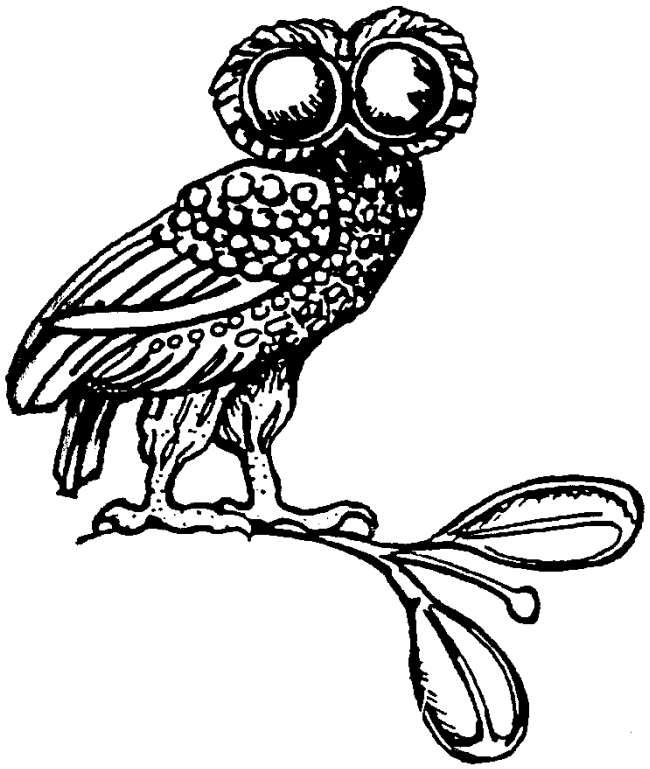
Bulletin of the

COUNCIL of UNIVERSITY

CLASSICAL DEPARTMENTS



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Contents

GENDER IN THE UNIVERSITY CLASSICS CURRICULUM

CUCD Chair's Report 2010-11

2010–11 has been a year of reversals. The university education that we had all grown up to consider an unashamedly public good has been declared a private benefit. But just as one world (of departments for education), which seemed to value teaching, declares itself to value only research, so another world (of Vice Chancellors), that set store only by research income and despised teaching, has discovered a new enthusiasm for good teaching. Like all reversals, these will certainly have some tragic consequences – though just how tragic and for whom is not yet clear. But perhaps most important is that by reflecting on these reversals we come to see more sharply the failures of recognition that have led to the current situation.

Abandonment of public-funded university education in the arts and humanities must count as the biggest reversal of them all. As far as the government is concerned, apparently, all we are good for is research, for which they will at least continue to give some funding (at least if it is directed to the 'public benefit' that is the favoured gloss on 'impact'). As for what we teach students, that, it seems is not, in the eyes of the coalition government, anything of value to the country as a whole, so whether we do it or not is to depend upon whether we can persuade 18 year-olds that they want what we offer. And the government, at least, thinks that they will only want it if they think it will lead them to a higher salary job.

It is true that we sold the pass on university education being free under the last government. In retrospect the sabres that have been so vainly rattled in the last year should have been unsheathed against Tony Blair. But whatever the government claims about there having been no change of principle, what is happening now changes the face of university education. Changes it to something none of us signed up to take part in. If university education is merely a finishing school, as the government seems to propose that it should be, few of us would want to be employed in finishing schools.

Fortunately, no one believes what the government says about university education. And with some reason. A government that introduces a graduate tax with a headline about not introducing a graduate tax can't expect to be listened to. Nor can a higher education reform supposedly introduced because existing higher education could not be afforded, but which saves no money at all – just directs the money in loans to 18-year olds rather than grants to HEIs – have its ideological basis long disguised. And whatever one thinks of that ideology, it is hard to do other than despise a government that has been so crass in its attempts at deception.

We will, I hope, go on fighting against the HE reforms, just as, I hope, we will go on fighting against the idea that research quality has any direct connection with research impact. But just as if impact is going to be set store by we need to make sure impact is measured in ways that are least harmful to the research we do, so we need to make sure that we make the most of the reforms of higher education, even as we try to reverse them.

What the HE reform proposals have effected is anything but the downgrading of teaching that they presuppose. Such is the utter distrust of government that the reforms have effected a reversal, in at least some Universities, of administrators' attitudes to teaching and research that gives teaching the whip hand. Twelve months ago research was still all the university administrations cared about, and it was supposed research weaknesses, spuriously deduced by reading RAE 2008 results as a league table, that were central to the threats being applied to some Classics departments. Then, once it became apparent that Arts and Humanities undergraduates were going to bring

in a fee that actually covers the cost of teaching them, departments which attract large numbers of students and teach them with very modest human resources, as most Classics departments do, came to look positively attractive. The complete turn-around at Leeds between this year and last, and something close to a turn-around, even in the course of the year, at Reading illustrate this.

What is happening at RHUL, however, should temper any sighs of relief. RHUL found ways of cooking the books (top-slicing large amounts off the fees on the grounds that students paying £9000 would need their lecture rooms refurbished...) and of introducing vastly pessimistic recruitment assumptions in their attempt to write-off their Classics degree and their Classics department. Whether a reversal can be achieved there may still depend on the unknown question of whether the prospect of paying larger fees will indeed change the subjects that students apply to study.

When the reversals of this last year are put in a broader perspective what is striking is how little dancing to the tune of the day turns out to benefit anyone. RHUL is a department that danced very effectively to the tune of getting in large-scale research grants, and when throwing out the net to catch professors purely with a view to attracting graduate students and research money was the name of the game it played that game with great success. With a new VC, and new tunes being drummed out, yesterday's successes come to be paraded as tomorrow's liabilities.

The thought that research was all that mattered was never a sensible thought. In the case of medical or scientific research, even perhaps in the case of research in pure mathematics, one might contemplate the possibility that the 'discovery' made in research will in itself directly or indirectly so transform the world that a lifetime of effort devote only to making that discovery makes sense. But that is hardly a plausible model for arts and humanities research. What could one contemplate discovering in history that will so transform people's understanding? Or what enlightening reading of, or way of reading, a literary text could give so much pleasure that the world will never be the same again? The great research projects – Oxford's Archive of Performance or Lexicon of Greek Personal Names – enable patterns to be discovered that could not previously have been seen, but however much those new patterns enrich our understanding of the past or of forms of cultural expression, they won't change people's lives and they won't radically improve the efficiency or effectiveness of how we teach history or literature. What they will do is enable us to explain more efficiently and effectively some things that we already explain, and to explain for the first time other things we never could explain in the past. Trained by these insights, those whom we teach will be more alert to a greater variety of ways of construing their own experiences and others' accounts of their experiences. They may not live longer, but they will, to an unmeasurable extent, live better. It is by educating us, and enabling us to educate others, that arts and humanities researchers make their impact. And if there is a quiet victory to be celebrated among the great reversals of 2011 it is the explicit mention, at least in some of the REF documents now out for consultation, of education as one arena in which HEIs can show the impact of their research.

That's why research needs teaching. However much we envy those with permanent positions at the Princeton Institute, or at All Souls, all research institutes do is lengthen the chain between the researcher and the main beneficiaries of research. What is the point disseminating research solely in print, for others to take up and transform into oral discourse, when you can talk about it to a live and listening audience directly? It isn't just that having to persuade people in a lecture or seminar that what you have been worrying about in the

library or the archive matters, improves the rhetorical skill with which the research is conveyed; it is (and we might compare the reservations Plato expressed about writing) that the tone of voice adds a dimension to exposition, and can clarify, and so render far more effective, what is being said (just as this sentence would have been a lot clearer to the reader had you heard me speak it aloud).

But so too, teaching needs research. At every level the best teachers pass on to their pupils what cannot be found in books – whether or not the teachers themselves think of what they are doing as research. The value of the arts and humanities in opening up new ways of seeing can only be conveyed by those who are themselves opening up for themselves new ways of seeing. This isn't about having a new theory in answer to every problem, as the endless rhetoric of 'innovation' sometimes seems to urge. It is about realising that the old problem can be, indeed must be, reframed, seen in a new light, compared with a text or event or thing that has not previously been considered relevant.

The statutory objects of most HEIs play a set of variations on 'education', 'learning', and 'research'. It is on the balance between these three that the excellence and sustainability (to pick two popular buzz-words of policy documents) of the university depends. The Gadarene rush to a fast drying-up sea of research grants must not be followed by a blind march up country to the chant of 'education, education'. Whatever the winds of change may bring in the coming year, we need to recognise that it is by keeping ourselves equally engaged in research and its educational deployment that we will both protect Classics (and our own jobs) and achieve our greatest impact.

Robin Osborne, September 2011

Going Astray: Classics and the NSS*

Over the last few months, 'classical departments'[1] in the UK will once more have gone through the process of analysing the most recent results of the National Student Survey (NSS).[2] This survey, intended to solicit the views of finalists on their study experience, is increasingly used to inform institutional and departmental rankings across the country, published by leading newspapers in the form of league tables. Running for the seventh time in 2011, the survey results are subsequently published on Unistats.com so that '[…] prospective students and their advisors can use the results to help make informed choices of where and what to study', as well as to be of use to universities, colleges and student unions '[…] to facilitate best practice and enhance the student learning experience'.[3] In a world where higher education is once more conceptualised as

* Thanks to colleagues across the country for discussion of and information on matters pertaining to the NSS, and in particular to Lena Isayev (Exeter), Jaap Wisse (Newcastle) and James Fraser (Edinburgh). The views expressed are those of the author.

[1] For the purpose of this exercise, 'classical departments' are defined as units that offer the teaching of subjects falling traditionally under the 'Classics umbrella' in the UK: Greek, Latin, Ancient History, Classical Art and Archaeology, Classical Studies/Literature in Translation/Civilisation. This is not to imply that all such units are Classics departments, or that they should be placed within a 'classical' set-up.

[2] http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/.

[3] http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/index.html; http://unistats.direct.gov.uk/.

(also) an economic enterprise, the impact of the results of the NSS can potentially be very damaging for individual departments that fail to score high enough in student satisfaction figures.

