



FALL 2018

# ARION

A JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND THE CLASSICS

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

\$12.50

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# Latin Woostered and Hard-Boiled: The Classical Style of P. G. Wodehouse and Raymond Chandler

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THE VICTORIAN classicist Benjamin Jowett, outlining his vision for Oxford's classical curriculum (or "Greats"), believed "the function of the scholar was to bring Greek ideas into contact with the modern world, and the purpose of university education was to produce not scholars or researchers but statesmen and men of the world."<sup>1</sup> One Oxford alumnus who exemplified this vision was Oscar Wilde. For him the classics were not just essential to education; they were an important part of another aspect of the modern world—mass entertainment. From his journalism to his plays and his novel, Wilde incorporated the ancient world in literary "products" designed to be consumed by large middle-class audiences. Effectively, he found a way of reconciling Parnassus and Piccadilly, the cloister and the marketplace.

Two later writers, born at a time when Wilde was making his mark as a wit, cultural critic and boulevardier, also epitomized Jowett's worldly vision—though their training ground was not Oxford but an English public school, Dulwich College, founded by Elizabethan actor-manager Edward Alleyn. They were P. G. Wodehouse and Raymond Chandler, near contemporaries who, while apparently very different from one another, had in common a classical education to which they subsequently ascribed their great facility as English prose stylists. The current Master of Dulwich College, Joseph Spence, maintains: "Chandler's Philip Marlowe may speak with a Los Angeles accent, but his syntax owes more to Virgil and Livy than to any later writers."<sup>2</sup> And Chandler himself remarked: "It would seem that a clas-

sical education might be a rather poor basis for writing novels in a hardboiled vernacular. I happen to think otherwise.”<sup>3</sup> Wodehouse described his schooling on the “Classical side” as “the best form of education I could have had as a writer.”<sup>4</sup>

And here is another point of comparison with Wilde, of whom Seamus Heaney once said: “The lighter his touch, the more devastating his effect. When he walked on air, he was on solid ground.”<sup>5</sup> Heaney was referring to the brilliant paradoxes and high-wire wordplay of Wilde the Society satirist, the subversive insider and scourge of Victorian hypocrisy, but he also pinpointed an intrinsic aspect of Wilde the freelance classicist. Wilde wore his erudition lightly but the sheer nimbleness of his creative genius, the assiduous court paid to triviality, the formation of so “delicate [a] bubble of fancy”<sup>6</sup> as *The Importance of Being Earnest*, all had a rootedness and authority attributable in large measure to his formal classical training. Wodehouse as weaver of whimsy and Chandler as purveyor of pulp fiction have a similar rootedness and authority that derive from a solid grounding in classics.

Like Wilde again, and his pitch-perfect High Comedy, Wodehouse and Chandler create very particular worlds in their writing—contrasting worlds of light and dark. Chandler’s is the Los Angeles demimonde, a world of hard edges, of blackmailers, *femme fatales* and tuxedoed racketeers, of seedy saloons and gambling joints; a world both repellent and seductive in its lurid, noirish venality. In his penultimate novel, *The Long Goodbye*, L.A. is personified as “a city no worse than others, a city rich and vigorous and full of pride, a city lost and beaten and full of emptiness.” Descending the mean streets of this urban underworld is Chandler’s private eye, Philip Marlowe, a hero with mythic resonance, “a shop-soiled Galahad,”<sup>7</sup> a gumshoe Aeneas every bit as world-weary as Virgil’s hero and just as attuned to the *lacrimae rerum*, the tears inherent in the human condition.

If Chandler depicts a city and its inhabitants indisputably banished from the Garden of Eden to the Garden of Allah (a notorious Hollywood hotel of the 1930s and ’40s), Wode-

house captures a world delightfully preserved in prelapsarian aspic or, as Evelyn Waugh put it, “a world of pristine paradisaal innocence. For Mr. Wodehouse there has been no Fall of Man; no ‘aboriginal calamity’. His characters have never tasted the forbidden fruit.”<sup>8</sup> An article in the *New Yorker*, in March 2014, referred to Wodehouse as “a tonic for those suffering from . . . jadedness of outlook and dinginess of soul.”<sup>9</sup> Did Philip Marlowe read Wodehouse in his quieter moments? Jeeves and Wooster, Blandings Castle, the monocled bon vivant Psmith—a Wildean array of formidable butlers, charming idlers and gorgon aunts—are, according to Robert McCrum, drawn by a miniaturist close “in spirit to Jane Austen, who famously worked on a ‘little bit (two inches wide) of ivory.’”<sup>10</sup> But, as McCrum further notes:

