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ARTICLE

The Classical 'Traception': Reconceptualizing Classics in Africa (With an Analysis of Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island*)

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Abstract

Classics has been used for various social, cultural and political purposes on the African sub-continent. Part I highlights some theoretical considerations regarding the traditional models of the classical tradition and the classical reception in Africa. The idea of the classical 'traception' embraces the classical tradition through its suggestion of linear descendent and the classical reception through its 'receptive' and reconfigurative associations. Part II discusses how and when classical ideas and texts reached and extended into Africa from the time of the sixteenth century and the main areas that constitute the classical 'traception' on the subcontinent. Part III presents a case study in the area of drama to illustrate some of the interpretive consequences of using the model of the classical tradition as opposed to that of the classical reception. My proposed model of the 'classical traception' seems preferable to either of these models when describing the dynamics of Fugard, Kani, and Ntshona's The Island (1974) since it spans both the European conception of the original Antigone and its linear descent as well as its reconfiguration by its split collective (hybrid) multi-racial 'author' in The Island. Considering the elements of the classical tradition along with those of the classical reception—what I jointly term classical 'traception'—helps to provide a broader view of the ways in which Classics has helped to shape and been received by different African societies and their cultures from the perspectives of both the European colonizers and indigenous peoples.

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Vnde etiam uulgare Graeciae dictum semper aliquid noui Africam adferre.
(Pliny, Historia Naturalis 8.17.42).
And whence (is derived) the common adage of Greece that Africa always brings something new.

The elder Pliny's famous dictum[1] gives a hint of what Africa has in store for Classicists, for they are likely to find something 'new' in the form of Classics and the development of the classical tradition and reception in some of the most unexpected places at some of the most unexpected times in the history of the European colonization of the African subcontinent and in its postcolonial aftermath.[2] Grant Parker has made precisely this observation in respect of South Africa: 'Classicism has been evident in some unexpected places, and it has been part of the lives not merely of those whose elite education enabled them to learn Latin at a young age'.[3] Indeed, the development of the classical tradition and reception of Classics in Africa[4] has a long and varied history.[5] Classical culture has played a visible role among various African cultures in different regions of the subcontinent.[6] Scholars have attempted to examine the role of Classics from the perspectives of the classical tradition and classical reception, with the inherent associations of either of these approaches having the potential to affect the interpretation of specific literary, architectural and other types of works examined.

Encounters with Classics in Africa are evident in such diverse areas as literature, law, education, architecture, sculpture and museology, with some of these encounters first being apparent from as early as the sixteenth century, which postdates the earliest adapted citation of Pliny's aforementioned dictum by the humanist Vergilius

[1] On the origin, history and uses of this expression, see I. Ronca, '*Semper Aliquid Novi Africam Adferre*: Philological Afterthoughts on the Plinian Reception of a Pre-Aristotelian Saying', *Akroterion*, 37.3–4, 1992, pp. 146–58; I. Ronca, '*Ex Africa Semper Aliquid Noui*: The Ever-Surprising Vicissitudes of a Pre-Aristotelian Proverb', *Latomus*, 53.3, 1994, pp. 570–93; cf. A. Van Stekelenburg, '*Ex Africa Semper Aliquid Novi*: A Proverb's Pedigree', *Akroterion*, 33.4, 1988, pp. 114–20.

[2] This article is adapted from the oral presentation I gave as part of the session 'Global Classical Traditions' held on 7 January 2018 at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Classical Studies in Boston, USA [https://classicalstudies.org/development-classical-tradition-africa-theoretical-considerations-and-interpretive-consequences, accessed 4 November 2022]. I have retained the general focus of my presentation, though I have excluded one of two case studies from this published version and instead have included material that deals with the theme of this special issue titled *The Global Dissemination of Classical Learning*, specifically the circumstances under which classical texts and ideas were first introduced to the African subcontinent (that is, sub-Saharan Africa as opposed to north Africa); see also n. 6 below. The main title of this article is a variation upon a suggested title made by Grant Parker (Stanford).

[3] G. Parker, 'The Azanian Muse: Classicism in Unexpected Places', in *South Africa, Greece, Rome: Classical Confrontations*, ed. G. Parker, Cambridge, 2017, p. 7.

[4] For the sake of scholarly convenience, any reference to 'Africa' in this article refers to the African subcontinent, that is, sub-Saharan Africa.

[5] My interest in this subject stems from the decade (1991–2001) I taught at the University of Natal (now University of Kwa-Zulu Natal) in South Africa before and after the official end of apartheid in 1994.

[6] The references to Africa in this essay are not meant to obscure or simplify the variations and contrasts in the histories and cultures of the southern, western, and eastern areas of the continent, including differences in chronologies and types of colonial histories and educational systems; rather, my purpose is to discuss what I describe as 'classical' elements in the geographical area south of the Saharan Desert known as sub-Saharan or subcontinental Africa.

Polydorus of Urbino in the late fifteenth century.[7] From the vantage point of some dominant racial and social groups on the subcontinent, classical 'influences' have had a positive and even 'civilizing' dimension. From the standpoint of various subordinate racial and social groups, the classical tradition and classical reception have been perceived as a positive or negative development in Africa, depending upon their experiences and encounters with manifestations of classical culture. Regardless of their feelings about and perspective on their classical encounters, various dominant and subordinate groups have used classical ideas and motifs for diverse social, cultural and political purposes, as reflected, for example, in the cultural area of drama. Examining one of these dramatic texts from South Africa -- Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island* -- by using the models of the classical tradition and reception reveals the potential for different readings to be produced as a result of these disparate approaches. Such an investigation also reveals the theoretical usefulness of a new term to describe the dynamics involved in both of these approaches -- that of the classical 'traception'.

The African Context: Theoretical and Practical Considerations

'Classics' has (or 'the Classics' have) sometimes been associated negatively with colonialism, elitism and oppression, as argued, for example, by Mike Lambert in *The Classics and South African Identities*.[8] Its adjectival form 'classical', which scholars of Classics (or Classical Studies) generally use in reference to their investigation and teaching of the Greek and Roman worlds, has sometimes been viewed as being meaningless, as no less a scholar than Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff thought,[9] and even undefinable, as suggested by James Porter.[10] Even so, the use of 'classical' in this essay refers both to the actual works created in Graeco-Roman antiquity and more generally to the idea of classicism and its constructions in western thought. Despite what Porter alleges is the indefinability of the term, he remarks that 'the idea of the classical has a cachet that continues to translate into cultural prestige, authority, elitist satisfactions, and economic power …'.[11]

[7] On this see Ronca, '*Semper Aliquid Novi Africam Adferre*' (n. 1 above), p. 153; Ronca, '*Ex Africa Semper Aliquid Noui*' (n. 1 above), p. 581. Cf. Van Stekelenburg, '*Ex Africa Semper Aliquid Novi*' (n. 1 above), p. 116 and p. 120, who gives a *terminus post quem* of the early sixteenth century.

[8] See, e.g. M. Lambert, *The Classics and South African Identities*, London, 2011, *passim*; for critical responses to some of the associations suggested by Lambert, see J.-M. Claassen, Review of M. Lambert, *The Classics and South African Identities* (London, 2011), *Acta Classica*, 61, 2012, pp. 172–8; J. Atkinson, Review of M. Lambert, *The Classics and South African Identities* (London, 2010), *Acta Classica*, 61, 2012, pp. 178–82; and W. J. Dominik, 'The Politics of Classics in South Africa: Identity, Race, Language, and Scholarship', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 20.3, 2013, pp. 101–12.

[9] On Wilamowitz's view of the term 'classical', see J. Porter, 'Introduction: What Is "Classical" About Classical Antiquity?', in *Classical Pasts: The Classical Traditions of Greece and Rome*, ed. J. Porter, Princeton, 2005, pp. 1–2; J. Porter, 'What Is "Classical" About Classical Antiquity? Eight Propositions', *Arion*, 13.1, 2005, p. 27.

[10] Specifically Porter, 'Introduction' (n. 9 above), pp. 2–3, remarks: '… if anything was learned from the once raging but now weary and exhausted debates of the past centuries, it is surely the conclusion that the terms formed around the idea of the classical can have no satisfactory definition'.

[11] Porter, 'Introduction' (n. 9 above), p. 3; cf. Porter, *Classical Pasts* (n. 9 above), p. 28.

With respect to the terms 'tradition' and 'reception', which have been used often in conjunction with 'classical', there has been considerable debate.[12] Most scholars who examine the role of Classics in Africa have done so from the viewpoint of either the 'classical tradition' or 'classical reception', though in practice these terms have sometimes been used broadly with little, if any, appreciable difference in their definition and interpretive application. This approach is followed by Anthony Grafton, Glenn Most and Salvatore Settis in their recent dictionary *The Classical Tradition*, whose first sentence (in the preface) makes obvious the title's synonymity with the 'classical reception': 'This book aims to provide a reliable and wide-ranging guide to the *reception* [my emphasis] of classical Graeco-Roman antiquity in all its dimensions in later cultures'.[13] The difference between the classical tradition and reception is partly one of perspective and perception. The classical reception model attempts to examine how modern African writers, thinkers, artists and architects, among others, have appropriated and adapted classical themes to suggest continuity with the past or to challenge its perspective;[14] this approach is highly selective and refractive, since modern African dramatists, for example, choose specific aspects of the classical world or its subsequent hypertexts to appropriate and to adapt in shaping their works.

The 'traditional' model of the classical tradition is arguably more rigid ideologically than the classical reception approach in that greater emphasis is placed upon the past and what it has had to offer to a subsequent period or culture, as is suggested by its derivation from Latin *traditio* ('a handing down'). The classical tradition does have the potential to emphasize both the foundation and 'influence' of classical civilization and ideas upon African societies in such a way as to suggest both the continuity of and the passing on of eternal ideals, truths and forms to successive generations up to the time of the present age.[15] Even though the notion of a direct link between the west European classical and modern African worlds *may* be inherent in the approach, the classical tradition may also suggest an indirect link or a 'refraction', that is, a connection to the ancient world through the intermediary of a previous encounter.[16] Although the classical tradition suggests the 'handing down'

[12] This section builds upon some of the ideas developed in W. J. Dominik, 'Classicism in South Africa', *Acta Classica*, 62, 2019, pp. 251–6. My purpose here is not to discuss such well-worn topics such as the origins of reception theory and relevant German scholarship but rather issues regarding the models of the classical tradition and reception, including my new conception of the classical 'traception', that are relevant to the history and role of Classics on the African subcontinent.

[13] *The Classical Tradition*, ed. A. Grafton, G. Most and S. Settis,Cambridge MA and London, 2010, p. vii.

[14] Cf. B. Goff, *'Your Secret Language': Classics in the British Colonies of West Africa*, Oxford, 2013, p. 2, who defines the classical reception as 'the redeployment of classical texts and artefacts by subsequent societies and cultures'; cf. L. Hardwick, *Reception Studies*, Oxford, 2003, p. 4, and Goff, *'Your Secret Language'*, p. 5, who argue for a dialogic aspect to the classical reception, with Goff noting that this model involves the appropriation of classical culture even as it 'potentially resists incorporation'.

[15] Cf. Hardwick, *Reception Studies* (n. 14 above), p. 3.

[16] Cf. M. Silk, I. Gildenhard and R. Barrow, *The Classical Tradition: Art, Literature, Thought*, Hoboken and Chichester, 2014, p. 5, who assert that 'the classical tradition, as a continuum, subsumes not only direct engagements with antiquity, but engagements with earlier engagements'.

of ideas from the past, African societies have drawn upon this tradition and adapted its elements for their own political, cultural and social purposes in a manner that is more akin to the paradigm of classical reception.[17]

The perceived negative associations of the phrase 'classical tradition' has been the subject of much discussion, especially by advocates of the term 'classical reception' and its variants. One of the criticisms of the classical tradition has been that it is laden explicitly or implicitly with Eurocentric assumptions and values.[18] Indeed, the supposed civilizing aspect of the classical tradition and its 'influence', which is a frequent theme of Gilbert Highet's *The Classical Tradition*,[19] constituted a part of the ideology of postcolonial education in Africa. At first, Classics did not form part of the education of indigenous Africans, however, since in the Cape of Good Hope in southern Africa, for example, the first evidence of classical education emerges in the Latin schools in the early eighteenth century for the white sons of Dutch, German and French settlers.[20] For this demographic group the knowledge of Latin was not only required for those who wanted to enter the legal professions since the courts functioned in terms of Roman-Dutch law, but such knowledge also was a social marker of being educated and 'civilized'. This is reminiscent of the idea of cultural capital developed by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, in which knowledge and education, including knowledge of the Classics or the classical languages,[21] become an instrument of political power and social success,[22] to which can be added social control.[23]

Recently edited volumes such as Craig Kallendorf's *A Companion to the Classical Tradition*[24] and James Porter's *Classical Pasts: The Classical Traditions of Greece and Rome*[25] avoid drawing an overt association between the classical tradition and its imagined 'civilizing' aspect and influence. Michael Silk, Ingo Gildenhard and Rosemary Barrow's *The Classical Tradition: Art, Literature, Thought*,[26] not only avoids making this association but also asserts that the 'classical tradition' has 'arguably' always had 'strongly positive connotations', is a wider concept than

[17] On some of the aforementioned differences in perspective between the classical tradition and the classical reception, cf. Goff, *'Your Secret Language'* (n. 14 above), p. 5.

[18] See, e.g. D. Fowler, *Roman Constructions: Readings in Postmodern Latin* Oxford, 2000, p. 5; F. Decreus, '"The Same Kind of Smile?" About the "Use and Abuse" of Theory in Constructing the Classical Tradition', in *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds*, ed. L. Hardwick and C. Gillespie, Oxford, 2007, p. 251; A. L. B. van Weyenberg, *The Politics of Adaptation: Contemporary African Drama and Greek Tragedy*, Amsterdam and New York, 2013, pp. xiv–xxi; cf. W. J. Dominik, 'Africa', in *A Companion to the Classical Tradition*, ed. C. Kallendorf, Oxford, 2007, pp. 130–31.

[19] G. Highet, *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature*, Oxford, 1949.

[20] On the establishment of these first Latin schools at the Cape, see below, 'Areas of Classical "Traception" and First Classical Contacts'.

[21] P. F. Bourdieu and J.-C. Passeron, *La Reproduction: Éléments pour une théorie du systéme d'enseignement*, Paris, 1970, pp. 154–5.