Naturally, the views and comments of our students are of great importance to each and every teacher at a UK higher education institution: that is why these are regularly solicited in the form of course questionnaires throughout the academic year, as well as through the well-tested method of face-to-face discussion, be it in staff-student liaison committees, or simply outwith any formal framework, on a personal, *ad hoc* basis, between student and teacher. Thus, there is nothing wrong in principle with the idea of gathering the views of students on the teaching they have received – even if the question as to whether the recipient of teaching (i.e. the student) is best equipped to judge the value of the education received (just at the point of graduation), and the methods through which this education was delivered, remains open for future discussion. But there are a number of disconcerting aspects of the NSS – especially (but not only) for Classics – that have not been fully acknowledged in the past, and that may for all practical purposes be in fact unknown to those who are thought of as the primary beneficiaries of the NSS: school-leavers – i.e. potential students – and their parents.

Evidently, the method of soliciting comments merely from finalists can only result in a partial view of any one department and the programmes on offer. Moreover, the ways and means employed by institutions to solicit a high enough return rate of surveys – e.g. through repeated 'telephone surveying' of students who have hitherto 'failed' to complete the survey by Ipsos MORI,[4] the independent market research agency that administers the NSS – is likely to influence the respondents' comments in ways as yet to be understood. But there is a much more structural issue with the NSS that distorts the results in varying degrees from department to department: and that is the simple fact that individual student surveys may be returned to a teaching unit other than that in which the student was taught.

The NSS classifies programmes of study by subject groups following each programme's standard 'JACS code': the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) has been developed by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in collaboration with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS); it classifies all programmes at UK HEIs. The overarching subject groupings are determined by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and are applied consistently to all HEIs that make use of the survey. The problem that arises from using these subject groupings and JACS codes uniformly across all HEIs is that the actual subject groupings in departments (*vel sim*., subject areas/schools/etc.) at HEIs can vary noticeably from HEI to HEI, and typically diverges as far as Classics is concerned from the groupings assumed by the NSS classification system. Thus, 'Classical Archaeology' is grouped with 'Archaeology' in the NSS – regardless of whether students on a classical archaeology programme were taught in an Archaeology department or in a Classics department (or other). As a result, the student survey returns from students on a Classical Archaeology programme will be used to inform the survey results for the subject group 'Archaeology' even if the programme is offered in a Classics department. Similarly, 'Ancient History' is grouped with 'History' in the NSS – regardless of whether students on the programme were taught in a History department (as for instance at UCL History) or in a Classics

[4] http://www.ipsos-mori.com/.

department (as for instance at KCL Classics).[5] Thus, 'historical departments' in the subject group 'History' typically receive survey data also from students who were not taught in a 'historical department', whilst 'classical departments' in the subject group 'Classics' typically lose survey data to other subject groups (such as 'History') that did not teach the students in question. A brief breakdown of typical UG programmes offered by 'classical departments' and the relevant NSS classifications highlights the underlying issues (Table 1).

Table 1: Programmes and NSS classifications

Programme	NSS classification
Ancient History	History
Ancient History and Greek	History and Classics
Ancient History and Latin	History and Classics
Ancient History and Medieval History	History
Ancient History and Modern History	History
Classical Archaeology	Archaeology
Classical Archaeology and Ancient History	Archaeology and History
Classical Studies (Classical Civilisation)	Classics
Classics (Greek and Latin)	Classics
Greek	Classics
Latin	Classics

As is immediately clear from this breakdown, the only undergraduate programmes that are automatically returned in the NSS to a 'classical department' (i.e. to the subject group 'Classics') are those involving the classical languages, and Classical Studies; whilst survey returns from students on Ancient History and Classical Archaeology programmes are instead grouped with 'History' and 'Archaeology' respectively: the students' views, as expressed in the survey, are used to inform the results of the relevant institutions' History and Archaeology departments even if the students in question were taught in a Classics department.

Whence the problem. The aim of the following analysis of student data – based on departments' finalists figures (expressed in FTEs) as provided in the annual statistics returns to CUCD in 2009/10 and 2010/11 for single and joint UG programmes – is, then, to create greater clarity on the potential proportion of student survey returns that are harvested or lost by each 'classical department' in the UK.[6] The analysis assumes a fictional 100% return rate of student surveys to the NSS (i.e. it is based on a full sample of finalists). Since finalist numbers on any one programme can change on an annual basis, the figures here offered are at best a rough guideline. Similarly, and for the same reason, the following analysis may not include all and every programme on offer by 'classical departments' in the UK; and programme titles at any one institution may vary from the generic titles here used. Lastly, the following analysis merely provides percentages of finalists on single and joint programmes, rather than actual figures; and it includes all 'classical departments' (except for Classics at the OU) irrespective of their student numbers, i.e. it includes departments whose student figures are too small to qualify for the NSS: the league table rankings of departments falling into this category are – for right or for wrong – not influenced by the NSS. In short, the figures here produced can only provide a rudimentary

[5] The same applies to programmes such as 'Art History', 'Architectural History', etc.

[6] The staff and student figures collected each year by CUCD from all departments in the UK offering the teaching of 'classical' subjects represent a snap shot of 'classical' teaching in the UK: they are not absolutely accurate.

benchmark for the respective NSS returns to 'classical' and 'non-classical departments' (Table 2): to gain accuracy on the matter, departments that offer programmes that fall under the Classics umbrella are advised to scrutinise their own institution's student data universe, and the relevant NSS statistics.[7]

Table 2: Fictional maximum NSS returns (in %) in 'Classics', 2009/10 and 2010/11

Key:
A: **Institution** (and programmes)
i: % of **2009/10** finalist FTEs returned to the subject group 'Classics'
ii: % of **2009/10** finalist FTEs returned to another subject group (e.g. 'History', 'Archaeology', etc.)
iii: % of **2010/11** finalist FTEs returned to the subject group 'Classics'
iv: % of **2010/11** finalist FTEs returned to another subject group (e.g. 'History', 'Archaeology', etc.)
v: **Average % (for 2009/10 and 2010/11)** of finalist FTEs returned to other subject groups (e.g. 'History', 'Archaeology', etc.)

A: **Birkbeck** (Programmes: Classics; Classical Studies/Civ.)

i: 100%	ii: 0%	iii: 100%	iv: 0%	v: **0%**

A: **Birmingham** (Programmes: Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History; Classical Art/Arch.)

i: 40.64%	ii: 59.36%	iii: 39.01%	iv: 60.99%	v: **60.17%**

A: **Bristol** (Programmes: Classics; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History; Classical Art/Arch.)

i: 65%	ii: 35%	iii: 61.82%	iv: 38.18%	v: **36.59%**

A: **Cambridge** (Programmes: Classics)

i: 100%	ii: 0%	iii: 100%	iv: 0%	v: **0%**

A: **Cardiff** (Programmes: Ancient History; Classical Art/Arch.)

i: 0%	ii: 100%	iii: 0%	iv: 100%	v: **100%**

A: **Durham** (Programmes: Classics; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History; Classical Art/Arch.)

i: 44.61%	ii: 55.39%	iii: 55.13%	iv: 44.87%	v: **50.13%**

A: **Edinburgh** (Programmes: Classics; Greek; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History; Classical Art/Arch.)

i: 58.97%	ii: 41.03%	iii: 52.25%	iv: 47.75%	v: **44.39%**

A: **Exeter** (Programmes: Classics; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History)

i: 50.84%	ii: 49.16%	iii: 50.43%	iv: 49.57%	v: **49.37%**

[7] An analysis of finalist figures in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh, based on university statistics and covering the last six academic years, was carried out by Dr James Fraser from Edinburgh University during 2010/11: concerning Classics, the results suggest an average migration of 60% of the maximum number of finalists survey returns to other subject groups in the NSS.

A: **Glasgow** (Programmes: Classics; Greek; Latin)

i: 100%	ii: 0%	iii: 100%	iv: 0%	v: **0%**

A: **KCL** (Programmes: Classics; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History; Classical Art/Arch.)

i: 62.67%	ii: 37.33%	iii: 61.29%	iv: 38.71%	v: **38.02%**

A: **Kent** (Programmes: Classical Studies/Civ.)

i: 100%	ii: 0%	iii: 100%	iv: 0%	v: **0%**

A: **Lampeter** (Programmes: Greek; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History)

i: 31.14%	ii: 68.86%	iii: 30.43%	iv: 69.57%	v: **69.22%**

A: **Leeds** (Programmes: Classics; Greek; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.)

i: 100%	ii: 0%	iii: 100%	iv: 0%	v: **0%**

A: **Leicester** (Programmes: Ancient History)

i: 0%	ii: 100%	iii: 0%	iv: 100%	v: **100%**

A: **Liverpool** (Programmes: Classics; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History)

i: 50%	ii: 50%	iii: 43.75%	iv: 56.25%	v: **53.13%**

A: **Manchester** (Programmes: Classics; Greek; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History; Classical Art/Arch.)

i: 45.64%	ii: 54.36%	iii: 41.3%	iv: 58.7%	v: **56.53%**

A: **Newcastle** (Programmes: Classics; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History)

i: 43.02%	ii: 56.98%	iii: 43.99%	iv: 56.01%	v: **56.5%**

A: **Nottingham** (Programmes: Classics; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History)

i: 45.67%	ii: 54.33%	iii: 48.17%	iv: 51.83%	v: **53.08%**

A: **Oxford** (Programmes: Classics; Greek; Latin; Ancient History)

i: 79.05%	ii: 20.95%	iii: 80.5%	iv: 19.5%	v: **20.23%**

A: **Reading** (Programmes: Classics; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History)

i: 35.44%	ii: 64.56%	iii: 41.94%	iv: 58.06%	v: **61.31%**

A: **Roehampton** (Programmes: Classical Studies/Civ.)

i: 100%	ii: 0%	iii: 100%	iv: 0%	v: **0%**

A: **Royal Holloway** (Programmes: Classics; Greek; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History)

i: 66.66%	ii: 33.33%	iii: 72.86%	iv: 27.14%	v: **30.24%**

A: **St. Andrews** (Programmes: Classics; Greek; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History; Classical Art/Arch.)

