armoury is to conciliate or to raise a smile, not to rouse emotion—at least, not any very strong emotion. Rhetorical theory generally makes a sharp distinction between the aims and techniques of *ēthos* and those of *pathos* ('passion'). Quintilian is an exception. He must indeed be fundamentally right in viewing these two psychological elements of oratory under the single head of *adfectus*, however much they differ in gravity or vehemence. But the common view was not this. Anger, deep disgust, and pity are passions. They are to be roused by a range of techniques different from those appropriate to *ēthos*: in the epilogue, rather than in the prooemium or narrative; by rhetorical questions, anaphoras, hyperbata, and grand language rather than by the devices of ecphrasis, reported conversations, or homely turns of phrase. The consequence of this separation—or perhaps rather the cause of it—is a way of viewing literature which pervades much ancient criticism. It is well seen in Longinus' famous comparison (9. 11–15) between the two Homeric epics, in which the *Iliad* is characterized as full of passion and action, and the *Odyssey* as essentially a comedy in which *ēthos* is dominant. This association of *ēthos* with comedy and *pathos* with tragedy is a constant one. Ordinary people, the characters of comedy, do not have grand passions. Ordinary people, too, are, as a rule, the characters of forensic oratory. It is concerned with the tensions and malice of everyday life. If there are strong feelings, the orator and the jury tend to look on them with a tolerant and worldly eye. Given their task, it is natural that the orators, and those who claimed to give them instruction, should have devoted such care and study to the 'types' that can be seen in the court-room. The result, for us, is that we possess, in the speeches of the Attic orators and their successors, a marvellous collection of character-types, and a carefully planned technique by which they can be displayed. Though the two main functions of *ēthos* in oratory—conciliation and the characterization of other parties—are distinct, they have in common a requirement of realism and good humour. The masters of this art, from Lysias to Libanius, have much to teach us both about literary skills and about the common conditions of civilized humanity.

10

Childhood and Personality in Greek Biography

CHRISTOPHER PELLING

I

Everybody notices when a great man dies; it is more difficult to notice when one is born, or when one is growing up. It is not surprising that ancient biographers often faced a dearth of reliable material on their subject's childhood and youth; and, for writers of a certain sort of biography, the temptation to fill this gap with the telling, fictional anecdote was difficult to resist. This is clear in biographies of literary figures:

> When Pindar was a boy, according to Chamaeleon and Ister, he went hunting near Mt. Helicon and fell asleep from exhaustion. As he slept a bee landed on his mouth and built a honeycomb there. Others say that he had a dream in which his mouth was full of honey and wax, and that he then decided to write poetry. (*Vita Pindari* 2, trans. Lefkowitz[1])

Similar tales were told about Plato, Homer, Hesiod, Lucan, Ambrose, and others.[2] Or stories could be less supernatural: stories, for instance, of Homer's travels as a young man to Ithaca, or of his studying poetry with a schoolteacher named Phemius; or of Sophocles' magnificent appearance in the

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[1] Cf. M. R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (London, 1981), 59, 155–6.

[2] Homer: Lefkowitz, *Lives*, 24. Plato: A. S. Riginos, *Platonica: The Anecdotes Concerning the Life and Writings of Plato* (Leiden, 1976), 17–21. Hesiod and Lucan: Suet. *Vita Lucani*, pp. 178–9 Rostagni. Ambrose: Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* 3. 2–5 (a reference I owe to Mr Wiedemann). Others: Riginos, *Platonica*, 19 and n. 39; cf. Lefkowitz, *Lives*, 59 n. 12.

chorus celebrating the victory of Salamis.[3] Some philosophers were similarly embroidered, though they tended to become interesting when a little older, at the stage of adolescence when they were ripe for conversion. Epicurus, for instance, turned to philosophy in disgust at a schoolmaster who could not explain the meaning of 'chaos' in Hesiod; Metrocles was so embarrassed when he farted during a declamation that he tried to starve himself to death, until Crates visited him and won him over by dropping a casual fart himself. (He had thoughtfully prepared himself by eating some lupins.)[4] Admittedly, even literary figures do not always get this sort of elaboration: it is remarkable how little is told about the early years of Socrates, for example, given his central importance for the development of biography. But there are still a fair number of such stories to be found.

It is unclear how many of these stories were made up by the biographers themselves, and how many figured in the tradition—often oral—which the biographers were using. Either way, a remarkable feature of ancient *political* biography is how little of this anecdotal elaboration one gets.[5] Of course, literary biographies are peculiarly susceptible to such embroidery, where influences and inspiration can be engagingly rephrased in anecdotal terms. Still, it was political biography that more often favoured the 'cradle-to-grave' form, in which awkward childhood gaps would be more visible; and more was usually known of the adult lives of political personalities, including their private lives, and there were correspondingly more qualities which one could, if one wished, retroject into childhood. We do occasionally find something of the kind:

[3] Homer: Lefkowitz, *Lives*, 13, 20–2, 140–1. Sophocles: ead., 77, 160; cf. 93–4.

[4] Epicurus: Diog. Laert. 10. 2, Sex. Emp. *Adu. Math.* 10. 18–19. Metrocles: Diog. Laert. 6. 94 (cf. 6. 96 on his sister Hipparchia). On stories of the young Plato, see Riginos, *Platonica*, 39–52.

[5] This distinction between 'literary' (or 'cultural' or 'intellectual') and 'political' biographies must be understood roughly. Leo's distinction in terms of generic form has long been recognized as imperfect (cf. e.g. A. Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Harvard, 1971), 87–8; J. Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos and Ancient Political Biography* (Hist. Einzelschr., 47; Stuttgart, 1985), 11–19); and men such as Cicero and M. Aurelius are both cultural and political figures. 'Cultural' biographies themselves straddle a large range, from propagandist tract to curious gossip. But it will emerge that certain important distinctions of content can still be made, affecting such central points as style of presentation, focus of interest, and degree of truth or mendacity: so, rightly, Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos*, 18–29.

Alexander hearing of Philip's successes, and saying in vexation to his friends that 'my father will leave nothing for me to do'; or Cato being held out of a window by a playful Poppaedius Silo, but still refusing to say that he would ask his father to support the citizenship proposals.[6] And many stories were told of the young Alcibiades, for instance the tale of a wrestling-match when he bit his opponent's arm to get out of a hold. 'Alcibiades, you're biting like a girl', said the indignant opponent; 'No,' said Alcibiades, 'like a lion.'[7] Indeed, it seems that material on childhood featured quite prominently in that fifth-century precursor of political biography, Stesimbrotus of Thasos: he evidently had a considerable amount to say about the youth and education of Themistocles, Cimon, and probably Pericles, not without a tinge of malice.[8] That was in keeping with the tradition of invective, which often concentrated on childhood and family background: we can indeed see that the childhood of all three of those fifth-century figures was already the subject of partisan controversy.[9] But it seems that Stesimbrotus' lead was rarely taken up, and later writers and audiences found the childhood of political figures much less interesting—particularly outside Athens, away from the democratic tradition of vigorous invective.[10]

[6] Plut. *Alex.* 5. 4; *C. Min.* 2. 1–5.

[7] Plut. *Alc.* 2. 2–3; other stories scattered through 2–9, discussed by D. A. Russell, 'Plutarch, "Alcibiades" 1–16', *PCPS* 12 (1966), 38–42.

[8] *FGrH* 107, esp. frs. 1, 4, 6. He was evidently interested in Pericles' private life (frs. 10–11), and some of Plutarch's material on Pericles' youth may also derive from him: cf. P. A. Stadter, *A Commentary to Plutarch's* Pericles (Chapel Hill, 1989), introd. On the character of his work, cf. the contrasting views of F. Schachermeyr, 'Stesimbrotus und seine Schrift über die Staatsmänner', *Sb. Oest. Ak. Wiss.* 247/5 (1965), and K. Meister, 'Stesimbrotus' Schrift über die athenischer Staatsmänner', *Hist.* 27 (1978), 274–94.

[9] Invective: below, p. 217. The youth of Cimon and Pericles was clearly the subject of contemporary exchanges: cf. Plut. *Cim.* 4. 4, 4. 6–9, with 15. 3; and the attacks on Pericles' 'educators' Damon and Anaxagoras (Per. 4. 3–4, 32, etc.). For Themistocles, cf. Plut. *Them.* 2. 6, 2. 8, 3. 2, with the comm. of F. J. Frost (Princeton, NJ, 1980). As Frost emphasizes, the controversy lasted into later generations: cf. Xen. *Mem.* 4. 2. 2; *P. Oxy.* xiii. 1608 (Aeschines Socraticus).

[10] Theopompus (*FGrH* 115) and Idomeneus (*FGrH* 338) wrote 'on the Athenian demagogues', perhaps consciously following Stesimbrotus. Schachermeyr, 'Stesimbrotus', 20–1, claims that they showed a considerable ethical interest in *paideia*, and suggests that Stesimbrotus was similar. Yet no particular concern with education is visible in Theopompus, *FGrH* 115 frs. 85–100; Idomeneus perhaps had more (*FGrH* 338 fr. 13, on Aeschines' education; cf. fr. 2 on his mother, and fr. 15 on Phocion's father), but this is a natural consequence of his use of material drawn from invective (cf. e.g. frs. 9, 12), and nothing suggests that he was really judging politicians 'mit schulmeisterlichem Stirnrunzeln' (Schachermeyr).