[22] Bourdieu and Passeron, *La Reproduction* (n. 21 above), *passim*.

[23] Bourdieu and Passeron, *La Reproduction* (n. 21 above), pp. 224, 227.

[24] C. Kallendorf, ed., *A Companion to the Classical Tradition*, Oxford, 2007.

[25] Porter, *Classical Pasts* (n. 9 above).

[26] Silk, Gildenhard and Barrow, *The Classical Tradition* (n. 16 above).

'classical reception', and vies for essentially the same contested content, topics and themes.[27]

Following in the wake of Silk, Gildenhard and Barrow's strongly favourable perspective on the term 'classical tradition' and its subject matter, Grant Parker, a South African-born scholar of Classics, nevertheless maintains that some classicists have rejected the concept of the classical tradition in favour of that of reception on the basis that the former 'implies uncritical celebration', but, as he observes, this is not entirely the case.[28] Parker further argues that 'it has become axiomatic, at least in the historical disciplines generally, that the notion of tradition deserves some measure of scepsis, and that the term has lost its supposed innocence'.[29] Indeed, one of the reasons that classicists began to favour the use of the term 'classical reception' is not just because the 'classical tradition' can imply 'uncritical celebration', but because it can also suggest other ideologically questionable positions and evoke various negative associations with colonialism, imperialism and racism. In regard to South Africa, Parker himself observes that 'the classical tradition … has been associated with colonialism';[30] Federico Freschi mentions its association with British imperialism (p. 65);[31] and Lambert relates the study of Classics to an alleged racist past.[32] These associations apply just as much to West Africa, where the classical tradition has had an equally long history and exerted a similar 'influence'.[33]

'Reception', which Charles Martindale noted has been preferred instead of 'tradition' or 'heritage' in order to emphasize the '*active* role played by receivers',[34] constitutes a critical response to the perspective of the classical tradition. Even so, the use of the term 'reception' itself is anything but new: August Buck used it in a relatively straightforward sense over four decades ago to refer to classically based Romance-language materials of the Renaissance in a volume titled *Die Rezeption der Antike in den romanischen Literaturen der Renaissance*.[35] Some recent scholars of the reception approach have favoured the terms 'receptions',[36] 'reception

[27] Silk, Gildenhard and Barrow, *The Classical Tradition* (n. 16 above), pp. 3–14, esp. pp. 4–7, 12–13.

[28] Parker, 'The Azanian Muse' (n. 3 above), p. 3.

[29] Parker, 'The Azanian Muse' (n. 3 above), p. 10 n. 10.

[30] Parker, 'The Azanian Muse' (n. 3 above), p. 9.

[31] F. Freschi, '"Poetry in Pidgin": Notes on the Persistence of Classicism in the Architecture of Johannesburg', in *South Africa, Greece, Rome: Classical Confrontations*, ed. G. Parker, Cambridge, 2017, p. 65.

[32] Lambert, *The Classics* (n. 8 above), p. 123.

[33] W. J. Dominik, 'Afrika', in *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Band 13*: Rezeptions- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte A–Fo*, ed. M. Landfester, H. Cancik and H. Schneider, Stuttgart, 1999, cols. 22–6; W. J. Dominik, 'Africa', in *Brill's New Pauly. Encyclopedia of the Ancient World: The Classical Tradition*, vol. 1*: A–Del*, ed. M. Landfester, H. Cancik and H. Schneider, Leiden, 2006, cols. 64–8; and Dominik, 'Africa' (n. 18 above), pp. 117–31 *passim*; Goff, *'Your Secret Language'* (n. 14 above), *passim*.

[34] C. Martindale, 'Introduction: Thinking Through Reception', in *Classics and the Uses of Reception*, ed. C. Martindale and R. F. Thomas, Malden, 2006, p. 11.

[35] A. Buck, *Die Rezeption der Antike in den romanischen Literaturen der Renaissance*, Berlin, 1976.

[36] L. Hardwick, 'Editorial', *Classical Receptions Journal*, 1.1, 2009, p. 2.

studies',[37] or even 'recipience'.[38] In recent times the concept of classical reception has gained critical predominance in which the ideals and models of the classical period constantly speak in different ways to subsequent ages in different parts of the world. Although the use of 'reception' has been criticized on the grounds that it 'implies too simplistic a model of departure and arrival',[39] the related phrase 'reception studies' conceptually allows more readily than 'tradition' for the reception of a hypertext by a hypotext.[40] Therefore it is possible to argue that the model of the classical reception produces a greater range of potential responses to the texts and ideas of the Graeco-Roman world. In any event, the result of the shift in critical perspective to 'reception' (and its variants) has fostered much creativity and originality on the African subcontinent, especially in classically derived drama, in relation to the expression of modern ideas about postcolonialism, democracy, multiculturalism, religion and social issues.

The 'reception' approach to the classical past, as suggested above, is not without its own conceptual issues and problematic associations -- and not just in relation to African cultures. In addition to the aforementioned oversimplicity attributed to 'reception' as a theoretical model (of departure and arrival),[41] the term has been criticized for suggesting a 'relatively weak or passive mode of acceptance or recognition'.[42] Martindale challenges the latter perception and responds in turn that 'tradition' '*might* [my emphasis] imply that the process of transmission is comfortably uncontested,[43] but this need not be the case, as Michael Silk, Ingo Gildenhard and Rosemary Barrow suggest through their broad and diverse conception of the 'classical tradition'.[44] Some scholars, including Lorna Hardwick, criticize the concept of the 'classical tradition' while attempting to establish their own case for the use of the term 'classical reception'.[45] Even so, Silk, Gildenhard and Barrow's expansive and multifarious concept of the 'classical tradition' presents a direct challenge to Hardwick's view of the 'classical tradition' as being based upon a 'narrow range of

[37] Hardwick, *Reception Studies* (n. 14 above), *passim*; L. Hardwick and C. Stray, 'Introduction: Making Connections', in *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, ed. L. Hardwick and C. Stray, Chichester, 2008, pp. 1–10; M. De Pourcq, 'Classical Reception Studies: Reconceptualizing the Study of the Classical Tradition', *The International Journal of the Humanities*, 9.4, 2012, pp. 219–25; Goff, *'Your Secret Language'* (n. 14 above), pp. 5, 7; C. Foster, 'Familiarity and Recognition: Towards a New Vocabulary for Classical Reception Studies', in *Framing Classical Reception Studies: Different Perspectives on a Developing Field*, ed. M. De Pourcq, N. De Haan and D. Rijser, Leiden, 2020, pp. 33–69.

[38] T. Whitmarsh, 'True Histories: Lucian, Bakhtin, and the Pragmatics of Reception', in *Classics and the Uses of Reception*, ed. C. Martindale and R. F. Thomas, Malden, 2006, p. 115.

[39] Whitmarsh, 'True Histories' (n. 38 above), p. 115.

[40] Cf. Hardwick, *Reception Studies* (n. 14 above), p. 4: '… in reception studies … the focus is on the two-way relationship between the source text or culture and the new work and receiving culture'.

[41] Whitmarsh, 'True Histories' (n. 38 above), p. 115.

[42] P. Baehr and M. O'Brien, *Founders, Classics and the Concept of a Canon*, London, 1994, pp. 86–7; cf. M. Silk, I. Gildenhard and R. Barrow, *The Classical Tradition: Art, Literature, Thought*, Hoboken and Chichester, 2014, p. 12 and n. 8.

[43] C. Martindale, 'Reception', in *A Companion to the Classical Tradition*, ed. C. Kallendorf, Oxford, 2007, p. 300.

[44] Silk, Gildenhard and Barrow, *The Classical Tradition* (n. 16 above), pp. 1–14, esp. 4–6, 10, 12–14.

[45] L. Hardwick, *Reception Studies* (n. 14 above), pp. 1–4.

perspectives' and capable of assuming an 'unproblematic' signification that needs only to be comprehended and applied to situations remote from its Greek or Roman context.[46]

In the midst of this debate and the problematic associations of the phrases 'classical tradition' and 'classical reception'[47] (and such variations as 'receptions,'[48] 'reception studies'[49] and 'recipience'[50]), some scholars have employed other terms and coined new ones. Of the traditional terms used in Anglophone scholarship, the most common one probably has been 'classical heritage', which is not new and, like the concept of the 'classical tradition', is invested with its own ideological baggage. As Parker notes, 'heritage' can function as an expression of 'a legacy, in the sense of an enriching survival or bequest'.[51] The title of R. R. Bolgar's *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries*,[52] for example, suggests explicitly that those subject to classical ideas inherently *must* benefit from them. Indeed, at least in the way the phrase 'classical heritage' has been used, the emphasis usually has been placed upon the enriching cultural 'legacy' of Classics rather than on its potential to function as a negative cultural burden or collective memory. But the concept of the 'classical heritage' is no less immune to the charge of cultural bias than that of the 'classical tradition'. As Parker observes, the term 'heritage' can function 'as a burden, either on the lines of inheriting a debt or of traumatic collective memory'.[53] More specifically, Goff criticizes the 'classical heritage' for playing 'a part in European cultural arrogance and in the corresponding intellectual subjections among colonized peoples, the "mind-forged manacles" of cultural dependency, which anti-colonial writers have so often decried'.[54]

Among other traditional terms, *Nachleben* is a German (and thus Eurocentric) word,[55] whose translation 'afterlife' is frequently used Anglophone scholarship,[56] while even a term like 'influence' has been laden with Eurocentric assumptions and

[46] Hardwick, *Reception Studies* (n. 14 above), p. 3.

[47] For various discussions of and comparisons between the terms 'classical tradition' and 'classical reception', see Hardwick, *Reception Studies* (n. 15 above), pp. 1–11; F. Budelmann and J. Haubold, 'Reception and Tradition', in *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, ed. L. Hardwick and C. Stray, Chichester, 2008, pp. 13–25; De Pourcq, 'Classical Reception Studies' (n. 37 above), pp. 219-25; M. Broder, 'Tradition vs. Reception as Models for Studying the Great Books.' *Classical World*, 106.3, 2013, pp. 505–15; Silk, Gildenhard and Barrow (n. 16 above), pp. 3–14; and Foster, 'Familiarity and Recognition' (n. 37 above), pp. 33–69.

[48] See n. 36 above.

[49] See nn. 14, 37 above.

[50] See no. 38 above.

[51] G. Parker, 'Classical Heritage? By Way of an Afterword', in *South Africa, Greece, Rome: Classical Confrontations*, ed. G. Parker, Cambridge, 2017, p. 485.

[52] R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries*, Cambridge, 1954.

[53] Parker, 'Classical Heritage' (n. 51 above), p. 485.

[54] Goff, *'Your Secret Language'* (n. 14 above), p. 4.

[55] E.g. J. S. Pendergast, '*Nachleben* Is Where You Find It', *The Classical Journal*, 83.4, 1988, pp. 323–5; C. Kallendorf, 'Philology, the Reader, and the "Nachleben" of Classical Texts', *Modern Philology*, 92.2, 1994, pp. 137–56.

[56] E.g. A. Forsyth, 'No Longer Lost for Words: Antigone's Afterlife', *Colloquy: Text, Theory, Critique*, 11, 2006, pp. 127–47.

values through its association with the 'classical tradition', as evident in the full title of Highet's tome *The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature*.[57] The term 'legacy' has also been used to refer to the 'influence' of classical ideas and works upon subsequent civilizations and their cultural, artistic and intellectual achievements, as evident in Moses Finley's edited volume *The Legacy of Greece* and Richard Jenkyn's *The Legacy of Rome*.[58] Another term used by critics in discussing classical texts is 'adaptation',[59] which refers to a hypertext that is derived from or alludes to a hypotext, has been used, as in the phrase 'reception studies',[60] to refer to a bidirectional process of influence and change.[61]

Yet other scholars have suggested new phrases, which have had *inter alia* the effect of affording variety and avoiding the potentially pejorative or detracting associations of the aforementioned phrases. While Shane Butler has proposed 'Deep Classics' as a *tertium quid* between 'tradition' and 'reception',[62] the phrase is not immediately graspable by readers unfamiliar with his conception of Classics. Lawrence Venuti uses the term 'domestication' to refer to the process of translation,[63] but his discussion is relevant to the model of the classical 'reception'. The translation of a text from a 'foreign' language results in a new text laden with linguistic and sociocultural markers that are comprehensible to a 'domestic' audience. The process can be likened to the 're-writing' of a classical work so that the themes and characters of the hypertext resonate with a contemporary audience because of recognizable or even shared experiences, though, as in the case of Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island*,[64] there is the problematic issue of attempting to distinguish between 'foreign' (classical) and 'domestic' (South African) elements arises because of its culturally hybrid nature. Barbara Goff has suggested a model of 'pulling', whereby the classical work can be conceived as being 'pulled' into the present by a power that makes use of the work for its own ends, but as such this term suggests a unidirectional model of reception.[65] Yet another concept is Emily Greenwood's 'frail connections', which is a concession that the connections between modern and classical literature will sometimes be tenuous or 'frail'.[66] Sometime the connection may exist only in the imagination of the reader, since a contemporary work is not always derived from an apparent classical hypotext. Such an example is the Nigerian

[57] Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (n. 19 above).

[58] M. Finley, ed., *The Legacy of Greece: A New Appraisal*, Oxford, 1981; R. Jenkyn, *The Legacy of Rome: A New Appraisal*, Oxford, 1992.

[59] E.g. Dominik, 'Africa' (n. 18 above), pp. 117–31, esp. pp. 118–126; Van Weyenberg, *The Politics of Adaptation* (n. 18 above), pp. xxi–xxix.

[60] Hardwick, *Reception Studies* (n. 14 above), p. 4; cf. n. 40 above.

[61] Van Weyenberg, *The Politics of Adaptation* (n. 18 above), p. xxii.

[62] S. Butler, 'Introduction: On the Origin of "Deep Classics"', in *Deep Classics: Rethinking Classical Reception*, ed. S. Butler, London and New York, 2016, pp. 1–19, esp. p. 3.

[63] L. Venuti, 'Translation and the Formation of Cultural Identities', in *Cultural Functions of Translation*, ed. C. Schäffner and H. Kelly-Holmes, Clevedon, 1995, pp. 9–25, esp. 9–10, 18–19, 22, 26.

