.

all stories in classical mythology. As Edith Hamilton notes, however, there is ample warrant to suggest that a great many stories in classical mythology are etiological (explanatory).²⁵

One theory about how myths arise is that if a situation occurred that could not be explained by logical means, then a story was fabricated to explain it. Lightning and thunder are Zeus's thunderbolts.²⁶ Many myths, of course, are not apparently related so directly to natural phenomena, and questions of their origin are matters of scholarly dispute. Though the matter apparently cannot be settled, the instructor who must deal with this question may wish to read Jane Harrison's "Introduction" in her book Our Debt to Greece and Rome.²⁷

Harrison notes that man uses his religion to expel evil and to secure good, and that these two functions are shared by all religions. Turning then to the reason for mythology, she points out that since man cannot immediately have the objects he reacts to in religious rituals, his mind forms mental pictures or images, and that the sharpness of image-forming was one of the crowning achievements of the

²⁵ Hamilton, p. 19.

²⁶ Gayley, pp. 431-32.

²⁷ Harrison, Our Debt to Greece and Rome (New York: Cooper Square Publishing Co., 1963), p. xii.

Greeks. "In Greek mythology, we have enshrined the images fashioned by the most gifted people the world has ever seen, and these images are the outcome, the reflection of that people's unsatisfied desire."²⁸

The Ancient Greek World

Since classical mythology abounds with specific place names, it is important to familiarize the students with the general geographical locations of the Greek coast line and the more important islands. A suitable map for this purpose is one entitled "Mediterranean Mythology and Classical Literature."²⁹ A much more vivid concept of this area is to be found in a simulated photographic representation in the Frontispiece of Sir C. M. Bowra's Classical Greece.³⁰ This illustration gives the illusion of depth, and its exceptional clarity lends itself to photographic slide reproduction.

Regardless of the map chosen for use, it is desirable that students gain the idea that the sea was always nearby; thus, many stories in classical mythology have references

²⁸ Harrison, p. xii.

²⁹ "Mediterranean Mythology," (Chicago, Illinois: Denoyear-Geppert #161361-14, 1968). Suggestion for using this map was furnished by Professor Charlene F. Crawley, Northeast Louisiana State University, in her letter of April 10, 1974.

³⁰ Bowra, Classical Greece (New York: Time, Inc., 1965).

to the sea or seaports. Frequent references are made to the many small islands in the Aegean Sea between Crete and the mainland of Greece. Of the sea, Bowra says: "The sea, which might have broken the Greek system into scattered and separate fragments, held it together and gave it a special unity in which far-severed communities kept in touch with the homeland and felt that in every sense they still belonged to it."³¹

Although some geographical orientation is useful, nearly essential, only those sites of special interest should be pointed out. These include (but are not limited to) the following places: Athens, Sparta, Ithaca, Pylos, the Straits of Gibraltar, and the site of ancient Troy. In addition, Mycenae, Tiryns, and Crete are the setting of many myths.

Major Writers

The first session should be concluded by some mention of mythological writers. Although to omit mention of early mythological composers other than Homer might appear to be a slight, in such a brief unit there is too little time for ample mention of later writers. It seems wisest to mention simply that although our knowledge of mythology is based on stories by quite a few writers, all of them owe a substantial debt to Homer. Rather than restating obvious facts about

³¹ The Greek Experience (New York: New American Library, 1959), p. 21.

Ovid's life and style (and also those of other writers), the instructor may simply wish to wait until studying a myth told by Ovid, such as Pygmalion and Galatea, to discuss the style or themes of that writer. Hamilton's "Introduction to Classical Mythology" provides enough background material in this matter so that the instructor may, if he wishes, simply direct his students to this source.³²

SECOND DAY

(Hamilton's Mythology, pp. 24-25; 63-78.) Since assignments for the remainder of the unit are to be made in Hamilton's Mythology, the major task of the instructor is that of making the material assigned interesting and understandable. This second day should be allotted to commentary on the Greek idea of creation with perhaps some slight reference to Cronus and Uranus, two early beings, scarcely anthropomorphized. It is suggested that more time be spent in discussing the meaning of Prometheus as a figure in literature.

Creation myths

Since all mythologies have creation myths, the instructor may begin by comparing the Greek story of creation with that in Genesis, though he may wish to judge the expediency of such a course by the nature of the class. Comparisons

³² Hamilton, pp. 13-23.

such as these may too easily become fruitless if the students become embroiled in a defense of the sanctity of the scriptures.

Of the primeval figures Uranus and Cronus, there is little to be said. On the grotesque story of Cronus swallowing his children, Philip Mayerson provides some interesting information on critical interpretations. One idea is that of the common folklore motif of a father attempting to rid himself of a son who may overthrow his rule. Another idea put forth by some scholars is that the myth may be historical, depicting the assimilation of the worship of Zeus, an Indo-European sky god, with the worship of an older Cretan vegetation deity.³³

Prometheus

Of the Titans who survive Zeus's battle, only one, Prometheus, is of any major significance. The Titan Atlas who supports the world on his shoulders typifies massive strength at the expense of intellect, and he is a comic figure of dullness, ranking even below Hercules in intelligence. Atlas is matched in dullness only by Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus, often depicted as the husband of Pandora.

³³ Mayerson, Classical Mythology, p. 37.

But among these witless pillars of strength is Prometheus, the Titan who dared Zeus's wrath to befriend mankind. Prometheus is an exemplar of the rebel against injustices, especially divine injustice or injustice of anyone in authority over another. The most succinct summary of his appeal is stated by David Grene and Richard Lattimore: "Prometheus is, politically, the symbol of the rebel against the tyrant who has overthrown the traditional rule of Justice and Law. He is the symbol of knowledge against Force. He is symbolically the champion of man, raising him, through the gift of intelligence, against the world, the destroyer of man. Finally, there is a level at which Prometheus is symbolically Man as opposed to God."³⁴

The story of Prometheus tricking Zeus into accepting bones and fat in sacrifices instead of the lean meat is an excellent example of a possible etiological (explanatory) myth--that of why the ancient Greeks reserved the edible parts of sacrifices for themselves--and also an excellent illustration of the inconsistency of Greek mythology. Since Zeus is regarded as being omniscient, deceiving him is logically impossible, yet Prometheus tricks him into setting an Olympian precedent of receiving the bones and fat of animals slain for sacrifices.

³⁴ The Complete Greek Tragedies: Aeschylus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), I, 306.

Though Prometheus is a magnificent figure in the dramas of Aeschylus and Shelley, reference to these plays may be of slight value, inasmuch as these two works are rarely studied in high school. It is better to impress on the students that the figure of Prometheus was drawn upon by such diverse writers as Milton, Shelley, and Hardy, to mention only three; and that their future studies in literature will reveal just how deeply this myth is ingrained in literature.

THIRD DAY

(Hamilton's Mythology, pp. 24-35.) This day's lesson should be devoted to a study of the major characteristics of the Olympian deities. The instructor should explain that although twelve is considered the "canonical" number of major Greek deities, there is substantial disagreement among scholars as to the deities included in this number.

Olympians

Morford and Lenardon state that after Zeus assumed power, there came to be fourteen major deities in Olympus: Zeus, Hades, Hera, Poseidon, Hestia, Hephaestus, Ares, Apollo, Artemis, Demeter, Aphrodite, Athena, Hermes, and Dionysus. Hades and Hestia, however, are sometimes omitted from this circle, making a more commonly accepted number of

twelve.³⁵ But another classical scholar, Edith Hamilton, states that although there were twelve Olympians, Demeter and Dionysus are not among them, while Hades and Hestia are considered among their number.³⁶ Once students understand the variance in the number of Olympians, the instructor should distinguish between the Greek and Roman names for the same gods. Students who bring with them a knowledge of classical mythology from high school are often more familiar with the Roman names of the deities.

Once the number and names of the Olympians have been explained, the instructor should generalize about the nature of these deities. Morford and Lenardon admit the difficulty of such a generalization, but their brief synthesis of attributes seems to cover most attributes of the Olympians, though not of the lesser divinities:

In general the gods are more versatile and more powerful than men. They are able to move with amazing speed and dexterity, appear and disappear in a moment, and change their shape at will, assuming various forms, human, animal, and divine. Their powers are far greater than those of mortals, but they are usually not omnipotent, except possibly Zeus himself. Yet even Zeus may be made subject to Fate or the Fates, although the conception is by no means always clear or consistent. Their knowledge, too, is superhuman, but on occasion limited. Omniscience is most often reserved as a special prerogative of Zeus and Apollo, who communicate their knowledge of the future to men. Most important

³⁵ Morford and Lenardon, p. 54.

³⁶ Hamilton, p. 25.

of all, the gods are immortal, and this is perhaps the one most consistent divine characteristic that in the last analysis distinguishes them from mortals.³⁷

Once these general characteristics are established, the remainder of the hour may be spent fruitfully in establishing the characteristics which delineate one deity from another--Ares' anger, for instance, is almost never a characteristic of Apollo or Athena, but is frequently found in stories of Hera.