Her inspiration . . . was drawn from a near-contemporary world; Wodehouse placed his characters in a recently vanished society and one, moreover, whose reality was transformed by his remarkable powers of fantasy and imagination into something timeless—and permanent. The secret of that permanence lies in Wodehouse’s surreptitious elegy for his country. Behind the Drones and the manor house weekends is a sweet, melancholy nostalgia for an England of innocent laughter and song.<sup>11</sup>

Wodehouse’s vanished England and Chandler’s neon-lit sidewalks of sin—the one enfolded in an elegiac drollery and dottiness, the other an authentic grittiness that manages to be romantic—are as distinct from each other as day and night. Yet, they are equally products of imaginations steeped in classical language and mythology, in the satire of Aristophanes and the psychological realism of Euripides, of pens honed by the techniques of Latin prose composition which instilled a mastery of simile and the subordinate clause, an abhorrence of padding and pretentiousness. “I live for syntax,” Chandler once proclaimed, and indeed he and Wodehouse are expert technicians of the evocative and unexpected sentence. It is in their technical brio and control that their classical style is most evident.

On Wednesday, June 21, 1939, at Oxford's annual Encaenia ceremony (*enkainia* being a Greek word for renewal), P. G. Wodehouse became an honorary Doctor of Letters. He had been proposed for the degree, somewhat impromptu, by I. O. Griffiths, a mathematician with a taste for the unconventional and an aficionado of Wodehouse's writing. The proposal met with surprise but received the approbation of the Vice-Chancellor, George Stuart Gordon, and eventually *The Times*. It also presented the University's Public Orator, Cyril Bailey, with a special challenge; as was customary, it fell to him to introduce the honorands in Latin but he had never read a word of Wodehouse. With a reading list prepared by Griffiths, he became a conscientious convert and rose brilliantly to the occasion, delivering a witty summation of Wodehouse's gifts in faultless Horatian hexameters. *The Times* called it "an *exemplum* of his own *urbana felicitas*, in which he not only paid tribute to the kindly temper and finished style of Mr Wodehouse's work, but also achieved the difficult task of presenting or suggesting in Latin the familiar figures of Bertie Wooster and Jeeves and Mr Mulliner and Lord Emsworth and the Empress of Blandings and PSmith and even the Honourable Augustus Fink-Nottle and the love life of the newts."<sup>12</sup> Bailey's salute concluded in prose: "Praesento vobis festivum caput—Petroniumne dicam an Terentium nostrum?—Pelham Grenville Wodehouse" ("I present to you that delightful chap—should I say our Petronius or our Terence—Pelham Grenville Wodehouse"). The Vice-Chancellor, in conferring the degree on this English Terence, apparently bestowed another title—that of the English Catullus—by extolling Wodehouse's neoteric virtues of *lepos* (wit) and *venustas* (charm): "Vir lepidissime, facetissime, venustissime, iocosissime, ribidundissime te cum turba tua Leporum, Facetinarum, Venustatum, Iocorum, Risuum, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis admitto ad gradum Doctoris in Litteris honoris causa" ("Wittiest of men, most humorous, most charming, most amusing, full of laughter, by the authority vested in me and the entire university, I



hereby admit you and your whole crowd of witty, humorous, charming, amusing, uproarious creations to the degree of honorary Doctor of Letters”).