i: 70.81%	ii: 29.19%	iii: 75.28%	iv: 24.72%	v: **26.96%**

A: **Swansea** (Programmes: Classics; Greek; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History)

i: 36.43%	ii: 63.57%	iii: 33.12%	iv: 66.88 %	v: **65.23%**

A: **UCL** (Programmes: 'classical programmes' in Greek and Latin/History/IoA)[8]

i: 71.64%	ii: 28.36%	iii: 72.79%	iv: 27.21%	v: **27.79%**

A: **Warwick** (Programmes: Classics; Latin; Classical Studies/Civ.; Ancient History)

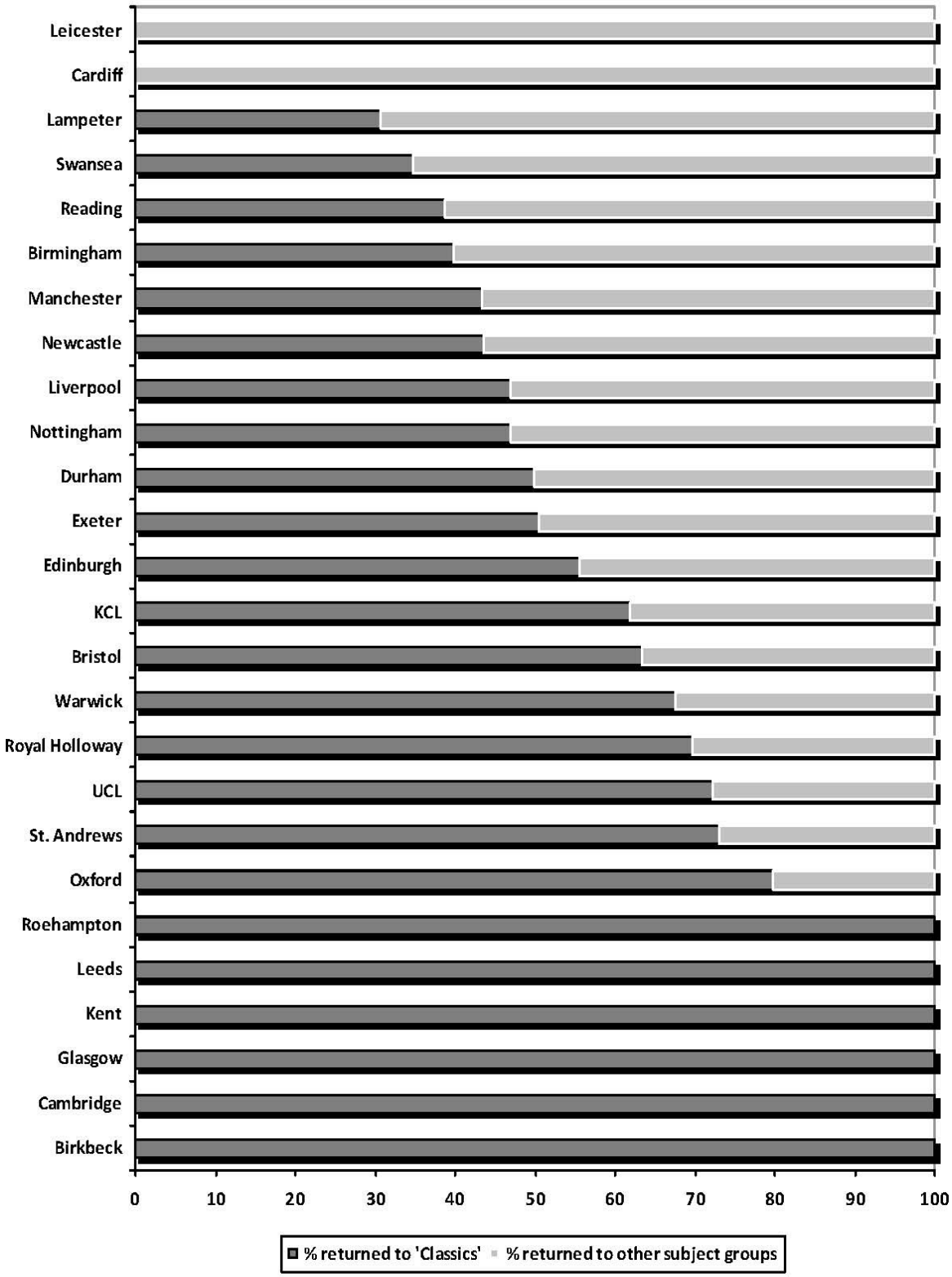
i: 73.33%	ii: 26.67%	iii: 61.84%	iv: 38.16%	v: **32.41%**

As the figures presented in Table 2 make clear, of the 26 institutions that offer teaching in one or other 'classical subject', only six have offered programmes in the last two academic sessions that are *all* returned in the NSS under the subject group 'Classics': Birkbeck, Cambridge, Glasgow, Kent, Leeds, and Roehampton. This is not to say that in the remaining 23 institutions the teaching units that offered programmes that typically fall under the Classics umbrella all lost student survey data to other teaching units: depending on institutional structures, the NSS subject classification system may accurately return the data to the (larger) unit in which the students were taught (as is likely to be the case for instance at UCL). But for the majority of 'classical departments' across the country, these figures nonetheless suggest a typical loss of crucial data. These figures also imply that the views and comments of students on, e.g., Ancient History programmes offered by a 'classical department' *regularly* influence the results of the subject group 'History', thus distorting that group's results through the inclusion of students who have not been taught in a 'historical department'.[9] A graphic display of the differences between individual 'classical departments' may help to foreground the potential unevenness in the NSS classification system as far as Classics is concerned (Figure 1).

[8] UCL submitted a joint statistics return to CUCD for 2009/10 and 2010/11 covering three departments (Greek and Latin, History, and the Institute of Archaeology), which does not allow one to separate student figures into each of the three departments for the purpose of the current exercise. In the light of the disciplinary structuring of departments in UCL, it is likely that only a small number of students might be returned in the NSS to a unit other than that which has taught them.

[9] Evidently, degree programmes may also be fairly flexible concerning the type of courses that students can take in order to fulfil the requirements of the degree. E.g., a programme called 'History', taught in a 'historical unit', may list courses in Ancient History amongst the course options for this degree even if a programme called 'Ancient History', taught by a 'classical unit', is available at the same institution.

Figure 1: Graphic display of the fictional maximum NSS returns to 'Classics' and the corresponding migration of student survey returns to non-classical subject groups (by individual 'classical departments')



But the matter is not just a numerical one: obviously, departments would like to know their students' views on *all* their programmes, rather than just on a sub-section of programmes. Furthermore, students on different programmes may reflect different social, economic or geographic backgrounds, with different attitudes, outlooks, likes and dislikes. By way of example, the body of finalists (from the UK) on programmes involving the classical languages at the University of Edinburgh is typically made up of students whose school education was received in England. In contrast, the body of finalists on programmes that do not involve the classical languages is regularly made up of a 'mixed' student population in relation to the students' place of school education south or north of the border (including Wales and Northern Ireland). Thus, in the case of Classics at Edinburgh, the views for instance of 'the Scottish student cohort' is currently not represented in the NSS results for Classics at Edinburgh – excluding from those results consequently also these students' evaluation of the work of the colleagues who teach them. This is not the place to attach any wide-reaching interpretation to this observation: the 'Scottish example' merely aims to indicate that there are issues beyond the 'numbers game' with the current NSS classification system for 'classical departments'.

In sum, anyone employing the NSS results for direct comparison between departments offering the study of subjects that traditionally fall under the Classics umbrella in the UK, compares apples with oranges. They may moreover be perceived as deliberately deceiving the potential body of 'customers'. The figures presented in this discussion paper aim at increasing awareness of the problems attached to the current use of our students' views; and to provide a basis for debate amongst the Classics community and beyond as to how one may initiate change in the NSS classification system.[10] As is clear from the figures presented here (Table 2 and Figure 1), the answer cannot be a mere reversal of the current situation. To group, e.g., 'Ancient History' with 'Classics' in future would not solve the underlying problem of false groupings: the 'classical landscape' in the UK is – thankfully – too diverse in its institutional organisation to allow a rigid and monochrome application of subject groupings in the NSS; institutions that are based on disciplinary groupings, and that, for instance, offer the teaching of Ancient History in a 'historical' teaching unit, would not benefit from a reversal of the current situation. Rather, what is needed is a more sophisticated survey mechanism that allows institutions to set the subject groupings in the NSS in accordance with the subject groupings practiced at *their* HEI: a technicality, but an important one.[11] Before such a mechanism has been put it place, the NSS results for Classics can have little bearing on a meaningful comparison between the views of our students across the country. The manufacturers of league tables would be well advised to stay far away from the NSS results for Classics.

The diverse organisational structures in HEIs in which the teaching of subjects that traditionally fall under the Classics umbrella in the UK is carried out, and the resulting impact on the NSS results, may hitherto have been less clear; but ignorance should not any longer delay the necessary confrontation of the issue. As Randell-MacIver put it nearly a century ago in relation to a quite different matter: '[...] if there are still scholars who protest that such things are not worth knowing, they can no longer have any excuse for asserting them to be

[10] Representations on behalf of CUCD have been made to UCAS in 2010/11 without leading to concrete results.

[11] For internal purposes, institutions can already obtain the NSS data based on a coding system that is in alignment with their departmental (or other) structures.

unknowable.'[12] To scholars add newspaper editors, university managers, market researchers, school leavers and parents.

Ulrike Roth, October 2011

[12] In his *Italy before the Romans* (Oxford, 1928), at 12.

Gender in the University Classics Curriculum: A Colloquium

The idea for the colloquium, an Institute of Classical Studies event which was held at Stewart House, University of London on March 9th 2011, developed out of a survey which I conducted in 2006 into the extent to which gender was being taught within Classics and Ancient History degrees in the UK. The survey forms had been sent to all universities and colleges where there were undergraduate courses in Classics and/or Ancient History; and the questions asked covered topics such as:

- What dedicated gender modules are being taught?
- How many modules are being taught where some kind of gender content is embedded in the material?
- What proportion of students enrols for optional gender modules?
- What is the sex of students enrolling for optional gender models?