Plutarch is a very useful guide here, for we can tell that he *was* very interested in youth and education. When he has the material, he does make a great deal of it—in *Alexander*, for example, or *Demosthenes*, or *Philopoemen*, or *Cato Minor*:[11] clearly, there were no generic rules to outlaw such material; but remarkably often he obviously has none. He has no childish squabbles of Romulus and Remus, usefully though they might have prepared the fratricide; no schoolboy infatuations of Antony with any schoolgirl Cleopatra; nothing on Camillus or Flamininus to match the material about their pairs Themistocles and Philopoemen. And it is not simply his Roman biographies—nothing on Nicias (how he was frightened by an eclipse in his youth, perhaps? It is the type of story one might expect to be made up); no stories of the young Agesilaus bending truth and justice to help a good-looking friend; nothing, or hardly anything, on Pelopidas or Lycurgus or Lysander or Timoleon or Eumenes or Phocion. Plutarch himself does not fabricate to fill the gaps; but this is also revealing about his sources, for it is not likely that Plutarch is suppressing anything here, nor that there was a mass of material that escaped his notice: he was too well informed for that. This sort of anecdotal tradition simply did not exist for him to know.

Nor, indeed, did it really exist in Roman biography. Why *don't* we find stories of Augustus hearing of Caesar's conquests in Gaul, and dreaming of similar glory for himself? And one could do so much with stories of Caligula's youth—how he got on with his sister Drusilla in the nursery, for example. (Suet. *Cal.* 24. 1 has a story of their being discovered in bed together by their grandmother Antonia, but by then they were in their late teens.) Why not a few colourful stories about the most colourful emperors, Elagabalus or Gallienus? But what we mostly find is generalizations about youthful promise or excess; or a routine collection of omens, portents, or prophecies of greatness. The emperor whose youth is treated most extensively in the Scriptores Historiae Augustae is Marcus Aurelius: that *Life* gives quite a full treatment of the various instructors and

[11] In such cases we can often offer specific explanations for the material's availability. *Phil.*, for instance, is informed by Polybius' encomium (below, p. 218); *Alex.* both by encomium and by works such as that of Onesicritus (ibid.); *Dem.* perhaps by literary biography; *C. Min.* by the martyrological tradition.

the honours he paid them, and tells for instance of his early penchant for sleeping on the ground and wearing a rough cloak.[12] It seems to be the affinity with literary biography, and Marcus Aurelius' status as an intellectual as well as an emperor, which makes the difference. We also have something on Commodus' youth, where the point is rather the converse—Marcus did all he could to educate him, and it did no good at all; and on the Gordians, where the size of the library features heavily.[13] It was intellectual figures, or at least figures where the intellectual register was appropriate, which stimulated this interest: political figures usually did not.

This is the more remarkable because there were neighbouring genres which elaborated politicians' childhoods in precisely the ways which biography eschewed. Among the closest genres to biography were, first, encomium and its inverse counterpart invective, and secondly, the biographical novel on the model of Xenophon's *Cyropaedeia*.[14] These genres treated public men more often than literary figures;[15] and they certainly encouraged attention to childhood, describing it in very predictable, and often fictional, ways. In the *Cyropaedeia* Xenophon lays great emphasis on Cyrus' youth, and it is full of elaboration: 1. 3 is especially telling, the sequence of precocious (and utterly infuriating) remarks he made when first brought to Astyages' court. Invective again favoured tales about its victim's youth, this time of course scurrilous ones:[16] Aeschines helped his father in the schoolroom and his mother in her initiation rites (Dem. 18. 258–9, 19. 199), Demosthenes was called 'Batalos' because of his lewd habits (Aesch. 2. 99), Alcibiades once ran off with one of his lovers (Antiphon fr. 66), Cicero handled filthy clothes in the family laundry (Dio 46. 5. 1). Encomium tended not to develop such specific material, and

[12] SHA *M. Aurel.* 2–3; cf. 4. 9–10.

[13] SHA *Comm.* 1; *Gord. I* 3; *Gord. II* 18; cf. *Anton. Geta* 3–4.

[14] Cf. esp. Momigliano, *Development*, ch. 4.

[15] Not of course that literary figures were immune: the attacks on Epicurus and Aristotle, for instance, have much in common with the exchanges of Aeschines and Demosthenes. (Epicurus too was attacked for assisting his father in his school for a paltry fee; he apparently retorted that Aristotle took to soldiering and selling drugs after squandering his patrimony: Diog. Laert. 10. 4, 8.)

[16] Cf. R. G. M. Nisbet's comm. on Cicero, *In Pisonem* (Oxford, 1961), 194; K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality* (Oxford, 1974), 32–3.

hence was less anecdotal;[17] but it equally dwelt on its subject's youth. We can already see this in Isocrates' conventionalized picture in *Evagoras*,[18] and Polybius' later encomium of Philopoemen 'explained who his family were and described his training when young ... setting out clearly the character of his education':[19] that work has evidently left its mark on Plutarch's *Philopoemen*.

Encomium, invective, and the biographical novel were familiar genres in the Hellenistic age. There were various works on Alexander and his successors, for instance, which seem to have been modelled on Xenophon's *Cyropaedeia* (though it is true that we know very little about them):[20] in particular, perhaps, Onesicritus' work *How Alexander was Brought up*, which Diogenes Laertius specifically connects with the *Cyropaedeia*.[21] That work's extravagant qualities are clear; less is known about Marsyas of Pella who wrote *On the Education of Alexander*, or of Lysimachus' *Paideia of Attalus*.[22] Such works presumably did not *confine* their interest to childhood: like Xenophon, Onesicritus carried the story some way past his subject's youth, and the emphasis on *paideia* embraced 'culture' as well as 'education'. It was he, for instance, who told the story of Alexander keeping the *Iliad* by his bedside, and the exchanges with the Gymnosophistae.[23] But childhood was surely central to the theme, and it is no surprise that some romantic material has filtered into the early chapters of Plutarch's *Alexander*.[24]

Yet such *Lives* as *Alexander* and *Philopoemen* remain exceptional. With encomium, invective, and the biographical novel all developing this interest in childhood, we might have expected to find similar material with other figures too; but on the whole we do not. Even with such men as Demetrius and Pyrrhus, figures who might well have inspired such encomia or novels, Plutarch's early chapters do not really suggest that he knows this type of material. He dwells on Pyrrhus' unprepossessing appearance, for instance, and an early military failure of Demetrius (*Pyrrh.* 3. 6; *Dtr.* 5), not very tactful themes for the encomiast or novelist. And there remain those other figures who seem clearly to have remained unembroidered—some of an earlier age, Nicias, Lysander, or Agesilaus for instance, but some more recent, Timoleon, Phocion, and Eumenes. This is not the place to enter the controversial debate on the history of political biography in the Hellenistic age;[25] perhaps *Lives* of Nicias or Eumenes were being written, but their authors eschewed such fictional childhood material; more likely, political biographies were not really being written at all, and even the novelistic and encomiastic traditions were not so rich or extensive as we might have expected.[26] Either way, the interest in politicians' childhoods remained stunted; and Plutarch, when he came to write genuine political biography, chose to do it in a style which, in this as in other ways, contrasted with those neighbouring genres.

Why should there be this difference in treatment between cultural and political figures?

First, there genuinely seems a difference in the attitude to truthfulness: in political biography no tradition of systematic mendacity seems to have developed. This needs to be emphasized, for Momigliano argued that 'the borderline between fiction and reality was thinner in biography than in ordinary historiography'.[27] Yet that dictum is truer of some sorts of biography than of others, and Plutarch, the only Greek political biographer we can really discuss, is really rather scrupulous

[17] Cf. S. Halliwell, above, pp. 56–7.

[18] Isoc. *Evag.* 21–2.

[19] Polybius' own description of the work, 10. 21. 5–6. Cf. esp. Plut. *Phil.* 3–4.

[20] Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos*, 48–9, though he is perhaps too cautious.

[21] *FGrH* 134 T 1 = Diog. Laert. 6. 84.

[22] *FGrH* 135–6, 170: cf. Momigliano, *Development*, 82–3.

[23] *FGrH* 134 fr. 38 = Plut. *Alex.* 8. 2; fr. 17 = Strabo 15. 1. 163–5, Plut. *Alex.* 65. On Plutarch's use of Onesicritus, cf. esp. J. R. Hamilton, *Plutarch*, Alexander: *A Commentary* (Oxford, 1969), xxxi, liii, lvi–lvii.

[24] Cf. esp. Hamilton, comm., liii, lvi–lvii. Not all of course will come from Onesicritus: Eratosthenes is cited at 3. 3, Hegesias of Magnesia at 3. 6, Aristoxenus at 4. 4. But some may well be specifically Onesicritus, esp. on Alexander's education in 5. 7–8. 5 (cf. Hamilton on 5. 7); possibly 6 (cf. fr. 20 = *Alex.* 61; T. S. Brown, *Onesicritus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949), 20); 8. 2 = fr. 38. The important point is the more general one, the traces in Plutarch's material of this encomiastic and novelistic *tradition*.

[25] See most recently Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos*, 30–65, with whose sceptical approach I sympathize.

[26] Timoleon is an especially interesting case: despite his glorification by the historian Timaeus, there was apparently no serious attempt to embellish his childhood in the manner of encomium or the novel, and nothing suggests that he was the subject of any political biography. Cf. Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos*, 55 n. 89.

[27] Momigliano, *Development*, esp. 56–7; cf. id., 'Marcel Mauss and the Quest for the Person in Greek Biography and Autobiography', in M. Carrithers, S. Collins, and S. Lukes (edd.), *The Category of the Person* (Cambridge, 1985), 87–8.

about fabricating material. Extravagant anecdotal fiction is simply not in his style, and nothing suggests that his generic predecessors (if he had any) were more cavalier. That point is fundamental;[28] but it remains a point about political biography, the narrative genre, and that takes us only so far. If audiences had been interested in politicians' childhoods, the stories would still have been made up, and, as we have seen, there were other genres to transmit the gossip; anecdotes could readily have survived in oral tradition, too. On the whole, that did not happen; that illuminates the taste of the public as well as of the biographers; and that public taste invites discussion.