Unlike several of his fellow honorands (who included Lord Lothian, Ambassador to the United States; Shakespearean scholar Sir Edmund Chambers; and the “Aristarchus of English letters,” Sir Herbert Grierson), Wodehouse was not an old Oxonian. His father had been a colonial judge in Hong Kong and his Civil Service pension was paid in rupees. As Wodehouse tells it, “just as scholarship time was approaching, with me full to the brim with classic lore and just spoiling for a good whack at the examiners, the rupee started creating again, and it seemed to my father that two sons at the University would be a son more than the privy purse could handle.”<sup>13</sup> It was a wounding blow to a boy who, being on the Classical (as opposed to Modern) side, had expected to win a scholarship and follow his elder brother Armine to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, an institution “consecrated,” in the words of Erasmus, “to the study of the three most important languages [Greek, Latin and Hebrew] and to the study of the best literature of the ancient authors” (*tribus praecipuis linguis ac melioribus literis vetustisque autoribus proprie consecravit*).<sup>14</sup>

At Dulwich College, Armine had been invited on four occasions to transcribe his Greek or Latin translations (from Milton, Shelley and Tennyson) into a splendid manuscript volume, bound in red calf, with a Virgilian title *Haec olim meminisse juvabit*. At Corpus Christi, he got a Double First in Classics and the Newdigate Prize for his poem “Minos.” He later regularly contributed light verse to *The Times of India*, under the Latin pseudonym of “Senex.” Among the poems he wrote as a serving officer on the Western Front was one titled “Quantum Mutatus” (“How great the change”) in which he marvelled at how a doctor had learned to deal with casualties.

The younger Wodehouse was possibly the less gifted classicist; nevertheless, he learned at Dulwich to write Latin and

Greek as rapidly as he wrote English, a skill cultivated under the impressive tutelage of Philip Hope whose students “were often spellbound by the speed and brilliance with which he gave version after version of the ways in which a sentence or line could be turned in Greek or Latin.”<sup>15</sup> McCrum maintains: “It is hard to overemphasize the importance of this training. Throughout his writing, [Wodehouse] would always display a passion for grammar and a virtuoso assurance over the perils of the most sophisticated English sentence.”<sup>16</sup> He offers as an example the opening sentence—much cherished by Wodehouse disciples—of *The Luck of the Bodkins*:

Into the face of the young man who sat on the terrace of the Hôtel Magnifique at Cannes there had crept a look of furtive shame, the shifty hangdog look which announces that an Englishman is about to talk French.

With the same sentence in mind, Robert Anderson Hall has commented: “A large proportion of the humorous effect of his narrative comes from the ease with which he moves—from one sentence, one phrase, and even one word to the next—between the formal and the informal level.”<sup>17</sup> It was an ease hard won by years of Latin and Greek prose composition and by assimilating, for instance, the urbane, colloquial Attic of Aristophanes with its mix of high and low registers.

This ability to move confidently between registers, to make literary and musical the vernacular, and vice versa, was shared by Raymond Chandler who, as a novice short-story writer for the pulp magazine *Black Mask*, learnt his craft by borrowing methods ingrained in him as a schoolboy classicist at Dulwich College. Born in Chicago, Chandler arrived at Dulwich in 1900, the year Wodehouse left. He switched between the Modern and Classical sides but it was his classical training that left an indelible impression. “Back then,” Tom Williams explains, “he had copied out hundreds of lines of Latin and Greek poetry and then translated them, laying bare the architecture of each work.”<sup>18</sup> He now approached the stories in *Black Mask* in the same way, reducing them to

their bare bones and then retelling them in his own words. In a letter to editor Dale Warren in 1945, Chandler wrote:

All I wanted to do when I began [writing] was to play with a fascinating new language, and trying, without anybody noticing it, to see what it would do as a means of expression which might remain on the level of unintellectual thinking and yet acquire the power to say things which are usually only said with a literary air.<sup>19</sup>

One of the most defining features of both Chandler and Wodehouse's style is an abundant use of similes—similes relished as much for their audacity as their appositeness, their melodious dissonance and the immediacy with which they encapsulate a character or situation. I would suggest that in this too the lessons of the Dulwich form room are brought to bear. Screenwriter Gavin Lambert spoke of Chandler's "throwaway exactness,"<sup>20</sup> his capacity to fuse far-flung or incongruous elements, the banal and the exotic, into an arresting tableau. Consider this handful of examples:

I belonged in Idle Valley like a pearl onion on a banana split.  
(*The Long Goodbye*)

Even on Central Avenue, not the quietest dressed street in the world, he was about as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel food. (*Farewell, My Lovely*)