It may be tempting to interpret the deities as comparable to states of mind--Aphrodite for expressions of endearment; Athena for wisdom; Ares for anger--but this explanation is much less facile when applied to the other deities such as Hephaestus or Hera. It seems proper to mention that at times certain gods may have characteristics that seem to symbolize emotional states, but mythological stories cannot be analyzed with this idea as a basis.

FOURTH DAY

(Hamilton's Mythology, pp. 39-40.) Though it might seem more logical to discuss next Dionysus and Demeter, two "earth gods," the story of Demeter's daughter Persephone can best be understood if the student has a prior knowledge of the Greek Underworld.

³⁷ Morford and Lenardon, pp. 68-69.

The Greek Underworld

It might be best to preface this session's discussion by explaining that Greek mythology is not clear in its depiction of the afterlife.³⁸ Next, it seems important to note that the Underworld is not equivalent to the Christian concept of hell, since Hades (the Underworld) was the final abode of all mortals, whether or not they had lived virtuous lives.

It may be instructive to identify several of the more famous sinners in Tartarus (the lowermost part of Hades): Tantalus, Ixion, and Sisyphus, for example. These sinners, it should be noted, are there for their offenses against the gods, not against mortals. Greek mythology is largely silent on the issue of mortals being punished for wrongdoing against mortals, unless a social issue is involved. An example of the latter category is the Danaans, sisters sentenced to haul water endlessly in leaky jars as punishment for their slaying of their husbands on their wedding night. Inasmuch as marriage and the family had the sanction of the gods, this offense against mortals proved too heinous for even the traditional Olympian disregard of mortal suffering.

³⁸ Hamilton, p. 39. Hamilton notes that Vergil's description of the Underworld in the Aeneid is more specific than any description found in Homer.

The instructor should point out that the Greek concept of the afterlife may well have influenced the way one lived, and thus it accounts, to some extent, for what may seem to modern readers, too much recklessness on the part of the heroes, such as Achilles, Hector, or Odysseus. One's reward was predicated on his being an exemplar of the heroic code which demanded prodigious feats of valor tempered with unselfishness. Though one deemed a hero of the worth of an Achilles or a Hector received somewhat preferential treatment by being allowed to dwell in Elysian Fields, a more cheerful part of Hades, his real reward was simply to live in the minds of generations to come.

In general, life in Hades was far less preferable to life on earth, even if one were allowed to live in Elysian Fields. Perhaps the clearest expression of this is in Homer's Odyssey. Odysseus makes a trip to Hades to receive further information for his trip home from the Trojan War. While in Hades he recognizes the shades of several people he knows, among them Achilles, the most famous warrior of the Trojan War who says:

Noble Odysseus, do not commend death to me.
I would rather serve on the land of another man
Who had no portion and not a great livelihood
Than to rule over all of the shades of those
who are dead (XI.488-91).³⁹

³⁹ Homer: The Odyssey, trans. Albert Cook (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1974).

FIFTH DAY

Since the kingdom of Hades has been presented in the previous day, this session's study of the two "earth gods" will link rather naturally the Olympian deities and Hades, the ruler of the underworld.

Demeter and Dionysus

The instructor may begin with a discussion of either the myth of Demeter and the abduction of her daughter Persephone by Hades, or a discussion of the myths surrounding Dionysus. In any event, the idea of spiritual resurrection being analogous to the resurrection of grain (from seeds) and of the vines in the spring will probably suggest itself rather naturally. Michael Grant comments on this idea in relation to Demeter, saying that "the tale of Demeter and Persephone, perhaps more than any other myth, has embodied and directed man's accumulated thoughts about being born and dying. It anticipates both Easter (in which life and death co-exist) and Christmas (the time of annual rebirth and hope)."⁴⁰

One of the aspects that may puzzle students is the almost animalistic behavior of the followers of Dionysus, the maenads. Both in myth and in actuality these followers of the gods are reported to have torn live animals to pieces

⁴⁰ Grant, p. 136.

in a frenzy, sometimes consuming the animals. Grant notes that as late as 276 B.C. the Dionysiac rites at Miletus called for the eating of raw flesh.⁴¹ Grant suggests that "the worshipper who performed the rite was at one with the god ('entheos'), expressing an idea of mystic communion--in contrast with the view, so often expressed in Greek literature, that there is a sharp gulf between human and divine."⁴²

Hamilton's chapter on these two gods has ample commentary that is quite illuminating in both comparing and contrasting the impact of these two gods in Greek society. For example, Hamilton succinctly contrasts the spiritual symbolism of both:

He [Dionysus] had still another side. He was the assurance that death does not end all. His worshipers believed that his death and resurrection showed that the soul lives on forever after the body dies. This faith was part of the mysteries at Eleusis. At first it centered in Persephone who also rose from the dead every spring. But as queen of the black underworld she kept even in the bright world above a suggestion of something strange and awful: how could she who carried always about her the reminder of death stand for the resurrection, the conquest of death? Dionysus, on the contrary, was never thought of as a power in the kingdom of the dead. There are many stories about Persephone in the lower world; only one about Dionysus--he rescued his mother from it. In his resurrection he was the embodiment of the life that is stronger than death. He and Persephone became the center of the belief in immortality.⁴³

⁴¹ Grant, p. 248. ⁴² Grant. p. 248.

⁴³ Hamilton, p. 62.

SIXTH DAY

(Hamilton's Mythology, pp. 92-102; 108-110.) In introducing this session's mythological stories, those of the previous session may be linked by noting that the myths of both Dionysus and Demeter are based on love--personal (Demeter for Persephone) and general (Dionysus for mankind).

Famous Love Stories

While classical mythology abounds with stories of all types of love, three stories seem to lend themselves to class study: Cupid and Psyche, Pygmalion and Galatea, and Pyramus and Thisbe. These myths show three sides of love; they also should be valuable in discussing three types of myths, or rather, three different types of interpretations that may be applied to myths.

Pyramus and Thisbe. The story of Pyramus and Thisbe, the shortest and most simply structured of the three, is one of the best examples in Greek mythology of an etiological myth. In this myth the blood of two lovers reaches the roots of the mulberry tree whose berries have hitherto been white. The gods in sympathy for the lovers allow the blood to color the mulberries a deep crimson (or black), and thus they have been since that time. Adolescents seem to have a special fondness for the myth, possibly because the lovers have been warned by their parents not to see each other. Such a basic

element in the myth as strict parents may lead students to see parallels between this myth and the plot of many works they might be familiar with. Students have often noted the same theme in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, since many have either read the play or have seen a screen production of it.

Pygmalion and Galatea. The myth of Pygmalion and Galatea is a good example of a myth for amusement, though it, like nearly any myth, may be subjected to more serious interpretations. It is true, moreover, that there are obvious parallels between this myth and myths of creation. Its most basic appeal, however, seems to be its rather obvious statement of the animating power of love.⁴⁴

Cupid and Psyche. The most elaborate myth, both in structure and in interpretation, is that of Cupid and Psyche. Gayley summarizes the most common interpretation of this myth, noting that it is most often considered by mythologists to be an allegory of the soul. The soul passes through three stages, beginning first in joyful innocence; next it enters a period of tribulation which prepares it for the final stage of happiness.⁴⁵ Gayley also notes that this myth has been interpreted as a sun myth in which Psyche, the Dawn, searches for the Sun (Eros).⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Morford and Lenardon, pp. 99-100.

⁴⁵ Gayley, p. 502. ⁴⁶ Gayley, p. 502.

The myth, stripped of its sometimes tenuous interpretations, suggests, as does the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea, that love is a most powerful force. Literature has no heroine who faces tasks comparable to those imposed on Psyche as she seeks the pardon of her lover's jealous mother.

SEVENTH DAY

(Hamilton's Mythology, pp. 141-172.) The purpose of this class session is to define the characteristics of the Greek hero and to study the exploits of several of the more famous Greek heroes. The session is so structured as to allow the instructor to focus class attention on either three primary heroes or on Hercules, the most famous single hero in Greek mythology.

Famous Heroes

This class hour might best begin by the instructor defining the term "hero" or by asking the class for help in framing a definition. In doing this it may be instructive to refer to Elysian Fields in Hades, the home of the most outstanding Greek heroes. Since the heroes in this region were those most favored by the gods, the students may easily draw the conclusion that the heroes possessed many of the characteristics of the gods. In this same manner, it should be mentioned that many heroes had one immortal parent--most often Zeus, but occasionally (like Achilles) another deity.

Once some kind of definition has been established, the instructor may mention the similarity of motifs that are in many stories of the most famous heroes. There is usually a divine conception; attempts may be made to kill the hero shortly after birth; he is saved and reared by animals or by a foster parent; when he is a young man he returns to the place of his birth or his home. Most of these motifs can be found in such heroes as Perseus, Oedipus, Romulus and Remus. ~~One common motif, shared by nearly all heroes except Perseus~~ and Hercules, is that they rarely have a satisfying and pleasant death: they suffer and die like other people.⁴⁷

Depending on the instructor's wishes, one hero or several may be discussed. If several are to be discussed, Theseus, Perseus, and Hercules are three whose exploits are notable.