[64] See below, 'Africanizing Greek Tragedy: Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island*'.

[65] B. Goff, 'Introduction', in *Classics and Colonialism*, ed. B. Goff, London, 2005, p. 13.

[66] E. Greenwood, *Afro-Greeks: Dialogues Between Anglophone Caribbean Literature and Classics in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford, 2009, p. 1.

love 'chapbook' (*Balladenbücher*), which may seem to be composed in the spirit of Ovid´s *Ars Amatoria* in order to introduce the reader to the art of love,[67] though there is no evidence that Ovid served as the actual inspiration for this genre.

The theoretical distinction between the most frequently used terms 'classical tradition' and 'classical reception' may seem artificially rigid, especially given the tendency by some scholars to use them synonymously.[68] This tendency may suggest that these terms overlap to such an extent in terms of their scholarly use that there is no need to distinguish between them, but other scholars who prefer the 'classical reception' stress the semantic and methodological differences between this term and the 'classical tradition'.[69] Probably no term is without its own problems and baggage, but one can conceive of a paradigm of classical 'influence' that is based upon a more fluid relationship between these models.

My proposed neologism to describe this suggested paradigm is classical 'traception'. Some classical scholars have stretched their conception of the classical tradition or the classical reception to include the other.[70] The concept of the classical 'traception' patently embraces the 'traditional' models of both the classical tradition and classical reception -- the former through its suggestion of linear descent and the latter through its 'receptive' and reconfigurative associations -- and therefore obviates the need for critics to expand their conception of the traditional models. The cross-pollination between 'original' works and their later adaptations is reciprocal and shifting in nature. What is required, according to Whitmarsh, is a critical term that suggests 'a richer sense of the constant shuttling back and forth between text, interpreter and intermediaries'.[71] The term 'traception' makes clearer the dialogic nature of the transactional forces involved in this process of linear descent and reception.

Using the example of Homer, Martindale argues that the 'original' itself is transformed by its later iterations and in the process opens up the text for new readings:[72] 'Homer has been changed for us by Virgil and Milton, who have left their traces in his text, and thereby enabled new possibilities of meaning'.[73] The same can be said for Sophocles' *Antigone*, whose numerous adaptations over the centuries have provided 'refracted' perspectives for reading and interpreting the ancient drama. In addition, the protean model of 'traception' facilitates the integration of various hybrid cultural elements that reflect a work's diverse origins and multi-faceted aspects,[74] not all of which may be defined as 'classical', as can

[67] Dominik, 'Afrika' (n. 33 above), col. 23, Dominik, 'Africa' (n. 33 above), col. 66.

[68] See, e.g. n. 13 above.

[69] See Martindale, 'Introduction: Thinking Through Reception' (n. 34 above), p. 11; Hardwick, *Reception Studies* (n. 14 above), pp. 2–3.

[70] See, e.g. n. 13 above (classical tradition) and n. 40 above (classical reception) with footnoted text in the main body of the essay.

[71] Whitmarsh, 'True Histories' (n. 38 above), p. 115.

[72] In private correspondence, Grant Parker has reminded me of Martindale's observation on this reverse process of interpretive influence upon a hypotext.

[73] C. Martindale, *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 6.

[74] This is not to suggest that other models such as the classical tradition and classical reception fail to take into account these hybrid cultural elements to varying degrees. My preferred term in this essay to refer to these variegated cultural features is 'multicultural', though I also use 'transcultural','intercultural' and 'crosscultural' depending upon the specific context, since all these terms have slight differences in signification.

be seen through an examination of the South African Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island*.[75]

Areas of Classical 'Traception' and First Classical Contacts

The main areas of classical 'traception' on the African subcontinent are drama, specifically political drama and non-political drama, poetry and prose, literature in Latin, law and architecture. Many scholars working in these areas have focussed upon specific literary genres, especially Greek drama;[76] particular modern literary works and their classical antecedents;[77] various political[78] and religious themes;[79] and mythological and historical figures from the classical world and their modern equivalents.[80] Tangential concerns of the classical tradition have included not only the history of Classics in regions and particular

[75] See below, 'Africanizing Greek Tragedy: Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island*'.

[76] E.g. M. Mezzabotta, 'Ancient Greek Drama in the New South Africa', in *Theatre: Ancient and Modern*, ed. L. Hardwick, P. E. Easterling, S. Ireland, F. Macintosch and N. Lowe, Milton Keynes, 2000, pp. 246–68; K. J. Wetmore, *The Athenian Sun in an African Sky: Modern African Adaptations of Classical Greek Tragedy*, Jefferson, 2002; J. Maritz, 'Greek Drama in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe', in *Greek and Roman Drama: Translation and Performance*, ed. J. Barsby, Stuttgart, pp. 197–215; F. Budelmann, 'Greek Tragedies in West African Adaptations', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 50, 2004, pp. 1–28 (=Greek Tragedies in West African Adaptations', *Classics and Colonialism*, London, 2005, pp. 108–146); van Weyenberg, *The Politics of Adaptation* (n. 18 above); B. van Zyl Smit, 'Multicultural Reception: Greek Drama in South Africa in the Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries', in *A Companion to Classical Receptions*, ed. L. Hardwick and C. Stray, Chichester, 2008, pp. 373–85 (≈B. van Zyl Smit, 'The Reception of Greek Tragedy in South Africa', *Eirene*, 39, 2003, pp. 234–253); W. J. Dominik, 'Reception of Greek Tragedy in (Sub-Saharan) African Literature', in *The Encyclopedia of Greek Tragedy*, ed. H. M. Roisman, vol. 2, Chichester, 2014, pp. 1116–21; B. Goff, 'The Reception of Greek Drama in Africa: "A Tradition that Intends to Be Established"', in *A Handbook to the Reception of Greek Drama*, ed. B. van Zyl Smit, Chichester, 2016, pp. 446–463.

[77] E.g. B. van Zyl Smit, '*medEia*: A South African *Medea* at the Start of the 21st Century', *Akroterion*, 52, 2007, pp. 1–10; B. Goff and M. Simpson, 'History Sisters: Femi Osofisan's *Tegonni: An African Antigone*, in *Crossroads in the Black Aegean: Oedipus, Antigone, and Dramas of the African Diaspora*, ed. B. Goff and M. Simpson, Oxford, 2007, pp. 321–64; E. Steinmeyer, 'Post-Apartheid Electra: *In the City of Paradise*', in *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds*, ed. L. Hardwick and C. Gillespie, Oxford, 2007, pp. 103–18; O. O. Olasope, 'To Sack a City or to Breach a Woman's Chastity: Euripides' *Trojan Women* and Osofisan's *Women of Owu*', *African Performance Review*, 6.1, pp. 111–21.

[78] E.g. B. van Zyl Smit, 'Medea and Apartheid', *Akroterion*, 37, 1992, pp. 73–81; B. van Zyl Smit, 'Medea Becomes Politically Correct', *Drama*, 10, 2001, pp. 261–84; W. J. Dominik, 'Writing Power and Politics in Classically Derived Afrikaans Drama', in *Alma Parens Originalis? The Receptions of Literature and Thought in Africa, Europe, the United States, and Cuba*, ed. J. Hilton and A. Gosling, Oxford, 2007, pp. 93–115.

[79] E.g. M. Lambert, 'Nomkhubulwana: The Zulu Demeter', *Akroterion*, 35.2, 1990, pp. 46–59; M. Lambert, 'Ancient Greek and Zulu Sacrificial Ritual: A Comparative Analysis', *Numen*, 40, 1993, pp. 293–318; O. O. Olasope, 'Greek and Yoruba Beliefs in Sophocles' *Antigone* and Fémi Osofisan's Adaptation *Tegonni*', in *Papers in Honour of Tekena N. Tamuno at 70*, ed. Egbe Ifie, Ibadan, 2002, pp. 408–20.

[80] E.g. F. Onayemi, 'Courageous Women in Greek and Nigerian Drama: Antigone and Tegonni', *Ibadan Journal of European Studies*, 3, 2002, pp. 153–161.

countries[81] but also especially the study and teaching of the discipline.[82] In general, though, broad overviews that attempt to cover a number of these areas in the classical tradition on the African subcontinent have been rare.[83] A brief overview of these main areas and concerns of the classical tradition in Africa, including how and when classical ideas and texts reached and extended into various regions of sub-Saharan Africa during different periods, will serve as a prelude to the presentation of one 'case study' in the area of drama. The purpose of this case study is to illustrate not only some of the interpretive consequences of using the classical tradition as opposed to that of the classical reception but also the methodological advantages of employing my proposed model of the 'classical traception'.

The main geographical areas in sub-Saharan Africa of early classical encounters and activity, including the writing and teaching of Latin (and to a much lesser degree Greek), were in west Africa, notably the Gold Coast in present-day Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone;[84] southern Africa, especially the Cape of Good Hope in what is now modern South Africa;[85] and east Africa, principally Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (now Tanzania).[86] From the time of the sixteenth century black and white

[81] E.g. Dominik, 'Afrika' (n. 33 above), cols. 22–6; F. Onayemi, 'Classics in Nigeria', *Daedalus*, 3.2, 2002, pp. 11–15; W. J. Dominik, 'Süd Afrika', in *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Band 15.3*: Rezeptions- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte Sco–Z*, ed. M. Landfester, H. Cancik and H. Schneider, Stuttgart, 2003, cols. 342–6; Dominik, 'Africa' (n. 33 above), cols. 64–8; Dominik, 'Africa' (n. 18 above), pp. 117–31; W. J. Dominik, 'South Africa', in *Brill's New Pauly. Encyclopedia of the Ancient World: The Classical Tradition*, vol. *5: Rus–Zor*, ed. M. Landfester, H. Cancik and H. Schneider, Leiden, 2010, cols. 163–8; Lambert, *The Classics* (n. 8 above); Goff, *'Your Secret Language'* (n. 14 above), *passim*; and G. Parker, ed., *South Africa, Greece, Rome: Classical Confrontations*, Cambridge, 2017.

[82] Among the myriad of publications on this subject are J.-M. Claassen, 'The Teaching of Latin in a Multicultural Society: Problems and Possibilities', *Scholia*, 1, 1992, pp. 102–18; W. J. Dominik, '*Quo Vadimus?* Classics at the Crossroads', *Theoria*, 80, 1992, pp. 164–70; J. H. D. Scourfield, 'The Classics After Apartheid', *Classical Journal*, 88.1, 1992, pp. 43–54; W. J. Dominik, 'Classics Making Gains in Sub-Saharan Africa, *The American Classical League Newsletter*, Fall 1993, pp. 4–7; M. Lambert and M. A. Masoga, 'A Pan-African Response to the Classics', *Akroterion*, 39.2, 1994, pp. 75–82; W. J. Dominik, 'Meeting the Educational Crisis of the Post-Apartheid Era: The Classics Foundation Course at the University of Natal', *The Classical Outlook*, 72.4, 1995, pp. 122–25; A. Gosling, 'Classics in South Africa', *Prospects*, Spring 1996, p. 1; W. J. Dominik, 'Classics in West and Central Africa', *Prospects*, Spring 1996, pp. 3–4; R. Whitaker, 'The Classics in South African Society: Past, Present and Future', *Acta Classica*, 40, 1997, pp. 5–14; E. A. Mackay, 'Classics in South Africa: A Way Forward', *Akroterion*, 44, 1999, pp. 79–90; F. Onayemi and N. Henry, 'New Approaches to the Humanities: The Key Role of Classics', in *Rethinking the Humanities in Africa*, ed. S. Akinrinade, D. Fashina, D. O. Ogungbile and J. O. Famakinwa, Ile-Ife, 2007, pp. 241–50; W. J. Dominik, 'Classics as a World Discipline', *Nigeria and the Classics*, 26, 2010, pp. 1–25; M. Lambert, 'On Rainbows and Butterflies: The Classics, the Humanities and Africa', *Acta Classica*, 57, 2014, pp. 1–15; and S. Nyamilandu, *Contextualising Classics Teaching in Malawi: A Comparative Study*, PhD diss., University of Malawi and University of St Andrews, 2016.

[83] E.g. Dominik, 'Africa' (n. 33 above), pp. 117–31.

[84] For a cultural history of Classics in west Africa, see Goff, *'Your Secret Language'* (n. 14 above), *passim*, who focuses on the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.

[85] For a history of Classics in South Africa, see Lambert, *The Classics* (n. 8 above), *passim*.

[86] For a discussion of education in east Africa that include scattered references to the classical languages, see T. J. Jones, *Education in East Africa: A Study of East, Central and South Africa by the Second African Education Commission Under the Auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, in Cooperation with the International Education Board*, New York and London, 1925, and (more recently) A. Mazrui, *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa*, London, 1978.

African poets and writers have used Greek and Roman references in their poetry and prose works. Literature by African writers first appeared in Latin and consisted predominantly of legal, philosophical and historical works.

The earliest black African writer was the poet Juan Latino, who was born as the son of black slaves in a sub-Saharan African territory named by him as Aethiopia in 1516–1518, in Baena (Córdoba, Spain) to 'Guinean' parents who were slaves, or to an enslaved black woman and a master.[87] A translator of Horace, Latino was known especially for his Latin poetry, of which five published works, mainly panegyrics with mythological allusions, are extant. Latino's major poetic work was the *Austrias Carmen*, an epic poem that narrates the victory of Don Juan of Austria over Ottoman forces at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.[88] The *Austriad*, which consisted of two volumes, was the first book of poetry to be published in Latin by a black African. Composed in Latin hexametric verse, the epic contains an opening invocation to Apollo and occasional formulations from classical Latin works. Latino's *Epigrammatum Liber* ('Book of Epigrams'), which was composed mainly in elegiac couplets following the Ovidian model, celebrates the birth of Prince Ferdinand in 1571.[89] Other works of Latino[90] in Latin include a poem on the relations between Pope Pius V and Philip II[91] and a short elegy to Philip II,[92] which appear in the same volume as *Austrias Carmen* and *Epigrammatum Liber*;[93] *De Translatione*, in which Philip II is praised for his filial devotion;[94] and a short poem eulogizing the deeds of Don Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, the third Duke of Sesa.[95]

Another well-known black West African writer who wrote in Latin is Anton Wilhelm Amo (*circa* 1703–*post* 1753), who was born in Axim in the Gold Coast

[87] On the uncertainty of the place of Latino's birth and his parentage, see E. R. Wright, *The Epic of Juan Latino: Dilemmas of Race and Religion in Renaissance Spain*, Toronto, 2016, pp. 25–28.

