

## THE FORUM

### THE CLASSICS AFTER APARTHEID<sup>1</sup>

The last two years in South Africa have seen the most sweeping changes in the politics of the country since the coming to power of the first National Party government in 1948. While full democratisation, with a new constitution and a franchise for every adult South African, has still to be achieved, the unbanning in 1990 of organisations such as the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party, and the repeal in 1991 of the principal Acts of Parliament which entrenched the system of racial segregation known as apartheid, have cleared the ground for the creation of a new and more democratic society in South Africa. It would be naive to suppose that this society can be called into existence merely by legislative means, or that the process leading to such legislation, which is now under way, will be painless. Years of domination by white South Africans over other racial groups will have to be unravelled, efforts devoted to improving the economic situation of individuals and the economy of

<sup>1</sup> This paper has its origin in a public lecture on the humanities after apartheid given at the University of Illinois at Urbana in April 1991. I should like to thank Professor W. M. Calder III for affording me that opportunity, and members of the audience for the stimulating discussion which followed. Colleagues at the University of the Witwatersrand have given me the benefit of their knowledge and expertise on matters in which I have no special competence; I am indebted particularly to Peter Delius, Penny Enslin, Noam Pines, and Charles van Onselen. Marica Frank made helpful suggestions at a late stage; to her too, my thanks.

The statistical data given in notes 5, 17, and 18, and most of those given in note 9, are taken from the Race Relations Surveys for 1980, 1985, and 1989/90, published in Johannesburg by the South African Institute for Race Relations. For other statistics, particularly those relating to enrolments at the University of the Witwatersrand, I have drawn on a variety of sources, including the report of the enquiry into admissions and exclusions at the University of the Witwatersrand, dated 29 August 1991, information supplied by the University's databases, and the internal records of the Department of Classics. It should be said that the enrolment statistics cannot be regarded as definitive, as each statistic reflects the position on a particular date, and there will be some variation in this position over the course of a year; but the picture outlined by the figures cited in this paper is accurate in all essentials. I am grateful to Elizabeth White for her help in the collection of the data; and to John Atkinson of the University of Cape Town and Michael Lambert of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, for providing me with information relating to their universities.

the country as a whole, mutual confidence built up, attitudes changed. The timespan involved will not be five years or ten, but a generation or more. But the movement has begun, and it is almost inconceivable that it could now be put into reverse.<sup>2</sup> Hiccups there will be, but democratic change will come.

One of the most crucial areas of policy in the changing South Africa is that of education. The apartheid system structured education, like everything else, along racial lines. At primary and secondary level, schools<sup>3</sup> for black<sup>4</sup> children received far less funding than schools for their white counterparts;<sup>5</sup> classes were often impossibly large, teachers underqualified, equipment appallingly inadequate, the kind of education offered geared by white Nationalist governments to the perceived needs of black children within a segregated and white-dominated society.<sup>6</sup> 'Black' universities were established for students barred from enrolling at 'white' institutions; far from being autonomous, these universities were subject to rigorous government control, and widely held to offer an inferior type of education. Multiracial education existed only in certain private schools, most notably those operated by the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, and, at tertiary level, in the 'liberal', English-medium, universities,<sup>7</sup> which

<sup>2</sup> The 'white' referendum of 17 March 1992, in which over 68% of votes cast were in favour of continuation of the reform process begun by President F. W. de Klerk, was probably the final watershed.

<sup>3</sup> I use this term throughout in the normal South African (or British) sense, to denote institutions offering primary or secondary education. It does not denote tertiary institutions.

<sup>4</sup> I use the term 'black' to refer to all South Africans not classified under the apartheid system as 'white', or (as in the case of the Chinese) regarded as white in most circumstances; that is, the word covers those classified as 'Indian' or 'Coloured' (the South African technical term for people of mixed race) as well as 'blacks' in the narrow sense, i.e. indigenous Africans. Where I mean to indicate the latter only, I use the term 'Africans'. This practice avoids the term 'non-white', with its suggestion that 'white' is the norm and everything else 'other'.

<sup>5</sup> In the fiscal year 1988–89 per capita expenditure by the state on pupils of different race groups amounted to R3082 in the case of whites, R2227 in the case of Indians, R1359 in the case of Coloureds, and R764 in the case of Africans (excluding those in the so-called 'homelands'). If the fact that four times as much money per pupil was pumped into the education of whites as into that of Africans should horrify, it should be noted that in 1978–79 the difference was tenfold (R724 for whites, R71 for Africans).