The hour may be most profitably spent if students are assigned the selection in Hamilton covering the deeds of the three heroes mentioned; class time should then be focused on Hercules, with perhaps some mention made of his kinsman, Theseus. The story of Theseus and the minotaur is an excellent opportunity to show that myth may spring from legend. Archaeological excavations have determined that the remains of King Minos' palace on Crete (the site of the minotaur in

⁴⁷ Mayerson, Classical Mythology, pp. 283-84.

the myth) have a maze-like pattern, thus perhaps inspiring the myth of the labyrinth.⁴⁸

Hercules. If Hercules alone is studied, the instructor may point out that Hercules is, by far, the most popular of the Greek heroes, being a national rather than a local hero.⁴⁹ Though scholars are not in agreement on the reasons for the popularity of Hercules, the instructor may find H. J. Rose's comment especially cogent, as he notes that Hercules' virtues are the ones people admire most often: "strength, valour, good nature, generosity, pity for the distressed, love of adventure and hardiness. . . ." His vices, says Rose, are those which "are most readily pardoned, a hot temper, insatiable gluttony, and a lust as boundless as his strength."⁵⁰ In a somewhat similar vein Moses Hadas and Morton Smith speculate that his popularity may be allegorized so that he is a champion of mankind who, through his labors, purges the world of various evils.⁵¹

But scholars are in general agreement that the labors of Hercules have a significance that transcends mere amusement.

⁴⁸ Morford and Lenardon, p. 373.

⁴⁹ H. J. Rose, A Handbook of Greek Mythology (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1959), p. 205.

⁵⁰ Rose, p. 205.

⁵¹ Heroes and Gods (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 22-24.

Rose best summarizes the ideas of other scholars as he notes that there is a religious significance in Hercules' attaining the golden apples of the Hesperides, equivalent, says Rose, to the Greek Tree of Life. Equally important is his descent to Hades and his return with the watchdog Cerberus; this is, in Rose's words, a "Harrowing of Hell."⁵² Thus, Hercules was a figure of considerable importance to the Greeks who were much more concerned with this world than with a possible shadowy existence in Hades. It is Hercules who defeats death symbolically, as in his defeat of Cerberus, or literally as he wrestles the shadowy figure of Death in the myth of Admetus and Alcestis.⁵³

There seems little point in commenting on all of the twelve famous labors of Hercules. However, if the instructor mentions only his visit to Hades and to the Hesperides, and then emphasizes the fact that after Hercules suffered an agonizing death he was taken to Olympus to wed the goddess Hebe, the class may easily be led to comment on parallels in the lives of other heroes, particularly religious ones such as Christ. A study of these few incidents in the myth of

⁵² Rose, pp. 210-11, 219.

⁵³ Admetus was fated to die, but his friend Apollo had Zeus promise to spare Admetus' life if someone would die in his place. Only his wife Alcestis would do this, and so Death came for her. Hercules, who was then a guest in Admetus' house, wrestled with Death and made him restore Alcestis to life and to her husband. See Hamilton, pp. 168-70.

Hercules serves to strengthen ideas made during the fourth day of studying the Underworld.

EIGHTH DAY

(Hamilton's Mythology, pp. 178-201.) The attributes of heroes having been established during the previous session, the raging battles of the Iliad should seem a natural sequel. In fact, one of the major purposes of this session should be to establish how Achilles, the hero of the Iliad, conforms to the previously established pattern of heroes.

The Trojan War

The instructor may heighten interest in this day's study by showing slides or pictures of the remains of the ancient cities of Troy unearthed by Schliemann in 1870. It should also be pointed out that the evidence of scholars indicates that there were wars in the city at various times, as indicated by the charred rubble from different layers. Thus, the war Homer writes about is based in fact on a war or a series of actual wars in that ancient city.

It should be made clear to the students that there is very little scholarly agreement on who Homer was, where he lived, when he lived--or even whether he is the sole author of the Iliad and the Odyssey.⁵⁴ Additionally, the

⁵⁴ C. M. Bowra analyzes some of these disputes in Homer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), pp. 4-9.

characteristics that are generally conceded to be those of the epic may be briefly treated. However, since Hamilton's summary obscures many of these characteristics, the instructor need not dwell on this point.

The value of the Iliad (or rather summary of it) in introductory literature classes is twofold: it serves to establish the ideal Homeric hero (Achilles, for instance), and it serves to introduce Odysseus, the chief figure of the Odyssey. There is far too little time for the instructor to evaluate the complexities of Achilles' character, one of the main themes in a thorough study of the Iliad. Some students charge that Achilles is simply a cruel, sulking, overly-sensitive hero, not at all of the moral stature of Hector. If the instructor takes care to point out that Achilles has a choice--either retiring from the battle, going home and living a long life, or fighting, winning great honor but also a short life and a violent death--then the students may better understand the whirlwind of emotions that swirls around Achilles.

The instructor should point out that Odysseus figures prominently in the war, both in his raid in Book X of the Iliad and in his talk with Achilles to try to persuade him to resume fighting--all this, even though collateral stories indicate that he was a reluctant participant in the war,

having pretended madness to avoid having to fight the Trojans.⁵⁵

NINTH DAY

(Hamilton's Mythology, pp. 241-242; 200-219.) The story of Agamemnon's death at the hands of his unfaithful wife, narrated succinctly by Hamilton, provides a foil for the homecoming of Odysseus and also provides a means of introducing the class session. The return of the war hero, a story basis for ages, is an excellent topic for later discussion on this day if time permits.

The Odyssey

The instructor may point out that the story of Odysseus' homecoming from the Trojan War has three separate parts--the story of Telemachus' search for his father, Odysseus' narration of his fantastic adventures, and, finally, Odysseus' successful attempt to regain his former position at home and in his community.

If students can identify deeds which call for cunning, Odysseus' primary attribute, it should help to explain why he is the favorite of Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom. Once several deeds have established Odysseus' cunning, the instructor might ask if this quality is incompatible with

⁵⁵ Mayerson, Classical Mythology, p. 392.

interpretations of Odysseus as a Christ figure, inasmuch as some of the early Church Fathers saw a comparison here.⁵⁶

It should be mentioned also that Odysseus' descent into Hades to get information about his return home parallels, in some ways, Hercules' journey to Hades, though Odysseus is the prototypical hero in this respect. It may be valuable to ask what effect the descent into Hades has on the hero (Odysseus and Hercules); that is, does the journey to the Underworld merely prove the hero's prowess, does it mature or change him, or is it to be seen primarily in allegorical terms?

If time remains in the ninth class session for a discussion, the questions below may be fruitful in eliciting student responses and in guiding a discussion to help tie together themes and ideas presented during the course of the unit:

1. What qualities did the Greek heroes (including Odysseus) have in common?
2. Why were Demeter and Dionysus so highly regarded that festivals in their honor received widespread public support?
3. Can you identify two or three specific qualities about classical myths that have caused them to be the basis for much literature today?

⁵⁶ Mayerson, Classical Mythology, p. 454.

On the following pages is a test to be administered on the tenth day. The questions were designed to cover each day's topic; every question calls for knowledge that relates the ideas of several days. The test may seem elementary, but in an introductory literature course an emphasis on the acquisition of fundamental concepts is a better basis for later studies in literature than an emphasis on the possible meanings of literature. This test reflects the emphasis in the syllabus on rather basic ideas gained in the previously outlined syllabus of classical mythology.

TENTH DAY

Classical mythology examination

Part I. Multiple choice.

Select the letter of the proper answer. Three points each answer.

____ 1. An etiological myth is one which purports to explain how something came to be. Which of the following myths explains how something in nature came to have its present appearance? (a) Pyramus and Thisbe (b) Cupid and Psyche (c) Pygmalion and Galatea.

____ 2. Years ago the story of the Iliad was generally regarded as completely fictional. Later scholars unearthed the actual remains of Troy, and found evidence that indicated that the city had been involved in a war or several wars.

The story of the Iliad can now properly be called (a) legend (b) myth (c) saga.

_____ 3. The Titan Prometheus was gifted with which quality not possessed by most of the Olympians: (a) foreknowledge (b) kindness toward mortals (c) immortality.

_____ 4. For what reason did Zeus punish Prometheus: (a) he tricked Zeus and helped mortals (b) he fought with the other Titans against Zeus (c) he slew Pandora.

_____ 5. Though there are several characteristics that usually distinguish the Olympians from mortals, the one unvarying attribute that distinguishes them is (a) superior strength (b) immortality (c) prudence.

_____ 6. Except for Zeus, and possibly Apollo, the Olympians are limited in which respect: (a) immortality (b) strength (c) omniscience.

