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Another Journey: Odysseus and the Future of Greek Studies

Abstract: In Greek literature itself, the past and the future are inextricably interwoven; no less than modern students of Classics, the ancients too very often turned to the past in order to try to grasp the future. This paper uses one very important example of that drive for understanding, Homer's *Odyssey*, as a pattern of the different models of exploration which confront us today. In particular I will be concerned with the narratives of the past which are told by Odysseus and others and with the Underworld of Book 11 and the prophetic figure of Teiresias, from whom, like Odysseus himself, we have much to learn. A text which for centuries has been read as an allegory for our own lives may also suggest future directions of travel.

Keywords: allegory, memory, νόστος, Odysseus, *Odyssey*, Teiresias, Underworld

The figure of Odysseus always comes to us freighted with an overload of significance; whether already in Athenian tragedy of the classical period, in the moralising philosophy of the Hellenistic and imperial periods, in the overlapping pagan and Christian cultures of late antiquity, or in the vision of modern Greek poets, Odysseus is never just Odysseus — he is a repository for hopes, fears, and our creative imaginations. He is the go-to allegory, a man for all seasons, the man who must resist the temptations of a life of delusion and pleasure in favour of the pursuit of the truth and the true home of the wise and virtuous; his homecoming, in being a 'forgetfulness of all he had suffered' (*Odyssey* 13.92) and in the grip of the deepest sleep 'very like death' (*Odyssey* 13.80), may be seen either as transport to a promised blessedness or the calm death that many of us wish for, or of course both. Odysseus carries so much on his shoulders (and I will return to these shoulders), we should hardly resist seeing in him the past and the future of the study of Greek and Roman antiquity, now adrift — as some seem to think it is — without a compass, geographical or moral,

This is a virtually unchanged text of a talk given at the Academy of Athens in November 2022. As befitted the occasion, that talk drew in part on work I had published elsewhere, and I have not sought to remove those overlaps here. So too, I have added only the most necessary footnotes and bibliographical references; to do otherwise would have been fundamentally to change the nature and purpose of the text as it was composed. I hope that those whose work I have exploited here but who do not receive due acknowledgement will take my silence in that spirit.

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https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111337852-002

with no obvious direction home and in constant search of a *telos*, both 'purpose' and 'end'. Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus seem to have thought that they had found that *telos*, but very few have followed the grammarians' lead.[1]

Nowhere perhaps might we feel closer to *this* Odysseus than in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*, the book of the really dead, set in a world freighted, like the Academy of Athens, with the ghosts of the 'heroic' past. Odysseus visits that past, and its ghosts tell him and us their stories — or fragments of them, never more than that. Nowhere perhaps in the Homeric epics is there such a rich display of other stories which might have been told, but are here silenced — the Underworld teems with the fragments and summaries of epic poems which we will probably never recover; it is an echoing repository of story, replete with an overwhelming sense of how much we have lost and how much we could learn, if only we knew how to and where to look. Book 11 itself has often been thought to be a palimpsested text, bearing the scars where different poems and different versions have been awkwardly stitched together, itself almost an image of the only view of the past we will be allowed to grasp, a past without 'flesh and bones' (*Odyssey* 11.219) which always slips out of our hands 'like a shadow or even a dream', as the ghost of his mother slipped from Odysseus' grasp (*Odyssey* 11.207–208). Moreover, even the stories which the ghosts tell are not, of course, unmediated — they come to us only indirectly, veiled by Odysseus' self-presentation and the spin he puts upon his narrative. We cling to what James Porter called a 'fantasy of classicism',[2] the idea that we can be in direct contact with the great figures of the past, but Odysseus (like us) must be selective both in his attention and in his narration, in his — if you like — presentation of the evidence. Book 11 is a paradigmatic lesson in the difficulties of interpreting the texts and objects we are lucky enough to have, just because they have somehow, unlike ourselves, escaped death. Not, of course, that this is a concern limited to Book 11. The *Odyssey* as a whole teaches us still crucial lessons about reading competing narratives of the past (Helen and Menelaos in Book 4), how imaginative fiction can be more 'real' than alleged documentary history (Odysseus' Cretan tales), and how we always ourselves have to fill in the gaps in order to make any kind of sense of what we are told.