[88] J. Latino, *Ad Catholicum, Pariter et Invictissimum Philippum Dei Gratia Hispaniarum Regem, de Felicissima Serenissimi Ferdinandi Principis Nativitate, Epigrammatum Liber … Austrias Carmen* ('A Book of Epigrams to the Catholic and Equally Most Invincible Philip, by the Grace of God the King of the Realms of Spain, on the Most Blessed Birth of His Most Serene Prince Ferdinand'), Granada, 1573.

[89] Latino, *Ad Catholicum* (n. 88 above).

[90] For discussions of Latino's literary output in Latin beyond this brief summary, see especially V. B. Spratlin, *Juan Latino: Slave and Humanist*, New York, 1938, pp. 33–62; and, e.g. O. R. Dathorne, *The Black Mind: A History of African Literature*, Minneapolis, 1974, pp. 67–75, esp. 68–73; H. L. Gates and M. Wolff, 'An Overview of Sources on the Life and Work of Juan Latino, the "Ethiopian Humanist"', *Research in African Literatures*, 29.4, 1998, pp. 14–41, esp. 25–31; J. M. Seo, 'Latino, Juan (1518–*c.* 1594/1596)', in *Dictionary of African Biography,* vol. 3*: Hailu–Lyaut*, ed. E. K. Akyeampong and H. L. Gates, Jr., Oxford, 2012, pp. 470–72; and Wright, *The Epic of Juan Latino* (n. 87 above), *passim*.

[91] *De Sanctissimi Pii Quinti Romanae Eclesiae Pontificis Sumi, Rebus et Afectibus erga Philippum Regem Christianissimum Liber Unus* ('One Book on the Affairs and Affections of the Most Holy Pius V, Highest Pope of the Roman Church, in relation to Philip, the most Christian King').

[92] *De Natali Serenissimi ad Catholicum et Invictissimum Regem Philippum Elegia* ('On the Birth of Untroubled Times to the Catholic and Most Invincible King Philip').

[93] Latino, *Ad Catholicum* (n. 88 above).

[94] J. Latino, *De Augusta et Catholica Regalium Corporum Translatione per Catholicum Philippum … Epigrammatum sive Epitaphiorum, Libri Duo* ('Two Books of Epigrams or Epitaphs on the Magnificent and Catholic Transfer of the Royal Remains by Catholic Philip'), Granada, 1576.

[95] J. Latino, *Ad Excellentissimum et Invictissimum D. D. Gonzalum Ferdinandez a Corduba*, Granada ('To the most noble and most invincible Don Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba'), Granada, 1585.

(Ghana). He was taken to Germany a few years after his birth and educated there. Amo wrote works on legal and philosophical subjects,[96] including a lost thesis asserting the rights of the Moors in Europe and the equality of all races.[97] Amo also wrote a doctoral thesis arguing that it is the body, not the mind, that perceives and feels,[98] and a work discussing the art of philosophizing.[99]

A black West African writer known especially for his elaborate style of classical Latin prose was Jacobus Eliza Johannes Capitein (1717–1747), who was born in the Gold Coast and taken to the Netherlands at age eleven. After being educated in the Netherlands, he returned as a schoolmaster and preacher to the Gold Coast.[100] Capitein published some of his sermons and lectures.[101] In a dissertation he argues on theological grounds, despite his own status as a former slave, that slavery is not incompatible with Christian freedom.[102] This is a remarkable argument for a black African intellectual to make, even considering the prevailing social attitudes of his time, and it stands in distinct contrast to his black African literary predecessor Juan Latino, who rejected the concept of natural slavery and asserted the worth of black Africans in his epic *Austriad*.[103] From the perspective of black emancipation, Capitein's stance illustrates the social phenomenon of a subjugated black man accepting the dominant ideology of his white master for his own advancement.[104]

[96] For further information on the works of Amo, see, e.g. B. Brentjes, *Anton Wilhelm Amo: Der Schwartze Philosoph in Halle*, Leipzig, 1976, *passim*; J. E. Mabe, *Wilhelm Anton Amo interkulterell gelesen*, Nordhausen, 2007, *passim*; W. E. Abraham, 'The Life and Times of Anton Wilhelm Amo, the First African (Black) Philosopher in Europe', in *African Intellectual Heritage: A Book of Sources*', ed. M. K. Asante and A. S. Abarry, Philadelphia, 1996, pp. 424–40; J. E. Mabe, 'Amo, Anton William (*c.* 1700–*c.* 1759)', in *Dictionary of African Biography,* vol. 1*: Abach–Brand*, ed. E. K. Akyeampong and H. L. Gates, Jr., Oxford, 2012, pp. 221–2.

[97] A. W. Amo, *De Jure Maurorum in Europa* ('On the Rights of the Moors in Europe'), Halle, 1729.

[98] A. W. Amo, *De Humanae Mentis Απάθεια seu Sensionis ac Facultatis Sentiendi in Mente Humana Absentia et Earum in Corpore Nostro Organico ac Vivo Praesentia* ('On the Impassivity of the Human Mind or the Absence of Sensation and the Ability to Feel in the Human Mind and Their Presence in Our Organic and Living Body'), Halle, 1734.

[99] A. W. Amo, *Tractatus de Arte Sobrie et Accurate Philosophandi* ('A Treatise on the Art of Philosophizing Soundly and Accurately'), Leiden, 1736.

[100] For discussions of Capitein, see, e.g. K. K. Prah, *Jacobus Eliza Johannes Capitein, 1717–1747: A Critical Study of an Eighteenth-Century African*, Trenton, 1992, *passim*; D. N. A. Kpobi, *Mission in Chains: The Life, Theology and Ministry of the Ex-Slave Jacobus E. J. Capitein (1717–1747)*, Zoetermeer, 1993, *passim*; G. Parker, ed. and tr., *The Agony of Asar: A Thesis on Slavery by the Former Slave Jacobus Elisa Johannes Capitein,* 1717-1747, Princeton, 1999, pp. 3–78; and G. Parker, 'Capitein, Jacobus Elisa Johannes (1717–1747)', in *Dictionary of African Biography,* vol. 2*: Brath–Haile*, ed. E. K. Akyeampong and H. L. Gates, Jr., Oxford, 2012, pp. 34–5.

[101] E.g. *De Vocatione Ethnicorum* ('On the Calling of the Heathen'), which was published after being delivered in 1737, but, unfortunately, is not extant.

[102] J. E. J. Capitein, *Dissertatio Politicotheologica de Servitute Libertati Christianae non Contraria*, Wittenberg, 1742.

[103] N. 88 above.

[104] In American terms, the phenomenon is known as the 'Uncle Tom Syndrome', though today the use of the term has evolved internationally to refer to any subjugated minority who *inter alia* adopts some of the habits and practices of the colonial authorities and even identifies with the oppressor; see Paul E. Priester, 'Uncle Tom Syndrome', in *Encyclopedia of Multicultural Psychology*, ed. Yo Jackson, Thousand Oaks, 2006, pp. 461–2.

The circumstances seem at least tangentially reminiscent of the situation discussed below in Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island*, where John (in his role of Creon) adopts the argument of his subjugator in order to justify his own oppression.[105] Further evidence of west Africans with facility in Greek and Latin also emerges from the British colonial era, for example, with the epistolographer Philip Quaque (*circa* 1740–1816), the son of an indigenous chief in the Gold Coast, who in 1765 became the first African ordained in the Church of England after being bought to England by an Anglican missionary organization in 1754.[106]

In the southern part of the African subcontinent the first signs of encounters with Classics are evident in the use of Latin in the historical and legal documents of the seventeenth century, namely in accounts of the native Khoikhoi population[107] and in South African law. The arrival of Latin in southern Africa can be said to have occurred in 1652 with the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape of Good Hope; the doctoral thesis of his son Abraham van Riebeeck[108] was the first Latin text produced by a white native-born South African.[109] Discussions of the Cape in Latin include those of the Dutch settlers Wilhelm ten Rhyne (1647–1700) and Jan Willem van Grevenbroek (1644–*circa* 1725). Ten Rhyne discusses the Cape of Good Hope, its animals, plants and the Khoikhoi people,[110] while van Grevenbroek (1644–*circa* 1725) composed a letter to a friend in the form of a quarto volume of 120 pages describing mainly the Khoikhoi but also the animals, climate, fertility and other features of the Cape;[111] the latter was also the author of a much longer Latin treatise dealing with the native population that does not survive.[112] Gysbert Hemmy, who was a native-born white South African,[113] not only delivered a Latin oration titled 'On the Cape of Good Hope' at the Hamburg Academy,[114] but he also used Latin to

[105] See below, 'Africanizing Greek Tragedy: Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island*'.

[106] On Quaque see V. Carretta and T. M. Reese, *The Life and Letters of Philip Quaque, The First African Anglican Missionary*, Athens (USA), 2010, pp. 1–26; cf. Goff, *'Your Secret Language'* (n. 14 above), pp. 24–5.

[107] The historical term used to refer to the Khokhoi is 'Hottentotts', which was sometimes employed in an abusive sense and is now widely considered to be disparaging and offensive.

[108] A. van Riebeeck, *De Usufructu*, Leiden, 1673.

[109] See A. V. Van Stekelenburg, 'The Cape in Latin and Latin in the Cape in the 17th and 18th Centuries', *Akroterion*, 48, 2003, pp. 89–109.

[110] W. ten Rhyne, *Schediasma de Promontorio Bonae Spei* ('A Short Account of the Cape of Good Hope'), Scheffhausen, 1685, in *The Early Cape Hottentots*, ed. I. Schapera (tr. B. Farrington), Cape Town, 1933, pp. 84–157; cf. Van Stekelenburg, 'The Cape in Latin' (n. 109 above), pp. 91–3.

[111] J. G. Grevenbroek, *Elegans et Accurata Gentis Africanae Circa Promontorium Capitis Bonae Spei Vulgo Hottentotten Nuncupatae Descriptio Epistolaris* ('An Elegant and Accurate Account of the African Race Living Around the Cape of Good Hope Commonly Called Hottentots'), 1695, in *The Early Cape Hottentots*, ed. and tr. I. Schapera, Cape Town, 1933, pp. 172–299; cf. Van Stekelenburg, 'The Cape in Latin' (n. 109 above), pp. 93–102; and A. V. Stekelenburg, 'Een intellektueel in de vroege Kaapkolonie: De nalatenschap van Jan Willem van Grevenbroek (1644–1726), *Tydskrif vir Nederlands en Afrikaans*, 8, 2001, pp. 3–34.

[112] See Van Stekelenburg, 'The Cape in Latin' (n. 109 above), pp. 94–102.

[113] On Hemmy's background and works, see Van Stekelenburg, 'The Cape in Latin' (n. 109 above), pp. 102–7; Lambert, *The Classics* (n. 8 above), pp. 27–31.

[114] G. Hemmy, *De Promontorio Bonae Spei*, Hamburg, 1767.

write his doctoral thesis (the norm at the time), which discusses the ability of non-Europeans to testify in legal proceedings.[115]

The first Latin school, founded in the tradition of the elite Latin schools of Protestant Europe, was opened for the sons of Dutch and other white settlers in the Cape of Good Hope in 1714.[116] Although it later closed, it was followed by the opening of another Latin school in 1793 devoted to the teaching of both Latin and Greek.[117] During this time it is evident that Latin was used in the Cape, since a knowledge of the language was required for admission into the legal profession and lawyers often made reference to Roman law. The influence of Roman law upon Roman-Dutch law in South Africa from the middle of the seventeenth century is one of the more significant cultural developments in African society. Certain aspects of Roman law, which were rearticulated in the Roman-Dutch sources brought to South Africa after the middle of the seventeenth century, were applied in a wide range of legal situations. In fact, in 1672, which was only twenty years after Jan van Riebeeck's establishment of the first settlement in the Cape of Good Hope, the Fiscal cites directly from Justinian's *Digest* and *Institutes* with precise references.[118] The 'influence' of the classical tradition in southern Africa was also apparent in the eighteenth century through the use of classical names for black slaves and free indigenous individuals,[119] thereby associating the classical tradition with hegemonic colonialism.

Although there is a dearth of extant literature composed in Latin or with classical references from east Africa (modern Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania), there is still evidence of its educational and social roles. Classics was especially important in east Africa during the nineteenth century in the mission schools established by European missionaries, who taught Latin and Greek to Africans preparing for a career in the church. Latin was even used as a medium of instruction in the seminaries superintended by the Roman Catholic White Fathers,[120] who produced a Latin-Luganda dictionary and grammar for their Ugandan students.[121] Students might even study Latin for as long as seventeen years while preparing for a career in the ministry.[122] The study of the classical languages in east Africa, then, was both preparation for such a career and for religious practice, in much the same way that the study of Latin in the Cape was both pre-professional in terms of being required for entry into the legal profession and of practical necessity in one's actual career as a lawyer. On a social linguistic level, Latin was even been perceived to serve as a unifier, as when

[115] G. Hemmy, *De Testimoniis Aethiopum, Chinensium, Aliorumque Paganorum in India Orientalis* ('On the Testimony of Africans, Chinese and Other Pagans in East India'), Leiden, 1770.

[116] F. Smuts, 'Classical Scholarship and the Teaching of Classics at Cape Town and Stellensbosch', *Acta Classica*, 3, 1960, p. 7; cf. Lambert, *The Classics* (n. 8 above), p. 25.

[117] Smuts, 'Classical Scholarship' (n. 116 above), p. 8; cf. Lambert, *The Classics* (n. 8 above), p. 26.

[118] J. Hilton, 'The Influence of Roman Law on the Practice of Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope', *Acta Classica*, 50, 2007, p. 4.

[119] See J. L. Hilton, 'The Classical Names Given to Slaves at the Western Cape in the Eighteenth Century', *Nomina Africana*, 18, 2004, pp. 18–36. The assignation of classical names to black slaves is a phenomenon that occurred in other geographical areas such as the United States and the Caribbean.

[120] Jones, *Education in East Africa* (n. 86 above), p. 161−2, 214.

[121] Jones, *Education in East Africa* (n. 86 above), p. 43.

[122] Jones, *Education in East Africa* (n. 86 above), p. 161.