_____ 7. Our knowledge of the Underworld in Greek mythology can best be described as (a) limited (b) moderate (c) extensive.

_____ 8. Famous sinners such as Tartarus and Ixion received harsh punishment for their transgressions against (a) common people (b) heroes, such as Hercules (c) the gods.

_____ 9. The Elusinian mysteries were religious rites honoring (a) Hephaestus (b) Aphrodite (c) Demeter.

_____ 10. The spring festivals from which Greek drama grew celebrated (a) Dionysus (b) Zeus (c) Apollo.

_____11. A successful harvest would probably inspire hymns of thanks to (a) Ares (b) Aphrodite (c) Demeter.

_____12. The only deity in the Olympic pantheon who had a mortal mother was (a) Hebe (c) Demeter (c) Dionysus.

_____13. In an ancient love story we learn of Psyche, whose name we now often associate with (a) body (b) spirit or soul (c) blood.

_____14. The story of Pyramus and Thisbe has always been fascinating to adolescents, possibly because the myth tells of (a) a suicide love-pact (b) young people attaining wealth after much hard work (c) stern parents forbidding the lovers to see each other.

_____15. Some scholars feel that the appeal of one famous Greek hero is in his symbolically conquering death by visiting Hades (the Underworld), conquering one of its chief denizens, and returning to the world of the living. The hero is (a) Theseus (b) Hercules (c) Perseus.

_____16. To "petrify" means to turn to stone. Which Greek hero literally petrified his enemies: (a) Theseus (b) Hercules (c) Perseus.

_____17. One of Theseus' most notable feats was that of (a) rescuing Andromeda from a sea serpent (b) slaying the minotaur (c) cleaning the stables of King Augeas.

_____18. Achilles' wrath derived from (a) Agamemnon's taking of Briseis (b) Odysseus' luring him to the Trojan War (c) Old Phoenix's impassioned but irksome speech urging him to battle.

_____19. Achilles slays Hector shortly before the end of the Iliad. From other accounts we learn that Achilles himself is killed by (a) Sinon, a Greek traitor (b) Machon, a Greek physician (c) Paris, Hector's brother.

_____20. By what stratagem did Odysseus' wife Penelope keep the suitors at bay during Odysseus' absence (a) spinning a shroud (b) pretending to be insane (c) threatening to summon a neighboring prince's army.

Part II. Short answer questions.

Answer each in two or three short sentences; be specific. Three points each.

1. Why do you think the American inventor Thomas Edison has been called "the Prometheus of our time"?⁵⁷
2. What is the function of Cerberus, the three-headed dog in Hades?
3. When Pygmalion prays for Galatea to become alive, why is it natural that it is to the goddess Aphrodite (Venus) that he prays rather than to another deity?

⁵⁷ Max Herzberg, Myths and Their Meanings (New York: Allyn and Bacon, 1969), p. 19.

4. What dramatic event causes Achilles to rejoin the battle with renewed fury after he has withdrawn in anger?

5. What is the secret of the construction of Odysseus' bed which assures Penelope that the stranger is really her long-absent husband?

Part III. Essay questions.

Select two questions. Answer carefully, making sure that your support is reasonable and adequate. Twenty-five points total.

1. Using the Iliad and the deeds of Hercules as examples, distinguish between myth and legend.

2. The Greek Underworld receives all those who die; there is no "heaven" in the commonly used sense. How might this fact help explain the intense admiration that the ancient Greeks had for Hercules?

3. Some scholars believe that the story of Prometheus tricking Zeus in the matter of sacrifices is an etiological myth. If this is so, what might the myth explain?

4. Odysseus and Hercules were very popular Greek heroes, but they are quite different in several ways. Supporting your answer with specific reference to their exploits, identify two characteristics that they had in common. Then, identify what you feel to be the single most dominant characteristic of each, and support your statement by reference to two or three specific deeds.

Chapter IV

RESOURCE UNIT

While the previous chapter suggested a syllabus primarily intended for instructors of classical mythology in introductory literature courses, it seems fitting that a portion of the handbook be useful for all instructors of classical mythology. This chapter is an effort to aid instructors by suggesting a basic core of texts and articles selected for the purpose of providing a general background in classical mythology. The survey previously examined in the handbook reveals the need for a basic knowledge of classical mythology among Alabama junior college instructors. Among instructors of literature in four-year institutions, the situation is different in that most instructors are specialists in one or more diverse fields. Yet, often the explanation of literature in even these rather specialized literature courses may call for a knowledge of classical mythology. This chapter is an annotated compilation of works selected to enable the instructor of English to approach the teaching of classical mythology with increased confidence and skill. Included in this compilation are books, journals and their articles, and audio-visual aids.

SELECTION AND ANALYSIS OF MATERIALS

The selection and evaluation of much of this material has been reached largely on the basis of research on the handbook. The difficult task of selecting and evaluating books was aided considerably by John J. Peradotto's booklet, Classical Mythology: An Annotated Bibliographical Survey.

Peradotto's booklet is a primary item in the list of works selected. This booklet lists and comments briefly on 212 works, all but one of which are books. Although Peradotto's survey is necessarily selective, the works he reviews are those that form a substantial body of literature by respected classical writers.

The booklet is divided into fourteen categories, though Peradotto admits the subjective nature of categorizing (p. 4): Alphabetized Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, Handbooks; Systematic Surveys of Classical Myth with Extensive Commentary and/or Interpretation; Systematic Surveys of Classical Myth without Extensive Commentary or Interpretation; Comparative Mythology; Myth and Art; Myth and Literature; Myth and Psychology; Myth and Anthropology; The Structural Study of Myth; Mythic Thought; Myth and Religion; Some General Studies and Collections of Essays; Some Specialized Studies; Translations: Hesiod, Homeric Hymns, Ovid; Addendum.

To the works in these fourteen categories Peradotto applies one of six ratings: (A) Suitable for use as an undergraduate textbook; (B) Suitable for supplementary reading rather than as a textbook for undergraduates; (C) Suitable for instructor reference rather than as undergraduate use; (X) Not recommended because of serious defects such as incorrect statements or serious bias; (Y) Primarily suitable for the secondary school level with limited application at the college level; (Z) Useful at the college level only in peripheral courses that might require some knowledge of mythology.⁵⁸ Peradotto's classical background and experience have served as authoritative guides to the extent that, with few exceptions, only books in the first three ratings (A, B, and C) have been considered for review.

A much more difficult decision was that of deciding which of several almost equally appealing works under each category might best serve the uses of the instructor wishing to develop better his knowledge of classical mythology. This matter required a great deal of personal judgment, though Peradotto's estimates of the worth of the works have also been considered. The list of material presented in the following pages lacks the catholicity of Peradotto's booklet in that the selections are tailored to the needs of the instructor who wishes to achieve a rather basic degree of

⁵⁸ Peradotto, p. 4.

competency in classical mythology rather than the instructor who might already have a substantial knowledge of the subject.

Books in the following areas of Peradotto's booklet have been considered: Dictionaries, Surveys (both with and without extensive commentary), Myth and Literature, and Myth and Psychology. In addition, several editions of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey will be evaluated. These selected works are those that will be of substantial worth to any instructor wishing to build a background in classical mythology. The comments on journals, articles, and other materials should prove valuable in aiding the instructor in his application of mythological ideas found in the texts.

Instructor Reference Books

Basic to the instructor's collection of works should be a dictionary or reference work. Two volumes deserve special mention. Of the eleven volumes Peradotto reviews in this classification, Edward Tripp's Crowell's Handbook of Classical Mythology is, says Peradotto, "the closest thing to the ideal in a single volume: numerous entries, detailed coverage, precise references to literary sources, unpedantic style, pleasant format."⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Peradotto, p. 7.

In addition to the features mentioned, the book has several other items which commend its use. Entries are amply cross-referenced to make further research on a given topic more convenient. For the instructor who wishes to pursue a reference to its origin, Tripp provides all sources in detail where possible. For example, on the minor Olympian goddess Hebe, Tripp cites specific lines in Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, Ovid's Metamorphoses, and Euripides' Children of Heracles.⁶⁰ Further, there are six pages of clearly drawn maps of Greece, Rome, and the Mediterranean area. Other helpful features are a pronouncing index and three genealogical charts. This work should be on the bookshelf of any instructor who teaches classical mythology in any capacity.

In this same category of reference works, a book of somewhat more modest proportions is J. E. Zimmerman's Dictionary of Classical Mythology.⁶¹ Though less than half the length of Tripp's Handbook, this slim volume provides succinct information on more than two thousand entries. Like Tripp's Handbook, entries are thoroughly cross-referenced. Though the book has no genealogical charts, each entry has a pronunciation guide that the instructor may find very helpful.

⁶⁰ Crowell's Handbook of Classical Mythology (New York; Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1970), p. 261.

⁶¹ Dictionary of Classical Mythology (New York; Bantam, 1966).

