that might have taken this engagement as a prompt for raising interesting philosophical or theoretical questions about Wordsworth's monastic proclivities. But on this front, Fay is probably right to follow Wordsworth in resting content with silence. After all, one upshot of the book is a clear sense of how the idea of monastic silence allowed Wordsworth—at least for a few years—to speak volumes. In an appendix to her own volume, Fay details the forty different monastic sites that Wordsworth visited throughout his life. In imagining these many pilgrimages, I could not help but think of another "Church-Going" poet who returned time and time again to stand in silence amidst a transhistorical community he only half-understood:

> A serious house on a serious earth it is,
> In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,
> Are recognized, and robed as destinies.
> And that much never can be obsolete,
> Since someone will forever be surprising
> A hunger in himself to be more serious,
> And gravitating with it to this ground,
> Which, he once heard, was proper to grow wise in,
> If only that so many dead lie round.

Perhaps finding Philip Larkin in conversation with a mid-life Wordsworth is a sign that his monastic inheritance survives.

K. P. Van Anglen and James Engell, eds, *The Call of Classical Literature in the Romantic Age*

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A Review by Anthony John Harding
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The somewhat innocuous title of this book, *The Call of Classical Literature in the Romantic Age*, conceals an ambitious purpose: to transform the reader's way of thinking about the Romantic age, especially how writers of that era were shaped and driven by their engagement with classical traditions. As part of this transformative purpose, the editors hope to expand the current notion of the classical languages and literatures to include Hebrew. James Engell's concluding chapter, a weighty "coda" of over sixty pages, develops in considerable detail the argument that from the late 1500s to the 1800s, on both sides of the Atlantic, the study of Hebrew played a far greater part in intellectual life and literary culture than most scholars realize; and that what is commonly called "Romanticism" would not exist without this respect for Hebrew as the "third classic," and the intersection of this knowledge with the very different aesthetic derived from Greek and Latin literature.

All thirteen chapters in this collection, not just Engell's, challenge current assumptions and should impel animated discussion at conferences and in the scholarly journals. Two main achievements of the *The Call of Classical Literature* is to expand the reader's conception of "the Romantic Age" both geographically and chronologically and to renew attention to the crucial role of classical knowledge. There is a strong transatlantic and American emphasis. Chapter topics proceed chronologically from William Gilpin and Phillis Wheatley to Longfellow and Melville, via Coleridge, W. S. Landor, the American Transcendentalists, and the black abolitionist writer and critic, James McCune Smith; with some more widely-ranging chapters on epic invocation, American political rhetoric, and the "Matter of Rome" in Gibbon and the Victorians. Some may wonder at the relative lack of attention to the British and Irish poets most frequently associated with love of classical antiquity. There is some discussion of Byron, Shelley, Keats and Scott; but no attention to Hemans, Barbauld, Tighe, or Landon. Still, the editors clearly want to propose that classical studies be understood as a new frontier for Romanticists, and to convey a refreshing sense of discovery, rather than a return to possibly over-familiar ground.

In this, they have certainly succeeded. Nearly a third of the Introduction is devoted to pointing out that the term "Romantic," as a label for this literary period, is in several respects inaccurate. In particular, they argue that the tendency to contrast Romanticism with Classicism, as if they were polar opposites, has led many commentators to ignore the ways in which classical antiquity was a source of creative renewal for writers of this period. These writers "were far more informed by, and engaged with, classical literature than many latter-day critics and students realize" (5-6).