A second explanation goes deeper. It is striking that interest in childhood was almost confined to interest in education; given that limitation, then *of course* the most intellectual figures were likely to be the most embellished. Even Plutarch helps to illustrate this: so much of the material he does have focuses on the teachers of Pericles or Themistocles or Philopoemen, for instance, or Alcibiades' relations with Socrates, or Cicero's or Lucullus' early intellectual prowess;[29] and focuses on those themes in a fairly unimaginative way, as we shall see. Youthful *behaviour*, the development or prefiguring of later traits, features largely in modern biography, and can be telling with unintellectual figures too—even politicians. In the ancient world this receives much less anecdotal embellishment: it is not wholly neglected—there are the stories of Cato or Alcibiades, for instance—but on the whole such points tend to emerge in a much less colourful way, with vague generalizations about early promise, or early concern for justice or glory.

One further reason for modern biographers' interest in childhood is the element of social mobility in modern society.[30] It is fascinating to muse on one Prime Minister (Mrs Thatcher) being a grocer's daughter, or another (Lord Wilson) being photographed on the steps of No. 10 as a lad; or on a pop star being just an ordinary boy in Form 3B, getting into all the usual scrapes and not getting very good marks. The ordinariness gives the reader a strange *frisson* of intimacy: such paradoxical success could have happened to people like ourselves. In the ancient world ordinary people did not on the whole become politicians, but they did sometimes become literary figures. And—a related point—ancient politicians did not feel the same need as their modern counterparts to play on the public's interest in their youth, and conspire in creating a sort of mythology of their own childhood. A striking example of that is Churchill's famous description of his first Latin lesson.[31] He *cared* about portraying himself as an early dullard, knowing that his audience would love it. Ancient political audiences were not so bothered about such things, and the politicians were less concerned to create this feeling of intimacy. They had no use for such myths.

This has brought us on to *self*-portrayal, and indeed in ancient autobiography we can see a similar, but more elaborate, contrast.[32] Egyptian and Near Eastern dynasts might talk about their childhoods, sometimes in a very individual way: thus the Egyptian Amen-hotep II (*c.*1447–1421 BC) wrote proudly of his youthful horsemanship, how he trained the best steeds of Memphis, how he was charmed by his visits to the pyramids; and the Assyrian Assurbanipal (668–626 BC) described his schooldays with enthusiasm—the difficulties of learning division or multiplication, or the way he was made stupid, even perhaps 'addled' (the reading is admittedly uncertain), by the beautiful script of Sumer or the obscure Akkadian.[33] Greek and Roman politicians were more

[28] Too fundamental to develop fully here: I discuss it in an essay on 'Truth and Fiction in Plutarch's *Lives*', to appear in D. A. Russell (ed.), *Antonine Literature* (Oxford).

[29] *Per.* 4–6; *Them.* 2; *Alc.* 6; *Cic.* 2; *Lucull.* 1. 4–8, 44 (1). 4; cf. below, pp. 232–5.

[30] I owe this point to Dr Cornell.

[31] *My Early Life* (London, 1930), 24–6.

[32] Ancient self-portrayal is treated magisterially by G. Misch, *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity* (Eng. trans., London, 1950); more recently, cf. K. J. Weintraub, *The Value of the Individual* (Chicago and London, 1978) chs. 1–2; G. W. Most, 'The Stranger's Strategem', *JHS* 109 (1989), 114–33.

[33] J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (3rd edn., Princeton, NJ, 1969), i. 244–5; D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (Chicago, 1927), ii. 378–80. In general, Eastern texts developed a greater interest in politicians' childhood, as Momigliano stresses in *Development* and in 'Marcel Mauss' (though, elaborating a thesis of Helene Homeyer, he builds too much on the very special case of Cyrus I): this can be traced, for instance, in the Persian material collected by D. Gera, 'The Dialogues of the *Cyropaedia*', D. Phil. thesis (Oxford, 1987), app. 2. Such an interest may well have influenced Xenophon's portrayal directly, and through him the later Greek tradition of biographical novels. Its influence on biography itself was probably less than Momigliano suggests.

reticent.[34] It is notable, for instance, that Plutarch knew little of Aratus' youth and virtually nothing of Sulla's, though he probably knew both men's autobiographies. 'Annos undeuiginti natus . . .' ['When I nineteen . . .'], begins the *Res Gestae*; and though Augustus certainly said more of his youth in his *Autobiography* than he did in the other work—he did discuss his family, and seems to have mentioned Cicero's dream that he would one day be Rome's salvation—he was still well into the complicated history of 44 by book 2.[35] Political autobiography does seem to have been largely *res gestae*, the record of a man's *achievements*, with all the limitations that suggests: that was the way politicians wished to be remembered.

Literary self-portrayal came to strike a different note. At first the tone is similar enough: Plato's *Seventh Letter* begins with events when Plato was in his twenties.[36] Isocrates' *Antidosis* has a great deal to say about the value of his form of *paideia*, defending his role as a moulder of the minds of the young, but of his own youthful development he says not a word. Such works are still distinctively *apologies*, defences of a man's career: childhood material would not have sat very comfortably here (just as both Aeschines and Demosthenes attack each other's childhood with specific charges, but defend their own with brief, dignified generalizations).[37] By the Augustan period Nicolaus of Damascus was fuller, including the admiration of his contemporaries for his remarkable educational prowess (*FGrH* 90 fr. 131. 1)—not that there is much individuality in such conventional self-praise: it is indeed very similar to his account of Augustus' childhood in the *Vita Caesaris*, or to Josephus' portrayal of himself in his *Autobiography*.[38] But Nicolaus adds some anecdotes about his various early wise remarks, and those are a little more distinctive: about Aristotle and the Muses, for instance, or about 'education being like a journey through life' (fr. 132. 2–3). In later authors the individual note becomes more marked. Lucian, with whatever degree of seriousness, tells of his early skill at wax-modelling, and how it let him down when he was apprenticed as a sculptor.[39] Galen goes further, not merely representing himself as a singular figure but also introducing an element of analysis and explanation: he talks of his luck in being educated by a father who was skilled in communicating mathematics and grammar, then at fifteen led him to philosophy, then allowed him at seventeen to switch his talents to medicine when warned to do so by a dream; and he can analyse what exactly he learnt from philosophy, and comment on the value of that early mathematical training in saving him from Pyrrhonian scepticism.[40] Galen's analysis recalls Horace's tribute to his father (*Serm.* 1. 6. 67–92); and that is one of several 'autobiographical' Latin poems (if that is quite the right word) which leave very personal pictures of schooldays. Just as Horace strikingly recalls the school where the sons of centurions swung their satchels (*Serm.* 1. 6. 72–3), so Ovid tells how he tried to write prose, and the words naturally fell into verse (*Tr.* 4. 10. 23–6). Once again, Marcus Aurelius seems to fill a special position, and his 'autobiography'—if, once again, that is the right term for the εἰς ἑαυτόν—finely describes those early days and early influences, as he analyses precisely what he owes to his great-grandfather, grandfather, parents, and various tutors, and finally to the gods:

> Thanks to Diognetus I learnt not to be absorbed in trivial pursuits; to be sceptical of wizards and wonder-workers with their tales of spells, exorcisms, and the like; to eschew cock-fighting and other such distractions. . . . It was the critic Alexander who put me on my guard against unnecessary fault-finding. . . . Alexander the Platonist cautioned me against frequent use of the words 'I am too busy' in speech or correspondence. . . . To the gods I owe it that the responsibility of my grandfather's mistress for my upbringing was brought to an early

[34] Rutilius Rufus' Latin autobiography was possibly an exception: certainly, Cicero was suspiciously well informed about his education (cf. *R-E* Ia. 1270; H. Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, i² (Leipzig, 1914), cclvii). But even here Cicero probably did not know enough to infer his age correctly (*Lael.* 101; cf. Vell. 2. 9. 6; *R-E* Ia. 1269); and it anyway seems likely that Rutilius presented himself as a philosopher as well as a politician (cf. e.g. Sen. *Ep.* 24. 4).

[35] Frs. 3, 4, 7 M; Suet. *Aug.* 8. 1 suggests that little was known of his life before his late teens. In *Vita Caesaris* Nicolaus was perhaps writing 'on Augustus' paideia' in the manner of the *Cyropaedeia* and Onesicritus (cf. Jacoby on *FGrH* 90 frs. 125–30, introductory n.); but, although he clearly knew the *Autobiography*, he could still find little more than a page to write about Augustus' youth (4–11).

[36] Riginos, *Platonica*, 39, comments on Plato's reticence about his youth throughout the dialogues.

[37] Attack: above, p. 217; defence: Aesch. 2. 146, 167; Dem. 18. 257. On autobiography as self-defence, cf. esp. Most, 'The Stranger's Stratagem'.

[38] Nic. Dam. *Vit. Caes.*, esp. 4–6 (cf. above, n. 35); Jos. *Vita* 7–9.

[39] Lucian, *Somnium* 1–3.