He accepted it with the dignity of an intoxicated dowager. (*The Little Sister*)

The General spoke again, slowly using his strength as carefully as an out-of-work show-girl uses her last good pair of stockings. (*The Big Sleep*)

The following examples from Wodehouse's work could almost have been written by Chandler:

He felt like a man who, chasing rainbows, has had one of them suddenly turn and bite him in the leg. (*Eggs, Beans and Crumpets*)



The Right Hon. was a tubby little chap who looked as if he had been poured into his clothes and had forgotten to say "When!" ("Jeeves and the Impending Doom")

He groaned slightly and winced like Prometheus watching his vulture dropping in for lunch. (*Big Money*)

She uttered a sound rather like an elephant taking its foot out of a mud hole in a Burmese teak forest. The name appeared to have touched an exposed nerve. (*Aunts Aren't Gentlemen*)

We can see in Wodehouse's similes what Sophie Ratcliffe calls "a carefully crafted form of ludic release."<sup>21</sup> However outlandish, a Wodehouse or Chandler simile has a precision to its oddity, a disciplined flourish that is distinctly classical and that gives the commonplace an aura of surreal sophistication. Clive James has discerned in Chandler's similes a comic style "always on the edge of self-parody—and, of course, sometimes over the edge—but at its best combining the exultant and the sad in an inseparable mixture."<sup>22</sup>

Also typical of this surreal sophistication and seamless movement between registers is Wodehouse's use of the transferred epithet (or in Greek, *hypallage*), by which he casts a state of mind or moral condition onto an unlikely inanimate object:

I balanced a thoughtful lump of sugar on the teaspoon. (*Joy in the Morning*)

He uncovered the fragrant eggs and I pronged a moody forkful. ("Jeeves and the Impending Doom")

His eyes widened, and an astonished piece of toast fell from his grasp. (*Jeeves in the Offing*)

It was the hottest day of summer, and though somebody had opened a tentative window or two, the atmosphere remained distinctive and individual. (*Right Ho, Jeeves*)

Such, then, is the sequence of events which led up to Bertram Wooster . . . standing at the door . . . surveying the scene before him through the aromatic smoke of a meditative cigarette. (*Thank you, Jeeves*)

Wodehouse would have encountered many striking instances of transferred epithets in his reading of Greek and Roman poets, not least in Horace (e.g., *Odes* 3.21.19–20 *iratos . . . regum apices*, “angry crowns of kings,” and *Epodes* 10.14 *impium Aiacis ratem*, “the impious vessel of Ajax”). What makes his use of the device so memorable is the mix of daftness and literariness.

In a similar rhetorical vein, and just as memorable, is the way Chandler employs synaesthesia, a transfer of senses. An example of synaesthetic imagery in Latin poetry is found in Catullus 6.7–8: *cubile clamat / sertis ac Syrio fragrans olivo* (“the bedroom shouts it with blossoms, fragrant with Syrian olive oil”) where the “shout” is not vocal or aural but olfactory. In Chandler’s novel *The Little Sister*, Marlowe says: “She smelled the way the Taj Mahal looks by moonlight.” Like his similes, the effect is at once jarring and evocative, poetic and yet somehow entirely true to the punchy, bourbon-soaked patois of hard-boiled pulp.

As well as making him proficient in such linguistic devices, the classics taught Chandler how *not* to write. In a letter to Hamish Hamilton in 1950, he reflected:

A classical education saves you from being fooled by pretentiousness, which is what most current fiction is too full of. In this country [America] the mystery writer is looked down on as sub-literary merely because he is a mystery writer, rather than for instance a writer of social significance twaddle. To a classicist—even a very rusty one—such an attitude is merely a parvenu insecurity.<sup>23</sup>

Wodehouse and Chandler’s near identical backgrounds in Greek and Latin lend their work an enviable self-awareness and self-assurance within genres that, superficially, are not highly literary. In an essay for the *Washington Post*, Charles Trueheart observed that Chandler “is credited with captur-

ing [a] native period idiom, but often as not the language he employs is finished in a glaze of erudition.”<sup>24</sup> Wodehouse knew that he was writing in a commercial, middlebrow medium: “I go in for what is known in the trade as ‘light writing’ and those who do that—humourists they are sometimes called—are looked down upon by the intelligentsia and sneered at.”<sup>25</sup> But, despite being thus pigeonholed, he deftly deployed his linguistic armoury to celebrate and deflate his own breezy erudition, fashioning a lively lexicon that embraced schoolboy Latin tags and metropolitan slang, cliché and quotation. Witness this exchange between the Eton- and Oxford-educated Bertie Wooster and his manservant Jeeves, a consummate autodidact:

“Precisely, sir. *Rem acu tetigisti*.”