In a book that explores multiple modes of engagement with classical literature, the opening chapter by Margaret Doody on William Gilpin is doubly well-placed. It shows how even such a well-recognized marker of Romantic taste as "the picturesque" is deeply embroiled with mid-18th century classicism; and it presents a detailed analysis of how Gilpin uses his knowledge to define his authorial persona, claiming the authority of a classical education for his innovative opinions. This suggests both the high status of classical knowledge and the broad recognition among the reading public of classical knowledge as the *sine qua non* of cultural authority. The garden at Stowe, which first piqued Gilpin's interest in the aesthetics of landscape, was itself a statement of neoclassical values. The young Gilpin, in the little book he published about Stowe, *A Dialogue upon the Gardens . . . at Stow,* refrains from any superfluous display of learning, choosing instead to give the more discriminating of his two interlocutors a rather cryptic reference to a story about the emperor Trajan that suggests his selfless dedication to "virtue and public spirit." Here Gilpin signals his "devotion to ancient public virtue," alongside a qualified admiration for the "schematized attractions" of Stowe (37). For Stowe also featured a gothic ruin: an artificial one, built in the centre of a newly-created lake. In his later work, Gilpin explored at length the contemporary taste for such scenes. This complicates his Whiggish and Protestant view of history. Gothic ruins are for him the melancholy record of a superstitious medieval past. As Doody finely expresses it, Gilpin "has not forsaken the art and literature of high classical civilization. Indeed, that classical civilization may stand in triumphant counterpoint to the ideology of the medieval church" (43).

Mary Louise Kete's chapter on Phillis Wheatley also shows how an author could deploy classical knowledge in order to claim an audience, though Wheatley's claim was more radical and far-reaching, given that the barriers she faced, as an African, a slave, and a woman, were greater. The title-page of her *Poems on Various Subjects* names her as "Negro Servant to Mr. John Wheatley, of Boston," and is accompanied by a frontispiece that shows her wearing a maid's cap, seated at a desk with paper, ink, and quill pen: all of which, as Kete remarks, was meant to turn her verse into "a book that readers would buy" (55). It also demonstrates, however, that she spoke "by and through the authority of the owner" (59). Kete sets out to show that Wheatley's poem "To Maecenas" goes far beyond the conventional utterance of the poet's presumed gratitude to a patron. Wheatley's poem subtly reverses the notion of the poet's indebtedness, suggesting that it is the patron who "owes a debt to the poet, for it is the poet whose praise will keep Maecenas's name alive" (66). In this way, Wheatley shows her grasp of Horace's *Carmina* 1.i, and its tribute to the original Maecenas; but through her lines honouring Homer, Virgil, and (especially) Terence, she also "exceeds" the limiting representation of her own self offered by the front matter of her book. Wheatley describes Terence – in his youth a slave, later a *libertinus*, a freed man – as "happier," more fortunate; a pointed reminder that in the classical world, unlike 18th century America, an African could "be free and be a poet, too" (68).

The next two chapters, Steven Stryer's on Landor and Christoph Irmscher's on Longfellow, discuss poets who were in different ways struggling to resist predominant cultural forces of their time and engaging closely with classical literature as a means of doing so. Criticizing what he saw as the prolixity and self-indulgence of more popular contemporaries such as Byron and Southey, Landor affirmed that "Order and proportion always were my objects" (quoted, 82). Yet, as Stryer shows, Landor recognized in himself the capacity for strong feeling more usually associated with the Romantic. Achieving balance between the two was his aim. In Landor's reading of the classics, the passions were never denied or excluded; they were channelled and controlled, as in Landor's "To the Author of *Festus*." In that poem, the imagery of fauns and nymphs expresses "transient feeling," but wilder passions are subsequently calmed by the appearance of Hermes and Apollo (88).

In the last section of his chapter, Stryer turns to a group of poems that are certainly more personal and perhaps more truly original, the "Ianthe" poems, written over a period of fifty years beginning in 1806. These concise but moving poems, Stryer shows, are "grounded in the personal – even autobiographical"; but are also classical in that they "[reach] for the transcendence of time and space" in ways that are enabled by Landor's classicism (89).