Makerere Univerity in Uganda adopted a Latin motto in place of a Luganda motto, which was seen as representing only a part of the population.[123]

Easily the most visible influence of classical antiquity upon Africa is in the field of colonial architecture, which was the domain of white settlers and their descendants. The form and spirit of classical architecture, with its qualities of monumentality and historicism emblematic of European colonial power and tradition, are evident in the design of hundreds of public buildings in Africa, predominantly in South Africa. From about 1780 a revival of classicism can be detected in South African architecture and included not just the exterior of a building but also its interior design and furnishings. Greek columns with their three orders became common in public and private buildings, as did other Greek features such as porticos and pediments; Roman architectural features, particularly the arch, apse and dome, were also used. Many South African towns founded in the nineteenth century follow the rigid grid pattern of Roman town planning.[124]

Elements of classical myth and drama are evident in the composition of numerous African dramas from the middle of the twentieth century. The second half of this century gave rise to the birth and development of political drama in west and South Africa as a means to express not only a range of political viewpoints regarding power, freedom and justice but also their opposites[125] using figures (or their equivalents) such as Antigone,[126] Orestes,[127] Electra,[128] Medea,[129]

[123] Mazrui, *Political Values* (n. 86 above), p. 99. While universities and schools throughout the African subcontinent continue to use Latin mottos, the motto on the coat of arms of Makerere University (*Pro Futuro Aedificamus*) has since been replaced with its English translation ('We Build for the Future').

[124] For a brief overview of some of these buildings and their neoclassical features in South Africa, see Dominik, 'Africa' (n. 18 above), pp. 129–30; Dominik, 'Süd Afrika' (n. 81 above), pp. 343–4; and Dominik, 'South Africa' (n. 81 above), pp. 164–6. See also F. Freschi, '"Poetry in Pidgin": Notes on the Persistence of Classicism in the Architecture of Johannesburg', in *South Africa, Greece, Rome: Classical Confrontations*, ed. G. Parker, Cambridge, 2017, pp. 55–87.

[125] Dominik, 'Africa' (n. 18 above), pp. 118–25.

[126] Among the best known of the plays featuring Antigone (or an Antigone-like figure) are those of K. Brathwaite, *Odale's Choice*, London, 1967 (Brathwaite was a Barbadian who spent many years in his adopted home of Ghana); A. Fugard, J. Kani and W. Ntshona, *The Island*, in A. Fugard, *Statements: Three Plays*, Oxford, 1973, pp. 45–77 (South African); S. Bemba, *Black Wedding Candles for Blessed Antigone*, tr. T. Brewster, in *Theatre and Politics: An International Anthology*, New York, 1990, pp. 1–62, which is a translation of his *Noces posthumes de Santigone*, Solignac, 1988 (Congolese); and F. Osofisan, *Tegonni: An African Antigone*, in *Recent Outings: Two Plays, Compromising Tegonni: An African Antigone, and Many Colours Make the Thunder King*, Ibadan, 1999, pp. 5–141 (Nigerian).

[127] A. Fugard, *Orestes*, in *Theatre One: New South African Drama*, Johannesburg, 1978, pp. 81–93 (South African); T. Yourgrau, *The Song of Jacob Zulu*, New York, 1993 (born in South Africa); M. Fleishman and J. Reznek, dir., *In the City of Paradise*, unpublished text, 1998 (South African); M. Fleishman and J. Reznek, dir., *In the City of Paradise*, video, 1998; M. McMurtry, in *Electra*, 2000, unpublished production book; Y. Farber, *Molora*, London, 2008.

[128] Fleishman and Reznek, *In the City of Paradise*, unpublished text and video (n. 127 above); McMurtry, *Electra* (n. 127 above); Yaël Farber, *Molora* (n. 127 above).

[129] G. Butler, *Demea*, Cape Town, 1990 (South African); M. Fleishman and J. Reznek, dir., *Medea*, unpublished text (director's copy), 1994 (South African); Fleishman and Reznek, *In the City of Paradise*, unpublished text (n. 127 above); Fleishman and Reznek, *In the City of Paradise*, video (n. 127 above); B. Bailey and L. Bye, dir., *medEia*, Cape Town, 2005.

Dionysus/Bacchus,[130] Oedipus,[131] and Orpheus,[132] Trojan women,[133] tyrants and generals.[134]Various non-political dramas since the middle of the twentieth century that are adapted or inspired by plots and characters of Greek drama are concerned with religious and other subjects.[135]

The aforementioned constitutes a select number of examples of how classical ideas and letters reached and extended into sub-Saharan Africa during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Naturally the effect of the reach and extension of the classical tradition has varied throughout the subcontinent but has been most prominent in West and South Africa. While classical ideas were introduced and influenced the development of African society during the colonial period, African peoples and cultures appropriated and adapted them to their own local and national traditions. Classical ideas and texts have the potential to be either oppressive or emancipative in effect,[136] but this depends upon the particular politico-social context and whether the perspective is that of the colonizer or the colonized or that of the oppressor or the oppressed (or even some combination thereof). Indeed, adherents of classical learning on the African subcontinent tended to be patronizing and even condescending in attitude toward indigenous blacks,[137] whereas much later black as well as white African writers, notably dramatists, have employed classical themes and references to express a range of activist ideas and viewpoints, as illustrated in the following section.

Africanizing Greek Tragedy: Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island*

The conflict that arises in Sophocles' *Antigone* involves the political and private worlds and issues of human power and natural justice. The main plot elements include a brother, Polynices, who, having died in a duel with his brother Eteocles, is denied burial by the Theban king Creon, whereupon his sister Antigone performs simple burial rites that result in Creon sentencing her to death by having Antigone buried alive in a cave. Antigone hangs herself in the cave, whereupon Haemon and Eurydice, Creon's son and wife, respectively, kill themselves. The model of the classical tradition has focussed upon and emphasized *inter alia* the themes of Sophocles' hypotext concerning pride; the conflict between the state and individual;

[130] W. Soyinka, *The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite*, London, 1973 (Nigeria); B. Smit, *Bacchus in die Boland*, Doornfontein, 1974 (South African).

[131] O. Rotimi, *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, Oxford, 1971 (Nigerian); J. Leloup, Gueido, Yaoundé, 1986, Yaoundé (Cameroonian).

[132] S. Bemba, *L'enfer, c'est Orféo*, Paris, 1970 (Congan).

[133] F. Osofisan, *The Women of Owu*, Ibadan, 2006 (Nigerian).

[134] D. J. Opperman, *Periandros van Korinthe*, Cape Town, 1960 (South African); N. P. Van Wyk Louw, *Germanicus*, Cape Town, 1956 (South African); A. P. Brink, *Caesar: 'n Drama*, Cape Town, 1961 (South African).

[135] Dominik, 'Africa' (n. 18 above), pp. 125–6.

[136] Cf. L. Hardwick, 'Refiguring Classical Texts: Aspects of the Postcolonial Condition', in *Classics and Colonialism*, ed. B. Goff, London, 2005, pp. 107–17 *passim*, esp. 108.

[137] See, e.g. Lambert, *The Classics* (n. 8 above), *passim*.

the distinction between human law and divine justice; the issue of gender, specifically the position of women; inaction or lack of agency versus agency; and so on. The *Antigone*'s transmission of values based upon a consideration of these issues has informed subsequent generations of readers. The tragedy is an ideal vehicle to explore the exercise of certain types of political power and its consequences in a modern setting. In a sense, the classical tradition puts emphasis upon the timeless themes of the *Antigone* that transcend its own age.

Numerous dramatic adaptations of Sophocles' *Antigone* have been produced over various ages on a number of different continents,[138] including on the African subcontinent, during the past half century.[139] A scholar working from the perspective of the classical tradition might look for traces of dramatic structures and themes in the dramas of African playwrights that mirror those in the *Antigone*.[140] Arguably the most well-known of the African dramas derived from the *Antigone* is *The Island* by the South Africans Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona (1973).[141] The setting of *The Island* is, befittingly, Robben Island, the site where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated during the era of apartheid,[142] the system of institutionalized racial oppression, after being found guilty on four counts of sabotage at the Rivonia Trial in 1964.[143] In *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela relates the story of how he played the role of Creon when performing *The Island*'s main hypotext of *The Antigone* (in 1970) while a prisoner on Robben Island and the influence this experience had upon his own political ideas.[144]

The basic plot structure of Sophocles' tragedy has been followed in the 'play within the play' of *The Island*. For *The Island*is not directly based upon the *Antigone* but rather is a metaplay: the 'production' contains a performance of a short and radically redacted version of the original to a group of prisoners and guards, including of the Sophoclean trial scene. Although this metadramatic staging of the *Antigone* in *The Island* is only five pages long,[145] there are discussions of the plot and characters of the original in scene one and of its staging in scene two in which the leading black actors John and Winston argue about who will play the parts of Antigone

[138] See S. Harris Smith, 'Twentieth-Century Plays Using Classical Mythic Themes: A Checklist', *Modern Drama*, 39.1, 1986, pp. 113–14; *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage*, ed. E. B. Mee and H. P. Foley, Oxford, 2011; H. Castro, A. Fabián, M. Mueller, 'Reception of the Antigone', *The Literary Encyclopedia*, published 5 November 2012 [https://www.litencyc.com/php/stopics.php?rec=true&UID=19318, accessed 4 November 2022].

[139] See n. 126 above.

[140] As, for example, in my oral presentation titled 'Africanizing Sophocles' Antigone', the abstract of which appears in *American Philological Association Abstracts of the One Hundred and Forty-First Annual Meeting*, Philadelphia, 2010, p. 112.

[141] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 45–77.

[142] As a privileged white male who lived in South Africa for a decade, I cannot possibly understand the black experience under apartheid; even so, *The Island* has had a particular resonance with me partly as a result of having had the opportunity not long after the end of apartheid to visit Robben Island, where I was able to see the cell in which Mandela was incarcerated.

[143] See N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, Boston, 1994, p. 375.

[144] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (n. 143 above), p. 476.

[145] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 73–77.

and Creon.[146] *The Island* commences with a scene showing two prisoners, John and Winston, repetitively miming the digging of sand in a labour described as 'interminable'.[147] The scene is representative not only of the ancient Greek king Sisyphus' meaningless task of repetitively rolling a boulder up a hill only for it to roll back down again as soon as it had reached the summit but also of Camus' absurdist essay titled *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*.[148] Whether viewed through the lens of the classical tradition or that of classical reception, the evocation of this Greek myth in *The Island* shows how a classical idea can be refracted; that is, as suggested above,[149] the reminiscence can evince a link to the ancient world through the intermediary of a slightly earlier hypertext, in this case, Camus' existentialist essay on the Sisyphus myth. The fourth and final scene, in which the performance of the *Antigone* actually occurs, includes the key components common to the Sophoclean original, including an account of the burial (in keeping with ancient Greek and traditional Roman practice) of Polynices and the death of a defiant and heroic Antigone.

In thematic terms, Sophocles' *Antigone* is metamorphosed and resonates broadly in *The Island* through the use of metatheatricality and various African and European transcultural components in order to highlight the themes of political tyranny and oppression, heroic defiance and resistance, racial and cultural prejudice, social and economic injustice, and the triumph of the human spirit in the face of overwhelming odds. Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's reinterpretation of the *Antigone* meditates on the aforementioned themes in ways that have a direct application to political events in modern South Africa. In *The Island* Creon, played by Kani, embodies the oppressive power of apartheid, while Antigone, played by Ntshona, represents individual freedom and human rights. Fugard, Kani and Ntshona also assimilate into *The Island* themes from Sophocles' *Antigone*, for example, the theme of conflict between the state and the individual and the distinction between human law and divine justice. Antigone's defiance and heroism in Sophocles' *Antigone* are echoed in *The Island* and, consistent with the model of the classical tradition, Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's hypertext does not challenge the Greek heroic value system.

On the other hand, the idea suggested by Highet of the classical tradition serving as a civilizing aspect[150] emerges in the fact that to the South African wardens on Robben Island, where black prisoners performed both Sophocles' *Antigone* and *The Island* during apartheid, the performance of an abridged version of a classical drama suggested black acceptance of European culture. Fugard has commented on the similarities between the performance of *The Island* and to Jean Anouilh's production of *Antigone* in Paris during the Nazi occupation of Paris in the Second World

[146] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 50–55, 59–63, respectively.

[147] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 47.

[148] A. Camus, *Le Muthe de Sisyphe*, Paris, 1942. On the connection between the opening scene of *The Island* and Camus' essay on the myth of Sisyphus, see A. Wertheim, *The Dramatic Art of Athol Fugard: From South Africa to the World*, Bloomington, 2000, pp. 89–90, 94–5.

[149] See above, 'The African Context: Theoretical and Practical Considerations'.

[150] Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (n. 19 above).

War:[151] 'In an exact parallel to the situation on Robben Island, the first five rows of German jackbooted officers admired what they thought was a straightforward piece of classical culture, but the French audience behind them knew what it was about.'[152] According to Fugard, when the actor 'Sharkie' (Sipho Mguqulwa), who was a member of Fugard's Serpent Players group in the 1960s before being arrested and incarcerated on Robben Island, performed the *Antigone* with a cell mate in the prison hall,[153] 'the Boers [Afrikaners] were in the first row and enjoyed it, but the prisoners were the ones who got the real message'.[154] Hence in modern South Africa the classical tradition promoted two very different reactions to the Antigone myth, depending upon the different perspectives of the performers, their audiences and the apartheid authorities.

A classical reception approach, however, involves the consideration of why African playwrights choose to rewrite *Antigone* over and over again, reinterpreting and reinventing the play with each new incarnation within each new geographical context and period. It also involves the question of how African dramatists appropriate the plot, dramatic conventions and themes of the *Antigone* to produce plays that have contemporary meaning in their own cultural and sociopolitical contexts. Other issues that this approach raises include how adaptations of the *Antigone*, which potentially represent polemical calls for collective action and revolution, are problematized by African nationalism, colonialism and feminism. More specifically, in respect of Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island*, the classical reception approach invites questions regarding the meaning of these dramaturgists' metadramatic adaptation of the *Antigone* to the modern political and social context of apartheid South Africa and what is at stake literally when black South African actors risk arrest in order to perform and when the very act of performing a play about civil disobedience is itself an act of civil disobedience. *The Island* meditates upon the universal theme of tyranny in ways that have a direct application to political events in South Africa. Read through the lens of classical reception, *The Island* becomes primarily a political drama that has appropriated and adapted a classical form to explore the

[151] J. Anouilh, *Antigone*, Paris, 1942; first performed in 1944. These similarities are not to suggest that Anouilh's *Antigone* is merely or even predominantly a pro-Resistance play; rather, it is an ambiguous drama that has both politically pro-Resistant and collaborationist elements. A number of recent literary critics have pointed out that Anouilh´s *Antigone* is less pro-Resistant than previously argued; see, for example, K. Fleming, 'Fascism on Stage: Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*', in *Laughing with Medusa: Classical Myth and Feminist Thought*, ed. M. Leonard and V. Zajko, Oxford, 2006, pp. 163–86.