[40] Galen, *Libr. Ord.*, p. 88; *Libr. Propr.*, p. 116.

end, and my innocence preserved. (εἰς ἑαυτόν 1. 6, 10, 12, 17, trans. Staniforth)

Marcus really analyses the formation and development of his character. That is some way from a Josephus or even a Nicolaus;[41] this is an individuality which probes the mind, analyses the ways it is different (not merely superior), and seeks to *explain* the differences. One begins to feel some intimacy with someone who writes like this, just as one later comes to know St Augustine, with his pictures of the miseries of his schooldays, or his reading Virgil and weeping for the woes of Dido, or his robbing a pear-tree, or his engaging habit of setting on passers-by and turning them on to their heads, or the profound effect when he read Cicero's *Hortensius*.[42] But such self-revelation and self-analysis is developing a tendency which is already visible in Marcus, even in Lucian and Galen, and indeed in Horace and Ovid too—and of course in the poets' case in a way which goes far beyond the explicitly autobiographical poems. There is no hint that *political* autobiography was anything like so personal or so intimate, and childish stories and influences would have sat far less well with its dignity, its *gravitas*. And this note of intimacy gives an important contrast with political biography, not just autobiography. This intimacy of psychological portrayal, this revelation or analysis of the 'real person', is not something which became part of the generic tradition, any more than it became conventional to invent a fund of early anecdotes.

II

So far we have been exploiting Plutarch for what he can tell us about the biographical tradition; if he did not include childhood material, we have been provisionally assuming that the stories did not exist for him to know. That assumption is a fair one, but only because Plutarch was both extremely well informed, particularly about Greek heroes, and extremely

[41] As Misch, *Autobiography*, 479–80 rightly stresses. Nic. Dam. and Jos.: n. 38 above.

[42] *Conf.* 1. 8–9, 13, 2. 4–8, 3. 3–4. Augustine's interest in childhood was not confined to his own: cf. his fine portrait of his mother Monica, with her youthful weakness for wine-bibbing (9. 8).

interested in childhood and education.[43] We can indeed often see him making the most of whatever slight information he *does* know—in the *Sulla*, for instance, where he strains to extract large inferences from two insubstantial anecdotes; or in the *Gracchi*, where (despite an extreme paucity of material) he puts great stress on the influence of the mother Cornelia, emphasizing that the *paideia* she gave the boys was even more influential than their inherited nature in forming their characters (1. 7); or in *Lysander* and *Agesilaus*, where again he has little information, but tries hard to relate both men's personalities to their Spartan training. The precise qualities thus explained are admittedly very different: it is Lysander's 'ambition and contentiousness' (2. 4), but Agesilaus' 'common touch and kindliness of manner' (1. 5); but at least Plutarch's interest in the subject is clear and insistent. That prompts further questions about his technique. These examples already suggest that he was concerned to explain character-development; elsewhere he stresses that such development is normal with all individuals.[44] But how effectively does he trace that development? What sorts of points does he try to extract from childhood? Does he even *try* to investigate the 'real person', in the way that Augustine and Marcus and even Horace reveal themselves and analyse their debts to others? Evidently, we shall find some differences; and here it may be interesting to explore Christopher Gill's distinction between 'character' and 'personality', in particular his suggestion that Plutarch's approach is typified by an interest in 'character', whereas modern writers more usually adopt the viewpoint of 'personality'.[45] Childhood is a promising area to

[43] His interest in education scarcely needs exemplification: see esp. *De Profectibus in Virtute*, *An Virtus Doceri Possit?*, *De Audiendis Poetis*, and (for more details of the psychological process) *De Virtute Morali*. For education as a civilizing and restraining force in the *Lives*, see esp. *Cor.* 1. 4–5; *Mar.* 2. 2–4; *Them.* 2. 7; *Numa* 26(4). 10–12; B. Bucher-Isler, *Norm und Individualität in den Biographien Plutarchs* (Noctes Romanae, 13; Berne and Stuttgart, 1972), 21, 24, 49, 67–8.

[44] *Mor.* 392b–e; cf. e.g. 28d–e, 37d–e, 76d–e, 82b–c, 83e–f, 450f, 453a, 551c–552d, 584e. Inherited nature was of course important too, as those passages show. Cf. esp. A. Dihle, *Studien zur griechischen Biographie* (Göttingen, 1956), 81; Bucher-Isler, *Norm und Individualität*, 47; C. Gill, 'The Question of Character-Development: Plutarch and Tacitus', *CQ*, NS 33 (1983), 469–87.

[45] Ibid. He further explains his distinction of these two 'viewpoints' in this volume: see esp. pp. 1–9. For some reservations, see C. Pelling, 'Plutarch: Roman Heroes and Greek Culture', in J. Barnes and M. T. Griffin (edd.), *Philosophia Togata* (Oxford, 1989), 231.

test that distinction, for modern biographers so typically exploit childhood influences and experiences in explaining their subject's personality; and they are characteristically both *individuating* their subject, isolating the ways in which he or she is different from other people, and trying to *understand* and *explain* those differences. That certainly fits Gill's 'personality-viewpoint'; in what ways is Plutarch's approach different?

The most usual sort of item we find is what one could call 'the routine generalization'.

> Romulus seemed to be more intelligent and politically shrewd than Remus; in his encounters with his neighbours in the countryside he showed that he was more a leader than a follower . . . (*Rom.* 6. 3)

> Aemilius was rather different from many of his contemporaries: he had no time for judicial oratory, and the greatest distaste for demagogic techniques; it was not that he could not do such things, but that he preferred to seek a reputation for bravery, justice, and good faith—in which he immediately outshone everyone. (*Aem.* 2. 5–6)

> Cyrus had from his early youth a sort of vehemence and extreme intensity, whereas the other one [Artaxerxes] seemed gentler in everything and naturally less violent in his impulses. (*Artax.* 2. 1)

Such generalizations are indeed so routine that we can surely sense Plutarch's own hand: he is simply retrojecting aspects of the men's later careers. And in these cases at least, Plutarch is not *fabricating*, even if no such material stood in his sources. He is simply inferring what sort of youth it must have been who grew up into the man he knew: this is 'imaginative reconstruction', not fiction.[46]

Sometimes the reconstruction is more elaborate. It may make negative points: Marcellus was basically a soldier, but he 'had enough enthusiasm for Greek *paideia* and literature to make him respect and admire those who excelled in them, though he himself had never had the leisure to study or learn these subjects as much as he would have wished' (*Marc.* 1. 3). Once again, that is surely no more than an inference from Marcellus' later career: this was the man who enthusiastically carried off the Greek treasures from Syracuse, but had to devote most of his life to Rome's perpetual wars (1. 4–5); and

[46] For an elaboration of the distinction, see my comm. on Plutarch, *Antony* (Cambridge, 1988), 33–6; and 'Truth and Fiction'.

he also showed some of the weaknesses which Plutarch associates with the uneducated soldier, in particular a lack of self-control.[47] Or the reconstruction may be fairly circumstantial, even though it is not anecdotal. Agis had been brought up in luxury by his mother and grandmother, but even before he was twenty 'he tore off all the bodily decoration and adornment that suited his beauty, and stripped himself of all extravagance and escaped from it, priding himself on the rough cloak, and went on in search of the Spartan food, baths, and way of life' (*Ag.-Cl.* 4. 1–2). Plutarch knew of the famous ladies (cf. 7. 2–4, 19–20) and of the prominence of female wealth in this degenerate Sparta (6. 7, 7. 5–7); it was clear that Agis did pride himself on his rough Spartan cloak (14. 3–4); at some time he must have abandoned foppery for asceticism; and it would surely have been in adolescence. Further circumstantial reconstruction is found in *Coriolanus*, where we hear of the envy of his youthful rivals, 'so that they excused their inferiority by attributing it all to his physical strength' (2. 2). Similar envy emerges later in the *Life*, and it seems that this again is part of an extensive retrojection.[48]

Coriolanus is indeed interesting here. There are other occasions when Plutarch dwells on his heroes' relationships with their mothers—in the *Lives* of Agis and the Gracchi, as we have seen, and also Sertorius and Demosthenes. One does not want to make Plutarch into a mantic pre-Freudian, and his treatment does not normally go very deep; but the perspective of *Coriolanus* is more enterprising.

> Marcius set himself to surpass his own record in courage. And since he was always eager to attempt fresh exploits, he added one deed of valour to another and heaped spoils upon spoils . . . But while other men displayed their courage to win glory for themselves, Marcius' motive was always to please his mother. The delight that she experienced when she saw him crowned, the tears of joy she wept as she embraced him—these things were for him the supreme joy and felicity that life could offer. (Epaminondas was very similar . . .) It was his mother's will and choice which dictated his marriage, and he continued to live in the same house with her, even after his wife had borne his children. (*Cor.* 4. 5–8, trans. Scott-Kilvert)

[47] I discuss *Marcellus* more fully in 'Roman Heroes'.

[48] So D. A. Russell, 'Plutarch's Life of Coriolanus', *JRS* 53 (1963), 21–9 at p. 23.

As Russell has brought out,[49] this is an unusually rich opportunity to analyse what Plutarch was doing to his sources, for he is clearly dependent on Dionysius of Halicarnassus; and here we can see how thoroughly he has recast Dionysius' picture. From Dionysius he knew that Coriolanus was an orphan (8. 51. 3–4); that his wife and mother seemed to share the same house (8. 40. 1 etc.); and that in the final scene he collapsed before his mother's pressure. That was enough, and this extensive psychological reconstruction seems to be his own—and it produces a very different mother from the much limper woman portrayed by Dionysius.[50] Nor, indeed, is this a particularly unrespectable or uninteresting thing to be doing. Erikson's influential biography of Martin Luther, for instance, is not playing wholly different games: he is reconstructing Luther's early relationship with his father rather than his mother, and admits frankly that his method is to start from later events and read back what the childhood relationship 'must have been' like.[51] It is vastly more elaborate than in Plutarch, with its extensive Freudian psychoanalytic apparatus; but not, perhaps, conspicuously more convincing.