Longfellow is represented in Irmscher's chapter as an excellent classicist and a skilled translator. Irmscher shows that Longfellow hoped to make classical literature the foundation on which he could begin to build a distinctive American literature that would unite all the languages that formed the fabric of American culture. *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadia* (1847) was an early attempt, a popular poem "with epic ambitions" (104). The pastoralism and validation of rural life expressed in that poem became a matter of concern again in the 1870s, when Longfellow heard the classical scholar and Harvard tutor, William Everett, give a series of public lectures on

Virgil. Although no transcript of the lectures exists, it seems certain from Everett's other published writings that he would have expressed his low opinion of pastoral poetry in general – and might have made disparaging comments about *Evangeline* in particular. Irmscher turns to Longfellow's translation of Virgil's *Eclogue I* (published in Longellow's *Kéramos and Other Poems*, 1878), to show, with careful attention to Longfellow's renderings, how faithful to the Latin original Longfellow's version is; and, particularly, how Longfellow brings out the sense of threatened catastrophe in the lines spoken by Meliboeus, whose lands have been taken from him to be given to another. As Irmscher says, "The world Virgil evokes is not, as William Everett thought, free of tragedy" (110). The last part of the chapter, interestingly, brings out Longfellow's growing concern about threats to the local environment: specifically, to the pristine meadows adjoining the Charles River, which had been earmarked for industrial development. Translating Virgil was not an escape to any "faux paradise," then, but rather "a real opportunity to clarify issues that pursued him in his own life" (117).

Herbert F. Tucker's chapter on "Epic Invocation" ranges widely over the long 18th century, from Voltaire to Elizabeth Barrett. Tucker scrutinizes with wit and piercing insight how epic poets, and would-be poets, tried to adapt to their own uses that difficult convention of invoking the Muse, seemingly still necessary even several generations after Voltaire. Or if not the Muse, then some other, more appropriate higher power. Unexpected revelations abound in this account: for example, the prevalence among American poets of the device (originally Miltonic) that Tucker names "*abvocation*," that is, "rejecting the Greco-Roman Muse in favor of an inspiration more doctrinally or politically correct" (129). Thus Joel Barlow, launching his *Columbiad* in 1807: "Almighty Freedom! . . . I bend no suppliant knee, / Invoke no miracle, no Muse but thee" (quoted, 130).

For Romanticists, however, the most rewarding parts of Tucker's essay may be those that discuss the uses of epic invocation in Wordsworth, Keats, and Blake. Having learned much about creative uses of invocation, and the many traps it sets for the clumsy, readers can appreciate more fully how these poets carry it off. Wordsworth, for example, in the 1805 *Prelude* "incorporates the invocatory passage into the story by retroactively disclosing that it is a quotation" (139). It is Blake, however, who emerges as the most radically original poet of this triad. In *Jerusalem*, the "romantic identification of poet with Muse with hero" climaxes in the line "I am in you and you in me, mutual in love divine": which, as Tucker shows, "puts into a nutshell what was at once Blake's artistic practice and his epic ethos" (143).

The essays in Part II, "Wider Romantic Engagements with the Classical World," have less to say about Romanticism in the more restrictive sense, though continuities with the narrowly-defined Romantic period are clear, and frequently of interest as examples of the reception of Romantic-era works in the later 19th century. This certainly applies to John P. McWilliams's fine chapter on Melville, which shows how much of Goethe's, Byron's, Mary Shelley's, and Emerson's conceptions of Prometheus went into the making of Captain Ahab, the Promethean figure in *Moby-Dick*, along with a distinctive Melvillean strain of late 19th century pessimism. Similarly, Carl J. Richard's chapter on "American Political Rhetoric" and Edward Adams's on "Gibbon, Virgil and the Victorians" have much to teach scholars of the earlier period about how Britain and America sought to redefine themselves, over the course of the succeeding century, in relation to classical concepts of state and empire.