A report of the survey findings was published in December 2008 by the Higher Education Academy's Subject Centre for Classics and Archaeology, which had helped fund the project; and the results were later reproduced in an article published in March 2009 in the *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education* Journal. Early in 2009, I also gave a paper on the survey results at a conference on Gender and the Classics organised at Roehampton University by Susan Deacy; the conference was well attended and aroused a great deal of interesting debate, and this helped to convince me that the pedagogical issues really were worth talking about in much greater depth. Today this seems to me to be even more obviously the case, at a time when the Classics in general, and the challenge to stereotypical gender roles in particular, are increasingly under threat.

Before I began the survey I'd imagined that gender had fallen out of fashion in the Classics curriculum, so in one way the results had been somewhat reassuring: I received replies from 24 of the 28 institutions that I had written to; and of these 24, 11 reported that they were teaching dedicated gender modules that year, and 21 that they were teaching at least one module where gender was embedded in the content. I also realised that some of the issues that had seemed to me to be very important at the start of the survey were not quite as significant as I'd originally believed; for example, after analysing the replies I began to accept that we need to teach both dedicated gender modules and modules where the gender content is embedded, and not to prioritise one approach over the other. Conversely, other issues began to seem more significant after I'd digested the survey results: the shift from 'Women' to 'Gender' in the titles of modules began to concern me a lot, and I am still disturbed by the seemingly growing reluctance to teach modules where the history of Greek or Roman women is addressed directly. These issues were debated pretty vigorously at the Colloquium.

The format of the colloquium was that speakers addressed specific topics for a maximum of 8 minutes, and discussion was then made general. Following introductions by myself and Susan Deacy, presentations were given by Emmanuel Carvajal (former student, Roehampton), Edward Harris (Durham), Mary Harlow (Birmingham), Catherine Lund (former student, Roehampton) and Vanda Zajko (Bristol). There were over fifty attendees, including undergraduates, postgraduates, and teaching staff. It had been suggested to the speakers before the colloquium that they might address some specific issues in their talks, and

lists of these issues were also distributed around the room. These are listed below.

Gender in the University Classics Curriculum: Some Questions

- Is gender still an issue?
- Should we be teaching 'Women' or 'Gender'?
- In modules where gender or women are being taught, are we focussing too much on women as representations, and avoiding the issue of how women actually lived?
- How do we teach women's experiences anyway (when so many of the sources are male-authored or male-produced)?
- Is masculinity still being taught?
- Are male Classics students being introduced to gender issues?
- If male students aren't opting for dedicated gender modules, is this a problem?
- Is it better to treat gender across the whole of the curriculum (i.e. to try to embed it in a wide range of modules), or deal with it in dedicated 'gender' modules?
- Has the Classics curriculum been transformed by the teaching of gender? Do we think Classics will be taught better if gender is taken into account? Do we think we can have an impact on gender relations in our own 21st century world?
- Who designs the classics/ancient history curriculum? Is gender being collectively discussed as a significant feature of the curriculum?

The current edition of *Bulletin of the Council of University Classical Departments* follows with versions of papers delivered at the colloquium and with responses to the event. Mary Harlow's paper is followed with responses from three of her postgraduate colleagues at Birmingham: Holly Ranger, Polly Toney and Sarah Wilkowski. The two graduated students who spoke at the event, Emmanuel Carvajal and Catherine Lund, present versions of their papers. The 'proceedings' conclude with responses to the event by Helen King (Professor of Classical Studies, The Open University), Susanne Turner (British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellow, Reading) and Niki Karapanagioti (PhD student, Reading).

Sue Blundell (with Susan Deacy), October 2011

Gender and Classics Teaching: Mary Harlow (Senior Lecturer, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham)

With Responses by Holly Ranger (MPhil Classics), Polly Toney (MPhil Classics) and Sarah Wilkowski (MA Antiquity)

Below is a version of the short paper I gave at the Gender in the University Classics Curriculum event 9th March 2011. It reflects my own views and experience of teaching at Birmingham over the past fifteen years. It is followed by the impressions and responses from three Birmingham postgraduates who attended the seminar. The day was very instructive, provocative and – in listening to the discussions – inspiring. We would all like to thank both Sue Blundell and Susan Deacy for organising the event.

To start in a very stereotypical way for a 'gender' paper I think I should state my position: first, I am an ancient historian; this makes me different from a classicist in many subtle ways, not least in the way I approach ancient evidence. In teaching gender in antiquity, however, many shared methodologies apply; second, from an ideological standpoint, I am a first wave feminist (stuck in a who-knows-what wave now) and for me the personal is still political (and vice-verse).

There is a very simple reason why awareness of gender should be part of any Classics/Ancient History curriculum: an investigation of gender ideals and relationships is one of the ways we can understand social systems, and individual and group behaviours in past societies. It reminds us that men and women are not monolithic or self-explanatory categories; their experiences of life are very different. Simply put, if we think about how much gender and attitudes to gender are a part of everyday life today, we are clearly missing many dimensions of ancient society if we fail to teach it.

From the point of view of life course and family history which form key areas of my own research, gender studies have had a profound effect on all areas of ancient history. They have moved historians away from the solely political and military arenas which tended to dominate until the last decades of the 20th century and shifted historical analyses to include the private and domestic realm. This shift moved the focus from an arguably segregated male world to one inhabited by women and children (also the lower classes, different ethnicities and different types of men and masculinities - here the related histories of sexuality and the body have also been influential).

This change of focus has also brought with it a sharpening of methodologies and more sophisticated analysis of our sources – written, visual and material. Classics has often led the way in the use of critical textual analysis; in deconstructing genres etc. it made us very aware of how we were approaching a text and of all its underlying agendas. Archaeology developed a gendered approach alongside this (see Ruth Whitehouse's 2009 survey). The increasing attention ancient historians are paying to sociological and anthropological methods is being seen in publications since the early 90s.

I agree with interviewees in Sue Blundell's original article that curriculum design is rarely looked at holistically and content of modules is often left very much to individual convenors. I am ambivalent about this. Research-led teaching should reflect the preoccupations (if not of the lecturer) at least of the discipline and theme; but at the same time some overall commentary on content could enable students to make better links between modules and related subject areas. Like Helen King, I think that student numbers and the shape of learning spaces

are an issue; work on gender requires discussion, it needs debating and this is hard to do in a tiered lecture theatre. Large numbers may begin to be a thing of the past with the introduction of higher fees but so might a lack of outside interference in the curriculum – we may find ourselves fighting the gender corner where we least expect it. Government intervention and student choice will be ever more forceful in the brave new world. If certain government spokespeople are already scathing about subjects such as media studies (where a lot of gender theory has been developed) how will they react to a Classics degree that advertises itself as focussing on gender, masculinity etc? Rather they should perhaps realise that the undergraduate's awareness of subtext has often come from the study of 'spin' in popular media, learnt in precisely those 'soft' subjects they often denigrate.

Should we worry about courses being titled gender and being mostly about women? Should we worry that they are mostly taught by women and taken by female students in the main? Personally my response to these issues is no. However, we can make the subject more encompassing by taking on board theories of masculinity and facing the problem head on in responses to teaching feedback. We should be self-consciously reflecting on participation and approaches. I have just taught a new MA module on 'Age and Gender at Rome' to a class of nine: five women and four men. The students aligned themselves spatially: women down one side of the table faced by the men sitting down the other. They recognised this as humorously stereotypical but no-one changed seats throughout the ten weeks of teaching. Discussion was always lively, and often related to personal experience as much as grounded in the source material, and at the end the backhanded compliment from the male students was the they hadn't really wanted to take the course but had really enjoyed it (and, almost as aside, learnt a lot). As Ray Laurence has noted in the recent Blackwell's *Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Rawson (ed.), 2010) there are more female than male contributors and male scholars tend to examine the street, while female scholars examine domesticity (Laurence & Strömberg, forthcoming). We need to look at our own gendered preoccupations more carefully.

There is a tension between specifically labelled courses which make the content and direction of theoretical underpinning overt (e.g. Gender in Classical Greece) and more embedded teaching which might have a strong gender theme running through a more traditional course. I think we need both. For political reasons we still need (now more than ever) to alert students to the inequality of the relationship between the sexes, the multiplicity of constructions of sexuality and gender, and the impact of these on social structure. As we seek to make our teaching relevant, teaching gender imparts valuable transferrable skills – not only academically in terms of the methods of critical analysis that are needed to study the subject but also in terms of raising political awareness and developing the ability to recognise and debate such issues. Matthew Fox's and Susan Deacy's points in Sue Blundell's article are key here I think: 'gender is good to think with' and in times when students pay more and more for their degrees we need to make our research and our subject relevant.

Gender works, as Matthew Fox says in Sue Blundell's paper, as an hermeneutic device; it opens up a whole range of angles following on from the 'women are good to think with' line. This brings me to Sue Blundell's point about the discourse of gender and its relationship to real life issues. While many of us who teach the material have spent a lot of time thinking about feminism and gender – and experiencing inequalities at all sorts of levels – we forget or are constantly surprised (or is this only me?) that much of this is new to our students.

In this sense teaching '**Women** in Antiquity' courses is a good introduction that can provide the background for more sophisticated thinking as the degree progresses. As I've intimated above, in the post-New Labour world students are very good at recognising the agendas which underlie texts, the demands of genre and the implications of stereotyping. Our job is to make the leap with them to translate this into a form of the lived reality of everyday life. This is a difficult task which cannot and should not – be simplified and here the challenge lies. Yes, we can talk a lot about the construction of masculinity – which given definition by opposition tells us a lot about femininity, or at least effeminacy – but making the leap from text to social reality is tricky.

Here archaeology and the study of material culture and social space should help and become part of the way we think about the past in a more holistic sense. For me interdisciplinarity is key – we've already 'borrowed' all our theoretical underpinnings from literary criticism and the social sciences so now we also need to have some awareness of the physical environment inhabited by our characters – a physical environment that is also highly gendered.

The current political and economic situation will hit women hardest: female students who take career breaks to raise children will take longer to pay off loans; more female students are part-timers and the rise in fees and lack of bursaries will hit them hardest. In our own profession we can still count the number of female VCs with our fingers and I wonder how many of them had children? Thinking about gender in the ancient world should make students alive to the position in the modern world – and enable them to ask the right questions about current social assumptions and interrogate their own expectations.