“*Rem*—?”

“*Acu tetigisti*, sir. A Latin expression. Literally it means ‘You have touched the matter with a needle,’ but a more idiomatic rendering would be—”

“Put my finger on the nub?”

“Exactly, sir.” *(Joy in the Morning)*

Or, Bertie’s allusion to the Battle of the Sabis (and indeed Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*) in *Right Ho, Jeeves*:

The makings were neatly laid out on a side table, and to pour into a glass an inch or so of the raw spirit and shoosh some soda water on top of it was with me the work of a moment. This done, I retired to an armchair and put my feet up, sipping the mixture with care-free enjoyment, rather like Caesar having one in his tent the day he overcame the Nervii.

Or, this concise lesson in the vagaries of love and the consolations of Latin, addressed directly to the reader, in *The Girl in the Boat*:

Nothing is more curious than the myriad ways in which reaction

from an unfortunate love-affair manifests itself in various men. No two males behave in the same way under the spur of female fickleness. *Archilochum*, for instance, according to the Roman writer, *proprio rabies armavit iambo*. It is no good pretending out of politeness that you know what that means, so I will translate. *Rabies*—his grouch—*armavit*—armed—*Archilochum*—Archilochus—*iambo*—with the iambic—*proprio*—his own invention. In other words, when the poet Archilochus was handed his hat by the lady of his affections, he consoled himself by going off and writing satirical verse about her in a new metre which he had thought up immediately after leaving the house. That was the way the thing affected him.

AS WELL AS this conscious form of classical name-dropping, there is, to a degree, happenstance. Cyril Bailey, in his Encaenia address, gave Wodehouse the soubriquet “Terentius nos-ter.” Thirty years later, a young Oxford classicist, Peter G. McC. Brown of Trinity College, wrote to ask Wodehouse whether he was knowingly influenced by Plautus or Terence, because of a similarity between a passage in Terence’s *Heauton Timorumenos* (*The Self-Tormentor*) and one in *The Luck of the Bodkins*. Wodehouse replied:

There certainly is a close resemblance between the two passages, and it can only be explained by a similarity of thought between Plautus [*sic*] and me, for though in my time at Dulwich we read a great many authors, for some reason neither Plautus nor Terence came my way. Why would this be? Because P and T were supposed to be rather low stuff? . . . But we read Aristophanes, who was just as slangy as either of them.<sup>26</sup>

(Wodehouse had not only read Aristophanes at Dulwich but had also appeared as a member of the Chorus in a production of *The Frogs*, performed in Greek.) Nevertheless, Brown was not alone in spotting a resemblance to Plautus and Terence. Reviewing *The Girl in Blue* for the *Spectator* in 1970, Cambridge Latinist E. J. Kenney said: “This is the English-Terentian comedy of manners at its most austere. The cast of characters includes several familiar figures, or recognisable variants of them,” including “the most arche-

typal figure of all, the Scheming Slave.”<sup>27</sup> (Elsewhere, Kenney likened Ovid to Wodehouse.) And earlier, in 1934, the *Classics Journal* featured an article by George McCracken entitled “Wodehouse and Latin Comedy” in which McCracken discussed Wodehouse’s use of stock characters, such as the helpless *adulescens* and ingenious *servus*, and described the Wodehousian nomenclature, e.g., Stanley Featherstonehaugh Utridge, as Plautine in essence.

Interestingly, Wodehouse’s closest school friend, William Townend, recalled Wodehouse writing at Dulwich “a series of plays after the pattern of the Greek tragedies, outrageously funny, dealing with boys and masters.”<sup>28</sup> Greek tragedy might have been the young Wodehouse’s model but he was clearly following the Aristophanic tradition of topicality, of targeting real personalities and local issues.