The loudest silence of all in Book 11 is perhaps these days rarely commented upon, but it was discussed in antiquity — a familiar pattern (and a familiar silence) in the history of modern literary scholarship. The ghosts of the past are not in fact all dead white males, but where are the Trojan ghosts, the ψυχαί of such major figures as Hector and Andromache? Homer's Underworld, or rather Odysseus', shuts

1 On the 'Alexandrian end' of the *Odyssey* cf. Hunter 2023, citing earlier literature.

2 Porter 2006, 301–302.

out 'the other', the peoples of the east for example, as surely as Classical studies has so often in the last decades been accused of so doing. Porphyry suggests that this was an act of kindness by Persephone who did not 'send up' any Trojan ghosts because she knew of the mutual hostility between Odysseus and them, and Eustathius regards this choice of Homer as convincing (πιθανῶς) for similar reasons. Virgil presumably reflects such discussion in *Aeneid* 6 when he brings the ghosts of the Greek warriors at Troy into Aeneas' field of vision, but then scatters them, nameless and terrified (vv. 489–493). The teeming ghosts of the vanquished are certainly there in the interstices of Homer's text: when Odysseus tells Achilles (or rather does *not* tell him) of his son Neoptolemos' role in the sacking of 'the city of Priam' (*Odyssey* 11.533), we can hardly fail to recall the cyclic story of Neoptolemos' savage killing of Priam at the altar of Zeus Herkeios (*Little Iliad* fr. 16 Bernabé). Priam's ghost is indeed there — both revealed and concealed in the deliberate web of Odysseus' words. As so often, Homer shows us how to read the suppressions and deceptions with which we are presented every day, particularly by those in positions of authority. All visions of the past are of course partial, not just because we lack the necessary evidence, but because (though this is itself a partial explanation) too often we find what we are looking for.

Be that as it may, Classics (and I will continue to use this term, though it now seems to require an apologetic footnote — like this one) is not of course just a matter of 'seeing corpses' (*Odyssey* 11.49), as Teiresias puts it in asking Odysseus why he has come on this 'other journey' (*Odyssey* 10.490), but it is hardly surprising that the notion of Classical studies as a kind of necromancy has often floated up the trench, itself very ghost-like; Wilamowitz himself succumbed to this temptation. Take Sophocles' last play, the *Oedipus at Colonus*, a drama full of Odyssean structures and echoes. Somehow it seems *right* that this last (for us) play has at its centre a blind man who carries the weight of tradition and the past with him, a figure modelled in part upon the Teiresias whom Odysseus meets in the Underworld. The blind man, who takes his secrets to the grave, ends his journey in Athens, surrounded by sacred figures and terrified old men, who react as if they really have 'seen a ghost'. As for Teiresias himself, the one man whose *phrenes* and *noos* remain intact post-mortem, he was to become the deathless embodiment and bearer of pagan Greek tradition, both immemorially old and ever renewed, like the Dionysiac rites which Teiresias champions in Euripides' *Bacchae*, the prophet of the past and the future who, in his blindness, has 'seen it all'.

Other models are available to us. Instead of Teiresias, there is the Proteus of *Odyssey* 4 — the half-model for, half-parody of Teiresias — and perhaps the patron deity of the prose and poetry of later antiquity, which has seen such a wonderful revolution in attention in recent decades. Like Proteus, however, the sense of what

our shared subject is can slip through our fingers. Anglophone classicists at least now regularly encounter flattering Siren-calls to the grandiose delusion of a claim to an all-encompassing omniscience of 'everything which happens over the fertile earth' (*Odyssey* 12.191), but one in which nothing is *really* understood. As antiquity well understood, the Sirens play upon man's innate desire to know and always know more; that is one of the completely admirable drivers of the outpouring of work in the field of 'Classical reception'. The Sirens, however, offered Odysseus both what was in his (dis)comfort zone, the story of Troy and the Greek past, and things of which he had no knowledge at all but for which he yearned (*Odyssey* 12.184–190). In the end, Odysseus needed a precisely measured trench in order to get the ghosts to speak, just as he could only hear the Sirens because of the restraints which restricted entirely free movement. Classics (and here again the English term is potentially misleading), a demonstrably flexible institutional unit within the humanities, offers us a structure (an imperfect and restricting one certainly) to try to make those ghosts speak to us. We should think very hard before we abandon our trench (a term of ambiguous resonance which I use deliberately) in the hope of finding a better vantage-point, whether institutional or intellectual, from which to try to understand Greek and Roman antiquity. Different choices, of course, face different academic communities and different intellectual agendas; there are, I think, hopeful signs that this is now coming to be recognised.