Another valuable feature is a thirteen-page introduction that includes, among other topics, brief but concise introductions to the importance of mythology, mythological sources, mythology in literature, and themes in literature. For the instructor who teaches a full-term course in classical mythology, this should be a most worthwhile supplementary work. Its low cost and paperback format make it ideal for student use.

The Iliad and the Odyssey

Inasmuch as the Iliad and the Odyssey are mentioned by instructors surveyed as being used with some frequency in their teaching, it seems appropriate to comment next on editions of these. Three editions seem to be potentially useful to the instructor and students.

For both the instructor and the student wishing to gain a knowledge of the Iliad, the best choice is that of I. A. Richards.⁶² Richards' version is in lean, modern prose, and, as he notes in the Introduction, he has made substantial cuts in the work, omitting entirely Books II, X, XIII, and XVII, as well as passages from other books. The reasons for Richards' cuts and use of modern prose are that "the Iliad is choked with dense thickets of reported play-by-play

⁶² The Iliad of Homer (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1950).

fighting and celestial politics which commonly prevent the main sources of its power from being approached. I have tried to make such a clearance, to bring the plot out into the fullest clarity, and at the same time to parallel this clarification of the action with a simplification of the English I have used."⁶³

Though the purist may find Richards' alterations and attitude heretical, the instructor who is not a classical scholar will find them refreshing. There is nothing in this version that smacks of oversimplification; what remains is Homer made clear. Besides the lucid and intriguing introduction, there is also included a convenient list of the gods and warriors, with the warriors grouped into two opposing forces.

When one moves from the heroism of the Iliad to the humanism of the Odyssey, he will find two quite different editions may be helpful. The first of these is Albert Cook's translation. This edition contains in addition to a poetic rendering of the original poem, a collection of informative articles, and a glossary and a bibliography, together with an intriguing map.

Of the two editions to be considered, this one may be the most helpful to the instructor. The critical material

⁶³ Richards, p. 16.

that accompanies the poem includes items in three categories: Backgrounds, The Odyssey in Antiquity, and Criticism. The selections in each category seem to be those that should help the instructor come to a good understanding of the poem. Portions of the bibliography are helpfully annotated. The map suggests some possible locations for events and places mentioned in the poem.

In contrast with Cook's literal translation is W. H. D. Rouse's prose translation.⁶⁴ Though its only aids are an index and an appendix, the index is a pronouncing one, and the appendix makes a lively appeal to the instructor. It is doubtful that the students will find the appendix worthwhile, inasmuch as it deals with ideas that are obscured in the translation from Greek to English; the illustrations, though in English, are heavily laced with the Greek for comparison, making it somewhat bothersome reading for the reader not acquainted with Greek.

Rouse's translation has a greater appeal to the student who is unconcerned with the criticism of the Odyssey and who is dismayed by the thought of reading a poem over three hundred pages long. Rouse's language is lovely, and, at times, colloquial. A passage in Book VI of Cook's translation illustrates the contrast between the two styles of

⁶⁴ Homer: The Odyssey (New York: New American Library, 1937).

Rouse and Cook. Pallas Athena speaks to Nausicaa, the daughter of King Alcinous, on whose island Odysseus has washed ashore:

Nausicaa, how did your mother have such a care-
less child?
Your shining garments lying uncared for,
And your wedding is near. . . . (VI.25.27)

Rouse renders the same lines in the following manner:

"Why are you so lazy, Nausicaa, and with such a mother as you have? There is all the fine linen lying soiled, and it is high time for you to marry. . . ."65

While there are other translations of these works available, these three appear to be the best suited for both the student and the instructor. If the instructor is to use the Odyssey for a full-term course in classical mythology, Cook's translation seems preferable to that of Rouse. For introductory literature classes in which much less time is allowable on the poem, Rouse's spirited translation seems the better choice.

Classroom Textbooks

Having considered reference guides and editions of two fairly commonly used poems, the next logical selection is that of a systematic survey of mythological stories. As Peradotto indicates in his booklet, there are two categories

65 Rouse, p. 73.

of such surveys, those with extensive commentary and those without it. The instructor seeking to improve his background in classical mythology will find the commentary quite valuable; for purposes of class use in introductory literature courses, though, the necessity for the students becoming acquainted with a substantial number of myths precludes the use of texts with extensive commentary. In addition, the relative sophistication of commentary might very well deter the uninitiated student of literature.

For introductory literature classes in which classical mythology is taught by textbook assignments rather than as the instructor encounters mythological allusions, Edith Hamilton's Mythology seems the work most preferable. Peradotto admits that Hamilton's work is quite popular with many readers, but he feels that a weakness is Hamilton's tendency to oversimplify matters.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, for the casual student of literature, Hamilton's Mythology has features which commend its use. Its Introduction alludes to the major ancient classical writers in reasonable detail. Later in the text the characteristics of these writers are again mentioned in connection with their tale or tales which Hamilton translates. The reader is thus easily able to perceive that Ovid's writings have more charm, grace, and wit

⁶⁶ Peradotto, pp. 15-16.

than those of Apollodorus. While such a distinction may be obvious to the student who pursues classical studies in depth, it is no small matter to the student just beginning studies in mythology.

In this manner the headnotes that preface each story in Hamilton's works relieve the instructor of the necessity of citing sources for the stories. Furthermore, the headnotes occasionally point unobtrusively to information that may be the source of much stimulating classroom discussion. For example, in the preface to the story of Perseus and his deeds, Hamilton notes that the story is anomalous in that, of all the Greek myths, it is the only story dominated by magic.⁶⁷ A discussion of the possible reasons for the lack of magic in the other myths should lead directly into the provocative questions of the origins and purposes of myths.

Finally, Hamilton provides six pages of genealogical tables and an index. The index is perhaps more helpful than many in that it occasionally functions as a dictionary, as, for example, the entry for Thalia: "One of the Three Graces, 7."⁶⁷

Though Hamilton's Mythology might be the best choice for use in introductory literature classes, the instructor

⁶⁷ Hamilton, p. 141.

⁶⁸ Hamilton, p. 334.

who wishes to consider surveys with extensive commentary will need to be acquainted with two texts. These texts are more suitable than Hamilton's for use as basic textbooks in full-term courses of classical mythology. In addition, each is more suitable for building an instructor's background in mythology than is Hamilton's work in that the commentary is integrated with the stories, making frequent references to other criticism largely unnecessary.

Of the two volumes considered for this purpose, the best one is Philip Mayerson's Classical Mythology in Literature, Art, and Music. This volume retells the myths and adds valuable explanatory and interpretive commentary. Other features that make the book especially useful are its excellent map of the Greek world, numerous genealogical tables throughout the book, and its general pronunciation guide in the index. Peradotto concludes that the best feature of the book is its use of many literary quotations, its thorough bibliography, and its systematic organization.⁶⁹

If organization is one of the better points of Mayerson's text, it is perhaps the weakest point of an otherwise excellent textbook in the same category. Many of the redeeming qualities of Mayerson's book, though with some important differences, are found in Michael Grant's Myths

⁶⁹ Peradotto, p. 13.

of the Greeks and Romans (New York: New American Library, 1962). It has, as does Mayerson's text, illustrations interspersed throughout the text. It also has six pages of maps, but unfortunately these are much less distinctly reproduced than are the maps in either Tripp or Mayerson. It has, however, twelve genealogical tables at strategic locations in the book; furthermore, these tables are cross-indexed, a small but potentially useful point, one not found in Mayerson. This volume, as Peradotto notes (p. 9), is very clearly written, with even difficult matters explained clearly. The bibliography is so compressed that it is difficult to locate items, but its cogent annotation is very valuable for the scholar or interested instructor with some background in classical mythology. The commentary in Grant's work may be very valuable, but for the instructor seeking a broad, comprehensive knowledge of classical mythology, the organization of Mayerson's book makes it a somewhat better choice.

Mythological Criticism

Commentary is criticism, and the instructor who finds his appetite for more mythological criticism greater than either Mayerson or Grant provides may wish to consider a collection of mythological criticism. Criticism, though, like the topic itself, is exceedingly varied, both in scope

and quality. Unfortunately, there are few works which are especially valuable in giving the interested but largely uninformed instructor a good sampling of mythological criticism. The best volume in this area is John Vickery's Myth and Literature (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1966).

Vickery's book is a collection of thirty-four essays on myth and literature, divided into three major categories--the Nature of Myth, Myth and Literature, and Myth and Criticism. Some of the essays are rather broad, tending toward definition or major hypotheses, such as Northrop Frye's classic essay "The Archetypes of Literature," or Clyde Kluckhohn's "Myth and Rituals: A General Theory." Others are more specific, dealing either with a literary period and genre or with a specific work. Examples are Herbert Weisinger's "The Myth and Ritual Approach to Shakespearean Tragedy" and John E. Hart's "The Red Badge of Courage as Myth and Symbol." Aside from the judicious selection of essays, two other features make the book a good choice.