From his juvenilia to his late novels, Wodehouse’s classical inheritance, and his gentle (sometimes unwitting) plundering of it, are apparent. His claim to the title of “England’s Terence” may be matched by Chandler’s claim to that of “Los Angeles’ Virgil”—a title Chandler would likely have disavowed in view of his irritation when W. H. Auden declared that his “powerful but extremely depressing books should be read and judged not as escape literature, but as works of art.”<sup>29</sup> But others are on Auden’s side. Paul Skelnazy has argued that Chandler “realigns the detective tradition with its forgotten antecedents, like the epic . . . This grafting of old forms and new times is Chandler’s grace as a novelist.”<sup>30</sup>

IN HIS ESSAY “The Simple Art of Murder,” first published in 1944, Chandler conceives of the detective hero in terms of an epic archetype, a solitary, essentially chivalrous soul in an unchivalrous, unfragrant world:

Down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. The detective in this kind of story must be such a man. He is the hero, he is everything. He must

be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man. He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honor, by instinct, by inevitability, without thought of it, and certainly without saying it. He must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world. . . . The story is his adventure in search of a hidden truth, and it would be no adventure if it did not happen to a man fit for adventure. He has a range of awareness that startles you, but it belongs to him by right, because it belongs to the world he lives in.<sup>31</sup>

Such a man is Philip Marlowe, whom Chandler is said to have named after playwright Christopher Marlowe (Edward Alleyn, founder of Dulwich College, created on stage the roles of Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabas). Numerous critics have considered his complex status as a modern-day chivalric knight and indeed *The Big Sleep* opens with Marlowe entering the hallway of the Sternwood mansion to be met by "a broad stained-glass panel showing a knight in dark armour rescuing a lady who was tied to a tree." But the questing Marlowe's epic lineage is more ancient than that, and it is not only his syntax that he owes to Virgil. There are several parallels between Aeneas' underworld journey and Marlowe's literal and metaphorical *katabasis* (descent) in *The Big Sleep*:<sup>32</sup>

### *Aeneid*

Aeneas' underworld journey results from a summons by his deceased father, the elderly, crippled Anchises, who appears to him in a dream in Book V.

At Cumae, before his descent into the underworld, Aeneas gazes admiringly at the great doors of Apollo's temple with their frieze of Theseus' descent into the labyrinth. Theseus' success foreshadows that of Aeneas.

### *The Big Sleep*

Marlowe's journey to the Los Angeles underworld, to investigate a blackmail attempt, is at the behest of General Sternwood who, like Anchises, has lost the use of his legs.

Marlowe contemplates the stained-glass panel in the Sternwood mansion, which depicts the knight "fiddling with the knots on the ropes that tied the lady to the tree." The knight's confusion foreshadows that of Marlowe.



Before he can make his journey, Aeneas must consult the sibyl and find the body of his comrade Misenus.

Marlowe's sibyl runs a bookstore, and her information also leads to a body—that of the murdered blackmailer, Geiger, whose missing body Marlowe must find before he can complete his commission.

The anteroom to Marlowe's underworld is the aptly-named Cypress Club of racketeer Eddie Mars, a mysterious "gray man, all gray," who seems to represent Pluto himself. At this point, Marlowe's *katabasis* assumes an Orphic dimension as he attempts to rescue a woman—Mars's wife Mona, a key witness—from the gangster's hideout. Like Orpheus, he almost succeeds: just as he reaches the District Attorney's office with his witness, Mars, who has friends in city government, intercepts him and reclaims his wife. Mars's henchman, who stands guard over Mona, is a Cerberus-like figure and is even named Canino. Returning to the theme of *Aeneid* VI, the journey culminates in an interview with Anchises / General Sternwood, in which Marlowe's duty and destiny become clear.