In one of the most famous parts of Book 11, Teiresias tells Odysseus of his own future after the killing of the suitors:

> αὐτὰρ ἐπὴν μνηστῆρας ἐνὶ μεγάροισι τεοῖσι
> κτείνῃς ἠὲ δόλῳ ἢ ἀμφαδὸν ὀξέϊ χαλκῷ,
> ἔρχεσθαι δὴ ἔπειτα, λαβὼν εὐῆρες ἐρετμόν,
> εἰς ὅ κε τοὺς ἀφίκηαι, οἳ οὐκ ἴσασι θάλασσαν
> ἀνέρες οὐδέ θ' ἅλεσσι μεμιγμένον εἶδαρ ἔδουσιν·
> οὐδ' ἄρα τοὶ ἴσασι νέας φοινικοπαρῄους,
> οὐδ' εὐήρε' ἐρετμά, τά τε πτερὰ νηυσὶ πέλονται.
> σῆμα δέ τοι ἐρέω μάλ' ἀριφραδές, οὐδέ σε λήσει·
> ὁππότε κεν δή τοι ξυμβλήμενος ἄλλος ὁδίτης
> φήῃ ἀθηρηλοιγὸν ἔχειν ἀνὰ φαιδίμῳ ὤμῳ,
> καὶ τότε δὴ γαίῃ πήξας εὐῆρες ἐρετμόν,
> ἔρξας ἱερὰ καλὰ Ποσειδάωνι ἄνακτι,
> ἀρνειὸν ταῦρόν τε συῶν τ' ἐπιβήτορα κάπρον,
> οἴκαδ' ἀποστείχειν ἔρδειν θ' ἱερὰς ἑκατόμβας
> ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι, τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσι,
> πᾶσι μάλ' ἐξείης. θάνατος δέ τοι ἐξ ἁλὸς αὐτῷ
> ἀβληχρὸς μάλα τοῖος ἐλεύσεται, ὅς κέ σε πέφνῃ
> γήρᾳ ὕπο λιπαρῷ ἀρημένον· ἀμφὶ δὲ λαοὶ
> ὄλβιοι ἔσσονται. τὰ δέ τοι νημερτέα εἴρω.
>
> Homer, *Odyssey* 11.119–137

> But when you have slain the suitors in your halls, whether by guile or openly with the sharp sword, then go abroad, taking a shapely oar, until you come to men that know nothing of the sea and eat their food unmixed with salt, who in fact know nothing of ships with ruddy cheeks, or of shapely oars, which are a vessel's wings. And I will tell you a most certain sign, which will not escape you: when another wayfarer, on meeting you, shall say that you have a winnowing fan on your stout shoulder, then fix in the earth your shapely oar and make handsome offerings to the lord Poseidon — a ram, and a bull, and a boar that mates with sows — and depart for your home and offer sacred hecatombs to the immortal gods who hold broad heaven, to each one in due order. And death shall come to you yourself away from the sea, the gentlest imaginable, that shall lay you low when you are overcome with sleek old age, and your people shall be dwelling in prosperity around you. This is the truth that I tell you.

These famously riddling verses have generated a huge modern bibliography, but not even that can blunt their mysterious power. Odysseus is told to 'go' (no mention of the mode of locomotion, certainly not of Greek sailing) until he reaches people 'who do not know the sea and eat their food unmixed with salt' (not apparently, as we do, for the sake of our blood-pressure). Who are they? Ancient scholars, unsurprisingly, came up with more than one answer to this question. One of the most powerful ancient readings of these verses is that of Neoplatonist allegory, most familiar to us from the account of Porphyry in his third-century AD *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey*. For Porphyry, the Homeric Odysseus is a man and the embodiment of a soul which has passed through 'every stage of *genesis*' in its wanderings and now returns to its real spiritual and intellectual world, 'far from the turbulent waves of everyday, embodied existence'; those who 'do not know the sea and its salt' are those beyond all the pains and salty bitterness of the material world; the soul has returned to its true home. Those, however, who have, with great struggle, sought to put the bodily passions and their pains behind them, must make reparations to the gods of the material world by further struggle until they are so 'far from the sea' that the tools which represent it, such as an oar, are utterly unknown. Then finally the soul will be at peace in the intelligible world (*Cave* 36).