Mary Harlow, August 2011

Commentary by Holly Ranger (MPhil Classics), Polly Toney (MPhil Classics) and Sarah Wilkowski (MA Antiquity)

The talks at the 'Gender in the University Classics Curriculum' colloquium triggered interesting responses in all three of us, whose research interests focus upon recognising gender in classical antiquity; investigating the reception of ancient texts by contemporary women writers and using gender to contextualise political speeches.

At the University of Birmingham active interdisciplinary collaboration is highly encouraged within the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity between classicists, ancient historians and archaeologists as well as with gender specialists in the social sciences and critical theorists.

We found the debate on how far 'gender' should be embedded or isolated within Classics, and the delegates' different responses to this issue, very thought provoking. We understand the fear of ghettoization and acknowledge the problems of isolating gender within the discipline, whilst at the same time recognising that gender does require an in depth focus to grasp its theoretical complexities; it is a tricky balance. Moreover, we may be over-thinking (male) undergraduates' potentially negative reactions to studying gender as a specialist module and thus falling ourselves into the gender stereotyping trap. Our response is to suggest that all undergraduate classicists take a 'Theory' module, in which gender is taught as just one lens through which to examine Classics, alongside, for example, Marxist and postcolonial theories. This would also help to

alleviate fears of gender being considered a 'soft' subject; anyone who reads Judith Butler would not dare say this again. Gender could then be embedded more easily into Classics, no longer an isolated and specialist topic but an obvious and integral part of classical theory itself, a fundamental aspect of Classics that all lecturers should consider. Gender cannot be examined in isolation; gender informs and is informed by our experiences of race, age, class and sexuality, and feminist notions of intersectionality are key here.

Although a daunting prospect to some, this is an exciting and necessary paradigm shift required in Classics. The very values of a classical education must be re-examined, and the evolution of Classics is to be encouraged not feared. The expansion of classical research into areas of gender, race and age wrests the study of Classics from being the prerogative of the privileged elite; as we start to include 'lost' areas of ancient society we are simultaneously increasing the appeal of studying Classics to a wider demographic. This can only be a good thing at a time when university funding relies increasingly upon research 'impact'.

The importance of studying gender, along with postcolonialism, Marxism and other progressive critical theories, is for us an inevitable and natural part of the evolution of Classics. Controversies, such as those surrounding Bernal's *Black Athena*, show us that there are areas of Classics which have been for the most part ignored and, like gender, should have been addressed far sooner than they were.

The issue of gender in Classics should be obvious; a new undergraduate student should automatically read gender as part of the context of Classics. Archaeological evidence supports the presence of gender, race and class which have been ignored in traditional classical scholarship, thus reinforcing the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration. The old humanism in which white, Western, middle-class men used Classics to muse on their link to their intellectual forefathers in ancient Greece and Rome is no longer viable. A new and different kind of humanism is required where Classics can become the vehicle of social change; the inclusion of gender is just one part of this. Classics should be scrutinised as a discipline, reinvented and purged of its racist, elitist and sexist legacy. Making gender an obvious and integral part of Classics, and not resting upon the scholarship of the past, can rehabilitate Classics from a bastion of social conservatism into a discipline everyone can be proud of.

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Sarah Wilkowski, Polly Toney and Holly Ranger, August 2011

The Impact of Gender on the Classical and Contemporary Worlds

'Why study that classical world?' was a frequent question posed to me by others upon hearing that I was a recent graduate in Classical Civilisation. It was, no doubt, a reaction to the "growing need", for both students and employers, in our dire situation to encourage vocational degrees that would be more *advantageous* in entering the world of work, than one from the Arts. So, why indeed study antiquity in the first place if not only to indulge in the world of Indiana Jones and Lara Croft, or as an excuse to frequent the British Museum? To be honest, it was for those very reasons that I chose to study Classical Civilisation.

Then "gender" came along and completely changed my perspective. No longer was it about rediscovering hidden ruins, locating priceless relics, and rediscovering long forgotten knowledge that could help save the world from an ancient threat all the while flying across the globe, or at least from one lecture room to the next, as some gun-toting tomb raider. It was now about the exciting relationship history had with gender, understanding the "body" in the ancient world, Roman masculinity and gladiators, Cleopatra, Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, ideas concerning masculinities and femininities, and all that is in between – those gender defying Amazons, Hermaphroditus, and a cross-dressing Herakles. And let's not forget the schemes involving gender, sex, lies, and perhaps even a little intrigue, played by the gods and goddesses between themselves in classical literature.

However, despite spending an exciting three years exploring gender and antiquity, still the question of 'Why study the classical world?' reared its ugly head again, and again. For a while, I even came to ask myself that dreaded question. And why indeed study an arts/humanities-related course when I could never be an astrophysicist and shed new light on accretion disks or formulate new techniques in understanding the distribution of dark matter in the galaxies, or become a biologist and finally cure cancer? So, after graduation it was to be the world of voluntary work to gain "employable" skills.

After securing a placement at an addictions charity – a far cry from anything antiquity-related – I started to learn the many reasons why people would fall into substance abuse. One such example was a young woman who had been trafficked in the UK and forced to be a sex worker and her only way to cope with her situation was through drug use. To my surprise, the first thought I has was of the classical myths of heroic abduction and rape – of Zeus's rape of Europa and the many other portrayals of sexual violence in classical myth. But when we strip them of their pastness and aesthetic beauty they are actually grim and starkly real. This is just one example of how I was reminded of the classical past and its issues of gender and their place in today's world.

Another connection between then and now is the myth of Ariadne and human trafficking. Although not entirely related with human trafficking it does, nonetheless, strike a chord in the way individuals can be uprooted from their country of origin only to be placed in an entirely foreign and savage new environment where survival is key. Often, when reading cases involving human trafficking, there is the scenario of loved ones being sold off and abandoned by their own kin for a profit, cases where the traffickers could be fathers, uncles, sisters, and even partners. Though one might flinch from such an idea, the promise of love is frequently used as a ruse for some human traffickers in leading on, then abandoning, their lovers, mirroring the actions of Theseus in forsaking Ariadne on Naxos. Before I knew it, I began to connect past with present, and

myth had now become a sort of “handbook” in navigating my experiences within the charity sector.

My volunteering branched out to human rights and I found myself working for a sexual health charity of which one of the departments focused on the sexual health of sex workers in the UK. Once again antiquity provided me with a basis of knowledge. Pompeii, with all its humour, images of sexual positions in brothels and bath houses, as well as those apotropaic phalloi could tell us so much about how sex and gender have radically changed.

But what I found touching about Pompeii was its prostitutes. Prostitution and the sex trade, even survival sex, at first would seem as something very impersonal, something faceless, and even nameless. The common held view to most is that those within the sex industry are all the same; prostitutes are prostitutes are prostitutes, merely carbon copies of one another. One might ask, ‘Is there a face of Soho?’ However, just like the prostitutes of Pompeii, those within the sex industry happen to be people as well, just as Pompeii’s ‘Victoria the unconquerable,’ Sabinus with her favourite client Proclus. Then we have Asellina and her thermopolium, and the names of the women who worked there as bar girls and perhaps occasional hookers: Palmyra the Oriental, Algae the Greek, Maria the Jewess, and Zmyrina the Exotic. They are all individuals who, doubtless, have their own personal histories, and more importantly, feelings.

Reconciling ancient and contemporary, we find that just like the vast array of different ethnicities residing in Pompeii hoping for better opportunities only to work in a thermopolium, the sex workers in London travelled far from their homes in Brazil and Venezuela, India, the far East, for example, desperate for greener pastures. Even more heartbreaking to know is that a great many students and professionals now turn to prostitution to earn extra money in order to just get by.

The past, I started to realise, was not something grand and full of pomp, but also, and more importantly, made up of many others who unfortunately would probably go down in history as merely footnotes. Usually, the ancient world is romanticized, it becomes a fantasy in Hollywood movies focusing on great people and mythical adventures such as in *Gladiator*, *Alexander*, and *Clash of the Titans*. Rarely, if ever, are we provided a glimpse from a prostitute’s perspective, or anyone not attached to definitions of “antique celebrity”. But it was here that the ancient world informed my working experience of sex and gender in the voluntary sector today.

So, returning to the question ‘Why study the classical world?’, I find myself better equipped in forming a response: a degree in the Humanities can only give us that – a better understanding and appreciation of what it means “to be human”, something that is very much overlooked at a time when technological advancement, monetary gain, and power seem to preoccupy us. And a degree in Classics has offered me a wealth of knowledge – from mythical archetypes to sociological comparisons – with which to negotiate working in a sensitive and sometimes difficult environment. Who knew that one day small talk of *lupanaria* in Pompeii would make for a great opener in a job interview?

Now and then, I still get the random person ask me how I could have chosen to embark on three years of non-vocational learning only to come out of university with so much debt and so many doors closed to me. Now, with the help of the maverick physicist/musician Brian Cox of BBC fame, the TV series *The Big Bang Theory* and even David Attenborough, science has now become ‘sexy’. On the other hand, *Time Team*, *Digging for Britain*, and BBC’s *Coast* have failed to inject anything seductive or raunchy in history and archaeology. I can look back and tell myself that after learning past civilisations, reading the writings of great minds which continually shape the lives of succeeding generations, and whose

archaeology and architecture we still use as benchmarks to evaluate our own sense of style, could only enrich me as a person.

I suppose that my experience with classical antiquity, and gender in particular, has shaped the way I view the world in general. And so, whenever I should find myself taking a stroll down any of Soho's alleyways, I will be thinking of the prostitutes of Pompeii and their clients, of the Palmyras, Procluses, and Marias and Zmyrinas. And, although it may be a less grand view of antiquity and a little less romantic, it is also a bit more personal.

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Emmanuel Carvajal, September 2011

The Road Never Travelled

When I was asked to give a paper by Dr Deacy at the Classics Colloquium I was hesitant about which avenue I should explore. I knew that, apart from a fellow student that was in my undergraduate class, I would be one of the few students speaking at the colloquium to a room full of experts in this field of study. This led me to consider what I should say. Should I go down the familiar route of saying that women don't get enough coverage? Should I instead say that feminism isn't applied readily enough to give a better view of gender? Perhaps I should just stick with what I know and present a paper on how I felt studying Gender and Sexuality in my undergraduate degree? I chose none of these options. After thinking harder upon what the suggested topics would be I decided that I would simply bounce off what the other speakers had to say in order to take the opportunity to comment and ask questions of these academics at the forefront of Gender in Classics.