LET US RETURN to where we began: Jowett's vision of a classical education neither esoteric nor utilitarian but, rather, vibrantly engaged with the modern world. Like Oscar Wilde, P. G. Wodehouse and Raymond Chandler had solid backgrounds in the language and literature of Graeco-Roman antiquity which profoundly influenced their work as writers. That fact alone is worthy of our attention. More importantly, however, they reached an audience far beyond the realm of classical scholarship, producing stories that the likes of Auden and Professor Kenney could appreciate as serious art and those seeking lurid thrills or nostalgic escape could equally enjoy. As Wilde did in the late-Victorian era, Wodehouse and Chandler drew, consciously and unconsciously, on

their experience of “dead” languages and ancient archetypes to create something iconic in their own era, something abiding but so redolent of a specific time and place. To borrow a phrase quoted earlier, they grafted old forms and new times.

## NOTES

1. M. L. Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain 1500–1900* (Cambridge 1959), 103.

2. Quoted in Maev Kennedy, “Raymond Chandler given blue plaque in mean streets of Upper Norwood,” *Guardian*, October 7, 2014.

3. Letter to Hamish Hamilton, November 10, 1950, in *Raymond Chandler: Later Novels and Other Writings*, ed. Frank MacShane (New York 1995), 1042.

4. Quoted in David A. Jasen, *P. G. Wodehouse: A Portrait of a Master* (New York 1974), 11.

5. Seamus Heaney, “Oscar Wilde Dedication: Westminster Abbey, 14 February 1995,” in *Wilde the Irishman*, ed. Jerusha McCormack (New Haven, CT & London 1998), 176.

6. Oscar Wilde interviewed by Robert Ross, *St James’s Gazette*, January 18, 1895.

7. Marlowe is described as such in *The High Window* (New York 1942).

8. Evelyn Waugh, “An Act of Homage and Reparation to P. G. Wodehouse,” broadcast over the BBC Home Service on July 15, 1961 and published the following day in *The Sunday Times*.

9. Brad Leithauser, “Plenty of Room for Stupidity: On P. G. Wodehouse,” *New Yorker*, March 26, 2014.

10. Robert McCrum, *Wodehouse: A Life* (London 2004), 417–18.

11. McCrum (note 10), *Wodehouse*, 418.

12. “The Encaenia at Oxford,” *The Times*, June 22, 1939, 10.

13. P. G. Wodehouse, *Over Seventy: An Autobiography with Digressions* (London 1957), 19.

14. Letter to John Claymond, June 27, 1519, in *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, vol. 3, ed. P. S. & H. M. Allen (Oxford 1913), 620.

15. One of Hope’s former students quoted in McCrum (note 10), *Wodehouse*, 30–31.

16. McCrum (note 10), *Wodehouse*, 31.

17. Robert Anderson Hall, *The Comic Style of P. G. Wodehouse* (Hamden, CT 1974), 90.

18. Tom Williams, *A Mysterious Something in the Light: The Life of Raymond Chandler* (Chicago 2013), 106.

19. Chandler (note 3), *Later Novels*, 1023.

20. Gavin Lambert, *The Dangerous Edge* (New York 1976), 220.
21. Sophie Ratcliffe, *P. G. Wodehouse: A Life in Letters* (London 2011), 6.
22. Clive James, "The Country Behind the Hill," in *The World of Raymond Chandler*, ed. Miriam Gross (London 1977), 117.
23. Chandler (note 3), *Later Novels*, 1042.
24. Charles Trueheart, "Raymond Chandler's L.A.," *Washington Post*, September 11, 1988.
25. Wodehouse (note 13), *Over Seventy*, 82.
26. Quoted in McCrum (note 10), *Wodehouse*, 30.
27. E. J. Kenney, "The Old Reliable," *Spectator*, October 31, 1970, 23.
28. Quoted in McCrum, *Wodehouse*, 35.
29. W. H. Auden, "The Guilty Vicarage: Notes on the Detective Story, by an Addict" (1948), in *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays* (New York 1962), 151.
30. Paul Skenazy, "Introduction," in *Raymond Chandler Speaking*, ed. Dorothy Gardiner and Kathrine Sorley Walker (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London 1997), 2.
31. Chandler (note 3), *Later Novels*, 991–92.
32. In compiling this table of correspondences, I am grateful to Ralph E. Doty for generously sharing his thoughts (email to author, October 10, 2017), which he had originally presented in a conference paper in April 2004.

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A letter from MARY MAXWELL