<sup>6</sup> The most celebrated instance of the hard-line Nationalist attitude is the remark made in 1953 by the future Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, to the effect that there was no point in teaching a Bantu (i.e. African) child mathematics.

<sup>7</sup> The Universities of Cape Town, Natal, and the Witwatersrand, and Rhodes University; to which should be added, in this context, the 'Coloured' University of the Western Cape, and the 'Indian' University of Durban-Westville. I disregard the University of South Africa, a distance-teaching institution. Though small numbers of

attempted wherever possible to admit qualified students without regard to race, though they faced constant difficulties in doing so.

The repeal of the Population Registration Act of 1950, which classified South African citizens according to race, implies the end of segregated education as a matter of national policy. Though the full effects of the repeal will not be noticed until the first children born subsequent to it are of school age (and even then the initial practical consequences will be limited),<sup>8</sup> certain 'white' schools in the state sector have already admitted a number of black pupils. For the liberal universities, the change in government policy is somewhat less dramatic, for during the 1980s government opposition to the admission of black students to 'white' universities grew weaker, and the proportion of black students enrolled at these institutions increased significantly.<sup>9</sup> But the repeal of apartheid legislation has unquestionably given a boost to this trend, and the universities are having to re-evaluate their role as they attempt to grapple with the problems posed by an increasing number of educationally disadvantaged black students.

Some of the problems are political in nature. The establishment of criteria for awarding a finite number of university places when applicants come from qualitatively different educational backgrounds implies a political decision. In general, the liberal universities have opted for what amounts to a policy of positive discrimination in favour of disadvantaged students whose paper qualifications do not automatically win them a university place but who give promise of success at

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black students were admitted to other 'white' universities, this was done only in special circumstances, and the admissions policy of these universities reflected the apartheid philosophy.

<sup>8</sup> Communities will not become racially mixed overnight; social and financial factors will preclude it. Since most children will presumably attend schools close to their homes, there will be widespread de facto segregation for years to come.

<sup>9</sup> In 1980, 243 African students, or 1.85% of the total student body, were enrolled at the University of the Witwatersrand. The total number of black students, including Indians and Coloureds, was 1055, or 8.04%. In 1990, the total number of black students had increased to 4582, or 23.69% of the total enrolment. By far the greatest proportion of this increase came from the African sector, where the 1990 enrolment was 2599, or 13.44%. At the University of Cape Town, a city where the Coloured community is much larger, and the African community relatively smaller, 1980 figures were 71 Africans (0.68%) and 1147 'total blacks' (10.92%), against 1110 Africans (8.11%) and 3381 'total blacks' (24.71%) in 1989. These figures contrast strikingly with those for Afrikaans-medium institutions; the University of Pretoria had liberalised to the extent of admitting 314 'total blacks' (1.34%) in 1989, against 2 (*sic*) (both Coloured) out of a student body of 16660 in 1980, while the relatively enlightened University of Stellenbosch had 656 'total blacks' (4.68%) on its books in 1989, against 92 (0.77%) in 1980. But even here widening cracks in the apartheid structure are evident.

tertiary level.<sup>10</sup> Established degree structures are having to be revised and academic support and enrichment programmes introduced to counterbalance the effects of inadequate secondary education. The difficulties associated with the need to take this kind of remedial action while attempting to maintain first-world standards in research and scholarship, and the moral-political question of whether students from disadvantaged backgrounds should be admitted to university on potential at the cost of places to others who are better qualified, I do not propose to confront in this paper. I take as my starting-point the fact that at the University of the Witwatersrand<sup>11</sup> in Johannesburg, where I teach, and other universities in South Africa, the demography of the student body is changing rapidly. The proportion of black, and particularly African, students is on the increase, while in certain broad areas of study not merely the proportion but the actual number of white students is in decline.<sup>12</sup> My prime concern here is to consider how a traditional, Eurocentric discipline like Classics can adapt to this changing context, in order to ensure its survival into the next century.

The problem was apparent even before the apartheid walls began to crumble. Wits University pioneered the teaching of courses in classical civilisation in South Africa. A one-year course in Classical Life and Thought, which did not require students to study Greek or Latin, was first introduced in 1927, and was subsequently developed into a three-year major.<sup>13</sup> In 1978, the number of students registered for Clas-

<sup>10</sup> The formal qualifications obtained in particular by African students educated in government schools are a poor predictor of such success, and there is increasing reliance on other assessment procedures at the university admission stage.

