

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

NOVEL CLASSICISM: BRITISH FICTION AND THE TRADITIONS OF ANTIQUITY

1740-1840

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

DECEMBER 2016

For my parents, Bruce and Lesley Kerr

sero sed serio

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The genesis of this project lies in Edinburgh's New Town, where classical order and harmony have been imposed on a sublime terrain with which, over two centuries, they have come to blend inseparably. That I originate there too, makes it possible to tell a long, especially digressive, even Shandean tale about this piece of work. A more concise version can be told through the debts of thanks I owe to individuals on both sides of the Atlantic, who were all instrumental in bringing this work to this stage.

At the University of Chicago, my dissertation committee has been a source of invaluable intellectual inspiration and support. Jim Chandler glimpsed long before I did the potential for a discussion of Scott as a classicist of a very particular bent, and Scott is the central column of the project. His belief in this project, even (and especially) as its architecture changed has been essential. Elaine Hadley has been unstintingly generous in giving time and intellectual energy to a project that rapidly receded from her Victorianist expertise. Her crystalline explanations of complex concepts, insistence on clarity, and pedagogical example have been invaluable. Tim Campbell has been an acute and attentive reader. His bibliographical and rhetorical suggestions vitally shaped amorphous swathes of research material and his transatlantic shepherding kept me in the fold.

The faculty, staff, and students of the English Department at Chicago have been colleagues and friends. The organizers and attendees of the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Cultures Workshop must be especially thanked for their time and skill in discussing chapters as work in progress. Over the course of my time at Chicago I have been fortunate to receive a number of fellowships and awards, all *sine quibus non*. The generosity of the Blair, Tillotson, and Nicholson families made this research possible. Tony Maramarco receives especial thanks

for funding graduate-student research travel. The days I spent with Scott's autograph manuscripts at the Morgan Library in New York were revelatory.

In the UK, a month's residential fellowship at the Chawton House Library in 2014 was a privilege which simultaneously deepened and broadened my sense of women writers' autonomous approach to the classics. At Edinburgh University, Penny Fielding and the members of the Scottish Writing in the Nineteenth Century (SWINC) group have offered an intellectual home-from-home-back-home.

Far back in time, it was the late Michael Comber who first introduced me to Classical Reception as a field of inquiry. Christopher Pelling, Helen Cooper, Jon Mee, and Andrew King opened the door to English and Classics. Oxford's joint-honors course suggested the genre-based framing of the project: from the list of Epic, Tragedy, Comedy, Satire, and Pastoral papers to choose, Novel was missing. This project is, in some way, an attempt to fill this significant absence. In deepest time, John Byrom was a scintillating expositor of the strangeness yet uncanny familiarity of the Romantic period. Far more recently Jonathan Sachs has been a supporter and exemplary exponent of Romantic classicism.

Friends and relatives across the world have been overwhelmingly generous with their ideas, spare rooms, and patience. Jan Rutherford, Hugh Andrew, and all Birlinn have been generous and forbearing in the latter stages of this enterprise, for which I shall always be grateful. The greatest thanks must go to my parents, who probably never expected this education to be so protracted but still manage to remain proud. The one is the classicist, the other the novel-reader. Thank you.

Introduction

The 1740s is a decade in which the novel's relation to the classical canon and its critical dictates are a central concern in writing and evaluating fiction. While much has been written about Henry Fielding's neoclassical "comic epic in prose" or Samuel Richardson's contrasting deficiency in classical erudition, this study reveals a relationship between British fiction and the legacy of classical antiquity originating in this decade that is more formative and persistent than the idea that the novel is the epic of modernity. In his essay "On the Study of History" (1741) David Hume draws a connection between novels and classical historiography. He relates a purportedly truthful anecdote detailing how he answered a request from a "young beauty" for novels and romances by sending a classical text to her country retreat instead.

I therefore sent her *Plutarch's Lives*, assuring her, at the same Time, that there was not a Word of Truth in them from Beginning to End. She perused them very attentively, 'till she came to the Lives of *Alexander* and *Caesar*, whose Names she had heard of by Accident: and then returned me the Book, with many Reproaches for deceiving her.¹

Hume's anecdote establishes an equivalence between novels and classical historiography that is the basis of my argument about the novel and the classics in the century between 1740 and 1840. Even as Hume champions history-reading over and against novel-reading, his anecdote reveals what will become the basis of the novel's authority over the subsequent century, that it will usurp historiography's longstanding status as the genre best adapted to representing human nature.²

Reading history, especially that of the ancient cultures, is to study human nature, declares Hume,

¹ David Hume, *Essays, Moral and Political* (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid, 1742), 70; further references to this edition are parenthesized within the text.