Neoplatonist allegory is not to everyone's taste … Some half a century or so before Porphyry, the Christian Clement of Alexandria had his own allegory to tell: when Odysseus is introduced by Athena in Book 1, stuck on Calypso's island and wishing for death as he longs to see the smoke rising from his native land (*Odyssey* 1.48–59), this shows that he is one of those who, as attached to the material world as seaweed to rocks at the sea's edge, has no thought for immortality, the truth and our real homeland in God's heaven where there is true light, but cares only for smoke or, as we might say, the banal smoke and mirrors of everyday deceptions (*Protrepticus* 9.86). Both the pagan Porphyry and the Christian Clement bear vivid witness to why the constantly reinvented Homer still matters, and the basic idea upon which both (in their very different ways) elaborate, that Odysseus stands for

all of us in our struggles and that the *Odyssey* is, as it were, just that, namely the paradigmatic odyssey of all lives, is — to return to where I started — as familiar to us now (think perhaps above all of Kavafis' *Ithaki*) as it was to the Homeric interpreters of late antiquity. We can no longer, I think, do without the idea of life's odyssey and of life as an odyssey. These interpretations are a striking manifestation of the persistent attempt throughout both antiquity and modernity to appropriate Homer, whether in whole or part, for particular intellectual and discursive agendas important to those proposing the interpretations. It was not difficult for ancient readers to find what they were looking for in the generous capaciousness of the Homeric texts. Antisthenes' famous explanation of Odysseus' epithet πολύτροπος as designating his wisdom and mastery of the 'tropes' of language (Schol. Hom. *Od.* 1.1l Pontani = Antisthenes fr. 187 Prince) turns the hero, *inter alia*, into an Antisthenes *avant la lettre*.

As is now well recognised, the journey to find people who do not know what an oar is and have no knowledge of the sea uses a folktale motif attested from several cultures.[3] One such Greek story, usually told of St Elias, is of a sailor who, wanting nothing further to do with the sea, travelled with an oar until someone failed to recognise it and there he stayed; that story is (in part) an aetiology for why chapels to the saint are found on mountain-tops, though it would in fact be easy enough to produce a reading along Porphyrian lines: the saint finally reaches a place where he can contemplate and worship his god in peace, and there he stays. Many, however, see in the *Odyssey* story an implicit aetiology for why Poseidon was in several places worshipped inland; at the very least, Odysseus will pay honour to Poseidon in an area which did not know him before. The planting of the oar is both a closural moment and a marker of new beginnings. In most such stories, the traveller settles down once the sea is so far away that people do not know it, but Odysseus will return home, and that is important; I shall come back to this. The more, however, that one reflects on this story, on the figure of Odysseus as a kind of 'everyman' or pilgrim (both in pagan and Christian readings) and on the importance of the sea to Greek self-identity (think of the cry of Xenophon's mercenaries, 'θάλαττα θάλαττα' (*Anabasis* 4.7.24)), the more tempting it becomes to read Teiresias' words as indeed a mythic aetiology, but one for the more modern Greek diaspora to new worlds and, particularly, to the New World; history teaches us that that diaspora has been inextricably linked also with the idea of, and sometimes the longing for, return, and νόστος is the very first word which Teiresias speaks to Odysseus after the old man has drunk the blood. The return to the homeland is always 'difficult/painful', as Teiresias predicts it will be for Odysseus (*Odyssey* 11.101). In such a mythic reading,

3 Cf. Hansen 1977 and 1990.

'Those who do not know the sea' does not mean (significantly, at least) those who have literally never seen the sea, but rather those who do not (yet) understand what that signifies, who have not been exposed to what we might call the 'culture of the sea', Greek culture, in other words. If Odysseus carried an oar with him, Alexander carried Homer, and the epic poems are, like Odysseus' oar, a potent, perhaps the most potent, image of the spread of Greek culture, ancient and modern, or at least how that spread could be (and has been) imagined.[4]

As for myself, I first read Homer in a country which has been one of the greatest beneficiaries of the Greek diaspora, Australia, and though I was offered the chance to read Homer, not in fact because of the diaspora in any simple sense, but rather because I attended a school built very firmly on an English model, the significant Greek presence in Sydney (and, even more so, in Melbourne) meant that Greece (both ancient and modern) soon came to seem not quite as far away as it might otherwise have done. The very first piece of real, joined-up Greek I read was Xenophon's account in the *Anabasis* of how it is possible to catch bustards ('their meat is wonderful') in the deserts of the Euphrates (*Anabasis* 1.5). It may be that this text would seem less than ideal for Beginners Greek classes today, but in 1960s Australia it seemed very exciting.