<sup>11</sup> Commonly referred to as Wits University.

<sup>12</sup> For example, in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, the number of white enrolments declined steadily from 866 in 1988 to 784 in 1991, while at Wits (where the Arts Faculty includes social science as well as humanities departments) the equivalent figures were 3330 in 1986, declining to 2796 in 1990; white enrolments at Wits across the University as a whole dropped by 380 students during the same period.

<sup>13</sup> The structure of the Bachelor of Arts degree in South African universities lies somewhere between the traditional British model, with its emphasis on one or two subjects and overall assessment of the whole of a student's work two or three times during the period of study, and the broader American model, where students take a large number of courses, each assessed separately and earning credit towards the degree. At Wits University, which in this respect may be regarded as typical of South African universities, students have to obtain ten credits to qualify for their B.A., one credit being awarded for a pass in a course lasting one year. A certain number of half-courses of one semester's duration are now also available, a pass in which earns a student half a credit. The degree must also contain two majors, or subjects studied for three years; advancement to the second or third year of study is dependent on the student's having passed the first- or second-year course. A completed degree would

sical Life and Thought I peaked at 250; figures of over 200 had already been recorded in 1976 and 1977. In 1985, by which time the course had been renamed Classical Civilisation I, the figure had declined to 75. Lows of 58 and 55 were reached in 1988 and 1989, before improving to 79 and 80 in 1990 and 1991, largely, it appears, owing to a much more intensive recruitment campaign. The second- and third-year courses in the sequence naturally followed the same pattern. But if the declining trend has been arrested, it has not been reversed.

In Greek and Latin, the picture is still bleaker. If Greek was always a minority subject, there were still 16 students registered for Greek I in 1970,<sup>14</sup> and 11 in 1980. Since 1985, the numbers registered for Greek I in any year have never exceeded seven, and in four successive years, 1987 to 1990 inclusive, there were no Greek majors. The case of Latin is somewhat different, for it is still a requirement in South Africa that advocates at the bar, and for the most part attorneys (who do not represent clients in the Supreme Court), must either include Latin among their matriculation subjects<sup>15</sup> or pass a one-year intensive course in Latin at university.<sup>16</sup> For many years this kept the number of students taking the beginners' Latin course at Wits around the 300 level. More recently this figure has declined somewhat, but in 1991 still exceeded 200 at the beginning of the year. At the University of Cape Town, where the equivalent course is taught in a slow as well as a normal stream, the total numbers originally enrolled in 1991 were in excess of 500. In senior years, however, our experience with Latin is only slightly better than that with Greek. While in 1970 22 students were registered for Latin II and 10 for Latin III, and in 1980 11 and 6 respectively, since 1985 there have never been more than six students registered for Latin II, and from 1986 to 1990 there was never more than a single student in Latin III.

Many reasons can be adduced to explain the decline of Classics even over a period when the Wits student body was predominantly

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thus contain passes in (for example) Latin I, II, and III (the first-, second-, and third-year courses, together forming a 'major sequence'); English I, II, and III; History I and II; Psychology I; African Literature I.

<sup>14</sup> The 1970 figures are the most suspect of the enrolment statistics presented in this paper; but they are much more likely to be underestimates of the actual figures than overestimates.

<sup>15</sup> Matriculation, or 'matric', is the highest school qualification attainable in South Africa, awarded to successful candidates after twelve years of school study. Normally each candidate will include six or seven subjects in his or her matric programme.

<sup>16</sup> Until 1991, students with matriculation Latin also had to take a (higher) university course in Latin to qualify.

white. The trend is of course not exclusive to South Africa, and other subjects have experienced similar difficulties. Foreign language subjects in particular have tended to lose ground throughout the English-speaking world. Numbers taking the six modern European languages taught at Wits have declined to the point where the departments concerned have had to unite in a new School of European Languages and Literatures, which offers courses that cut across traditional subject boundaries, in order to strengthen their weak position, maximise the use of existing resources, and boost enrolment. Growth in commerce and business subjects, especially evident in a university situated in a bustling commercial city such as Johannesburg, a tendency towards professional qualifications, prompted partly, perhaps, by the desire to make oneself more marketable in a shrinking job market, the acquisitive culture of the Thatcher-Reagan years, and the insistent refrain that studies should be 'relevant', have all contributed to the eclipse of certain areas within the broad field of the humanities.