² Ian Duncan "The Trouble with Man: Scott, Romance, and World History in the Age of Lamarck," *Romantic Frictions*, ed. Theresa M. Kelley, September 2011, Par. 4, Romantic Circles, 6 November 2016.

<<http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/frictions/HTML/praxis.2011.duncan.html>>

noting that only men and women who are well read in a triad of Greek, Roman, and their own national histories can be interesting conversationalists. Though it would be decades before the novel was received as the legitimate heir to this humanist tradition in Walter Scott's historical novels, the Enlightenment's classically based conceptions of prose narrative and societal development influence and inadvertently authorize the genre.

At the same time, fiction's ascent begins to alter both the perception of antiquity and the meaning of the word "classical." In the second half of the eighteenth century, the classical corpus begins to be read novelistically. In this instance, Hume suggests that classical history offers the same enticing and titillating subject matter as fiction.

Has [the female reader] not equal Reason to be pleased, when she is informed, (what is whispered about among Historians) that *Cato's* Sister had an Intrigue with *Caesar*, and palmed her Son, *Marcus Brutus*, upon her Husband for his own, tho', in Reality, he was her Gallant's? And are not the Loves of Messalina or Julia as proper Subjects of Discourse as any Intrigue that this City has produced of late Years. (71)

The paradox of classical history is that it had always contained examples of both the most depraved and virtuous deeds. This scandal-laden and gossipy historiography proves that first-century Rome provides a portrait of nature and manners analogous to that in contemporary novels and therefore also modern life. As a "philosophical historian" bringing systematized Enlightenment arguments to historiography, Hume retains a neoclassical, humanist commitment to exemplary narrative that functions through the double effect of creating both sympathetic identification and critical distance.³ As they were emulated by eighteenth-century successors, ancient historians were also interpreted as proto-novelists, offering examples of how to neutralize even salacious subject matter in their alternation of sympathetic engagement and moralized, sentimental reflection.

³ Mark Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: The Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740-1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 47.

Romanticism has long been defined by its dialectical rejection of the Augustan variety of neoclassicism as exemplified, in particular, by the works of Alexander Pope. Yet many critics have shown the persistence of classicism in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century British culture: in the material production of the Wedgwood factory at Etruria, in the fashion and painting of the 1780s and 90s, on the stage, and in the late-Romantic philhellenism of Shelley and the Hunt circle.⁴ As part of the British classical tradition, namely the broad continuum of cultural artifacts responsive to classical antiquity, these are all instances of neoclassicism because ‘neo’ means both modern and dialectically new. So is it possible to characterize Romantic neoclassicism in general? Marilyn Butler posits that neoclassicism’s coexistence and dialogue with Romanticism makes it constitutive of Romanticism’s characteristically protean nature.⁵ The novel’s engagement with the traditions of classical antiquity is precisely both neoclassical and Romantic. Rather than anti-classical, the novel is the chief proponent of a persisting but importantly different kind of literary classicism in this period, one grafted onto vernacular forms and native subject matter in both poetry and prose. This movement is too diffuse to be termed a neoclassicism; indeed, it critiques other Romantic neoclassicisms and begins to constitute a British classicism that is eventually naturalized and decoupled from Greco-Roman antiquity.

One of the crucial legacies (and burdens) of Augustan neoclassicism for the classicism of the Romantic period is its rigorous adherence to the rules of composition transmitted through the

⁴ See especially Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School: Keats, Shelley, Hunt and their Circle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Jonathan Sachs, *Romantic Antiquity: Rome in the British Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Timothy Campbell, *Historical Style: Fashion and the New Mode of History, 1740-1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

⁵ Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 6.

classical tradition. While the Romantics deemed this classicism un-English because of its association with the stringent French school of poetry, it retained potency in periodical criticism. Its association with criticism can make Augustan neoclassicism seem emulatory in impulse as it strives to achieve classical elegance and polish. Fielding's novelistic neoclassicism engages with this in the 1740s with repeated defensive comparisons between the novel and epic poetry: *Joseph Andrews* (1742) opens with a preface on the novel as "a comic Epic-Poem in Prose" and *Tom Jones* (1749) is a "Heroic, Historical, Prosaic Poem."⁶ Extended episodes in the latter, such as the chapter subtitled "A battle sung by the muse in the Homeric style, and which none but the classical reader can taste" (153) in which a catalogue of English villagers scuffle over Molly Seagrim's honor, render mock heroic the chief mode of the novel's neoclassicism in the decade, a mode it shares with Augustan poetry. Fielding's (and Pope's) mock heroic depends on the incongruous collision of style and subject, highlighting the discrepancy between modern manners and the grand classical action the style had evolved to represent. Alongside with its quest for its protagonist's legitimacy, the *History of Tom Jones, Foundling* borrows classical authority to legitimize itself and its genre.