One of the first things I noticed when the speakers took to their papers was the dichotomous imbalance that permeated the teaching of Gender in Classics. Each speaker took the chance to wax lyrical about the benefits of the tradition that various academic approaches took to benefit studying Gender in Classics; not only did this leave me confused but it also led me to wonder just what we were all doing there if every speaker was looking to the past: I do realise the irony in that comment. Below I shall outline the various points that I picked up on during the colloquium and how I see their influence upon our studying of Gender.

Feminism: the ultimate discourse theory. The influence that feminism plays in the studying of Gender in Classics is something that many students feel should be negated. Many students came up to me after I raised my comments and questions to voice their own opinions. Feminism had had its heyday and it was time that we laid it to rest. Why do fewer male students take courses aimed and Gender and Sexuality? From what I can see and from what I have been told, it's because they don't want to feel like outsiders in a class that should have as much to say about men as it does about women. They feel like outsiders because of the very way lecturers describe their modules; they are geared towards a feminist reading and many male students feel as though they will learn nothing from feminism as it excludes them from the outset. I see feminism as the ultimate discourse theory for Gender in Classics. Feminism has become something we talk about, as if we were discussing Aphrodite's influence in *Hippolytus* or Zeus' importance in the *Iliad*. The anachronistic domination with which feminist authors surrounded the Classics world is no longer relevant.

Women and Masculinity. This topic was one of the biggest annoyances throughout the entire colloquium. I am not sure if it is because I was accompanied by a friend who has a keen interest in linguistics but this makes no sense to me whatsoever. How should scholars further the study of an ever expanding avenue of academic interest when they seem fixated upon comparing and contrasting a biological entity with a personalised characteristic? It would be like comparing a cow to the colour black: nonsensical literary devices that prove to be linguistically null and void, in the most polite way plausible. Surely the aspects of femininity in the Classical world are as complex as the concept of masculinity? Surely men deserve to be studied as readily as women? Yet when each speaker took their turn, they all repeated Women and Masculinity as if it was the latest must-have mantra for improving oneself.

"When we were growing up femininity was a dirty world...We didn't discuss it, we were just expected to be feminine"......"But did you expect men to be masculine?" This was said to me by Sue Blundell after I had raised the question of the lack of femininity within the discussions; my response was quick and to the point. Why this preoccupation with what women had been groomed socially to conform to when there wasn't a single thought given to the same social conditioning that men had to go through? Wasn't it just as important for men to be masculine? It seems that there is a gap for contemporary academics that needs to be bridged in their own understanding of what femininity and masculinity is what it was and what it should be.

The road never travelled. When my turn to speak was drawing to a close I chose to thrown down somewhat of an academic gauntlet to those in the audience. It was partly unintentional. I had not meant to become confrontational but it has been taken that way nonetheless. What I pose is this: if we as classicists continue on this same path, never questioning the 'seminal' authors in our fields of study, and never deviating from the anachronistic theoretical and methodological approaches that have remained the same for decades, what is the point of it all? Why would any student want to study Gender if they are forced to respect everyone, question no one and think nothing? Why should we waste our time doing new research when it seems we're not allowed to say anything against the old? What I say is that Gender in classics needs change.

The good intentions of many seminal academics has led to a period of stagnation in the arena of Gender in Classics, which will never recover if we continue to pander to the whims of this reversal of thought. In a subject that has so many hypotheses, so few certainties and so little evidentiary stability we know that Athens was a patriarchal society, we know that all of our literature comes from elite males and we know that women held fewer rights than their male counterparts, but what I don't know now is why we continue to ignore the biological entity that is "men", review anachronistic feminist theoretical and methodological viewpoints of women, and battle our own contemporary hang-ups with what femininity is and what masculinity is.

Catherine Lund, October 2011

Gender and Classics Teaching: Helen King (Professor of Classical Studies, The Open University), Susanne Turner (British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellow, Reading) and Niki Karapanagioti (PhD student, Reading), Respond to the Event

HK: At this event I felt at times like a pioneer, but at others like a fossil! I've been working on gender since the 1980s; I first taught 'Women in antiquity' as a module in Cambridge, when I was a PhD student, in the days when we still needed to think about where the women were, and how the sources could reveal them even in the absence of women's voices; when I taught at Liverpool Hope I did a dissertation option on 'Women in antiquity', and then at Reading I moved into coordinating and teaching on team-taught modules on 'Gender'. I've integrated gender issues into other modules, but also taught dedicated modules, so I was interested when Susan Deacy started by raising the issue of best practice here. When I wrote a short introduction to Greek and Roman medicine in 2001 I deliberately avoided a chapter on 'women', instead commenting on women's bodies, women as healers, women and drugs and so on in the rest of the text: when I put together a French version in 2008, my co-writer Véronique Dasen insisted we should have a dedicated chapter on women, so I duly wrote one. Has the pendulum swung back to 'dedicated', or is this an issue of national preferences?

Edward Harris discussed a first-year team-taught module, 'Living in the ancient world', which uses the 'integrated' approach, and argued that this represents a better reflection of what really happened. He also talked about how we can find a woman's perspective in the absence of sources written by women. He discussed enriching our source base, going beyond literary sources (especially Athenian tragedy) to look at images, medical texts, and epigraphy, but also physical anthropology. Lin Foxhall later flagged up archaeology, especially the value of 'small things', mundane objects (there was a conference on 'The Gods of Small Things' at Reading in 2009). I agree that there is much that can be done with sources outside the literary canon, and Vanda Zajko argued convincingly that gender studies have already expanded the canon.

NK: I agree. But I think that, with regards to teaching, we must also enrich our source base even within the literary canon. We usually focus on Athenian drama and Archaic poetry. But we sometimes tend to overlook, disregard even, the evidence included in prose or later literature (both Greek and Latin). To mention a quick example, Tim Whitmarsh writes that we have more evidence for women's activities and for men's worries regarding 'manhood' in the Second Sophistic than in the classical and the archaic periods (Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic*, 2005: 9). Indeed, many scholars are now researching gender in later Greek literature, especially the novel. But it is more difficult to find undergraduate courses where this evidence is taken into account.

ST: Yes, the expansion of the canon is already happening - many of us are researching gender and art and using art objects/material culture to teach – and are teaching modules on the classical body. I taught on just such a module as a Ph.D. student at Cambridge, as well as interdisciplinary modules on sexual ethics. Still, I've taught on dedicated gender modules surprisingly little – I've contributed to the one at Reading while I've been a post-doc there, but otherwise I've done bits and pieces of integrated gender and sexuality in posts at Nottingham and Cardiff. I was struck by the point made at this conference that 'dedicated' modules can form a ghetto. We need to think about that more. I

wonder about the potential of 'the body' as a better focus for integrated modules? I keep hearing whisperings that this is all old hat, that theory and research is moving on, but I'm resisting. Is it just me, or have we seen fewer publications on women and gender in recent years?

HK: I agree, at the moment there is a reaction against both 'gender' and 'the body' as been-there, done-that. The world has moved on. But has it? When I taught a 'Women and Renaissance' module in a History department in the mid-1990s, I was struck by female students' resistance to the word '**feminism**': 'We're not feminists!' Why not? Don't you think your gender affects your prospects, your pay, your options? Mary Harlow suggested that now, even more, we need to make students aware of gender inequalities.

ST: So does feminism add anything any more? Mary talked about how undergraduates don't want to read it; it is seen as too hard to get into and not applicable to the study topic. She asked whether gender is seen as particularly 'soft', in the context of the possibility of the government withdrawing funding from 'soft' subjects. Maybe we should ask our students about this one ... But then, the students tend to think art modules are fluffy, and I soon absolve them of that one! It's not just that feminist writing is so hard to read, it's also that some classics research using it is equally impenetrable. But - and it's a big but - not everything is supposed to be easy.

HK: Whatever students think about feminism, they need to know about its development and about the role of **theory**. Gender, as Vanda Zajko said, is part of the huge shift in our discipline with the rise of reception. Fan fiction websites allow identification with classical figures in new ways, and explore gender boundaries. Studying gender introduces students to theories used in other subjects. When Reading first ran a module on 'gender in ancient societies', there was a compulsory Section 1 in the exam where the questions were all on theory. Students hated it. But we should be challenging students. These are not modules on daily life or myths about the sexes. It's the same as when we run a module on 'Myth'; we soon disabuse any students who think they are just going to learn the stories. Vanda talked about the plurality of meanings in a text providing more opportunities for transgressive readings. I think gender is a very good topic through which to introduce students to what Jack Winkler called 'reading against the grain'. How can we read our sources so that they can answer fresh questions? Bring back the theory!

ST: I'm all for teaching theory. Have you noticed how good archaeology departments are at pushing their students towards theory in the form of non-negotiable core modules? OK, so often it terrifies them and it takes a good teacher to make the theory accessible, but the approach is impressive. Those of us who study the ancient past, and tread the fine line between looking for similarity and emphasising difference, are in a unique position to contribute to theorisations of gender, sexuality and the body - many modern theories just don't work for the ancient world because their underlying modern assumptions are under-appreciated. The problem is getting anyone to listen to us. There's an interesting point here about how work on homo-erotics and male sexuality has really died down recently; why is that? So is the real question here how do we fit teaching feminism into already over-loaded **curricula**? Is it our responsibility? - I can hear that battle cry. It's really worth us trying, if only to counter the undergraduate resistance to all things feminist. As an aside, when I first met Mary Beard, I told her I wanted to use feminist theory but not be a feminist. You should

have seen her face! But I soon changed my mind on that one, so I do really sympathise with this point.