Each essay, or in some cases groups of essays, is preceded by an illuminating headnote which may summarize the major ideas in the essay, point out pertinent features, contrast that essay with another, or simply make an enlightening comment on the essay. These remarks add a sense of

continuity to the discrete essays and enable the reader to see relationships among ideas. Finally, the book has an excellent bibliography that points the interested reader to still other valuable works in the several branches of mythological criticism.

Psychological Criticism

Of all the labyrinthine branches of mythological criticism, the area most easily accessible to the instructor and probably to the popular imagination of his students is that of psychological criticism. To many critics and students of literature, psychological criticism is that which is built on the theories of Sigmund Freud. A sizeable group of scholars, though, feel that the ideas of Freud's student and one-time partner Carl Jung contribute greatly to our understanding of mythology and other literature. Even as the two men had differing theories of human nature that eventually caused them to cease communication with each other, so there is disagreement among scholars that the theories of both men should be called "psychological" theories of criticism.

This issue of the differing theories of the two men is clearly explained in Wilfred Guerin's work, A Handbook of Critical Approaches.⁷⁰ Guerin notes that Jung's theories

⁷⁰ With Earle G. Labor, Lee Morgan, John R. Willingham, A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 84-150.

are usually considered most applicable to mythology, and that while mythological criticism and psychological criticism have things in common, the two approaches are "distinct, and mythology [i.e., mythological criticism] is wider in its scope. For example, what psychoanalysis attempts to disclose about the individual personality, the study of myth reveals about the mind and character of a people. And just as dreams reflect the unconscious desires and anxieties of the individual personality, the study of myth reveals about the mind and character of a people. And just as dreams reflect the unconscious desires and anxieties of the individual, so myths are the symbolic projections of a people's hopes, values, fears, and aspirations."⁷¹

While the relative influence of these two theories on literature may be a moot point, the theories of Jungian psychology on the interpretation of mythology is of such significance that the instructor who wishes to examine a common link between classical mythology and mythologies of other cultures cannot afford to ignore Jung's theories.

Of special interest to the instructor may be Jung's ideas on the hero figure in world literature. Jung observed that the mythologies of disparate cultures were strikingly similar in their patterns of depicting heroes and their

⁷¹ Guerin, pp. 116-17.

battles or quests. Anthony Storr explains Jung's thoughts on this matter:

We all start life as helpless children. We all have to emancipate ourselves from parents and other adults and face life and its challenges independently. If we do not succeed in doing so, we will neither attain a position in the world (a throne) nor reach sufficient heterosexual maturity to win a mate (the beautiful princess). Instead we shall be destroyed by the dragon; and everyone must surely be familiar with at least one family in which a son has been destroyed by a dragon of a mother from whom he has been unable to emancipate himself, even if it was he who made her into one by his failure to seek freedom. Hero myths originating from different cultures are similar because our psychological progress through life is similar, whether we were reared in New York or belong to the Netsilik Eskimos; whether we live in the twentieth century or in the fifth century before Christ.⁷²

Jung's ideas on the hero figure were synthesized by the American mythologist Joseph Campbell in a scholarly yet highly readable book, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (New York: World Publishing Co., 1956). Its all-embracing theory of hero similarity gives the serious scholar or the interested instructor limitless points of departure for engaging classroom discussions.

Typically, the hero figure has a divine birth. Later, in his childhood, certain divine signs suggest his special role as a future leader. After a period of meditation the hero begins his quest for an elixir of life or some other appropriate element symbolic of understanding or salvation,

⁷² C. G. Jung (New York: Viking Press, 1973), p. 31.

either personal or cultural. The remaining description of the journey of the hero is taken directly from Campbell's book:

The mythological hero, setting forth from his common-day hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark (brother-battle, dragon battle; offering, charm), or be slain by the opponent and descend in death (dismemberment, crucifixion). Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (test), some of which give magical aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of his mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. The triumphs may be represented as the hero's sexual union with the goddess-mother of the world (sacred marriage), his recognition by the father-creator (father atonement), his own divinization (apotheosis), or again--if the powers have remained unfriendly to him--his theft of the boon he came to gain (bride-theft; fire-theft); intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom). The final work is that of the return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection (emissary); if not, he flees and is pursued (transformation flight, obstacle flight). At the return threshold of the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world (elixir).⁷³

Although the theories of Jung and Freud are clearly outlined in Guerin's previously mentioned book, the instructor who wishes more detailed illustrations of Freud's ideas that

⁷³ Campbell, pp. 245-46.

may apply to mythology should consult Hendrik M. Ruitenbeek's anthology of criticism, Psychoanalysis and Literature (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1964). This book contains sixteen essays, all dealing in one way or another with the application of Freud's psychological theories on literature. Naturally, there are several articles which have no direct bearing on classical mythology as such. Several of the essays, though, should stimulate the instructor's interest in the relationship of Freud's ideas as applied to mythology, particularly the story of Oedipus.

To this list of books suggested for their worth to the instructor, one must add Peradotto's frequently consulted bibliographical guide. The instructor who lacks a background in classical literature or mythology and who wishes to build his background in that area will find Peradotto's brief but incisive comments to be an excellent guide in his selection of reading material. Unfortunately, though, there is no bibliography of comparable worth to direct the instructor to helpful articles in journals. Of some value is a compilation by Gregory I. Stevens entitled Myth, Folklore, and Literature.⁷⁴ This is a listing of articles and books on topics of mythology and folklore, with all entries listed

⁷⁴ Myth, Folklore, and Literature (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for the Coordination of Ancient and Modern Studies, University of Michigan, 1972).

alphabetically. There is no critical evaluation and no apparent criteria for the selection of the entries. Also, there is no separate category for articles. The instructor who wishes to pursue further reading in classical mythology will find this work to be of limited value.

Articles

The whole field of journals and helpful articles is comparably bleak. The instructor who is a non-specialist in classics will find disappointingly few articles to help him gain new ideas or to relate new ideas to the teaching of classical mythology. Although there are several journals which include articles that deal with classical mythology, the contents of most of the articles are usually too esoteric for all but the accomplished classical scholar. In addition, their scope may be too restricted for much use by the non-specialist. For example, the Classical Review, a British publication, publishes primarily reviews of books on classical topics. Two other journals are potentially of more help to the instructor: the Classical World, published at Pennsylvania State University eight times a year, and the Classical Bulletin, published by the Department of Classical Languages at St. Louis University. Some articles in these journals are related to the philosophy of the classics, as for example Mark Morford's essay "Expanding Horizons in the

Classical Humanities."⁷⁵ More often, though, the tenor of articles is comparable to an article by Alfred P. Dorjahn and William D. Fairchild entitled "Extemporaneous Elements in the Orations of Lysias."⁷⁶

Only the Classical Journal, published by the Department of Classics, University of Iowa, seems to be useful to the non-classical instructor. Articles appear with some frequency on topics of general interest, such as J. K. Anderson's essay "The Trojan Horse Again."⁷⁷ At times, too, instructors describe their methods of teaching or devising a course in classical mythology, as for example Robert J. Schork's article "Classical Mythology."⁷⁸

More often, though, the instructor may have to turn to the general journals of English, such as College English or English Journal for helpful ideas on the application of classical mythology. Most of the several dozen articles I reviewed while gathering material for the handbook had only limited application for the college instructor of

⁷⁵ "Expanding Horizons in the Classical Humanities," Classical World, 66 (1972), 3-12.

⁷⁶ "Extemporaneous Elements in the Orations of Lysias," Classical Bulletin, 43 (1966), 17-25.

⁷⁷ "The Trojan Horse Again," Classical Journal, 66 (1970), 22-25.

⁷⁸ "Classical Mythology," Classical Journal, 64 (1969), 117-23.

English who lacks a background in classical mythology. They were either too esoteric for application at the undergraduate level, or they were designed for teachers at the grade school or high school level. Of the articles I judged to be useful for the college instructor, four seemed to have special significance.

Though the word "relevance" may have taken on faddish connotations in the past decade, teachers of literature have always been faced with the problem of convincing students that good literature is always current and that its themes are never outrun by societal advances. To the teacher searching for ideas to relate classical mythology to current problems, Sara Hickman's article "What's Relevant in Classical Literature" may prove a valuable inspiration.⁷⁹ Though the article does not restrict itself to classical mythology, it quite effectively compares the plights of heroes in classic works to the plights of modern man. Hickman draws generously on scenes from Homer's Iliad and Odyssey as she very ably demonstrates that the emotions and actions of Achilles, Hector, and Odysseus are similar to those faced by many of us today. The article clearly illustrates the need for a study of classics by today's students. It is a well-written and stimulating article.

⁷⁹ "What's Relevant in Classical Literature," English Journal, 59 (1970), 375-79.

An article that exemplifies Hickman's thesis is that of Carl Ladensack.⁸⁰ Ladensack demonstrates his teaching of classical mythology in a modern context. He explained to his high school classes the story of Theseus and the minotaur, and then asked the students if they could find modern parallels around them. He states that quite a few cited the school itself as a labyrinth, the teachers as the minotaur, and some boys, he notes with amusement, confessed to having female help (Ariadne) to get them safely through school. He also mentions the use of paintings which his students viewed, keeping in mind, as they did, the structure and the idea of the labyrinth.