[152] R. Jenkins, 'THEATER; "Antigone" as a Protest Tactic', *New York Times*, 30 March 2003, Section 2, p. 6; cf. A. Fugard, 'Antigone in Africa', in *Amid Our Struggles: Irish Versions of Greek Tragedy*, ed. M. McDonald and J. M. Watson, London, 2002, p. 134.

[153] On the actor Sharkie (Sipho Mguqulwa), see C. Bayley, 'The Theatre of Hate Bows Out', *Independent*, 27 April 1995 [https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/the-theatre-of-hate-bows-out-1617260.html, accessed 4 November 2022]; Fugard, 'Antigone in Africa' (n. 152 above), pp. 133–4, 144. A. Harris, '"The Island Is Not a Story in Itself": Apartheid's World Literature', *Safundi*, 19.3, 2018, p. 327 and n. 34, maintains that there is a 'mistake in Fugard's "Antigone in Africa"' (see Fugard, 'Antigone in Africa' [n. 152 above], pp. 133–4, 144) and that Norman Ntshinga, not Sipho Mguqulwa, was the actor who was arrested and who performed the *Antigone* on Robben Island.

[154] Jenkins, 'THEATER' (n. 152 above), Section 2, p. 6; cf. Fugard, 'Antigone in Africa' (n. 152 above), p. 134.

theme of human costs of apartheid. Despite (or because of) the classical overtones of this modern play, ultimately its performance involved a political act because the apartheid regime recognized that it was not merely a critical portrayal of its political and social system but also a call for resistance and action against it.

Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone* is problematic, however, in the sense that they portray Antigone as a defiant and heroic figure in the face of political oppression, which is represented by Creon, yet these are western figures imported into the African dramatic tradition. The appearance of these characters bears testimony to the intrusion of European colonialism in African culture, to which Winston alludes when he questions the significance of a classical myth to his culture and circumstances:

> Go to hell, man. Only last night you tell me that this Antigone is a bloody … what you call it … legend! A Greek one at that. Bloody thing never even happened. Not even history! Look, brother, I got no time for bullshit. Fuck legends. Me? … I believe my life here! I know why I'm here, and it's history, not legends. I had my chat with a magistrate in Cradock and now I'm here. Your Antigone is a child's play, man.[155]

Even though Winston's comments serve to highlight the general issue of the relevance of a European myth to the African stage in the postcolonial era, *The Island* itself is a hybrid (or fragmentation) of African and European cultural components that reflect the play's colonial and classical origins. *The Island* has a split collective (or hybrid) multi-racial 'author' -- Fugard is white, while Kani and Ntshona are black[156] -- while the names of the drama's black co-authors, who also perform the roles of classical characters in the metaperformance of the *Antigone*, are intercultural hybridizations.[157]

A note beneath the list of characters of *The Island* mentions that in the first performance of this drama on 2 July 1973, John Kani played the part of Creon and

[155] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 62.

[156] In the titles (and even in the text) of some scholarly articles and chapters, Fugard is cited as the sole author of *The Island*, which effectively diminishes the contributions of its black collaborators. Note the titles of such publications as A. Wertheim, 'Political Acting and Political Action: Athol Fugard's *The Island*', *World Literature Written in English*, 26.2, 1986, pp. 245–52; A. Wertheim, 'The Prison as Theatre and the Theatre as Prison: Athol Fugard's *the Island*', in *Themes in Drama*, vol. 9*: The Theatrical Space*, ed. J. Redmond, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 229–37; E. A. Mackay, 'Fugard's *The Island* and Sophocles' *Antigone* Within the Parameters of South African Protest Literature', in *Literature and Revolution*, ed. D. Bevan, Amsterdam, 1989, pp. 145–162; and H. Garuba, 'The Island Writes Back: Discourse/Power and Marginality in Wole Soyinka's The Swamp Dwellers, Derek Walcott's The Sea at Dauphin and Athol Fugard's *The Island*', *Research in African Literatures*, 32.4, 2001, pp. 61–76. Cf. E. Durbach, 'Sophocles in South Africa: Athol Fugard's *The Island*, *Comparative Drama*, 18.3, 1984, p. 252, who argues that '*Notebooks* [A. Fugard, *Notebooks 1960–77*, Johannesburg, 1983] make clear that the ideas, dramatic structure and the basic source material for *The Island* are Fugard's own. In treating the play as Fugard's, I do not intend to devalue the contribution of his actors to its composition'. But this is what Durbach in effect achieves by treating *The Island* as Fugard's own play and by referring to the contributions of Kani and Ntshona to its composition as being those of merely 'actors' instead of, for example, 'co-authors', 'co-creators', 'co-devisors' or even 'collaborators'.

[157] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 62.

Winston Ntshona assumed the role of Antigone.[158] These characters assume hybrid, multicultural, multi-racial, bigenerational and mixed-gender identities, as evident, for example, when Winston dons a blond wig and false breasts at the beginning of scenes two and four to practice and to perform, respectively, his role of Antigone,[159] thereby fusing his male black African identity to a female western classical identity. Initially Winston violently rejects the idea of playing the role of Antigone when John laughs at him wearing the wig and fake breasts,[160] but he finally accepts the part.[161] Despite the almost fratricidal hostility evident between the pair, their brotherhood, solidarity, and physical bond are suggested in John's allusion to their 'marriage' by the prison wardens at 'Rooihel' (Rooi Hel, 'Red Hell') prison.[162] This scene featuring Winston's refusal to assume the role of Antigone,[163] which reveals his own fear of being humiliated as a woman, is laden with irony given John's and especially Winston's debasement of women with their misogynistic, sexualized comments and gestures:[164]

> WINSTON. *Haai*, man! You got no wife here. Look for the rag yourself.[165]
> JOHN. Nomhle played Antigone. A bastard of a lady that one, but a beautiful bitch. Can't get her out of my mind tonight.[166]
> JOHN. Hey, Winston's asking how are the punkies[167] doing? [*Big laugh.*] You bloody lover boy! Leave something for us, man![168]
> JOHN. [*John launches into an extravagant send-up of Winston's Antigone. He circles 'her' admiringly, he fondles her breasts, he walks arm in arm with her down Main Street, collapsing with laughter between each 'turn'. He climaxes everything by dropping his trousers.*]
> Speedy Gonzales! Here I come![169]

[158] Cf. Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 46.
[159] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 59–61, 74–7, respectively.
[160] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 59–63.
[161] Cf. Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 72.
[162] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 65.
[163] Cf. Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 59–63.
[164] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 47–72, esp. pp. 50, 54, 57, 59–60, 63, 70–71. On the feminization of Winston and the representation of women in *The Island*, see R. Rehm, '"If You Are a Woman": Theatrical Womanizing in Sophocles' *Antigone* and Fugard, Kani, and Ntshona's *The Island*', in *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds*', ed. Lorna Hardwick and Carole Gillespie, Oxford, 2007, pp. 211–27, esp. 219–27.
[165] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 50.
[166] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 54.
[167] Afrikaans slang for 'prostitutes'.
[168] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 57.
[169] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 59.

WINSTON. I'm a man, not a bloody woman.[170]
WINSTON. 'Nyah … nyah… . Here comes comes Antigone! … Help the pool lady! … Well, you can go to hell with your Antigone.'[171]
WINSTON. Who else was here that dressed himself as a lady and made a bloody fool of himself?[172]
WINSTON. All *he* wants it to make me a 'boy' … not a bloody woman.[173]
WINSTON. Here's Antigone … take these titties and hair and play Antigone… . Take your two titties… .[174]
WINSTON… . so that he can dress me up like a woman and make a bloody fool of me.[175]
WINSTON. Because you'll need a fuck. A really wild one![176]
WINSTON. They´ll fix you up with a woman… .[177]
WINSTON. Set you up with her in a comfortable joint, and then leave you alone. You'll watch her, watch her take her clothes off, you'll take your pants off, get near her, feel her, feel it… . Ja, you'll feel it. It will be wet… .[178]
WINSTON. Wet *poes*,[179] John! And you'll fuck it wild.[180]
WINSTON. [*quietly*] You stink, John. You stink of … *poes*… .[181]
WINSTON… . your hands on your balls, and *poes* waiting for you… . you will fuck and forget.[182]

Winston and John impute an inferior status to the female in much the same way that the cruel prison guard Hodoshe ascribes an inferior social position to blacks by considering everything they do to be 'child's play'[183] and by apparently wanting to make Winston a 'boy'.[184] Both black male prisoners appear to display a lack of self-awareness and hypocrisy regarding their own sexist attitudes toward and sexual objectification of women -- and it is apparent that it is their own black women they are talking about.[185] In the genre of protest theatre itself, black women were

[170] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 60.
[171] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 60.
[172] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 60.
[173] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 60.
[174] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 61.
[175] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 63.
[176] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 70.
[177] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 70.
[178] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 71.
[179] Afrikaans slang for 'vagina'.
[180] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 71.
[181] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 71.
[182] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 71.
[183] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 62; see also n. 204 below.
[184] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 60; see also n. 204 below.
[185] Cf. Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 59–67 *passim*.

disregarded,[186] as reflected in *The Island* by a male actor playing Antigone's part, though in the case of this particular play the necessity of a male playing the female role can be explained by the setting of Robben Island, a black male prison.

The denigration of women by Winston and John in *The Island* elicits the memory of Creon's misogynism in the *Antigone* when the king, in speeches to Antigone and her beloved Haemon, belittles not only Antigone as a woman but also more broadly the female sex:

αὕτη δ' ὑβρίζειν μὲν τότ' ἐξηπίστατο,
νόμους ὑπερβαίνουσα τοὺς προκειμένους·
ὕβρις δ', ἐπεὶ δέδρακεν, ἥδε δευτέρα,
τούτοις ἐπαυχεῖν καὶ δεδρακυῖαν γελᾶν.
ἦ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἀνήρ, αὕτη δ' ἀνήρ,
εἰ ταῦτ' ἀνατεὶ τῆιδε κείσεται κράτη.
……
……ἐμοῦ δὲ ζῶντος οὐκ ἄρξει γυνή.
……
……ἐκ δὲ τοῦδε χρὴ
γυναῖκας εἶναι τάσδε μηδ' ἀνειμένας.
……
μή νύν ποτ', ὦ παῖ, τὰς φρένας γ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς
γυναικὸς οὕνεκ' ἐκβάλῃς, εἰδὼς ὅτι
ψυχρὸν παραγκάλισμα τοῦτο γίγνεται,
γυνὴ κακὴ ξύνευνος ἐν δόμοις.
……
οὕτως ἀμυντέ' ἐστὶ τοῖς κοσμουμένοις,
κοὔτοι γυναικὸς οὐδαμῶς ἡσσητέα.
κρεῖσσον γάρ, εἴπερ δεῖ, πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἐκπεσεῖν,
κοὐκ ἂν γυναικῶν ἥσσονες καλοίμεθ' ἄν.
……
ὦ μιαρὸν ἦθος καὶ γυναικὸς ὕστερον.
……

[186] Cf. the comment of the black South African playwright and director Fatima Dike cited in M. Blumberg and D. Walder, 'Introduction', *South African Theatre As/And Intervention*, ed. M Blumberg and D. Walder, Amsterdam, 1999, p. 9: 'In protest theatre women never had a voice. There was a disregard for African women'.

γυναικὸς ὢν δούλευμα, μὴ κώτιλλέ με.[187]

(Sophocles, *Antigone* 480–85, 525, 578–9, 648–51, 677–80, 746, 756)

This girl was already skillful at being insolent,
when she broke laws that had been established.
Her second act of insolence was to laugh and exult
in the deed after she had performed it
I am no man and she is the man instead
if she achieves her victory with impunity.
……
No woman is going to rule me while I live.
……
From this point they must
act like women, free to wander no longer.
……
Now, boy, do not ever throw common sense aside
for the pleasure that women provide. You know
that a loving embrace becomes cold comfort
when an evil woman shares your bed at home.
……
In this way I must defend my authority
and never allow myself to be beaten by some woman.
If I must be cast out, let that be by a man;
I will not be called inferior to a woman.
……
You foul character, inferior to any woman!
……
You woman's slave, do not try to cajole me![188]

Creon's misogynistic comments about Antigone and women generally in the *Antigone* include a sexual reference to the dangerous pleasure they provide to men (648–51). It is this sexual thread in the *Antigone* that Winston's sexist remarks about women in *The Island* seem to pick up on.

Notwithstanding Winston's misogynistic streak in *The Island*, his actual performance dressed in drag as a Greek female mythological figure in scene four[189] seems transformative, even cathartic, given that he actually enacts by playing this role his own set of experiences as a black victim of a modern white repressive state, thereby helping to bridge not only the faultline between black male and female but also a cultural gap that spans two continents and 2,500 years. With its diverse racial, cultural, geographical, generational and gender-based elements, *The Island* does not seem merely to reflect the African aversion to apartheid; rather, its message of

[187] The text of the *Antigone* used in this essay is that of M. Griffith, ed., *Sophocles, Antigone*, Cambridge, 1999.

[188] The translations of the Greek text are mine.