HK: Mary Harlow talked about curriculum design, and how the content is usually left to convenors, but convenors need to find people to teach on their courses! Having convened modules on 'gender', it is always more difficult to find colleagues willing to teach masculinity. And it tends to be just 'masculinity and citizenship' or 'masculinity and war' or 'selected Roman emperors'. Speakers said that some universities are under pressure from students to offer more traditional modules like 'The fall of the Roman republic'. So here we come up against how the curriculum responds both to subject bench-marking and to student demand. We are not just giving students what they want, though, surely? We are expanding their horizons! It was refreshing when Vanda spoke and insisted that we want those we teach to go out thinking **the world looks different** after what they have learned. I was also pleased to hear from Emmanuel, a former Roehampton student working with a drugs and alcohol charity. He really engaged with the relevance of Classics today, through gender issues, observing that myths of heroic abduction seem far more grim when you meet a sex worker. He explored the role of gender in who becomes homeless today and linked this to Hippolytus being thrown out after his lifestyle choices. He also gave us a sense of how engaging with a topic in Classics then changes people's perceptions in their own societies: he said that awareness of the names of prostitutes at Pompeii makes him realise that those he meets are individuals too. Mary Harlow gave the example of a student dissertation comparing language of the rape of the Sabine women to how soldiers who have used rape in war in Bosnia talk about what they did.

ST: If we do go for running a dedicated module, what do we call it? Several speakers commented on this. Do the words 'women' or 'gender' put students off enrolling?

HK: It doesn't seem straightforward. Some universities manage to run 'women' modules taken by both sexes, and 'Roman family' modules are not necessarily seen as 'for girls'. Mary pointed out that family history is valuable not only for bringing in women, but also the poor, and other understudied groups. And both male and female students want to write dissertations on women. How far are your choices already determined because you know from school what subjects, as a woman, you should be doing?

ST: To understand gendered module choices, we need to look at the boys as well as the girls - and not ignore masculinity just like we may well be doing in our module content... There are more factors in student module choice than the words in the title! What your friends are doing, who's teaching it, at what time of day, what is the assessment method... I didn't realise the 'women' word was such a turn off - but I agree that our gender modules are still primarily about women, and the repeated occurrence of comments in essays and exams that women have a gender and men don't, or women are a gender and men aren't, means we're at risk of reproducing men as the unmarked category - and potentially ghetto-izing women? That was a really good point, I thought.

NK: I agree. I think you can tell that the 'women' word is a turn off by observing the reaction of some students when you discuss 'women' in non-gender modules. As a seminar tutor at Reading, I led some discussions focusing on women in Epic poetry and women in Athenian drama. I was struck by students who deliberately

broadened the discussion and spoke more generally about gender, femininity and masculinity and the boundaries between them.

HK: Another Roehampton student, Catherine, who has clearly gained by taking modules in social anthropology alongside classics, gave a very personal account in which she asked whether we are consciously ignoring the word 'men' and saying masculinity, while saying 'women', not femininity. Others present explored this point and replied that it is because 'femininity' is a term constructed by men to point to the ideal woman. I wonder about this. We need to think about it more; surely there is an ideal man as well as an ideal woman in people's minds? Catherine also expressed her irritation with us creating a 'voice' for women, while assuming our sources give us the male voice in an unmediated way. She's right. She also asked why we often talk about deities as if they were real people... I know what she means. Is it easier to do this?

ST: Yes, I thought Catherine's points about how we often fail to interrogate men and masculinity as we insist on interrogating women were very good - and very brave. Anything we can do to counter men as the unmarked category has to be valuable. But we need to ground these issues of semantics in developments in the field of theory. It's back to Helen's comments on needing to understand the history of feminism. The study of women developed in 1970s feminism, when we were looking for [evidence of] women – but the study of masculinity (and men) developed with the rise of queer theory, which focuses on representations, language and construction. The language of 'femininity' is in fact used in certain circles – for example, the work of Elisabeth Bronfen - but also Sue Blundell et al., *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece.* It's also not entirely true to say no one's 'doing' men. My Ph.D. on classical Attic grave stelai was originally intended to explore issues of the female gaze but that soon became unworkable – in Catherine's terms, I failed to 'find' any female voices, I'm afraid, or rather, I couldn't justify claiming that men and women's reactions to death and commemoration were more different than they were similar. As I rework that research now, I'm approaching the issue of women quite differently but I'm also finding my research increasingly drawn to question of the representation of men and masculinity. So my own work is addressing the very issues that Catherine raised.

NK: This goes for me too. When I started my PhD, I intended to focus on the theme of women and revenge in Herodotus' *Histories*. But I have to admit that I failed to find why women's revenge is a more important theme than men's. So now, I am equally focusing on women and men, femininity and masculinity.

ST: But it's also very important for us to think about why a generation of young women - and I include mine in this - has been sold a myth by women's magazines (and the government, too, if my A-level sociology lessons are anything to go by) about living in a post-feminist age, hence their resistance to feminist theory. In so many classical circles, it's still brave to use feminist theory, so let's not write it off just yet... Classics has such a reputation as being a-theoretical, and it's not just a reputation. I came away from the conference thinking that we should make we're contributing to debates outside classics; we're so used to being in our own little disciplines, perhaps we don't venture outside enough. It's interesting that the journal *Gender and History* is making a plea for more articles on the classical world. We should be publishing beyond Classics journals!

Helen King, Susanne Turner and Niki Karapanagioti, April 2011

Classics at UK Universities, 2010-11: Statistics

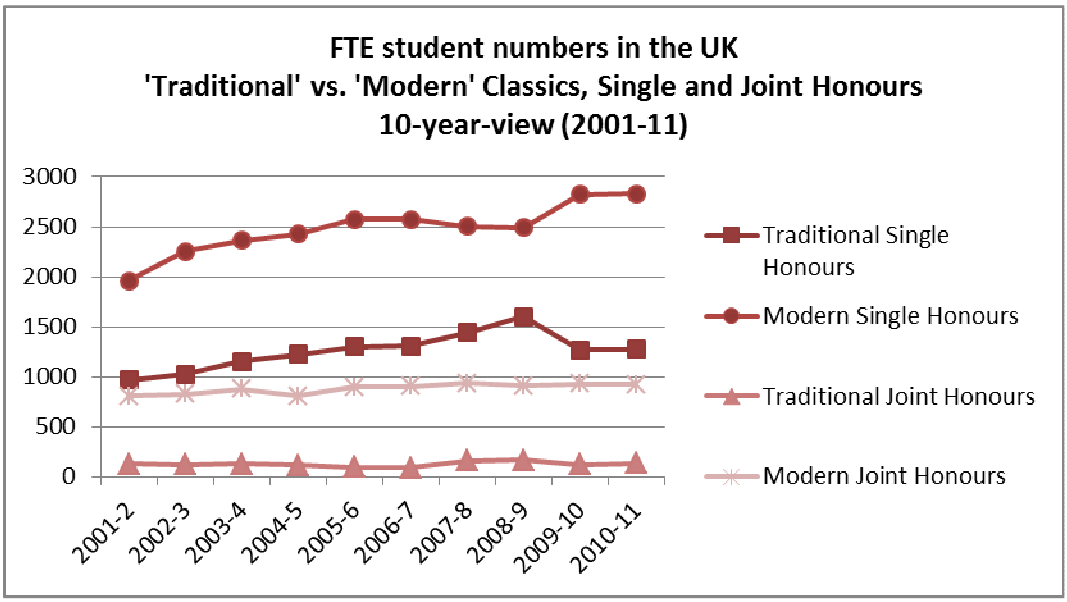
No CUCD Statistics Report could be produced without the collaboration of the many 'classical' departments in the UK. First and foremost, then, thanks are due to those colleagues – academic and administrative – who have compiled the staff and student figures of their institution for 2010-11: without their help and assistance, the CUCD Statistics on 'classical' teaching at HEIs would not be possible.

One of the striking features of the figures for 2010-11 is perhaps the continuing large number of students in the UK who study one or other 'classical subject', including both 'Traditional Classics' and 'Modern Classics': Classics has been and continues to be of great interest to students irrespective of the lobby for 'applied' subjects, or the economic crisis. Our students clearly value the education we can offer them, and it is high time that not only their university teachers listened to them. Of course, what our students make of their time at university, and their degree in one or other 'classical' department is supposedly captured by the National Student Survey: but as is becoming ever clearer, that survey is not equipped, in its current format, to reproduce faithfully these students' views on the teaching they receive in the majority of institutions. How many of these students' survey returns are potentially 'going astray', roughly speaking that is, could be ascertained on the basis of the departmental returns to CUCD: again, without the work of the colleagues who have compiled their department's staff and student figures, such comparative analysis across the twenty-odd contributing departments would not be possible.

Ulrike Roth, October 2011

CONTRIBUTING DEPARTMENTS:

Birkbeck
Birmingham
Bristol
Cambridge
Cardiff
Durham
Edinburgh
Exeter
Glasgow
KCL
Kent
Lampeter
Leeds
Leicester
Liverpool
Manchester
Newcastle
Nottingham
Oxford
Reading
Roehampton
Royal Holloway
St. Andrews
Swansea
UCL
Warwick
and the Open University



Observations/comments :

Table A : Overview

	Honours students (SH + JH)				All students (incl. Other)							
					excluding OU				*including OU*			
	no.	**FTE**	*% change FTE*	*index (1992–3 = 100)*	no.	**FTE**	*% change FTE*	*index (1992–3 = 100)*	no.	**FTE**	*% change FTE*	*index (1997–8 = 100)*
2001–2	5,673	**3,858**	*1.4*	*112*	8,244	**4,549**	*-8.9*	*92*	18,786	**6,195**	*-4.3*	*99*
2002-3	5,571	**4,225**	*9.5*	*110*	8,577	**5,016**	*10.3*	*94*	17,507	**6,394**	*3.2*	*102*
2003-4	5,854	**4,527**	*7.1*	*118*	8,399	**5,129**	*2.2*	*96*	17,866	**6,460**	*1.0*	*103*
2004-5	5,834	**4,571**	*1.0*	*119*	8,366	**5,220**	*1.8*	*98*	16,877	**6,244**	*-3.3*	*100*
2005-6	6,186	**4,868**	*6.5*	*141*	8,937	**5,500**	*5.4*	*112*	17,448	**6,524**	*4.5*	*104*
2006-7	6,258	**4,878**	*0.2*	*142*	9,296	**5,600**	*1.8*	*114*	15,032	**6,696**	*2.6*	*107*
2007-8	6,812	**5,044**	*3.6*	*146*	9,851	**5,672**	*3.1*	*115*	16,183	**6,831**	*4.7*	*109*
2008-9	6,922	**5,163**	*6.1*	*150*	9,980	**5,808**	*5.6*	*118*	16,334	**6,864**	*5.2*	*110*
2009-10	6,500	**5,149**	*-0.3*	*149*	9,456	**5,791**	*-0.3*	*118*	12,070	**7,716**	*12.4*	*123*
2010-11	6,465	**5,164**	*0.3*	*150*	10,530	**5,817**	*0.5*	*118*	14,028	**7,566**	*-2.0*	*121*