In such a climate a subject like Classics, which cannot even plead that the languages it teaches have direct, practical uses, is already at a disadvantage. But the growth in the numbers of black students enrolling at universities in South Africa creates special problems for the discipline. To some extent these problems are connected with the political history of the country, but it would be surprising if they did not find resonances elsewhere, particularly in multi-ethnic, multi-cultural societies where European culture has been dominant and the perspective of the white middle class normative.

In so far as they have had access to university study at all,<sup>17</sup> black students in South Africa have historically been recipients of a type of education deriving from European, and particularly British, models, and geared mainly to the needs and interests of the privileged white community. In this respect their case may not be far different from that of non-European minorities in other parts of the world. The difference lies in the fact that in South Africa most of the students in this category belong to a section of the population that, far from being a minority, makes up more than seventy-five per cent of the population of the country as a whole.<sup>18</sup> Worse, this majority has not merely been ruled

<sup>17</sup> Though by 1989 black students accounted for almost 48% of university students in South Africa (including the homelands), as opposed to less than 25% in 1980, the limited higher-educational opportunities afforded blacks even in the late 1980s can be gauged by a glance at the statistics for primary and secondary education. In 1988, there were over eight million blacks at school in South Africa (including the homelands); the figure for whites was less than a million.

<sup>18</sup> The Bureau of Market Research at the University of South Africa estimated the

by a minority of European extraction, but made subject to laws entrenching its inequality in a variety of ways. The relationship between black South African students and the educational system in which they find themselves is thus likely to be much more tense than analogous relationships in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, where, nevertheless, students from the indigenous populations or other minority groups may be equally justified in protesting against excessive Eurocentricity in the content of university courses. In the South African context, it is only to be expected that there should be a measure of resistance among Africans to the study of European culture in general. More specific difficulties face Classics. Not only is it a subject which in the English-speaking world has always carried élitist overtones; in South Africa, Latin has held a special place in the legal system, the roots of which lie in Roman-Dutch law. In so far as the legal system is perceived by black South Africans as an organ of repression (I make no comment on the accuracy of this perception), Latin itself is at risk of being tarred with the same brush.

To test the validity of these theories concerning the resistance of black students to the study of the Classics would require research of an empirical nature which I have not done. But it is certainly true that at Wits African students have been very reluctant to enrol for courses in Classical Civilisation. Until 1991 it was rare to find even a single African student in Classical Civilisation I, and it had been many years since an African had registered for Classical Civilisation II or III. The position changed dramatically in 1991, when no fewer than twelve<sup>19</sup> Africans registered for the first-year course at the beginning of the year, six of them persisting to the end and writing the final examination. But while this was a remarkable and cheering development, it would be rash, on the basis of one year's figures, to suppose that there has been a spontaneous shift of interest towards the subject. Other factors may have played a part; it is possible, for example, that some of these students were unable to obtain places in the courses of their first choice, where excessive demand caused restrictions to be imposed on numbers registering.

As the processes of political and educational change develop, Classics seems sure to face still greater difficulties. The compulsory Latin requirement for prospective lawyers is almost certain to be

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total African population of South Africa (including the homelands) in 1990 as 28,258,000, or 75.3% of the total population of the country.

<sup>19</sup> According to Departmental records; the University figure is still higher (sixteen), but it is clear that, as often happens, four deregistered almost immediately, and may even have attended no classes at all.

abolished during the next few years.<sup>20</sup> Arts courses capable of being taught wholly or partly from an Afrocentric viewpoint are likely to gain ascendancy over those which are not. Attempts to jump on the bandwagon by offering courses on topics such as Roman north Africa will probably meet with only limited success, because of their patent artificiality; it will soon transpire that the history of Roman north Africa is essentially the history not of Africa but of Rome. By what means, then, is the subject to meet the challenge issued by the educational demands of post-apartheid South Africa?