Such an analysis leads us back to Gill's distinction of 'character' and 'personality'. In this case it is surely hard to deny Plutarch a considerable interest in 'personality': is Plutarch not really trying to get inside Coriolanus' skin, to work out why he acted in a way which was so distinctive, and to relate it to what was individual in his personal background? It indeed demonstrates Plutarch's capacity to draw an exemplary moral from a very individual case, for at *Cor.* 4. 1 he has already distinguished an easily quenched and a more stable form of ambition; these are evidently types which will recur in others, but the genesis *within* Coriolanus of this type of firm, stable ambition is related not merely to his nature but also to his individual circumstances and motives. *Alcibiades*, too, develops an intensely individual figure.[52] It is true that Plutarch initially

[49] Ibid.

[50] Cf. esp. 8. 51. 4: I discuss this instance more fully in 'Truth and Fiction'. For other reinterpretations of Dionysius' material, see Russell, 'Plutarch's Life of Coriolanus'.

[51] E. Erikson, *Young Man Luther* (New York, 1958), 37, 47, 50, 65.

[52] Though 'individual' in a way which requires further definition, and which shows some differences from modern approaches and assumptions. Cf. below, p. 236–7.

describes Alcibiades' character in a disappointing way, as embodying 'the desire for honour and to be first in the state' (2. 1)—as Russell says, 'one of the commonest passions in Plutarch's repertoire'.[53] So far that suits 'character', subsuming to an exemplary class and inviting ethical judgement rather than identifying what is individual and different. But ancient authors often begin by stating a truth in a very general way, then gradually correct and complement and redefine, so that we are finally left with a subtler picture. And as *Alcibiades* progresses the man becomes much more singular: no one else could behave with this charming outrageousness, or with such versatility and flair. Here we clearly have the *individuation* which one associates with a 'personality'; as we also do in, say, *Lysander*, where the man gradually emerges as an extremely un-Spartan figure, running counter to normal expectations in several interesting ways.[54]

Whether in these cases we quite have the psychological *understanding* is a different point; we shall return to that. But there are other portraits where the psychological register is surely present. Consider for instance the *Theseus*. The impact on Theseus of Heracles, whose heroics were so recent, is immediately made a psychological point. Theseus was related to Heracles, and this, he felt, put a special burden on him; Heracles' successes would not let him sleep; the desire for such glory 'inflamed' him; he learnt from Heracles how to make a punishment fit the crime or the criminal . . . (6. 8, 8. 2, 11. 2). If one compares earlier treatments of this relationship, Isocrates for instance only talks of Theseus doing things 'that were fitting to their kinship';[55] it seems to be Plutarch who moves into the psychological register, and helps us to understand Theseus' own view of his debt. Similarly in *Cleomenes*: it is Plutarch who reconstructs the effect on the young Cleomenes of marrying Agis' widow. 'He would ask her often about what happened,

[53] 'Plutarch, "Alcibiades" 1–16', 38.

[54] I discuss the characterization of Lysander in 'Aspects of Plutarch's Characterization', to appear in *ICS*; cf. below, p. 236.

[55] Isoc. 10. 23; cf. D. S. 4. 59. 1, and other passages listed at *R-E* Spb. xiii. 1204. The absence of anecdote is here especially striking; contrast the pleasing Hellenistic story of Paus. 1. 27. 7 (= *FGrH* 607 fr. 4; cf. *R-E* Spb. 1058), which he may well have known. The seven-year-old Theseus met Heracles over dinner; Heracles took off his lion-skin, and everyone else thought it was a real lion and fled. Theseus stayed.

and listen carefully as she told of Agis' plans and purposes . . .' (*Ag.-Cl.* 22 (1). 3). In Cleomenes' case that was combined with the influence of the shrewd philosopher Sphaerus (23 (2). 3–6). As with Theseus and Coriolanus, we have a very individual set of circumstances and influences, and an analysis of the external pressures on the men: all this fits Gill's category of 'personality', with the individuation, the psychology, the concern to understand. Exemplary morals can doubtless also be drawn, but we have already noticed Plutarch's capacity to use individual cases to point general ethical truths.

But Gill does of course have a case, and we may still feel Plutarch's analysis does not go very deep, that it takes disappointingly little empathy to understand a Theseus or a Cleomenes. The men's youthful circumstances may be singular; the men themselves, less so. Take another aspect of the *Theseus*. Plutarch knew something about Theseus' early erotic adventures: he mentions one at 29. 1, his rape of a girl called Anaxo when he was still at Troezen, and adds that he tended to rape all the daughters of the monstrous figures he killed. Theseus' weakness for women will become an important theme later in the *Life*, and will in fact be the climactic point in the epilogue comparing him with his pair Romulus. Theseus carried off Helen too when she was just a girl, he had this disturbing tendency to get involved with Amazons, and so on. Had Plutarch wanted to sketch in as much as possible of Theseus' personality at the outset, he would certainly have found room for those early rapes; that is what a modern political biographer would do, if he happened to find himself writing a *Life* of Theseus. Plutarch preferred to hold it back: he thought it artistically superior to begin by dwelling on Theseus as a great hero, then gradually introduce the various darkening shades to fill out and qualify the picture. Again, it is the technique of gradual redefinition, which means that ancient writers often hold back important information till later than a modern would expect.[56] Here he wants to collect all the shady ladies together towards the end of the *Life* to prepare the path for the final downfall. We can see

[56] This is in fact a refinement of the basic narrative technique discussed briefly by Fraenkel in his comm. on Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* (Oxford, 1950), app. A; for related techniques in other authors, cf. e.g. C. F. Russo, *Aristofane, autore di teatro* (Florence, 1962), 57–65.

something similar in the *Elder Cato*. When Plutarch first introduces Cato's proud hostility to Greek culture, he does so in rather appreciative tones. It is only later, after he has established the grander and more impressive aspects of Cato's personality, that he will revert to this, and begin to trace how this attitude had weaknesses as well as strengths, and in important respects Cato was diminished by such antihellenism.[57] All that is certainly still an interest in personality: these are individual figures, and one comes to comprehend them fairly well. But it means that, in the early chapters, Plutarch is not pulling out all the stops all the time to help us to understand people. That is not his only concern, and other literary considerations may carry more weight.

That said, one often feels that Plutarch is simply not doing as much as he can to understand people anyway—it is not just a question of holding things back, but of not doing it at all. Indeed, we are now close to the real paradox of his technique. For all his stress on education and character-development, Plutarch's own presentation of the childhood of particular heroes is often extraordinarily banal: so banal, indeed, that distinguished critics can claim that he gives no idea of development at all[58]—an overstatement, but an understandable one. *Antony*, for instance, is one of the *Lives* which generates a real interest in psychology, as Antony's mental torment becomes so clear. *Given his make-up*—that blend of susceptibility, simplicity, bluffness, and nobility—we can certainly understand why he was so peculiarly vulnerable to Cleopatra, and then so agonized and torn; it is once again an individual portrait, a 'personality'. But Plutarch makes no real attempt to explain *why* Antony came to have that particular make-up: that is precisely what a modern biographer would regard as the first priority. Influences are indeed a major preoccupation of a

[57] Cf. Pelling, 'Roman Heroes'.

[58] 'The hero is there, all in one piece': V. Cilento, *Transposizioni dell' antico* (Milan, 1961), 109, quoted with approval by Russell, 'On Reading Plutarch's *Lives*', *GR* 13 (1966), 145; Russell's own discussion (144–7) is here especially interesting. Cf. also Misch, *Autobiography*, 291; Bucher-Isler, *Norm und Individualität*, 61. The more precise formulation of Gill, 'Character-Development', 476, is very fair: 'even when the author regards the theme of character-formation as relevant to his narrative (as Plutarch clearly sometimes does), the actual process of personal development is very lightly sketched'.

modern biographer; Plutarch too is interested, as we saw when he related traits of Lysander and Agesilaus to the Spartan educational system. But the way he introduces the point in *Lysander* is eloquent. 'His ambition and contentiousness he derived from his Spartan education, *and we should not greatly blame his nature for this*' (2. 4). The point, it seems, is not introduced *primarily* to explain: the explanatory force is a means to an end, to guide our moral judgement and dissuade us from too hasty a condemnation. Similarly, in *Marcellus* it is important to know that Rome was so beset by wars, but mainly so that we should not be too harsh on Marcellus for neglecting his literary education: explanation is again the handmaiden of ethical assessment. The treatment of family, too, is uneven. Sometimes the analysis of family background can genuinely illuminate hereditary traits (*Antony*, *Brutus*) or important aspects of youthful environment (*Gracchi*, *Cleomenes*, *Coriolanus*); but just as often the treatment of γένος is simply casual and curious, as in *Fabius*, *Pyrrhus*, *Phocion*, or *Aemilius*.

Nor is the quest for understanding pursued insistently elsewhere. Given Plutarch's capacity for imaginative reconstruction, he might so easily have built a picutre of Lysander's first reaction to seeing foreign luxury, a mixture perhaps of inner contempt and ruthless determination to exploit it for Sparta's interests. Elsewhere too we can easily identify psychological reconstructions it might have been interesting to make. What would the country boys Marius or the elder Cato really have felt when they first met those smooth men of the city? How must Demosthenes have reacted when his mother denied him the chance to study (4. 4)? What must it have been like for Artaxerxes to have an elder brother like Cyrus? What was the mental effect on Themistocles of his illegitimacy? Plutarch could make that sort of psychological reconstruction—we have seen that from *Theseus*, *Coriolanus*, and *Cleomenes*—but, usually, that was not his way.