If Odysseus and his oar can, on a macroscopic level, point us towards the Greek diaspora, towards the gnawing need always to satisfy the Aristotelian desire to know and, more mundanely, to seek new places of settlement, the image has another smaller-scale significance for those of us involved in the teaching of Greek studies, most notably (but not exclusively) ancient Greek studies. If the diaspora was, in many cases, forced upon Greeks by terrible and violent acts, modern teachers of Greek studies are compelled, both by their own commitment to the subject and by institutional pressures, to pursue an intellectual diaspora, the need to spread the word, to win over new recruits for the subject and the language of Poseidon, or risk (so it is always claimed) a fairly rapid withering. Whereas Teiresias gave Odysseus a clear sign, however riddlingly phrased — Odysseus was unlikely to meet two people who both called his oar a 'chaff-destroyer' — *we* are given no clear sign, just a snowstorm of ambiguous indications that our subject has now reached a point of decision. Moreover, although St Elias stayed where he was, ἐξ ἁλός 'away from the sea' (at least on one reading of that phrase), Odysseus, like Plato's philosopher returning to the cave, perhaps the other most famous classical Underworld where all those false shadows compete for attention, will have, like us, to return to his starting-point, to see, as we would put it, to business. There can be no secure retreat (in any sense of the term) — even the mountaintop hermit will be

4 Dio Chrysostom 53. 6–8 is a very telling passage here, cf. Hunter 2018, 22.

plagued by uncertainties. How, then, will we tell the false shadows from those of substance in the murky academic fairground of competing chances and pot-luck games? The very difficult choices to be made, for example about the centrality of the ancient languages to the study of the ancient world, will presumably importantly depend on the end in view, and here there is certainly no unanimity, though there is no shortage of Sirens offering their advice.

Teiresias' prophecy of Odysseus' death is pointedly set against Proteus' prophecy of Menelaos' post-mortem transportation to the blessed 'Elysian Plain' 'because [he was married] to Helen and was Zeus's son-in-law' (*Odyssey* 4.561–569). Lucian was famously to grant Odysseus a place with the lucky ones after death, but what kind of death might Classics experience and how blessed is the afterlife which awaits our subject. Will it be a 'gentle' one, at the end of a long and prosperous, if rather complacent, old age, with expenses-paid transportation to the Island of the Blessed, the academic equivalent of a seat in the House of Lords 'far from the turbulent waves of everyday, embodied existence', as Porphyry might have described that institution, or will it be the *Telegony* model — death by a thousand stingray cuts, the constant seep of poison into the bloodstream of the subject, destroying it from within? We must not either imagine or wish that the future of the study of the past will be the same everywhere, any more than the critical orthodoxies and assumptions of our subject have been universal throughout the world of classical study over the last century and a half (to go no further back). So too, the challenges in different places are different. For one thing, the study of the Greek and Roman past is very differently institutionalised (and very differently labelled) in different countries. In France, Germany and Italy 'Classics' (and here the name really is an anglophone misnomer) is a very different beast from the subject in the UK, where successive governments and University administrations have downgraded the status of the Humanities in schools and universities and eroded (and this is important) the salaries of those who teach and research in the subject, while vastly increasing the workload, so that academic life is not necessarily as attractive as it once was. In Greece, there are very real challenges to the study of Greek and Latin, which have, I think, far more to do with the traditional (and perhaps unique) place of, particularly, ancient Greek in the school curriculum and with changes in society at large, reflected in higher education, than with the arguments about the subject which have occupied so much time recently in Anglophone countries. The reasons for studying Greek antiquity in Greece cannot, on any model, be quite the same as they are elsewhere and that simple fact should be properly acknowledged; there is also, of course, some hard thinking and hard planning about the future of the disciplines needed in Greece, and here again there are, I believe, hopeful signs. As for the Anglophone world, this is hardly monolithic, whether socially or culturally, and the

pressures driving debate about the future of the subject in the UK (let alone Australia) must, in many particulars, inevitably differ from those which have raged in the US; what is important is that those on both sides of the Atlantic learn from the variable experience, and the mistakes and successes, of those on the other side.

