

Sophocles' *Antigone* at the prison on Robben Island, in which Nelson Mandela played the role of Creon. Mandela subsequently indicated in his autobiography that Creon's role and words led him to reflect on the qualities needed in a wise leader.

The influence of Roman law on the South African legal system through the adoption of Roman-Dutch law as the common law of the country seems a rather obvious instance of the reception of a facet of Roman society. However, as Deon van Zyl points out in his chapter, 'After Cicero: legal thought from antiquity to the new constitution', the ideas of justice, equity, fairness, good faith and moral probity originated with the Greek philosophers and were transmitted by Cicero and others first into Roman law and then further developed before finding their place in the new South African constitution created after 1994.

Sitting in contrast to van Zyl's positive interpretation of the legacy of ancient thought in South Africa's legal system is John Hilton's criticism that the attempts of Cecil John Rhodes to create an empire that was an improved version of that of the Romans and to represent classical ideas architecturally 'missed some of the more lasting and fundamental ideas produced by Rome, such as universal humanism and the Hellenistic brotherhood of man' (113). Rhodes' engagement with the ancient world is covered in another chapter too, 'Cecil Rhodes as a reader of the classics: The Groote Schuur Collection'. Here, David Wardle describes how Rhodes was so impressed by Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that he had all ancient works referred to by Gibbon translated into English. The typescripts of these translations are kept in the library of Groote Schuur, beautifully bound in red leather. They have not been accessible to scholars before, and Wardle interestingly compares the quality of these unabridged versions by unknown translators with others by contemporary scholars. An appendix lists all the classical translations in the Rhodes collection.

Particularly interesting chapters are those dealing with aspects of the classics in the lives of black South Africans and the Afrikaans community, respectively. In her chapter, "'You are people like the Romans were!": D. D. T. Jabavu at Fort Hare', Jo-Marie Claassen describes the inspiring role of the first black African to teach classics at a South African institution of higher learning. In contrast, Philip R. Bosman's chapter shows how a group of Afrikaners, embittered by the Anglo-Boer War, were determined to prove

that their language could achieve parity with English in every sphere. In 'Greeks, Romans and volks-education in the *Afrikaanse Kinderensiklopedie*', Bosman argues that a group of highly educated Afrikaner men saw knowledge of classical antiquity as a tool for cultural enrichment, as it dealt with a crucial period in the development of Western civilization. He analyses the contributions dealing with the classical world in the encyclopaedia and notes the high standard of the material. Bosman concludes that 'it formed an integral part of the overall educational strategy among Afrikaner intelligentsia during the 1940s and 1950s. The emphasis on the high cultures of antiquity served to tie Afrikaner identity to Europe and Western tradition, but it also served to introduce a universal and humanist perspective into the educational programme' (231).

A short review cannot do justice to the variety presented by the diverse approaches to the different ways in which classical antiquity has resonated and continues to resonate in South Africa. Recent stagings and adaptations of Greek tragedy as described in the chapters by Roy Sargeant and Elke Steinmeyer prove that the new, democratic South Africa still draws on classical antiquity to make sense of the profound political and social changes in the country.

The book is handsomely produced and contains numerous illustrations, as well as 12 colour plates. They play a key part in understanding, notably in the chapters that deal with material culture. There is an index and a very useful bibliography.

This volume is indispensable to anyone interested in the ways classical antiquity has intersected with South African education, arts, society and politics.

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**MALAMUD (M.) African Americans and the Classics: Antiquity, Abolition and Activism.**

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In the past few years numerous American classical scholars have shone a spotlight on (mis)appropriations of ancient Greece and Rome by contemporary white supremacists. Donna Zuckerberg, the editor of the progressive online classics journal

*Eidolon*, has recently contributed a book-length analysis of such appropriations (*Not All Dead White Men: Classics and Misogyny in the Digital Age*, Cambridge 2018). In it she demonstrates the ways in which devotees of the so-called alt-right have sullied some of the darker corners of the internet with bigoted musings on classical antiquity as a reflection of the purported greatness of white males.

Malamud does not touch on this subject in her new monograph; the book's composition predates the election of Donald Trump, whose presidency has undoubtedly energized some American scholars to take stock of how classical antiquity has been used to divide and exclude. But it is one of the many virtues of *African Americans and the Classics* that it helps contextualize today's ideological struggles over the classical past. The book, a major contribution to the burgeoning sub-field of black classicism (also known as 'classica Africana'), tracks the recourse to the ancient world made by African-American intellectuals in their fight against slavery and oppression. As Malamud ably demonstrates, 'knowledge of Classics was a powerful weapon and tool for resistance – as improbable as that might seem now – when wielded by activists committed to the abolition of slavery and the end of the social and economic oppression of free blacks' (4).

In addition to a slim introduction and afterword, the book contains four chapters. The first of these expounds on the efforts made by some African Americans in the early US to learn the classical languages. To some extent, as Malamud indicates, knowledge of Greek and Latin was prized as ammunition against white racists such as the vice-president and senator John C. Calhoun (1782–1850), who thought that black people's purported inability to master ancient Greek demonstrated their inferiority. But an introduction to the classical world also offered African Americans the chance to take part in intellectual debates about slavery and racism, which were often peppered with allusions to antiquity. In opposition to many white educational leaders (whose schools typically disallowed black students) and pragmatists such as Booker T. Washington, some African Americans studied the classics and contributed to classical scholarship.

The second and third chapters feature various debates in American history, chiefly surrounding the nature of modern slavery. Malamud highlights, for example, the likening of Toussaint Louverture (1743–1803), a leader of the successful Haitian

Revolution, to Spartacus. She also shows that Demosthenes and Cicero were powerful role models for African-American orators such as Frederick Douglass. Comparative analysis of ancient and modern slavery played an especially notable role in early American political disputes, as anti-abolitionists distorted Aristotle's ideas in order to validate race-based enslavement. Abolitionists, Malamud shows, attempted to counter such ideas through numerous lines of attack. The author and activist David Walker (1796–1830), for instance, viewed the Carthaginians as the ancestors of African Americans and wished for a modern-day Hannibal to come and free the slaves.

Chapter 4 takes up the African-American search for ancient roots. More specifically, it highlights the long-standing tradition of linking modern blacks to ancient Egyptians. Such a linkage, Malamud shows, served to undercut white racists, since it helped demonstrate that African Americans had contributed to civilization. But Malamud rightly notes the dangers inherent in this connection. 'The trap of such arguments', she writes in one of the book's most striking passages, 'is the premise that African Americans could be civilised only if they could be proved once to have belonged to the paradigmatic triad of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilizations' (188). In the afterword, Malamud brings the story up to the present, ruminating on the continued use of antiquity by black artists, novelists and filmmakers to make statements about the contemporary world.

In places the reader hungers for more analysis than Malamud provides. Many examples she cites underscore the limitations inherent in commandeering antiquity for any ideological purpose – however noble. Thus, for example, the Carthaginians often invoked by abolitionists were hardly abolitionists themselves. When the senator Charles Sumner viewed slavery as a modern-day Catilinarian conspiracy, moreover, he did not mention the slaves who joined Catiline's cause. What do such imperfect appropriations tell us about the fight for African-American rights and, more broadly, about American history? Malamud typically says little about such matters. Still, the book presents a learned and captivating tour of American responses to the classical world. It will surely prove a starting point for further work on black classicism.

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