Two articles on a somewhat more sophisticated level suggest a broader latitude of possibilities in the interpretation and application of classical mythology. For an interesting mythical interpretation of a famous American short story the instructor will find Marjorie Bruner's article to be well worth reading. Bruner's thesis is that Washington Irving's popular "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" is really a "rollicking parody of ancient Greek myths and rites of Greek fertility cults, a comic story of death and rebirth, fertility and immortality."⁸¹

⁸⁰ "The Amazing Labyrinth: An Ancient-Modern Humanities Unit," English Journal, 62 (1973), 402-09.

⁸¹ "Legend of Sleepy Hollow: A Mythological Parody," College English, 25 (1964), 274-83.

Bruner's contention is that Irving felt the Classics had been in ascendance too long, and it was time for them to be considered less seriously. Bruner's article is fascinating, convincing, and easy to read, even for the instructor with only a slight background in classical mythology. It is ideally suited to be duplicated and assigned to classes, either in conjunction with copies of Irving's tale or after re-telling the popular story. According to Bruner, Brom Bones, the bully of the story, is an earthy American Hercules (p. 274), Katrina Van Tassell is the corn goddess Demeter (p. 274), while Ichabod is a mixture of the river god Acheloos, who once fought Hercules, and a comic worshipper of the secret rites at Eleusis (p. 279). His wild night ride is a parody of initiation rites (pp. 282-83). Whether one takes such an interpretation to its fullest extent or not, the distribution of the article in the classroom should stimulate some serious discussion about the value of myth being used as the basis for stories, either serious ones or comic ones.

For the reader interested in the interpretation of myths but wishing to gain a broader basis before applying one method of interpretation, James F. Krapp's article will be quite valuable.⁸² Krapp's thesis is, in his own words, "to

⁸² "Proteus in the Classroom: Myth and Literature Today," College English, 34 (1973), 796-805.

pose a question: what kinds of possibilities exist in the contemporary study of myth for illuminating works of literature in fresh ways?"⁸³ He then gives a thumbnail introduction to the application of the ideas of Freud and Jung as well as the newer structuralist theories of Claude Levi-Strauss, discussing their theories in relation to the interpretation of literature. The article presupposes no previous knowledge of myth criticism and serves as a good introduction for someone contemplating a study of mythic criticism. It is, in all respects, a very solid article.

Audio-visual Aids

This chapter concludes with a review of two sources of audio-visual material the instructor is most likely to use, maps and filmstrip-sound recording units. My own experience with maps as an aid in teaching classical mythology has convinced me that they are of limited value. They may be used most effectively to convey the idea that Greece is a rocky land with many miles of coast line and many small islands in the surrounding sea, all of which are mentioned frequently in the various myths. If wall maps are to be used, two maps seem suitable. "The Achaean World 1500-1200 B.C." and "Greek and Phoenician Colonies and Commerce,"⁸⁴ "The

⁸³ Krapp, p. 805.

⁸⁴ "The Achaean World" and "Greek and Phoenician Colonies" drawn by James H. Breasted and Carl F. Huth, Jr. (Chicago: Denoyer-Geppert Co., 1967).

Achaean World" has a separate inset of Crete and shows its relation to mainland Greece more clearly than does "Greek and Phoenician Colonies and Commerce." The latter map shows more clearly the location of ancient Troy, making it more useful in the teaching of the Iliad or the Odyssey.

Maps, of course, are used most commonly in conjunction with the traditional lecture presentation of material. The instructor who wishes an alternative method of instruction might wish to consider filmstrips and accompanying cassettes or records. However, a review of two such units proved very disappointing.

The first such unit reviewed is "Mythology is Alive and Well."⁸⁵ The unit consists of two full-color filmstrips, two cassettes, and a Discussion Guide for the instructor. The purpose of the unit, according to the Discussion Guide, is "to give the student a simple introduction to a subject which often seems more difficult than it is."⁸⁶

The material does not accomplish this aim with any degree of thoroughness. The Discussion Guide is too simplistic to be of any real value to the college instructor. For example, it sidesteps the complex question of mythological interpretation by "showing from the beginning that each

⁸⁵ "Mythology is Alive and Well," (Pleasantville, New York: Guidance Associates of Pleasantville, 1970).

⁸⁶ "Mythology is Alive and Well," p. 7.

kind of myth of the gods is a fable in which natural phenomena or kinds of behavior are personified."⁸⁷ The filmstrips are of no more value, inasmuch as they are restricted to an introduction of the deities and some commentary on their attributes. Furthermore, Part I of the filmstrip does not distinguish adequately between the Roman and Greek names for the gods. Thus, while Zeus and Poseidon are given their Greek names, their brother Hades is inexplicably called Pluto, with no indication that his Greek name is otherwise.⁸⁸

Another such unit considered is "Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece, Sets I and II."⁸⁹ Like its counterpart just reviewed, this unit has several deficiencies. The Teacher's Notes are both inaccurate and misleading. For example, one statement is that "in almost all the myths, the hero has to undertake a task or a quest which seems to hold certain death--usually in order to prove himself or to win a woman in marriage."⁹⁰ Though this statement is correct for quite a few myths, to suggest that it is true for the great majority of myths is incorrect. Also, the Notes deny the basis for a great deal of Carl Jung's theories by denying that the

⁸⁷ "Mythology is Alive and Well," p. 7.

⁸⁸ "Mythology is Alive and Well," p. 27.

⁸⁹ "Myths and Legends of Ancient Greece" (Pleasantville, New York: Educational Audio Visual Inc., n.d.).

⁹⁰ "Myths and Legends," p. 1.

similarities between mythologies of different cultures are anything more than "similarities of detail rather than of central theme."⁹¹

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In summary, the filmstrips and accompanying sound recordings and teacher guides are not suitable for general use in college classes. In the hands of a discerning instructor, the material might be of limited value in introducing classical mythology. But it seems that the discrepancies noted should preclude all but a most careful and limited use of the materials. For these reasons, the instructor considering a purchase of these or similar units should weigh carefully the worth of such a purchase.

The instructor who wishes to make a systematic and fruitful venture into classical mythology will find ample material to help him. The prime difficulty is that so much available is either too esoteric to be understood easily or too thin and poorly organized to be useful. However, with a dictionary or reference guide, a survey with extensive commentary, and Peradotto's booklet as an invaluable guide-- he will have the basic material for a rewarding study leading to a richer background in classical mythology.

⁹¹ "Myths and Legends," p. 1.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

In my research for the handbook I noticed with a sense of unease that published literature on the teaching of the humanities often assumes a pessimistic undertone, suggesting that if the humanities are not dead, they are moribund. But such jeremiads are in sharp contrast with the spirit of the answers found in informal queries to teachers of classical mythology at several different levels. While this chapter is no assertion that classical mythology is the bellwether of a revived interest in the humanities, the spirit of the chapter should be analogous to Mark Twain's widely quoted remark that reports of his death had been greatly exaggerated.

The purpose of this chapter is neither a summary of material examined in the handbook nor is it merely an exhortation championing the worth of classical mythology in the larger framework of the classics. Any scholarly venture needs commentary if it is to be more than a mere compendium of facts, statistics, and suggested procedures. The major purpose of this chapter is to comment on several major related problems in the teaching of classical mythology.

The issues of these problems are reflected only incidentally in the published literature on teaching classical mythology, and to the same extent in the evaluation of the questionnaire in Chapter II. However, these problems were revealed in letters and in conversations with other colleagues. While the selection of and commentary on these matters is in large measure subjective, I feel that the commentary will be as revealing as the published material in putting a finger on the pulse of the teaching of classical mythology in colleges.

My queries by mail and in person produced a cornucopia of helpful information--syllabi, bibliographies, teaching suggestions, and statements of problems. Such an unexpected largesse prompts the suggestion that one need not defer his inquiries in this discipline until he writes a dissertation. Instructors were eager to share experiences and ideas, and, in turn, were eager to receive my findings gathered in the preparation of the handbook. Such helpful reciprocity might be used more often by instructors in a quandary about preparing either a unit or a new course in classical mythology.

One frequently mentioned problem is that, though the mythological tales exist alone, they are most commonly found in conjunction with other literature. If the instructor is evaluating a work or is teaching his students to evaluate a work in which myths or a myth plays a dominant role, he has

to ascertain whether or not the literature stands on its own merits or whether (and to what extent) myth is a part of its structure or theme. For example, in evaluating the worth of Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound or Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, one must decide to what extent the work is dependent on the myth for its value. That is, do we consider the myth of Prometheus powerful aside from its use in literature, or is there a sort of halo effect, the drama having a kind of burnishing effect on the myth? The same question applies to other works of literature based largely on mythology. Though the myth of Oedipus existed long before Sophocles' trilogy, we often tend to think of Oedipus only in relation to Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus or Oedipus at Colonus.