Table B: Single and Joint Honours

	'Traditional classics' (Classics, Greek, Latin)								'Modern classics' (Class. Studs, Anc. Hist., Art/Arch.)							
	single honours				joint honours				single honours				joint honours			
	no.	**FTE**	*% change FTE*	*index ('92–3 = 100)*	no.	**FTE**	*% change FTE*	*index ('92–3 = 100)*	no.	**FTE**	*% change FTE*	*index ('92–3 = 100)*	no.	**FTE**	*% change FTE*	*index ('92–3 = 100)*
		trad SH				**trad JH**				**mod SH**				**mod JH**		
2001–2	1,082	**968**	*-5.0*	*80*	265	**127**	*31.3*	*83*	2,363	**1,958**	*7.4*	*133*	1,963	**805**	*-6.7*	*132*
2002-3	1,108	**1,022**	*5.6*	*81*	238	**120**	*-5.3*	*86*	2,525	**2,255**	*15.1*	*138*	1,700	**828**	*2.9*	*102*
2003-4	1,362	**1,150**	*12.5*	*91*	221	**126**	*4.7*	*91*	2,582	**2,363**	*4.8*	*144*	1,689	**879**	*6.1*	*110*
2004-5	1,482	**1,225**	*6.5*	*97*	232	**114**	*-9.4*	*82*	2,518	**2,424**	*2.6*	*149*	1,602	**809**	*-8.0*	*99*
2005-6	1,624	**1,300**	*6.2*	*107*	200	**96**	*-16.2*	*62*	2,792	**2,576**	*6.3*	*175*	1,571	**896**	*10.9*	*147*
2006-7	1,616	**1,306**	*0.4*	*108*	187	**92**	*-4.0*	*60*	2,808	**2,575**	*0.0*	*175*	1,647	**905**	*1.0*	*149*
2007-8	1,773	**1,440**	*10.8*	*119*	296	**163**	*70.0*	*106*	2,924	**2,506**	*-2.7*	*170*	1,819	**935**	*4.3*	*154*
2008-9	1,958	**1,600**	*23.0*	*132*	289	**164**	*71.3*	*107*	2,822	**2,488**	*-3.4*	*169*	1,853	**911**	*1.6*	*150*
2009-10	1,399	**1,271**	*-20.6*	*105*	252	**124**	*-24.4*	*119*	2,989	**2,824**	*13.5*	*192*	1,860	**929**	*2.0*	*153*
2010-11	1,437	**1,276**	0	106	254	**136**	10	88	2,961	**2,832**	0	192	1,813	**920**	-1	151

TABLE C.1:
ALL STUDENTS

	'Traditional classics'					
	Classics		**Greek**		**Latin**	
	No.	FTE	No.	FTE	No.	FTE
SINGLE HONOURS						
2006-7	1,488	**1,231**	43	**25**	85	**49**
2007-8	1,657	**1,376**	38	**22**	78	**42**
2008-9	1,705	**1,408**	171	**149**	82	**43**
2009-10	1,312	**1,212**	41	**21**	46	**39**
2010-11	1,318	**1,215**	40	**23**	79	**38**
JOINT HONOURS						
2006-7	*63*	**30**	*27*	**14**	97	**48**
2007-8	*128*	**77**	30	**15**	138	**70**
2008-9	126	**75**	17	**9**	146	**79**
2009-10	79	**39**	13	**7**	160	**79**
2010-11	110	**59**	17	**10**	127	**68**
OTHER						
2006-7	40	**16**	*561*	***137***	*1,109*	***264***
2007-8	23	**12**	*626*	***154***	*977*	***231***
2008-9	131	**51**	70	**15**	948	**224**
2009-10	*26*	***11***	*404*	***98***	*456*	***160***
2010-11	*110*	***30***	*270*	***116***	*932*	***393***
ALL						
2006-7	1,591	**1,277**	*631*	***176***	*1,291*	***362***
2007-8	1,808	**1,466**	*694*	***191***	*1,193*	***344***
2008-9	1,962	**1,534**	*258*	***173***	*1,176*	***346***
2009-10	*1,417*	***1,262***	*448*	***126***	*662*	***278***
2010-11	*1,538*	***1,304***	*327*	***149***	*1,138*	***499***

Figures in italics include Open University data.

TABLE C.2:
ALL STUDENTS

	'Modern classics'					
	Class. Civ./Studs		Anc. Hist.		Class. Art/Arch.	
	No.	FTE	No.	FTE	No.	FTE
SINGLE HONOURS						
2006-7	1,433	**1,338**	1,263	**1,114**	112	**124**
2007-8	1,415	**1,248**	1,385	**1,141**	124	**117**
2008-9	1,310	**1,169**	1,404	**1,226**	108	**93**
2009-10	1,475	**1,430**	1,425	**1,338**	89	**56**
2010-11	1,435	**1,388**	1,470	**1,397**	66	**47**
JOINT HONOURS						
2006-7	537	**298**	1,057	**577**	53	**30**
2007-8	541	**269**	1,195	**602**	83	**65**
2008-9	539	**261**	1,213	**595**	101	**55**
2009-10	572	**277**	1,145	**574**	143	**78**
2010-11	626	**310**	1,089	**557**	98	**53**
OTHER						
2006-7	*5,039*	***896***	1,567	**393**	458	**111**
2007-8	*5,767*	***998***	1,553	**315**	426	**76**
2008-9	6,432	**1,052**	1,413	**284**	418	**75**
2009-10	*2,169*	***1,586***	*1,531*	***304***	*984*	***408***
2010-11	*2,617*	***1,134***	*1,601*	***311***	*1,029*	***418***
ALL						
2006-7	*7,009*	***2,532***	3,887	**2,084**	623	**265**
2007-8	*7,723*	***2,515***	4,133	**2,057**	633	**258**
2008-9	*8,281*	***2,483***	4,030	**2,106**	627	**222**
2009-10	*4,216*	***3,293***	4,101	**2,216**	*1,216*	***542***
2010-11	*4,678*	***2,832***	4,160	**2,247**	*1,193*	***518***

TABLE D: STAFF

	Full-time				Part-time				Other	
	permanent		temporary		permanent		temporary			
	no.	FTE	no.	FTE	no.	FTE	no.	FTE	no.	FTE
2001–2	335	**316**	39	**37**	5	**3**	84	**25**	122	**34**
2002-3	332	**330**	47	**44**	12	**4**	74	**28**	156	**48**
2003-4	333	**323**	49	**49**	9	**20**	82	**37**	142	**29**
2004-5	327	**324**	41	**41**	12	**5**	75	**35**	148	**35**
2005-6	345	**342**	38	**39**	40	**19**	53	**15**	150	**56**
2006-7	370	**367**	34	**35**	38	**18**	73	**18**	115	**48**
2007-8	394	**390**	33	**34**	30	**14**	72	**27**	124	**36**
2008-9	401	**398**	33	**34**	29	**16**	87	**32**	125	**31**
2009-10	369	**369**	45	**45**	26	**12**	92	**39**	155	**33**
2010-11	380	**377**	36	**24**	26	**12**	106	**44**	161	**44**

Summary (all staff)

	no.	**FTE**	*% change*	on leave (FTE)	**effective FTE**	*% change*
2006-7	630	**485**	3.1	61	**425**	5.2
2007-8	653	**501**	6.3	69	**430**	6.5
2008-9	674	**510**	8.3	63	**445**	10.2
2009-10	687	**498**	-2.4	86	**411.8**	-7.5
2010-11	692	**501**	*0.6*	67	***434.0***	5.4

TABLE E: BEGINNERS' LANGUAGES

		Greek			Latin		
		no.	**FTE**	*% change*	no.	**FTE**	*% change*
Undergraduates							
	2006-7	980	**323**	*-4.2*	1,395	**380**	*7.3*
	2007-8	1,174	**355**	*5.1*	1,408	**350**	*-1.2*
	2008-9	1,163	**331**	*-1.8*	1,492	**377**	*6.7*
	2009-10	950	**288**	*-18.3*	1,309	**343**	*-12.3*
	2010-11	850	**267**	*-7.3*	1,387	**454**	*32.0*
Postgraduates							
	2006-7	73	**22**	*35.3*	80	**17**	*-13.6*
	2007-8	95	**20**	*22.7*	122	**26**	*32.5*
	2008-9	74	**21**	*31.4*	156	**37**	*87.4*
	2009-10	78	**22**	*5.4*	130	**27**	*-16.7*
	2010-11	87	**19**	*-15.6*	168	**64**	*137.0*

TABLE F: POSTGRADUATES

		Full-time	Part-time	Other (FTE = 0)	Total no.	FTE	*% change*
TAUGHT							
	2003-4	268	256	8.7	532.7	**373**	*4.4*
	2004-5	277	222	9	508	**354**	*-5.1*
	2005-6	315	208	10	533	**423**	*19.4*
	2006-7	281	231	6	518	**395**	*-6.5*
	2007-8	308	265	4	577	**409**	*-3.2*
	2008-9	305	284	30.6	619.6	**400**	*-5.5*
	2009-10	389	201	14	604	**491**	*-2.5*
	2010-11	405	207	5	612	**469**	*-4.7*
RESEARCH							
	2003-4	388	157	14	559	**442**	*7.9*
	2004-5	411	130.5	18	559.5	**482**	*9.0*
	2005-6	432	107	14	553	**490**	*1.7*
	2006-7	508	103	10	621	**538**	*9.9*
	2007-8	467	125	30.5	622.5	**491**	*0.1*
	2008-9	377	126	20.6	523.6	**415**	*-15.3*
	2009-10	430.5	119.5	23	573	**455**	*9.4*
	2010-11	444	116	10	560	**504**	*10.8*