[189] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 67–74.

the immorality and injustice of a political system has broad universal meaning[190] and appeal, with successful performances (and runs of performances) occurring in various regions and countries within and outside Africa.[191] Therefore the criticisms mentioned by Hardwick of this 'countertext'[192] having been 'hijacked by middle-class white liberals' and 'domesticated into the dominant discourses of European tradition, marginalizing African tradition and practices' seem misguided.[193] The use of 'countertext' and the similar term 'counter-discourse' are problematic within the African context, however, if their meaning is confined merely to the genre of 'protest´ theatre since, as the Nigerian playwright Femi Osofisan has remarked in respect of 'countertext', their use inherently suggests both that the African role is 'subaltern' and merely an automatous response to the 'Other'.[194]

Ultimately the use of classical reception in the treatment of a figure such as Antigone reflects the postmodern tendency to decentre the cultural works and ideas of Greece and Rome from their western orientation and to destabilize them in terms of their position of cultural dominance,[195] whereas the model of the classical tradition inherently privileges the position of Greece and Rome through its emphasis upon the influence of its ideas upon subsequent generations, literary forms and specific works. Therefore the perspective of classical reception has the propensity to liberate African versions of the *Antigone* from the shackles of European cultural hegemony, whereas the 'traditional' paradigm of the classical tradition tends to preserve this cultural dominance in ideological terms. As suggested above, this theoretical distinction between the classical tradition and classical reception may appear

[190] Cf. Harris, '"The Island is Not a Story"' (n. 153 above), pp. 321–7.

[191] E.g. Canada, France, India, Ireland, Malawi, Palestine, South Africa, Sweden, United States, United Kingdom, West Indies and Zimbabwe.

[192] The validity of the use of term 'countertext' to describe the conception of *The Island* by L. Hardwick, 'Playing Around Cultural Faultlines: The Impact of Modern Translations for the Stage on Perceptions of Ancient Greek Drama', in *Translation Practices: Through Language to Culture*, ed. A. Chantler and C. Dente, Amsterdam, 2009, p. 182, is refuted by W. Raji, 'Africanizing *Antigone*: Postcolonial Discourse and Strategies of Indigenizing a Western Classic', *Research in African Literatures*, 36.4, 2005, p. 149, on the basis that in order for a text to qualify as a 'countertext' it must be opposed to the view of an earlier work, but instead *The Island* reproduces the theme of Sophocles' *Antigone*. In addition to the type of counter-text that challenges an 'original' (or 'classical') text, there is also the counter-text that challenges preconceptions about European-dominated classicism, but that is not what transpires in *The Island*.

[193] Hardwick, 'Playing Around Cultural Faultlines' (n. 192 above), p. 182. No actual citations of this type of criticism are offered by Hardwick in her discussion, but see, e.g. Mshengu, 'Political Theatre in South Africa and the Work of Athol Fugard', *Theatre Research International*, 7.3, 1982, pp. 170–9 *passim*.

[194] F. Osofisan, 'Theatre and the Rites of "Post-negritude" Remembering", *Research in African Literatures*, 30, 1999, 30.1, p. 3. I wish to acknowledge my informal discussions with this foremost Nigerian playwright during my visit in November 2010 to the University of Ibadan, where I was honoured to present the Third Biennial Constantine Leventis Memorial Lecture (Dominik, 'Classics as a World Discipline', n. 82 above). During my visit I also had the privilege of viewing a performance of Osofisan's *Tegonni: An African Antigone* (n. 126 above; cf. nn. 77, 79 above for scholarly references), which was directed by Tunde Awosanmi and performed by the Okinba Players. For some comparisons between *Tegonni* and *The Island*, see Raji, 'Africanizing *Antigone* (n. 192 above), pp. 135–54.

[195] Cf. Dominik, 'Africa' (n. 18 above), pp. 130–31.

to be artificially rigid and one can envisage a paradigm of classical 'influence' that is based upon a more fluid relationship between these models -- I have proposed the term 'classical traception'[196] -- because the story of Antigone both has informed subsequent adaptations of Sophocles' tragedy as well as been informed by later generations of playwrights.

The crosscultural metatheatricality of *The Island* is apparent through not only the discussion of the staging of Sophocles' *Antigone* that takes place between John and Winston in scenes one and two but also the performance of this play in the fourth and final scene.[197] This rehearsing and performance of the *Antigone* serves to remind Winston and the other prisoners of the reasons for their own political acts of defiance and the principles behind them. The working out of the *Antigone* also becomes the means by which the men attempt to cope with their prison environment and isolation. At the beginning of the final scene, John addresses the theatre audience as if it were the actual prison audience on Robben Island:

> Captain Prinsloo, Hodoshe, Warders … and Gentlemen! Two brothers of the house of Labdacus found themselves on opposite sides in battle, the one defending the State, the other attacking it. They both died on the battlefield. King Creon, Head of State, decided that the one who had defended the State would be buried with all religious rites due to the noble dead. But the other one, the traitor Polynices, who had come back from exile intending to burn and destroy his fatherland, to drink the blood of his masters, was to have no grave, no mourning. […] It was the law. But Antigone, their sister, defied the law and buried the body of her brother Polynices. She was caught and arrested. That is why tonight the Hodoshe Span, Cell Forty-two, presents for your entertainment: 'The Trial and Punishment of Antigone'.[198]

The staging of the *Antigone* immediately makes apparent the contemporary relevance of the performance to South Africa, with the thrice-repeated phrase 'the State' serving emphatically as a reference both to Thebes and the South African government, whose representatives have 'arrested' Antigone, which conjures up a contemporary, especially South African, context. In the prison the State is represented by Captain Prinsloo, Hodoshe and the Warders, while the 'Gentlemen' are obviously the black prisoners.

Immediately after this metadramatic exposition, John commences playing the role of Creon. Within the context of the metaplay, at this point John is no longer a black African prisoner but rather his white apartheid master. Yet John immediately reminds the prison audience in this performance within the play that even when he assumes the role of a king, in fact he is still a 'servant' of his privileged white theatregoers:

[196] See above, 'The African Context: Theoretical and Practical Considerations'.
[197] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 50–55, 59–63, 73–77, respectively.
[198] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 73.

> My People! Creon stands before his palace and greets you! […] Did I hear 'Hail the King'? My good people, I am your *servant* … a happy one, but still your servant. […] Creon's crown is as simple, and I hope as clean, as the apron Nanny wears. And even as Nanny smiles and is your happy servant because she sees her charge … your child! … waxing fat in that little cradle, so too does Creon -- your obedient servant! -- stand here and smile. For what does he see? Fatness and happiness! How else does one measure the success of a state? By the sumptuousness of the palaces build for its king and princes? The magnificence of the temples erected to its gods? The achievements of its scientists and technicians who can now send rockets to the moon? No! Theses count for nothing beside the fatness and happiness of its people.[199]

Thus John's role is ambiguous: he reminds the audience in his hybrid (or fragmented) roles as Creon and apartheid master that nothing has in fact changed. He is still the black servant of the white members of his audience as he reminds them how black nannies have raised their healthy white babies, with the obvious contrast being the destitute conditions of the black townships.

John's role as Creon requires that he take the side of his white apartheid master in arguing for the necessity of defending the people through violent means against those who undermine the State:

> The law defends! The law is no more or less than a shield in your faithful servant's hand to protect YOU! But even as a shield would be useless in one hand, to defend, without a sword in the other, to strike … so too the law has its edge. The penalty! We have come through difficult times. I am sure it is needless for me to remind you of the constant troubles on our borders … those despicable rats who would gnaw away at our fatness and happiness. We have been diligent in dealing with them. But unfortunately there are still at large subversive elements … there are still amongst us a few rats that are not satisfied and to them I must show this face of Creon …[200]

The geopolitical context is made obvious here, with the troubles mentioned a reference to the various conflicts being fought largely in neighbouring states of South Africa during the time this drama was first performed (1973).[201] The reasoning adduced resembles that of Creon in his defence of the necessity to protect Thebes from a 'traitor' such as Polynices in the *Antigone*:

> οὔτ' ἂν σιωπήσαιμι τὴν ἄτην ὁρῶν
> στείχουσαν ἀστοῖς ἀντὶ τῆς σωτηρίας,
> οὔτ' ἂν φίλον ποτ' ἄνδρα δυσμενῆ χθονὸς
> θείμην ἐμαυτῶι, τοῦτο γιγνώσκων ὅτι
> ἥδ' ἐστὶν ἡ σῴζουσα, καὶ ταύτης ἔπι
> πλέοντες ὀρθῆς τοὺς φίλους ποιούμεθα.

[199] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), pp. 73–4.
[200] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 74.
[201] On these conflicts see, e.g. W. Steenkamp, *South Africa's Border War: 1966–89*, Gibraltar, 1989.

τοιοῖσδ᾽ ἐγὼ νόμοισι τήνδ᾽ αὔξω πόλιν.
……
τὸν δ᾽ αὖ ξύναιμον τοῦδε, Πολυνείκη λέγω,
ὃς γῆν πατρώιαν καὶ θεοὺς τοὺς ἐγγενεῖς
φυγὰς κατελθὼν ἠθέλησε μὲν πυρὶ
πρῆσαι κατ᾽ ἄκρας, ἠθέλησε δ᾽ αἵματος
κοινοῦ πάσασθαι, τοὺς δὲ δουλώσας ἄγειν …
……
τοιόνδ᾽ ἐμὸν φρόνημα, κοὔποτ᾽ ἔκ γ᾽ ἐμοῦ
τιμῆι προέξουσ᾽ οἱ κακοὶ τῶν ἐνδίκων.
(Sophocles, *Antigone* 185–91, 198–202, 207–8)

I would never keep my silence if I saw ruin,
instead of safety, marching upon the citizens.
Nor would I ever make a friend of a man who is
hostile to my country. Because I know well that
the State is the ship that keeps us safe, and that only
upon sailing a straight course can we make friends.
Such are the laws by which I strengthen this city.
……
But for his brother, I mean Polynices,
who, returning from exile, wanted to burn to ashes
the city of his fathers and his country's gods,
and wanted to feed on kindred blood
and to lead the rest into slavery…
……
Such is my will, and I will never permit the
traitor to be honoured before the just man.

Both John in his role of Creon and Creon in the *Antigone* make a similar argument to justify the brutality and capriciousness of the state -- the necessity of defending the people against 'subversive elements' and 'traitors', respectively.

At the end of the metaperformance of the *Antigone* in *The Island*, Winston, John's fellow actor, seems to accept his fate of being immured in Robben Island prison:

> Brothers and Sisters of the Land! I go now on my last journey. I must leave the light of day forever, for the Island, strange and cold, to be lost between life and death. So, to my grave, my everlasting prison, condemned alive to solitary death.

Winston's specific mention of 'the Island' serves as a reminder to the audience that the fate of the other prisoners on Robben Island mirrors his own (and that of Antigone). Winston then removes his wig and addresses the audience directly as himself, rather than as Antigone, with these words:

> Gods of our Fathers! My Land! My Home!
> Time waits no longer. I go now to my living death, because I honoured those things to which honour belongs.[202]

These last lines of Winston's concluding speech are palpably echoed in the final speech of Antigone in Sophocles' tragedy:

> ὦ γῆς Θήβης ἄστυ πατρῶιον
> καὶ θεοὶ προγενεῖς,
> ἄγομαι δὴ κοὐκέτι μέλλω.
> λεύσσετε, Θήβης οἱ κοιρανίδαι
> τὴν βασιλειδῶν μούνην λοιπήν,
> οἷα πρὸς οἵων ἀνδρῶν πάσχω,
> τὴν εὐσεβίαν σεβίσασα.
> (Sophocles, *Antigone* 937–43)
> O land of Thebes, city of my fathers,
> and you, gods of my ancestors,
> I am being led away now; there is no more delay.
> Look upon me, lords of Thebes,
> the sole surviving princess of your royal house.
> See what I have to suffer at the hands of such men
> for paying reverence toward the gods.

Winston's appropriation and adaptation of Antigone's words means that they are neither completely his nor hers.

The same can be said of Winston's dichotomous identity when he begins speaking at the end of the play: he is neither completely Antigone nor himself. When Winston confronts the audience as himself, he is not just an African male actor playing the role of a Greek mythological figure but a black political prisoner acting out in a self-conscious manner his own fate in a real prison. For Winston a certain liberation is experienced in his dismissal of Creon's threat even as, like Antigone, he suffers the 'penalty' for violating a law of the State in order to obey a higher law of humanity:

> What lay on the battlefield waiting for Hodoshe to turn rotten, belonged to God. You are only a man, Creon. Even as there are laws made by men, so too there are others that come from God… . Your threat is nothing to me, Creon.

The evil of the apartheid political system is embodied literally in the cruelty of the prison guard nicknamed 'Hodoshe', a Xhosa word for a carrion fly, after whom the drama was originally named as *Die Hodoshe Span* ('Hodoshe's Work Team'); Hodoshe's presence is pervasive throughout the play as the victimizer of the innocent prisoners,[203] though he never actually makes an appearance onstage. Winston, like Antigone, courageously braves the consequences of his defiance of the State,

[202] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 77.
[203] On this notorious Robben Island prison guard, see S. Gray, ed., *File on Fugard*, London, 1991, p. 49.

though, yet again like her, he accepts neither its authority nor the unjust law, in his case, the passbook law, that results in the 'penalty' to which he alludes.[204] The fate of Winston, who is serving a life sentence for burning his passbook, mobilizes the feelings of the reader or audience against the system of apartheid, which dehumanizes and attempts to suck the life force out of its victims.

In addition to the explicit parallel between Winston and Antigone, Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's hypertext incorporates a number of other Sophoclean elements in a reconfigured form, for instance, John, who plays the part of Creon, though he more closely resembles Ismene, Antigone's sister. At the beginning of *The Island*, John attempts to dissuade Winston from provoking Hodoshe and creating more trouble for them:

> WINSTON [*calling*]. Hodoshe!
> JOHN. Leave him, Winston. Listen to me, man! If he comes now we'll be in bigger shit.
> WINSTON. I want Hodoshe. I want him now! I want to take him to the office. He must read my warrant. I was sentenced to Life brother, not bloody Death!
> JOHN. Please, Winston! He made us run… .
> WINSTON. I want Hodoshe!
> JOHN. He made us run. He´s happy now. Leave him. Maybe he´ll let us go back to the quarry tomorrow.[205]

John's efforts to calm Winston and to steer him away from aggravating Hodoshe, which constitute an implicit acknowledgement of their subjugated status, bring to mind Ismene's attempt in the *Antigone* to deter her sister from challenging Creon's decree prohibiting the burial of Polynices' corpse:

> ἀλλ᾽ ἐννοεῖν χρὴ τοῦτο μὲν γυναῖχ᾽ ὅτι
> ἔφυμεν, ὡς πρὸς ἄνδρας οὐ μαχουμένα.
> ἔπειτα δ᾽ οὕνεκ᾽ ἀρχόμεσθ᾽ ἐκ κρεισσόνων,
> καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἀκούειν κἄτι τῶνδ᾽ ἀλγίονα.
> (Sophocles, *Antigone* 61–4)
> We must consider that we are women
> by birth and thus should not fight against men.
> Since we are ruled by those who are stronger,
> we must obey in this, whatever distress it brings us.