Even the crucial aspect of education is presented rather than explored. Only very rarely does Plutarch analyse precisely *what* a figure has derived from his particular tutors or particular philosophical school.[59] It is in fact most typically when education is deficient—in *Coriolanus*, for instance, or *Marius*,or even *Marcellus*—that the point really helps us to understand their personalities, for it then helps to explain their distinctive flaws. But *Pericles* is particularly interesting here, for this is one of the few cases where Plutarch does try to discriminate what his hero learnt from his tutors. Anaxagoras specifically taught him to be above superstition, for instance (6), and how to include impressive natural philosophy in his rhetoric (8. 1). Still, even here all his educators tend to be *telling him the same things*, in particular guiding him towards a specific political style: Anaxagoras gave him 'a majesty and φρόνημα that was too weighty for demagogy' (4. 6); Zeno then defended that dignified public demeanour (5. 3); Damon at least encouraged and guided his political ambitions, and was suspected of helping him towards tyranny (4. 3, 9. 2). That gives a hint of Plutarch's reasons for developing the theme so fully. It matters a lot to him that Pericles had so good an education, but only because with so many good tutors he must have developed a particularly high intellect and character, φρόνημα. It does not go any deeper than that: but this was itself deep enough to land Plutarch in terrible difficulties over his characterization. It was a great trouble to him that in his early years Pericles adopted various disreputable popular techniques to establish his position; and Plutarch comes up with the uncomfortable judgement that Pericles' behaviour was 'contrary to his own nature, which was not at all democratic' (7. 3).[60] He does not seem to have faced the question whether this was really compatible with his admiration for Pericles' integrity and greatness of spirit.[61] It is not that Plutarch did not

[59] This is another central point which cannot be elaborated here; see 'Roman Heroes'.

[60] *Aem.* 30. 1 provides a particularly interesting parallel. Aemilius authorized the enslavement of 150,000 men and the devastation of 70 cities. That presented Plutarch with similar problems, for Aemilius too has been presented as a distinctively cultured figure: so 'this in particular ran counter to his nature, which was reasonable and noble'. So also with the well-brought-up Gracchi, eventually led astray 'contrary to their nature' (*Gracch.* 45 (5). 5). It is figures like this whose lapses are felt as particularly problematic. Cf. Gill, 'Character-Development', 478–81: 'his analysis [of apparent character-change in *Sulla* and *Sert.*] depends on his view of good character (fully developed, reasoned excellence of character), and his conviction that it guarantees emotional continuity regardless of circumstances' (481). As Gill stresses, it is precisely *paideia* that imparts this 'fully developed, reasoned excellence of character'.

[61] P. A. Stadter, 'The Rhetoric of Plutarch's *Pericles*', *Anc. Soc.* 18 (1987), 251–69, acutely illustrates the rhetorical problems which this stage of Pericles' career presented, and the importance of this 'out of character' analysis to Plutarch's narrative strategy; but the criticisms levelled by A. W. Gomme (*Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, i

have a perfectly good model to use, that of the youthful leader of the people who becomes more moderate as he grows older: there is a certain amount of that in *Caesar*, *Pompey*, and even *Cleomenes*. But it will not do here simply because Pericles was so thoroughly educated, and hence *must have* developed a character which was above genuine demagogy at an early stage. The analysis is not really very profound, and tends to regard education simply as something you have either had or not had, rather like a vaccination: if you have had it, then you ought to be immune from certain dangers for ever. Here, as so often, Plutarch's preoccupation with education is disquietingly superficial. Pericles' education created the problem for Plutarch's characterization; but the analysis was too shallow to solve or even illuminate that problem at all satisfactorily.

Take *Alcibiades*, too. Plutarch makes a fair amount of his growing up in Pericles' house, and of his relationship with Socrates. But the interesting thing about it is simply that, despite all his flair and excesses, he was still the sort of man to listen to Socrates; there is no attempt to explore *what* Socrates might have told him about the Athenian democracy, for instance, or the admirable aspects of Spartan military culture. How much more he could have made of the relationship with Pericles, too. He has an anecdote where Alcibiades hears that Pericles is thinking out a speech in which he would submit an account of his magistracy to the Athenian people; Alcibiades promptly reflects that it would be 'better to think out how to *avoid* giving accounts to the Athenians' (8. 3). But that is all. Consider the following passage:

> Alcibiades was inspired by Pericles' power, which he saw around him every day; but he was deeply disillusioned by the ingratitude the Athenian *dēmos* showed him. He considered where Pericles had perhaps made mistakes: perhaps his haughtiness was out of keeping with a younger generation, perhaps more affability and charm was needed. He also saw what Pericles had achieved, and determined that he too, one day, would have a great achievement that would be his own, and he would make Athens indeed prince of Greece.

(Oxford, 1956), 65–6) and W. R. Connor (*Theopompus and Fifth-Century Athens* (Washington, DC, 1968), 114) still have some force. This particular narrative strategy was an uncomfortable one, but Pericles' education forced Plutarch to adopt it.

But Plutarch did not write that, I did. He had the wherewithal to make that sort of psychological deduction, but he had enough to say about Alcibiades if he simply *described* the peculiar flair and glamour of his political style. Trying to *understand* what made him the sort of politician he was could, in this *Life*, be discarded. Understanding people was just one among several things which he was trying to do; it was not always the priority. And that is a fundamental difference between Plutarch and modern biography.

III

This is largely because, for ancient biography, there was less in the *adult* personality to understand. Plutarch individuates his personalities; he has a rich and differentiated vocabulary for describing traits;[62] but it remains true that he, like most or all ancient writers, has an extremely *integrated* conception of character, and that his figures are consequently individual in a way which we find oddly limited.[63] The differing elements of a character are regularly brought into some sort of relationship with one another, reconciled: not exactly unified, for a character cannot be described with a single word or category, and is not a stereotype; but one element at least goes closely with another, and each element predicts the next. Antony has his simplicity, his ἁπλότης or 'oneness,[64] which leaves him so vulnerable to flatterers or more powerful personalities (Curio, Fulvia, Cleopatra); that helps to explain why he is so passive. The simplicity goes well with his soldierliness too, and the rumbustious sense of fun he shares with his men—and then goes on to share with Cleopatra, so that the same qualities both build and destroy his greatness; the soldierliness and the leadership then go well with the nobility, which he shows for instance in honouring the fallen Brutus at Philippi (22. 6–7); that nobility goes closely with his capacity to be inflamed by Roman values and duty,

[62] See esp. Bucher-Isler, *Norm und Individualität*.

[63] For similar remarks, see R. B. Rutherford, 'The Philosophy of the *Odyssey*', *JHS* 106 (1986), 149–50 and n. 31. N. Rudd, *Lines of Enquiry* (Cambridge, 1976), 160–2, has a stimulating and cultured discussion to which I am indebted, though perhaps he underestimates the distance between ancient and modern assumptions. Cf. also Dihle, *Studien*, 76–81; n. 70 below.

[64] *Ant.* 24. 9–12; cf. my comm. ad loc.

and therefore to feel his shame intensely at the end—the head-in-hands scene as he sails from Actium (67), the Roman suicide (76), the fine dying words, 'a Roman, by a Roman valiantly vanquished' (77. 7). It all fits together very tightly: not as a stereotype, for these are all distinct traits; but they are closely *neighbouring* traits, and we are not surprised that Antony shows them all. In modern terms, his personality exemplifies a 'syndrome' of traits which are independent but which one naturally finds in combination (rather than a set of characteristics which are all deducible from a single original 'source-trait').[65]

This is typical.[66] Lysander's ruthlessness, deviousness, and unscrupulousness all combine readily with his personal ambition and pride. He belies all the natural expectations of a Spartan, even a travelled one—both the conventional Callicratidas and the corrupt Gylippus are developed as his foils—and is certainly individuated; yet those characteristics still bind together tightly. The younger Cato's high principle and resolution go with his Stoicism,[67] and that in its turn goes with his determination to feel shame only at the truly shameful: that explains his scruffiness, his strange but (to him) logical treatment of his women, perhaps even his drunkenness (cf. 6. 1–4); but this singleness of purpose also goes with a disabling lack of political insight and flexibility. In describing Aratus, Polybius dwelt on the paradox of his personality, his *unpredictable* blend of timidity and daring (4. 8); Plutarch turns him into a much less peculiar

[65] For terms and discussion, see e.g. R. B. Cattell, *The Scientific Analysis of Personality* (Harmondsworth, 1965), chs. 3–4. 'Source-traits' do not work for Plutarch's characters (*pace* e.g. A. Garzetti, *Plutarchi Vita Caesaris* (Florence, 1954), xliii–xlix): so, rightly, Bucher-Isler, *Norm und Individualität*, 60, though at 82 she oddly thinks that this detracts from their cogency as individual personalities.

[66] Much useful material can be gleaned from Bucher-Isler, *Norm und Individualität*, 25–46, though her approach is austerely lexical. Her pp. 39–45, exemplifying 'Gleichzeitiges Vorkommen gegensätzlicher Tugenden' might be expected to provide counter-examples: but in fact many of of the 'virtues' are not particularly 'contrary' (e.g. ἀνδρεία does not combine at all uncomfortably with αἰδώς, ἀπάθεια, γνώμη, δεινότης, δικαιοσύνη, or ἐγκράτεια, to take only her first six cases); and in some cases where the combination is more surprising Plutarch himself explains why the grouping is an easy one (e.g. it was natural that someone of Marcellus' period, education, and tastes should become πολεμικός, σώφρων, and φιλάνθρωπος (*Marc.* 1. 2)).