In the English-medium universities it has long been apparent that in marketing the subject the principal focus has to be on those courses which do not require the student to study Latin or Greek. Fewer and fewer 'white' high schools continue to offer Latin, and only a handful of pupils each year include Greek among their matriculation subjects. In black communities, opportunities for pupils to study Latin at school are almost non-existent.<sup>21</sup> Particularly in the present climate, it will be a rare individual who, on coming to university, chooses to enrol for a course in a 'dead' language he or she knows nothing about when there are so many more fashionable and apparently more relevant courses available.<sup>22</sup> While attempts can be made to capitalise on the conscript law students, the Wits experience is that in an average year no more than five or six of those who pass the obligatory course in Latin opt to continue with the subject in the following year. We can continue to

<sup>20</sup> The legal profession, both in the universities and in legal practice, has been deeply split over the question of abolition. Afrikaans-dominated law practices, university Law Faculties and Bar Councils have tended to favour the retention of the Latin requirement, while their English counterparts have taken the opposite view, believing that a knowledge of Latin, and specifically an ability to read the Roman-Dutch authorities in the original language, is unnecessary for most practising lawyers; it has also been argued by some that the insistence on Latin further disadvantages African students, who are obliged to study it through the medium of another language (English or Afrikaans) not their own. A significant measure of agreement among academic lawyers was, however, achieved at a conference of the deans of all law faculties in South Africa on 30 March 1990. The deans resolved unanimously that the statutory requirement was an unwarranted interference with the autonomy of the law faculties, which should be allowed to determine for themselves what should be included in law courses. It seems most improbable that the requirement will survive the advent of a fully democratically-elected government for long.

<sup>21</sup> While the subject is offered in some state institutions—a number of Coloured schools in the Cape Town area, for example—this is highly exceptional. In general, only those blacks fortunate enough to have attended one of a select number of (multi-racial) private schools will have had the opportunity to study Latin.

<sup>22</sup> Though at Wits Classics will be at least a minor beneficiary if every B.A. student is required to include at least one language course in his or her degree—a matter currently under consideration by the Faculty of Arts.



beat the drum for the ancient languages, and to target certain categories of students such as Biblical Studies majors, who might be induced into doing a year of Greek; but it is plain that the most fruitful way forward for Classics in the 1990s must be to attract students into classical civilisation courses and to seek to inspire a proportion of them to enrol subsequently for a course in Greek or Latin. Wits has had some success in this over the years, though the students who have followed this route have been exclusively white, and rarely do more than a year of language study. In a world which asks more and more pressingly, 'but what can you do with it?',<sup>23</sup> present chances of significantly increasing the number of Greek and Latin majors remain slim.

Attracting black South African students into Classics, however, is a much more difficult task than attracting those of English, Afrikaner, Portuguese, Greek, or Italian descent. The cultural assumptions that can be made are entirely different. Black students possess neither ethnic nor traditional ties to classical Antiquity. A few, who develop an interest in, for example, English literature (which at Wits includes English South African literature), or history of art (which likewise includes South African and other African art), may decide that a knowledge of Greco-Roman Antiquity will be beneficial to their other studies. But in general it is to the social-scientific branches of the Arts, not to the humanities, that black students gravitate. In 1990, 156 black students in a class of 458 (34.06%) registered for Sociology I at Wits. In Social Anthropology I, the figures were 138 out of 301 (45.85%), in History I 115 out of 214 (53.74%), while in Political Studies I no fewer than 56.08% (143 out of 255) of the registered students were black. The figures for the Faculty of Arts as a whole were 920 black students out of 3730, or 24.66%.

Given that any course is likely to do better in terms of student enrolments if it seeks to lock into the interests of the students themselves, these statistics suggest that courses in classical civilisation, at least at first-year level, need to draw to a considerable extent on social-scientific approaches to the subject matter. This is not to say that the more traditional, literary-historical, ways of teaching classical civilisation should be jettisoned altogether; rather, it is to recognise that the priority is to bring students to the Classics in the first place, and to introduce less immediately appealing material and approaches once they are hooked. It is of course crucial that the presentation should not be simply cosmetic. Whereas the cosmetic aspect is of great impor-

<sup>23</sup> The question is of course misposed. The question that should be asked is, 'What can it do with you?'.

tance in the marketing of the subject, appearance which is not followed by reality will merely disappoint, and students will rapidly disappear to other courses. The context in which we find ourselves in South Africa in the 1990s demands that we bring sociological, anthropological, and other social-scientific methods and models to bear in the teaching of the Classics to a greater degree than we have perhaps done hitherto. Traditionalists may not find the prospect attractive. But it at least has the merit of being in keeping with current trends in classical scholarship; and where survival is concerned, any development which holds out hope without demanding that we sacrifice our academic integrity by lowering standards is to be undertaken gladly.