Here Ismene expresses the traditional subjugated role of women within the Athenian patriarchal system of governance. Similar to Ismene in relation to Antigone in Sophocles' tragedy, John seems more conventional in his thinking than Winston in terms of avoiding further unnecessary conflict with the cruel state apparatus.

The transcultural metadramaticality apparent in the hybrid (or fragmented) roles of both Winston and John needs to be viewed within the sociopolitical context of

[204] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 74.
[205] Fugard, Kani and Ntshona, *The Island* (n. 126 above), p. 47–8.

The Island, which is designed to expose the tyranny of the apartheid system of government, its dehumanizing effects on black people, and the political injustices taking place in South Africa.[206] South African protest and resistance (or agitprop) theatre emerged in the 1970s as a response to the oppressive political policies of the government and the deprivatory social conditions of the townships.[207] Although the aforementioned terms are used interchangeably, the black South African playwright Zakes Mda distinguishes between them, with 'protest' theatre demonstrating the consequences of oppression to the oppressors and 'resistance' theatre striving to mobilize the oppressed into actions against the oppressors.[208] While Mda has argued against 'protest theatre' on the basis that it addresses the oppressor rather than the oppressed,[209] some scholars also have been dismissive of the notion that productions of classical drama -- and an adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone* such as *The Island* -- could have assumed a role in the anti-apartheid struggle.[210] Other scholars, however, others have recognized the potential for such dramas to have served as a form of

[206] Fleishman and Reznek, in *In the City of Paradise* (n. 127 above); McMurtry, in *Electra* (n. 127 above); and Farber, in *Molora* (n. 127 above), adapt aspects of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, especially the Electra myth, and apply them to the immediate post-apartheid era involving the transition to democracy and the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that were held to address the crimes of the state apartheid apparatus. In the context of classically inspired theatre as a means of political statement, *In the City of Paradise*, *Electra* and *Molora* can be viewed as sequels to the events portrayed in *The Island*; there are numerous other non-classically derived dramas, however, composed in the aftermath of apartheid that deal in various ways with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

[207] For various views on 'protest' theatre in South Africa, see the discussions in *South African Theatre As/And Intervention*, ed. M Blumberg and D. Walder, Amsterdam, 1999, esp. pp. 1, 5–6, 9, 51, 57, 62, 106, 178–9, 228, 233; on 'resistance' or 'agitprop' theatre, see pp. 5–6, 53.

[208] Z. Mda, 'Introduction', in *Four Plays*, ed. Z. Mda, Florida Hills, 1996, pp. viii–xi.

[209] Z. Mda, 'Current Trends in Theatre for Development in South Africa', in *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid and Democracy, 1970–1995*, ed. D. Attridge and R. Jolly, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 257–8.

[210] E.g. Mshengu [no first name given], 'Political Theatre in South Africa and the Work of Athol Fugard', *Theatre Research International*, 7.3, 1982, pp. 160–79, who plays down the role of the white Fugard and *The Island* in the anti-apartheid struggle; E. Mackay, 'Antigone and Orestes in the Works of Athol Fugard', *Theoria*, 74, 1989, p. 41, who cautions against overt political readings of Fugard's dramas, including *The Island* (but cf. Mackay, 'Fugard's *The Island* and Sophocles' *Antigone*' [n. 156 above], pp. 159–60, who, despite stressing *The Island*'s 'humanist' perspective and maintaining that it is not true protest literature, still concedes that Antigone's modern *persona* helps to invest the text with a degree of 'protest resonance'); D. Walder, 'Resituating Fugard: South African Drama as Witness', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 8.32, 1992, p. 353, who, while acknowledging that protest theatre, including *The Island*, has the potential to play a role in political protest and resistance, argues that it is limited in what it can achieve for its varied audiences; E. Durbach, 'Sophocles in South Africa: Athol Fugard's *The Island*', in *Drama and the Classical Heritage*, ed. C. Davidson, R. Johnson and J. H. Stroupe, New York, 1993, p. 242, who diminishes the political effect of *The Island* in the eyes of the 'Special Branch and the censor'; cf. pp. 251–2; and Lambert, *The Classics* (n. 8 above), pp. 115–17, who argues that the productions by *white* South African playwrights of classical drama not only played no role in the struggle against apartheid but also that they were counterproductive.

political protest in the country.[211] As Albert Wertheim observed in his review of the performance of *The Island* held at the National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown, South Africa, in 1995, the members of the audience were reminded 'of the not-very-distant past' and the production 'helped them, moreover, to recognize the power of the theatre, of what dramatic works like *The Island* helped to bring about …'.[212] In fact, *The Island* is the most explicitly political play written in Africa, as suggested in its setting of Robben Island, the site where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for eighteen years (1964–1982); for Mandela this prison island was the equivalent of Antigone's cave in which she is immured in the *Antigone*. In *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela observes that Creon's 'inflexibility and blindness [in *The Island*'s hypotext of the *Antigone*] ill become a leader, for a leader must temper justice with mercy'.[213] Since the figure of Creon in *The Island* symbolizes the oppressive power of apartheid, it is possible to imagine how Mandela's experience of assuming the identity of the oppressor could have influenced his own political ideas. According to Mandela, who could be viewed as apartheid's Antigone, it was she 'who symbolized our struggle; she was, in her own way, a freedom fighter, for she defied the law on the grounds it was unjust'.[214] Mandela explained at his Rivonia Trial how he had often been 'forced to choose between compliance with the law and accommodating my conscience', a sentiment that has a particularly strong resonance with the dilemma of Sophocles' Antigone.[215]

It should be no surprise that *The Island* received a negative reception from the apartheid regime, which recognized that the drama could serve the purpose of heightening the awareness of its audiences about the immorality, brutality and injustice of the apartheid system. After *The Island* was performed along with Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*[216] at the Royal Court Theatre in London, an 'anonymous' South African newspaper report of 1974 claimed that the plays 'contained propaganda aimed at discrediting the South African Embassy in London, the Government, and White South Africans in general'.[217] The performance of *The Island* constituted a political act because the regime recognized that it was not merely a damning portrayal of apartheid but also a stance of defiance against the state and a call for resistance and action against it. Indeed, Kani and Ntshona declared over a decade later that 'every single performance of this play, *The Island*, [was] an endorsement of the

[211] E.g. most recently, B. van Zyl Smit, 'Medea and Apartheid' (n. 79 above), pp. 73–81; R. Jenkins, 'THEATER; 'Antigone' as a Protest Tactic' (n. 152 above), Section 2, p. 6; B. Goff and M. Simpson, 'No Man's Island: Fugard, Kani, and Ntshona's *The Island*', in *Crossroads in the Black Aegean: Oedipus, Antigone and Dramas of the African Diaspora*, ed. B. Goff and M. Simpson, Oxford, 2007, 379–99; R. Gordon, 'Fugard, Kani, Ntshona's *The Island*: *Antigone* as South African Drama', *Comparative Drama*, 46.3, 2012, pp. 271–320; and Dominik, 'The Politics of Classics' (n. 8 above), pp. 108–10.

[212] A. Wertheim, 'The 1995 Grahamstown Festival', *South African Theatre Journal*, 10.1, 1996, p. 95.

[213] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (n. 143 above), p. 476.

[214] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (n. 143 above), p. 476.

[215] Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (n. 143 above), p. 330.

[216] A. Fugard, J. Kani and W. Ntshona, *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, in A. Fugard, *Statements: Three Plays*, Oxford, 1973, pp. 1–44.

[217] Anonymous, 'Plays Not Anti-SA -- Fugard', *Eastern Province Herald*, Port Elizabeth, 5 February 1974, p. 4.

local and international call for the immediate release of Mr. Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners and detainees'.[218]

The rewriting (or reinterpretation) of the *Antigone* by Fugard, Kani and Ntshona offers an insight into how the 'traditional' paradigm of the classical tradition can be brought to bear upon a reading of *The Island* both from the perspective of the scholar who is searching for traces of classically derived material and from the standpoint of the prison guards who viewed the performance of the *Antigone* as an example of European (or white) cultural hegemony. While this model of the classical tradition implies a linear mode of descent for such scholars and the prison wardens in *The Island*, the model of classical reception, through the deconstruction of the original plot of the *Antigone*, offers Fugard, Kani and Ntshona the opportunity to challenge the apartheid regime. Furthermore, in a metatheatrical sense, the classical reception model offers an opportunity for the prisoners on Robben Island to protest against the inhuman apartheid system before their wardens and fellow prisoners. Stephen Gray charges Fugard with being an 'irresponsible scholar of the Greeks' through an indiscriminate use of his classical sources,[219] but in comparison with the 'traditional' model of the classical tradition, the paradigm of classical reception enables Fugard and his co-creators Kani and Ntshona to infuse *The Island* with contemporary significance by distilling the thoughts, feelings and experiences of black South African political prisoners.

In one important respect the concept of 'classical traception' proposed above[220] seems preferable to either the model of the classical tradition or that of classical reception when describing the dynamics of *The Island*. Both the white and black authors of *The Island* as well as the Afrikaans prison wardens and their black African prisoners share hybrid (or fragmented) European and African cultural elements that are the result of the drama's colonial and classical origins. *The Island* is neither entirely European nor African in its conception and performance; even the performance within the play of the *Antigone* is replete with African characteristics. In a sense, Sophocles' *Antigone* has been 'decolonized' in its reconfiguration as a drama highlighting South Africa's dark history of racial oppression and tyranny.[221] The idea of 'classical traception' spans both the European conception of the original *Antigone* and its linear descent (the traditional model of the classical tradition) as well as its reconfiguration by its split collective (or hybrid) multi-racial 'author' in *The Island* (the traditional concept of the classical reception). Just as the *Antigone* has been

[218] D. Lautenbach, 'An Island of Dreams', *Weekend Argus*, Cape Town, 2 November 1985.

[219] S. Gray, 'A Chair Called Agamemnon: Athol Fugard's Use of Greek Dramatic Myths', *Standpunte*, 1986, 39.4, p. 23.

[220] See above, 'The African Context: Theoretical and Practical Considerations'.

[221] The notion of 'decolonizing the Classics', which lies outside the boundaries of my discussion, has become a buzz phrase in recent discussions about the role and future of Classics on the African subcontinent. On this idea of the African decolonization of Classics in both scholarship and in debates about the Classics curriculum, see, for example, the various discussions in S. Masters, I. Nzungu and G. Parker, eds., *(u)Mzantsi Classics: Dialogues in Decolonisation from Southern Africa*, Cape Town/Liverpool, 2022, and M. Lambert, 'Decolonizing the Classics Curriculum in South African Universities with Euripides' *Hippolytus*', *Akroterion*, 64, 2019, pp. 127–44.

written indelibly into the text of *The Island*, so, in a way, *The Island* seems to have been written back into the *Antigone* so as to render the hypotext a new work.[222] Both plays, including their themes, characters and circumstances, share universal qualities in common. As discussed above, proponents of the 'classical tradition' or of the 'classical reception' have argued for the inclusive nature of these models by extending their original conceptions to embrace the other.[223] But the phrase 'classical traception' not only naturally embraces the forces of linear descent and reception involved in the 'traditional' models of the classical tradition and the classical reception, respectively, but it also inherently suggests the cross-fertilization that occurs between the 'original' classical work and a later adaptation. The cross-fertilization, for example, between the *Antigone* and *The Island* is symbiotic and goes in both directions. The phrase 'classical traception' is a more naturally inclusive phrase suggestive of the bidirectional forces involved collectively in the models of the classical tradition and the classical reception.

Epilogue

The investigation of how the classical languages, texts and ideas reached the African subcontinent and affected its development in a range of areas is complementary with an examination of how indigenous Africans and European settlers and their ancestors made use of these languages and appropriated and adapted these ideas and texts.[224] This can be seen even from the brief discussion of the eighteenth-century west African-born writer Jacobus Eliza Johannes Capitein[225] and the extended analysis of the South African modern drama, *The Island*.[226] The globalization of the classical tradition and classical reception -- what I have jointly termed classical 'traception' -- reflects the expansion of these concepts to geographical areas such as Africa and to modern critical disciplines such as postcolonial studies. The classical 'traception' is a complex, sometimes fragmented, seemingly chaotic, web of interconnected works, images and ideas, which naturally has contributed to it becoming an area of cultural contestation. Consistent with broader cultural shifts occurring elsewhere in the world, cultural politics in Africa has resulted in not only a lessening of the Eurocentric focus in the study of the classical 'traception' but also the treatment of the modern African work as equal to the original classical work in what is perceived as a dynamic, transcultural relationship.

[222] Perhaps with the subtitle of '*The Island* Writes Back'?—but neither in Femi Osofisan's pejorative sense of merely 'writing back' to an 'Empire' (cf. Osofisan, 'Theatre and the Rites' [n. 194 above], p. 3, with footnoted text in the main body of the essay), nor in Harry Garuba's geographical sense of an island (cf. Garuba, 'The Island Writes Back' [n. 156 above], pp. 61–76), but rather in the sense of *The Island* as the play itself.

[223] See above, 'The African Context: Theoretical and Practical Considerations'; cf. n. 70 above.

[224] This 'Epilogue' is slightly adapted from Dominik, 'Africa' (n. 18 above), p. 131.

[225] See above, 'The African Context: Theoretical and Practical Considerations'.

[226] See above, 'Africanizing Greek Tragedy: Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island*'.

In the African context my proposed joint model of the classical 'traception' is open to challenge on the basis that it is neither entirely classical nor cohesive but rather is a fragmented form of cultural hybridity in which classical and postcolonial components from different cultures -- not just African and European -- converge and diverge. Even so, considering the traditional elements of the classical tradition along with those of classical reception helps to provide a broader view of the ways in which Classics has helped to shape and been received by different African societies and their cultures from the perspectives of both the European colonizers and indigenous peoples (that is, dominant and subordinate groups). Cultural developments in Africa have shown that classical texts, images and ideas continue to provide the basis for much reflection on the subcontinent and to serve as a stimulus for political and social transformation.[227]

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