John Stauffer's important chapter on James McCune Smith stands alongside these two chapters, in that it shows how deeply imbricated with classical models of the just state, especially classical ideas of citizenship, American political discourse was during the antebellum period. Smith was "the foremost black intellectual in nineteenth-century America and the most educated before W. E. B. Du Bois" (221). Born into slavery in 1813, he was freed in 1827 by the Emancipation Act of New York State, graduated from the Quakers' African Free School in 1828, and studied Latin and Greek in New York before travelling to Glasgow for his B.A., M.A., and (in 1837) his M.D. – his studies being funded, remarkably, by the black community of New York City. Smith's knowledge of Roman Law – specifically, its willingness to grant citizenship to those who were born into slavery and subsequently freed (*libertini*) – enabled him to critique the judgment of the U.S. Supreme Court in the notorious *Dred Scott v. Sanford* case (1857). The ruling given in that case was that "neither slaves nor their descendants could be citizens." The then-Chief Justice claimed that this decision was based on the Justinian Code, but Smith showed that the court had in fact misinterpreted the Code, and that "Roman law provided the precedent for blacks' right to citizenship in the U.S." (221). This was only one of Smith's many interventions in public debate. Stauffer shows that running through all of Smith's published writings was the notion of the "pure republic," a goal that the United States could not reach until it realized the full meaning of

Terence's maxim, *Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto* ("I am a man, I count nothing human indifferent to me" – quoted, 224).

One other chapter that deals with Roman history, rather oddly placed after McWilliams's chapter on Melville, is Jonathan Sachs's on "Coleridge's Rome." Sachs selects for close examination the five articles Coleridge wrote for the *Morning Post* in September and October, 1802. In these articles, Coleridge developed an analogy between France under Napoleon (who in May, 1802, had been elected "First Consul" for a ten-year term) and Rome under the "three first Caesars," Julius, Augustus, and Tiberius – the era when, as Coleridge says, "Rome ceased to be a Republic" (quoted, 273), and fell under the rule of increasingly autocratic and, in the case of Tiberius, vindictive emperors.

Sachs begins by referring to the notion of "exemplary history," which clearly applies to Coleridge's analysis: "Coleridge . . . continues to assert that 'As human nature is the same in all ages, similar events will of course take place under similar circumstances'" (269). In order to sustain the analogy, however, Coleridge has to introduce the concept of the acceleration of historical time. While it took several decades for the Roman republic to evolve into a repressive *imperium*, events were proceeding much faster in contemporary France. The cause of this temporal acceleration, Coleridge argued, was the greater speed with which news and opinions could be circulated. In such a "media-saturated" environment, it was all the more important to clarify one's thinking by keeping in mind the classical parallel. The slower pace of change in ancient Rome would not cancel the usefulness of the analogy. On the contrary, it made the true nature of what was happening in France more readily apparent.

K. P. Van Anglen's chapter on Thoreau and Jeffrey Steele's on Margaret Fuller carry the story of Romantic aspirations and disillusionments forward in more specific ways than most of the other chapters in Part II. Emerson is an important link between these two chapters, if only because both Thoreau and Fuller are shown as having declared their independence from him, and as having used classical knowledge as a way of doing so. Van Anglen highlights the fact that, while still a student at Harvard, Thoreau had absorbed the Virgilian notion of the *cursus honorum*, the progress of a major poet through the genres, from pastoral, to georgic, to epic, the last being the culmination of the true poet's calling, subsuming the other genres in itself and defining the poet's era in relation to history. Van Anglen's particular purpose is to make two salient points about Thoreau's career, the first of which emerges from a careful analysis of the early excursion piece, "A Walk to Wachusett": "in this excursion," Van Anglen argues, "he must at least postpone his epic ambitions to comprehend the cosmos as he experiences it here and now . . . . This is why the last five or six pages of the excursion leave the language of classical, Miltonic, and romantic poetry behind and describe the natural world and New England's own history as they are and in detail, in all their variety" (173). Second, Thoreau's turn toward what some critics consider more purely scientific interests does not mean he abandoned classical studies: "His interest in classical antiquity . . . never faded, even as he became more engaged in scientific observation and speculation" (175). Thoreau's triad of predecessors – Homer, Virgil, Humboldt, the literary giants who are honoured in the poem that opens "A Walk to Wachusett" – all remained strong presences for him, as he took up in his later prose the universal subject of humankind's place in the natural world.