Why does it matter? As countless generations of undergraduate essays have struggled to tell us, Odysseus' trip to the Underworld proves not strictly 'necessary', despite what Circe tells him about this 'other journey', and despite what Odysseus learns there about the past, the future and, we might think, about himself. The view that the Humanities, like Odysseus' trip to the Underworld, are 'not necessary', in the sense of 'necessary to the economic prosperity of the state' is one which it is not hard to find, either openly expressed or veiled by soft words of apparent sympathy. We have been here before. The Platonic Socrates famously banned poetry, above all Homer, from his ideal state. In the tenth book of the *Republic*, Socrates admits that he too is 'enchanted' by Homer's poetry and would be glad to be able to allow it a place in the ideal city (607c5–7), but only if it could be shown that poetry is not only pleasurable, but also beneficial in the well-ordered state. 'Enchantment' is not enough: poetry must also do us and the state good, it must be ὠφέλιμον. In an extraordinary passage, Socrates memorably describes the irrational and emotional appeal of performed epic poetry as like the power still exercised over us by someone we once loved but from whom we force ourselves to keep away, because we recognise that this persistent desire is doing us no good (607e4–6). Are we to say the same of the Classics and their study? How broad and long-term a view of the ὠφέλιμον are we to take? One thing we can say in Socrates' defence is that he was much more concerned with the state of our souls than with the economic well-being of the State.

Above all it matters, because we owe it to the past to remember. Memory and its loss is one of the great driving narratives and anxieties of our own age.[5] We all take our daily dose of Vitamin D in a desperate attempt to persuade the ghost of dementia to pass by our house and visit another, but we all sadly know those who have failed in the attempt. The awfulness of this illness has even spawned its own genre of jokes, just as the source of terrible fears (and indeed memories) do. In some contexts, memory is what we live by. Far from wanting to forget, we insist (and rightly so) that our children learn to remember wars and genocides, whereas Herodotus famously reports that the Athenians imposed a heavy fine upon Phrynichus because his drama on the capture of Miletus 'reminded them of their own misfortunes' and they appear to have tried to erase the 'memory' of the play itself (6.21). Severe dementia is sometimes described as a kind of living death, and in the

5 This and the following paragraph borrow from Hunter 2021.

Homeric Underworld memory is indeed erased, at least until the blood has been drunk, but — and this is where we must pay attention — the dead also charge the living with the preservation of their memory. It is easy enough to smile at Elpenor, a rather dim young man who had too much to drink and killed himself by falling off Circe's roof, when he asks Odysseus to build him a *sēma* on the shore 'for even those who come after to learn of' (*Odyssey* 11.75–76); this may be a 'delusion of grandeur', as Alfred Heubeck calls it, but Odysseus recognises his responsibility to the dead and carries out Elpenor's request to the letter. At least as early as the fourth century BC, the 'tomb of Elpenor' was shown (and the relevant verses presumably quoted) in Campania, near where Circe's dwelling had been identified on one version of Homeric geography. Elpenor is one of history's little people, an entirely ordinary forgettable person, a nobody (rather than a 'No man'), except that he should not be forgotten.

We too owe it to the past not to allow that past, whether 'classical' or not, to disappear, not ourselves to drink the darkwater of Lethe which wipes out individual and collective memory. The terrible events we are witnessing in Ukraine are a stark reminder of how remembering the past is inseparable from care for the present. There are, however, other insidious dangers also to the life-giving presence of historical memory, if one can compare small with great. Without our often awkward attempts to make that leap of understanding which engagement with the past always entails, society will become a bleak wasteland where we will no longer be able to talk to the ghosts, even after we have offered them our blood; once gone, the memory and the knowledge will not return. Those of us who live, as I do, in a country which, several very long years ago, chose the self-satisfaction of retreat and isolation over openness, argument, and engagement may well feel such dangers even more acutely. The Greek model serves to remind us of what is at stake in such engagement and such remembering, just as the epic song of traditional cultures works to preserve the memory, not necessarily of historical truth, but of something much more important.

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