[67] This formulation may help to explain why Cato's Stoicism is allowed more explanatory force than most heroes' education or philosophy (a point noted but not explained in my 'Roman Heroes'). Stoicism more distinctively explains Cato's lack of concern for conventional opinion, and that is important in relating the scruffiness, for instance, to the high principle.

mixture. There is a particular 'sort of cleverness and understanding' which now explains his apparent inconsistencies, and is represented as a regular feature of human nature (*Arat.* 10. 4–5).[68] Even Alcibiades' 'many-sidedness' is not the sort of complexity we find in a modern counterpart, any more than, say, Homer's Odysseus is 'many-sided' in quite our sense.[69] It still requires only a rather limited list of categories to capture an Alcibiades or an Odysseus: each trait still predicts the next, and the reader swiftly gets the idea. Such characters are arresting, not intriguing: this is a very different sort of complexity from what we shall see in, for instance, Strachey's General Gordon. The same really applies to Sulla, even though Plutarch goes out of his way to stress his 'inconsistency' (*Sulla* 6. 14–15). And Caesar's ambition, determination, and ability are the traits which control that *Life*: we would bring out the man's many-sidedness in a different way—one which in fact is closer to Suetonius, whose rapidly shifting categories lend themselves to such protean complexity.

Plutarch's 'integrated personalities' are nothing unusual in the ancient world, though it is arguable that his integration is peculiarly thorough and complete, as those comparisons with Polybius and Suetonius suggest; but his characters are clearly very different from the more complex figures which modern writers like to develop.[70] He would indeed find it rather difficult to cope with some of the quirky combinations so familiar to our popular awareness: the maharaja with four Rolls-Royces whose only ambition is to compete at Wimbledon, the England fast bowler whose delight is writing poetry, the distinguished philosopher with an amazing knowledge of the workings of the

[68] I discuss *Aratus* at greater length in 'Aspects of Characterization', and try to show how this difference in approach leads Plutarch to recast the emphasis and detail of Polybius' narrative.

[69] Cf. esp. Rutherford, 'Philosophy'. The same goes for Tacitus' Licinius Mucianus (*Hist.* 1. 10) and Horace's Tigellius (*Serm.* 1. 3. 1–19), *pace* Rudd, *Lines of Enquiry*, 161–2. Such ancient figures are, in Aristotelian terms, 'consistently inconsistent' (*Poet.* 1454ª27–8)—and much more *predictably* inconsistent than modern counterparts. Mucianus' inconsistency, influenced as it is by Sallust's Sulla and Catiline (*BJ* 95, *BC* 5), is indeed stereotyped rather than singular (cf. J. Griffin, *Latin Poets and Roman Life* (London, 1985), 39–40). Plutarch's Sulla too has something in common with this type.

[70] For most interesting treatments of ancient and modern assumptions, cf. Dihle, *Studien*, 76–81, which I discuss in more detail in 'Aspects of Characterization', and S. Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics* (London, 1986), 149–52.

British telephone system. And the more developed portraits of formal biography tell the same story. Lytton Strachey's 'New Biography' is in some ways a special case as his work was so consciously iconoclastic, but it makes the point particularly plain. Stratchey is always straining for the *un*expected. Here we are presented with personalities whose traits do not sit at all comfortably together, whose combination in a single individual is paradoxical: Gordon earnestly tracing the location of Old Testament sites around Jerusalem, Bible in hand; but also approaching military operations with vigour and dynamism; but also hiding himself from his troops and staff for bouts of brandy and soda; but also, when coolly sober, bombarding the Ambassador in Cairo with utterly contradictory telegrams about the military situation, sometimes thirty a day. Dr Arnold towers darkly in his gown and religion; he also finds it humanly difficult to get out of bed in the morning; he also cavorts with his children on the hearthrug; he also suffers from a strange hypochondria. When *Eminent Victorians* was published, Virginia Woolf wrote to Strachey about his Gordon:[71]

> My only criticism, which I ought to hesitate to give until a second reading, is that I'm not sure whether the character of Gordon altogether 'convinces'. I felt a little difficulty in bridging the gulfs, but I rather think this is inevitable from the method, which flashes light and dark this side and that . . .

These 'gulfs' capture something quite important. One may dispute whether Strachey does make Gordon convincing; but if he does, it is a great tribute to his art, and it is indeed a primary task of a biographer in this genre to bring together such almost random, sometimes conflicting, traits in a single individual personality. And the only thing that brings them together is that single individual: Gordon may have combined all those traits, but there is little in the traits themselves to predispose us to expect their combination.

This contrast naturally affects the characters' exemplary quality. Even with Plutarch's most individual figures, we can still naturally talk about what may happen to '*a sort of person like* Antony' when he encounters a '*a sort of person like* Cleopatra':

[71] Letter of 28 Dec. 1917: Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey, *Letters*, ed. L. Woolf and J. Strachey (London, 1956), 68.

such figures will certainly not recur often, but at least their traits combine so readily that a recurrence is conceivable. One would not talk of 'a sort of person like General Gordon', for so paradoxical a combination must be unique. It would of course be a mistake to think that this was Plutarch's *reason* for the integration, to believe that he characterizes in this way to make the extraction of morals more straightforward.[72] That is to start from the wrong end, as if our modern assumptions were unquestionably right or natural, and Plutarch's different approach required explanation. In fact, this taste for the quirky is very much a modern fad. Plutarch's characterizing technique rests on assumptions which he inherited and saw no reason to question, and, indeed, which few other cultures fundamentally questioned until the nineteenth century (though it is true that few cultures integrated quite so thoroughly as the Greeks).[73] Similar points—and similar modern comparisons—can so easily be made with other Hellenic genres, epic, historiography, or drama: it makes much more sense to talk of 'a sort of person like Odysseus' or Hector or Pericles or Orestes than 'a sort of person like Pierre' or Anna or Churchill or Hamlet—or even less dominating figures such as Masha or Nina in *The Seagull*.[74]

[72] The integration does not even invariably aid the moralism. One of his ethical interests is the demonstration that human nature is very varied, and can produce *people like this* (cf. esp. *Cim.* 2. 5; *Ag.-Cl.* 37 (16). 8), an insight which should encourage rather than impede an interest in idiosyncrasy.

[73] Shakespeare's characters strike us as more individualized than their ancient counterparts (see J. P. Gould, 'Dramatic Character and "Human Intelligibility" in Greek Tragedy', *PCPS*, NS 24 (1978), 46–8); but Dr Johnson praised them differently: 'In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual: in Shakespeare it is commonly a species' (Preface to his 1765 edn. = *Dr Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed. W. K. Wimsatt (Harmondsworth, 1960), 59). Johnson's tastes were those of his day. Cf. M. C. Bradbrook's discussion. *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1935), 50–4.

[74] The nearest ancient parallel to a modern 'complex personality' is perhaps afforded by divine 'personalities'. Gods do often combine a multiplicity of traits or associations which do not group naturally, most clearly Apollo and Hermes, and arguably Artemis: that, doubtless, partly springs from the amalgamation of the associations of discrete local cults (see e.g. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Persephone and Aphrodite at Locris: A Model for Personality Definitions in Greek Religion', *JHS* 98 (1978), 101–21). The treatment of childhood is consequently more varied: the Homeric Hymn to Hermes, for instance, does introduce that range of different qualities, all pointed by anecdotes about the god's first days—not merely the inventiveness (making the lyre), the mischief-making (the stealing of Apollo's cattle, both on his first day alive), and the charm he exercises on both Zeus and Apollo himself, all qualities which could be held to be neighbouring, but also the flair for beguiling song, which seems less naturally

The integrating assumptions clearly went very deep, and it would be facile to derive them from a straightforward interest in the exemplary. The integration certainly goes well with the drawing of exemplary morals, and in some cases will have encouraged or facilitated that process; equally, the taste for morals reinforced the assumption of integration; but the causal relation of the two was surely delicate and tangled—and, of course, wholly unconscious.

This fundamental difference between ancient and modern has its impact on the treatment of childhood. Plutarch can give that telling anecdote or generalization prefiguring the 'sort of person' that Alcibiades or Cato or Aratus is going to be. It is not going to be a paradoxical combination of divergent traits, any or all of which might be usefully prefigured. And Plutarch can develop his technique of gradual refinement: the traits he is going to develop will not *wholly* call into question those which we know from the beginning, they will just sharpen and complement them. Contrast Strachey on Florence Nightingale:

> What was that secret voice in her ear, if it was not a call? Why had she felt, from her earliest years, those mysterious promptings towards . . . she hardly knew what, but something very different from anything around her? Why, as a child in the nursery, where her sister had shown a healthy pleasure in tearing her dolls to pieces, had *she* shown an almost morbid one in sewing them up again? (*Eminent Victorians* (London, 1918), 120)

One can tell how Plutarch would have used the story of the dolls: a straightforward, and not very imaginative, foretaste of her later concern for healing. Strachey is very different: now the elder sister takes 'a healthy pleasure' in tearing the dolls apart, while Florence's behaviour is 'almost morbid': 'it was very odd; what could be the matter with dear Flo?' Strachey brings out how paradoxical and unexpected the behaviour is: it still prefigures the later person, who is demoniacal in her pressure for work, driving more passive assistants into early graves, but it prefigures those more individual traits in a distinctly

related. This contrast of divine and human raises interesting points: for instance, an unusually singular combination of human traits is presented by Achilles in the *Iliad*, and one wonders about the relevance of his divine parentage. But that cannot be pursued here.

more individual way. Still, elaboration need not guarantee success, and this is not good writing. The anecdote stretches credibility ('it is difficult to think of dainty Parthe "tearing up dolls",' wrote an indignant family friend[75]); the psychology is dark but forced. Plutarchan simplicity and restraint might after all have been fairer.