Margaret Fuller, who like Thoreau was forced to create her own sustaining tradition (though for even more compelling reasons), turned to classical mythology as a source for the more dynamic self-image that she needed. Such figures as Athena, Diana, and Demeter were more affirming for women that anything offered in the social or literary conventions of her own time. Thus, as Jeffrey Steele shows, "classical myths became models of psychological and social being" for her (211). This turn to classical myth did originate in an insight, or theory, that she shared with Emerson: the belief that "Intuiting the divine forces lying in the depths of the psyche . . . one gained the capacity to authorize oneself" (194). But Fuller pursued this mantra down paths that Emerson could not understand, or even tolerate. In her essay "The Great Lawsuit," she moved toward a syncretic mode of mythmaking that drew not only on ancient Greek traditions but on the many different manifestations of Venus; on the tradition of Sophia, goddess of wisdom; and on the Egyptian goddess Isis – all of these being brought together with the Virgin Mary. The essay, which grew into her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, envisaged a double role for Fuller, and other women of her era: as the searcher (Demeter, Isis, Psyche) seeking a lost child or lover; but also as the lost child, who in Fuller's syncretic way of working with myth took on alternately the forms of Minerva, Cassandra, and Electra.

James Engell's concluding chapter argues for the recognition of Hebrew as the "other classic," and particularly seeks to remind scholars of the "older

usage" prevalent in Britain and America from 1600 to the late 1800s that "identifies Hebrew equally, or even *primus inter pares,* as one of the classical languages" (343). The idea of considering Hebrew as a classical language alongside Latin and Greek should not surprize anyone who has studied the history of university education in Britain and America between 1600 and 1900. Nor will it surprize those who have read Murray Roston, Stephen Prickett, or Ian Balfour on Romantic prophecy, Geoffrey Hartman on Midrash and literature, Elinor Shaffer on biblical criticism, or Judith Page, Michael Scrivener, and Sheila Spector on the Jewish presence in British Romanticism. Nevertheless, as James Engell admits at the beginning of this impressive chapter, "After the Romantic era, the influence of Hebrew wanes" (341-2). Developments within the leading universities were partly to blame: by 1900, Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Cambridge, and many other institutions had dropped Hebrew as a requirement. Secularization and (it has to be said) institutional anti-Semitism played a part in this change, so that, as Engell argues, it is now almost forgotten that Hebrew was considered one of the "three learned languages" (345). (Engell does not mention the fact that the Dissenting academies that flourished in late 18th century Britain were also home to some distinguished Hebraists – but that is a minor quibble.)

Engell interweaves this general point about the vitality of Hebrew studies in the universities and seminaries with an extensive review of evidence to support his second point: that scholars' accounts of Romanticism are impoverished and partial if they ignore the awareness of Hebrew language, literature, and poetic style that was widely disseminated through British and American society until the late 19th century. Robert Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* are crucial to this argument, but Engell's story touches on many other scholars, clergy, poets, and artists: among them, John Dennis, Increase Mather, G. F. Handel, Edmund Burke, John Coleridge (the poet's father), Isaac Watts, Christopher Smart, S. T. Coleridge, Thomas Cole (the American painter), Emma Lazarus, and Herman Melville.

This final chapter, which deserves a more thorough discussion, has the salutary effect of making the reader reconsider most of what was said in the previous twelve. Taken together, this collection represents a fertile and provocative starting-point for further research and debate, in 18th century studies and work on British and American 19th century literature as well as on literature of the Romantic period.

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