This suggested shift in approach will not, however, solve all the difficulties. The cultural divide between an African student in Johannesburg or Cape Town and the ancient world of Greece and Rome is a broad one, and needs to be bridged by whatever means it can. In certain areas of study a comparative method can usefully be employed. In teaching Greek mythology and religion, for example, we can seek parallels in traditional African myths and rituals.<sup>24</sup> The confirmation of political policy in ancient Greece by appeal to oracles can be shown to have an African analogy in the role of the Mwari cult in Southern Rhodesia in the late nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> The position and roles of women in ancient Greco-Roman society can be compared with those of their counterparts in African society, where the twentieth century can be seen to have had a powerful impact on traditional social structures. For the study of ancient social history in particular, we can find numerous jumping-off points in African culture: Roman rites of passage, or the social and political functions of the Athenian funeral, or ancient views on sex and sexuality, can all be introduced by reference to corresponding African phenomena and attitudes. Still closer to home, the oppressive treatment meted out to subject peoples or cities by Rome or Athens may find ready echoes in the experience of students who have grown up in South African townships. Indeed, the ancient world offers a variety of parallels to the socio-political situation of apartheid South Africa, some of them continuing to have validity in the post-apartheid era. The whites-only franchise has the

<sup>24</sup> For a fascinating scholarly demonstration of the kind of thing that can be done in this area see M. Lambert, "Nomkhubulwana: the Zulu Demeter," *Akroterion* 35 (1990) 46-59.

<sup>25</sup> For the Mwari cult see T. O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-7: A Study in African Resistance* (London 1967), 21-24, 145-48, and *passim*. It is not fanciful to view the relationship between the National Party and the Dutch Reformed Churches in their less enlightened days in a similar way.

flavour of an oligarchy, the majority possessing citizenship but not full political rights. The availability and exploitation of cheap labour in the home, on the farm, and in the mines, recalls the slave-based economies of Antiquity. Cultural protectionism and absurd notions of racial purity were familiar then as now.<sup>26</sup> In short, in the selection and presentation of material we are able, if we choose, to relate the Greco-Roman world both to aspects of African culture and to the personal experience of the African students themselves.

This discussion has focused mainly on the specific difficulties facing Classics in post-apartheid South Africa, and attempted to set out possible solutions. I have also suggested that similar problems confront other Eurocentric disciplines. But to gain a full understanding of the nature of the situation which we face we have to take a wider view.

Not only are universities under increasing strain from the effort to maintain academic excellence while compensating for desperately poor secondary education in black communities, and from a steady decline in financial resources; special demands are being imposed on them by the needs of the country as a whole. South Africa is a third-world country with a first-world veneer. The economy, reliant for so long on the mining industry, remains underdeveloped in certain sectors. The population is increasing rapidly; unemployment is high. At the same time there is a serious skills shortage. The priorities are thus quite different from those in the highly developed, industrialised world. In the coming years the emphasis will have to be on better, more widespread education in practical, technical, and technological fields, and on the improvement of economic performance. In such a context acquisition of the ability to read Homer or Horace in the original becomes the most minor of aims. This is not to say that there is no place for the humanities in 1990s South Africa; it is to recognise that the future of these disciplines in this country is dependent on our nursing them through a period where to suppose that they are entitled to the status they once possessed is not only self-deceptive but potentially ruinous. To be truly vigilant we must be realistic.

One other factor needs to be taken into account. Historically, black South Africans have not only been excluded from many aspects of the culture of the ruling white community; their political and social subjection has also denied them a free identity of their own, a knowledge

<sup>26</sup> One has only to recall the hostility of Cato the Censor to the Hellenisation of Roman society; or the comments of Herodotus (1.146.1–2) on the Ionians of Asia Minor, who considered themselves more Ionian and of purer pedigree than the rest.

of self unshaped by an environment of oppression and violence. The acquisition of such an identity is a matter of huge importance. It calls for the establishment of equal political rights and equal social and economic opportunities; it calls also for the opportunity to be granted them to reassess their own position in history. Encouragement to African students to write their own history is now an established practice at universities with liberal traditions, where this is perceived as a matter not only of identity but of liberation, in a meaningful and not simply a rhetorical sense. But a sense of a full, free identity cannot be imparted by teaching alone. It is something which can be acquired only over time, as the process of democratisation moves forward and old attitudes wither. It may not be until this goal has been achieved and cultural jealousies and suspicions set aside that the Classics will be able to flourish again in South Africa.

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