Another problem of significant proportions seems to be a feeling of skepticism as to whether or not classical mythology can be taught profitably in less time than a full-term course. Closely allied with this feeling is the implication that freshmen and sophomore students are perhaps intellectually too unsophisticated to profit from a brief exposure to classical mythology. These ideas are contrary to a major thesis of the handbook which is that a brief introduction to classical mythology can be effective. Though I cannot substantiate my belief, I feel that many instructors who express a reluctance to introduce classical mythology systematically in an introductory literature course do so

because they do not see any logical system of structuring a brief unit. I believe the plan I propose for the syllabus (Chapter III) will effectively obviate this problem.

A more perplexing problem to evaluate or describe is the attitude among some instructors that classical myths are primarily a collection of amusing stories that have little reference to everyday life; or perhaps they are seen as sophisticated fables, valuable for their "moral." It is true that these same instructors may show some slight deference to classical mythology, usually in the form of a cliché that classical mythology postulates a set of "universal values." More often than not, though, these same instructors fail to support this token assertion with any kind of systematic approach to their teaching of mythology.

The causes of this latter problem may be difficult to ascertain, though two reasons seem tenable. First, a lack of fundamental knowledge about classical mythology might well be a part of the reason for this type of response. Though quite a few of the instructors questioned stated they had a knowledge of Hamilton's Mythology, few mentioned having read any criticism or surveys with extensive commentary.

A second reason for this attitude stems ironically from one of the chief rewards of mythology--its richness or complexity. Thus, while one instructor may think that the myth of, say, Oedipus has primarily a psychological basis, another

may be satisfied that the myth is basically a sun worship celebration imbedded in later mythological accretions. A third person may reject both of these interpretations, feeling that there is too little basis for the first interpretation and not enough logical consistency in the latter view for a really defensible interpretation.

There is no easy resolution or answer to any of the issues mentioned. As to whether college freshmen or sophomores are intellectually equipped to profit from a brief exposure to classical mythology, it should be obvious that during the first year, especially, there is a greater proportion of academically weak students than there is after attrition has taken its toll. Thus there is some justification for the assumption that some freshmen and sophomores cannot profit by their study of classical mythology. But this same principle applies to all other courses normally taught during the first two years of college. There seems to be no reason why classical mythology should be inherently more difficult than organic chemistry or French, both commonly taught in the freshman and sophomore years.

The other problem--that mythology is a collection of naive folk tales or mystical sketches beyond our real comprehension--is more difficult to deal with. It is true that mythological tales evolve in a manner unknown to scholars, but it seems implausible to assume that if the tales were

created only for amusement or are generally inexplicable they could have had such an enduring fascination for generations of writers and readers. No clearer evidence exists than the rich products of the twentieth century French dramatists who have structured plays on myths or have re-written myths to suit their purposes.

There is no easy answer to such a complex problem. First, it should be realized that while it is quite possible to familiarize oneself with most of the major mythological tales with some careful reading, attaining a like degree of comprehension of the value of these tales is a far more demanding and involved task. One probably will feel more drawn toward certain interpretations on the basis of his educational backgrounds. If, for example, one has a background in history or religion, he may well develop an affinity for anthropological interpretations. If his background is in psychology, he may tend to see the mythological stories as being more symbolic of man's inner feelings.

Yet the problems in interpretation are obvious. If interpretations are offered to a class, there is the evident possibility that the interpretations may be ill suited for a particular myth. If no interpretation is offered, the narrative of the myth may be too insubstantial for detailed analysis, either in the literature it accompanies or by itself. Too, freshman and sophomore students have rarely

developed, especially in their first English courses, a facility for really critical literary analysis; therefore, asking them to evaluate the meaning of myths without offering some help may be a frustrating and fruitless endeavor.

If the students have a need for developing a habit of careful literary analysis, this training is invaluable for the instructor who works with classical mythology in other forms of literature. There can never be an easy answer nor a definitive answer to the question of whether Jean Anouilh's Antigone is superior to that of Sophocles, but the instructor should be aware that both works can be systematically analyzed to determine how mythology functions in each one.

We may say in conclusion that grappling with these problems is akin to Menelaus trying to wrest answers from the ever-changing Proteus who in the Odyssey changes into a raging lion and a fire before he assumes anthropomorphic proportions. And the instructor who wishes to make headway with these problems must assume the inquiring mind of Oedipus, the courage of Theseus, and the tenacity of Odysseus, for his labors, like those of Sisyphus, will be never-ending. However, like Hercules, if he perseveres, he will be rewarded, though not with the golden apples of the Hesperides, but with a better knowledge of how classical mythology is the story of all of mankind's deeds, both noble

and ignoble, remarkable and unremarkable; and more than that, he will have a better knowledge of those deeds. For the stories of those achievements are what great literature really is.

Appendix A

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of English

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE 37130

March 27, 1974

Chairman, Department of English
_____ State Junior College

Dear

I am presently on leave from Enterprise State Junior College, and I am in the preliminary stages of research on my dissertation. Though I have not yet completely defined the scope of my task, I tentatively plan to investigate innovative approaches in the teaching of Classical mythology at selected colleges and universities. I hope then to use the ideas I have gleaned from my research to design a curriculum unit that will fit in well with the freshman and sophomore composition or introduction to literature courses in Alabama's public junior colleges.

I need your help in this Herculean task. If you and your department members could take a few minutes to respond to the enclosed questionnaires, I would be most grateful. I am enclosing two brief questionnaires for you and 12 questionnaires for the members of your department. If it won't rush you too much, it would help me out in many ways if you could return the completed questionnaires in the stamped, self-addressed envelope by Tuesday, April 9.

Finally, if you have syllabi of your English composition and introduction to literature courses, they would help me very much in designing a worth-while unit in the teaching of Classical mythology. Also, I would appreciate it if you could send me a copy of your school's catalog.

Appendix A

I will be glad to share the fruits of my labors with you when my research is completed.

Again, thank you, and I hope to see you at the next year's meeting of AAJC.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Beasley

Appendix B

QUESTIONNAIRE

(To be filled out by the departmental chairman)

1. Name of college _____
2. Approximate enrollment of college _____
- * 3. Number of teachers, including yourself, who regularly teach English composition or introduction to literature courses _____
4. What texts are used in your introduction to literature courses:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
5. Do you feel it would be feasible for your college to offer a separate course in Classical (Greek and Roman) mythology?

6. If feasibility were no barrier, would you like to have your college offer Classical mythology as a separate course? _____
7. Which best describes your feelings toward the inclusion of Classical mythology in freshman and sophomore composition and introduction to literature courses? (circle one)

Essential

Somewhat desirable

Highly desirable

Not desirable

Appendix B

8. Other comments

* By "introduction to literature courses" I mean those courses in freshman or sophomore English which may require some composition skills but which also stress selection of literary works other than non-fiction essays.

Michael H. Beasley
Department of English
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130

Appendix C

QUESTIONNAIRE

(To be filled out by instructors who teach one or more introductory literature courses or composition courses that include a substantial amount of literature other than non-fiction essays.)

Many of these questions were adapted from a questionnaire by Lloyd Jeffrey in his article entitled "The Teachings of Classical Mythology: A Recent Survey," The Classical Journal, 64 (1969), 312-21. Please circle the answers of your choice.

- Yes No (1) Do you include the systematic teaching of Classical (Greek and Roman) mythology as a part of the courses you teach in composition or introductory literature?
- Yes No (2) Have you ever taken a course exclusively in Classical mythology?
- Yes No (3) Have you ever taken a course (in folklore, for instance) in which you made a serious study of one or more Classical myths?
- Yes No (4) Have you found that students who enter your classes with some knowledge of Classical mythology are better able to understand literary allusions than those lacking such knowledge?
- Yes No (5) Do you feel that non-remedial English composition courses or introduction to literature courses should include some systematic approach to the Classic myths?
- Much Moderate Slight (6) Of what value has your knowledge of Classical mythology been in your teachings of literature?
- Much Moderate Slight (7) Of what importance is Classical mythology in the study of literature?

Appendix C

Over 50% 25-50% Under 25% (8) Approximately what percent of your students enter your composition or introductory literature classes with a knowledge of at least six major myths? (e.g., Homer's Iliad or Odyssey; Vergil's Aeneid; the deeds of Hercules or Prometheus; the names of characteristics of most of the Olympians.)

Much Moderate Slight (9) What value do you feel you might derive from a carefully designed syllabus on the teaching of Classical mythology?

10. If you teach Classical mythology in your courses, please note the text(s) you use:

_____ Hamilton's Mythology

_____ H. J. Rose, A Handbook of Greek Mythology

_____ Iliad; _____ Odyssey

_____ Others (please specify)

11. For comments, please use the opposite side of this sheet.

Thank you

Please return this questionnaire to your Departmental Chairman

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