Childhood anecdotes also prefigure the clashing elements in a personality. It is distinctive of Strachey's Cardinal Manning that his ability and ambition are more weighty than his piety, though the piety is real enough; and the clash of these elements leads to psychological strain, which Manning is powerful enough to cope with—again, we notice how *singular* a person this is, and how un-Plutarchan it is to have such conflicting tensions. So in his childhood we have the piety, in a very evangelical household. At the age of four he was told by a cousin of six that God wrote down everything we did wrong, and for some days his mother found him sitting under a kind of writing-table in great fear. 'I never forgot this at any time in my life, and it has been a great grace to me', wrote Manning later—and Strachey notes it, with a typical, slightly malicious hint of the self-righteousness as well as the piety. 'Yet', Strachey goes on, 'on the whole he led the unspiritual life of an ordinary schoolboy', and more noticeable was 'a certain dexterity of conduct'. At Harrow

> he went out of bounds, and a master, riding by and seeing him on the other side of a field, tied his horse to a gate, and ran after him. The astute youth outran the master, fetched a circle, reached the gate, jumped on to the horse's back and rode off. (*Eminent Victorians*, 6)

It is a much less expected story for a future Cardinal, and yet it prefigures something more important than the piety. So childhood anecdotes are here used to focus two conflicting traits, and the paradoxical one carries the greater weight. The whole technique is more complex, and the characterization again incomparably more singular, than in Plutarch.

With so much more to understand in the adult figures, there

[75] Mrs Rosalind Nashe, in an entertaining article in *Ninteenth Century*, 103 (1928), 258–65 (cit. C. R. Sanders, *Lytton Strachey: His Mind and Art* (Port Washington and London, 1957), 203. For other criticisms of the passage, see M. Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: The Years of Achievement 1910–1932* (London, 1968), 287–8.

is therefore more to prefigure; we might expect there to be more for the child to develop, too, and more that could be related to specific influences. Here we can trace a growing interest through Strachey's *œuvre*. A few points are traceable even in *Eminent Victorians*: Manning's evangelical home, or Nightingale's closeted childhood in the Derbyshire country house, carry some explanatory force; or there is the more delicious point about Arnold:

> It is true that, as a schoolboy, a certain pompousness in the style of his letters home suggested to the more clear-sighted among his relatives the possibility that young Thomas might grow up into a prig; but, after all, what else could be expected from a child who, at the age of three, had been presented by his father, as a reward for proficiency in his studies, with the twenty-four volumes of Smollett's *History of England*? (*Eminent Victorians*, 183–4)

But it is left at that, and there is no clear interest in tracing in detail how particular influences shaped a child's development. Most of the 'understanding' is to be reached by considering the man himself or the woman herself, not their society; that is still in the Plutarchan tradition. And indeed, there is comparatively little development to trace: Manning is already showing the same tensions as later.

By *Queen Victoria* that has changed. We have a chapter on 'Antecedents' as well as one on 'Childhood', and Strachey is very concerned indeed to depict the importance of the uneasy atmosphere in the royal family. Her christening, for instance, provoked a marvellously embarrassing scene;[76] that does reveal something about the uncomfortable background against which she grew up—the background which finally erupted in a public tirade against Victoria's mother, the Duchess of Kent, delivered by William IV before 100 embarrassed guests at a birthday dinner, again a story in which Strachey reveals. He is concerned to point influences, too: of governesses, of her uncle the king of Belgium, of her father's political sympathies and associations, and of the lack of robust masculine friends—'It was her misfortune that the mental atmosphere which surrounded her during these years of adolescence was almost entirely feminine'—which may explain why she was so mes-

[76] *Queen Victoria* (London, 1924), 16–17.

merized when young handsome male cousins, including the youthful Prince Albert, visited. Then in *Elizabeth and Essex* Strachey points Elizabeth's 'seriously warped sexual organization', crucial for understanding the way she handled English noblemen and foreign kings. This is explained by 'the profound psychological disturbances of her childhood'—the early beheading of her mother, the bewildering sequence of stepmothers, finally the extraordinary sexual attention of Catherine Parr's later husband Thomas Seymour, with his engaging habit of bounding into her room, tickling her in bed, and slapping her bottom. The Freudian influence by now is clear, and this detailed tracing of influences takes us some distance from Plutarch.

This preoccupation with influences and understanding is of course what we now expect. It is particularly clear in Erikson, but for instance Emil Ludwig's *Bismarck* is also similar—the bad relations with his distant, theatrical mother, always too busy to have him home, which led to his neurosis, cynicism, and 'refractory and unequable nature';[77] no wonder he came to despise the liberal ideas his mother espoused, and no wonder his reaction was so ambivalent to the harsh, whipping, military school his mother sent him to. Tickling, bottom-slapping, and whipping tend to be less typical of the more regular genre of political biography, less highly wrought than Strachey, less self-conscious and artistically pretentious, distinctly more respectful, and in some ways closer to the grave, dignified genre of multi-volume Victorian biography which Strachey was striving to replace. But this preoccupation with influences and understanding remains dominant. Almost at random, one could take Philip Williams's fine book on Hugh Gaitskell.[78]

There are in fact some surprising similarities with Plutarch. Williams too is concerned with education, though the points are made in greater detail. The Dragon School was 'a highly unorthodox and notably unconventional preparatory school . . . masters were known by their nicknames'. Later, his public school Winchester was 'much less philistine than most of its contemporaries. Intellect was not despised as at Rugby or Harrow.' There is often the routine generalization, more

[77] Emil Ludwig, *Bismarck* (Eng. trans., London, 1927), 29.
[78] *Hugh Gaitskell* (London, 1979).

pointed than in Plutarch but showing rather the same flavour: 'at prep school, Winchester, and Oxford alike, he was unusually unpossessive and behaved as a "natural socialist", treating everyone as equal and everything as held in common'. One wonders exactly what that means, and what really lies behind it: surely a measure of retrojection from later years? And there is the telling anecdote, too, which one suspects is not always subjected to rigorous historical criticism: 'he once startled a strange lady in the street by chanting to her from the pram: "Soon shall you and I be lying | Each within our narrow tomb" '. But what is different here is that perpetual quest for understanding, clearly the author's first priority. The chapter is headed 'Seeking Something to Fight For'—the psychological register which Plutarch sometimes moves into, but generally eschews. There is the interest, again, in isolating influences: 'to his mother he owed the gaiety and friendliness . . . the strong Burma connections had—surprisingly—no apparent influence on his life, outlook, or policy. Separation from his parents possibly did have such an influence'; 'Winchester's heavy emphasis on self-restraint helped Hugh to keep under firm control the strong emotions that seethed beneath a placid surface.'

What would Plutarch have made of all that? It is quite alien to his manner, even in the passages where he is trying to understand: we are moving into a quite different register when we seek to isolate such broad influences. Plutarch would have been perplexed; and he would also have felt the irony that he is now regarded as the man with the taste for fiction, while the moderns regard themselves as reconstructing truth. Williams's reconstruction of these influences is much more moderate and cogent than those of Strachey, Erikson, or Ludwig; but all rest on a very slender foundation. Winchester was like that, and Gaitskell was like that too; Bismarck's mother and Luther's father were unsatisfactory, and Bismarck and Luther turned out the way they did; Thomas Seymour was sexually peculiar, and Elizabeth was arguably a bit peculiar too; hence there *must have been* a causal connection. Plutarch would have thought all this a new, peculiar brand of imaginative reconstruction; and I am not sure that he would have been too impressed.

11

Conclusion

CHRISTOPHER PELLING

We must not gloss over the point. Just as the Greeks failed to develop a genuine discipline of historical research, so also they were unable to grasp the true nature of a human being. The observer always remained detached, when he should have been placing himself in the other man's soul. Instead of understanding, he praises or blames. And always he regards a man as something complete and entire, never as anything that develops. How could they have understood the contradictions that are found in every soul of any richness, and whose unification alone creates a person's individuality? Only their tragedians (for Menander's comedy certainly fell short of it) had the capacity to create whole persons of the sort where we can sense how they must have become the way they are, through life's experiences and despite life's experiences. And then, of course, there was Plato: but Plato at least potentially burst through virtually all the limitations of the Greek spirit. I do not here discuss how the Greeks came to be like this: in the sixth and fifth centuries there was the potential for a quite different development. But, since they did develop in this way, we must suppose that they grasped little, and conveyed less, of genuine human individuality. The universal culture and the later philosophies, all aimed at normal humans, reduced this to its own level. How different it was with the Romans of the same period! (For the later Hellenizing culture of the Roman empire again imposed its own level.) One cannot stress their superiority enough. We hear of Lucilius, and know of Horace, how poetry became the revelation of the poet's self: and then there is Cicero, all of whose works breathe his rich individuality, despite all the rhetoric. That is a whole person. His Greek contemporaries were, at best, professors.

So wrote Wilamowitz in 1907.[1] Much of this volume could serve as an extended critique of that text.

Greek audiences did not always shy from the particular: any narative page of Herodotus or Thucydides shows that, and

[1] *Internationale Wochenschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technik*, 1 (1907), 1109–10 (= *Kleine Schriften*, vi (Berlin and Amsterdam, 1972), 124).

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