After Fielding this legitimizing aspect of the novel's classicism moved largely out of novels themselves and into criticism and prefaces, though it would resurface again in the 1810s and 20s, a crucial decade in which the novel began to be canonized. In the meantime, a different strain of classicism was emerging concurrently in the novel, one that took as its model the exemplarity of classical narratives rather than the exemplarity of classical genres and criticism. Novelist Sarah Fielding's *Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* (written 1748, published 1757) merges

⁶ Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews and Shamela*, ed. Tom Keymer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3; Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*, ed. John Bender (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998), 132.

Plutarchan biography with a pair of narratives fictionally told by the ghosts of Antony's infamous mistress and virtuous Roman wife. Fielding's work conjures the female voices of Roman history to have them speak for themselves, psychologizing and thereby fictionalizing their well known stories. In her preface she frames what she calls the "interview" by invoking the epic conceit of the journey to the underworld. Naming Homer, Virgil, Aristophanes, and Lucan, Fielding predicates her fiction on "the assistance of an eastern sorcerer or magician, who conveyed her to the gloomy realms of *Pluto* and by his interest at court, prevailed on that great monarch to command those celebrated shades to give her a faithful detail of their lives, during their abode on earth."⁷ This epic formula recurs in historical novels across the century, its eastern and gothic aspects asserting the common origin of the classical and romance traditions as well as creating a particularly novelistic, and Romantic classicism.⁸

Fielding's book, which bestrides novel, history, and biography, shows a feminization of classical exemplarity. As biography, the paired narratives continue the tradition of recounting exemplary lives but the opposition between the women divides the book into a pair of conduct narratives. Octavia's is an account of exemplary, steadfast domestic and matronly virtue set against Cleopatra's tale of seduction and political intrigue. Fielding's Cleopatra unapologetically confesses her manipulation of Antony, narrating her feats engagingly, in a witty and enticing manner and at far greater length than Octavia.⁹ It is clear that the narratives have ultimately been paired in order to place a moralized check on her example. Like the novels of the day, this

⁷ Sarah Fielding, *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia by the Author of David Simple* (London, Printed for the Author, 1757), v.

⁸ The most famous of these usages is Walter Scott's in the 'Dedicatory Epistle' to *Ivanhoe* (1820). See James Chandler, *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), 168.

⁹ The "Life of Cleopatra" occupies pp. 7-176 in the 1757 edition; the "Life of Octavia" pp. 177-219.

feminized classical historiography must answer to the anxieties attendant on its female subject and projected readership. A proficient classicist herself, Fielding's work foreshadows how fiction was to become an essential medium for diffusing knowledge about antiquity to British readers without a traditional classical education, a category aligned with the novel-reader: the young, the uneducated, and the female.

Classics and the novel, then, were never antithetical. Indeed, a lot of critical work has been done from the seventeenth century forward to establish the modern novel's contiguity with classical antiquity through the European vernacular romance traditions. Narratives of the history or progress of romance begin with what has retrospectively been termed 'the ancient novel', itself a mixed bag of Greek (Heraclitus' *Aethiopica*) or Greek-influenced (Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*) prose romance or Menippean satire (Petronius) and convincingly trace the evolution and continuity of erotic and quest narratives thematizing legitimacy, return, or inheritance.¹⁰ The novel's vernacularism, its populism, its mixing of high and low modes, or of pathos and comedy all find genealogical forebears in antiquity. Yet the genre's detractors were quick to condemn it for not having a classical precedent, naming just these characteristics as unclassical. That hierarchy of classical genres, a structuring tenet of criticism well into the nineteenth century, did not recognize the romance or accommodate such diversity compounded this condemnation. In order to overcome this association with mere romance the novel needed to merge the popular and perennial aspects of the romance tradition with the expression of nature.

¹⁰ Margaret Anne Doody's *The True Story of the Novel* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996) makes a number of claims that connect the eighteenth century novel with classical romance, namely that Heraclitus's Chariclea is transmuted into Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747). Most recently Thomas Pavel's *The Lives of the Novel: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013) has divided the millennia-long transglobal continuum of the novel longitudinally into stories that either idealize human behavior or condemn it.

In the *Essay on Criticism* Pope writes that “Nature and Homer...were one.” For all the repudiation of Pope by and following Wordsworth in the Romantic period, this dictum remained uncontested, though the nature of Homer’s nature changed. While nature relocated from the Mediterranean to the British landscape, people, and language, the novel both supported and obstructed this change. On one hand, national tales and historical novels show the British periphery to be a classical site in both the natural state of its people and landscape: classicism therefore became sublime and savage. On the other, criticism of the novel continued to retain and revere the exemplary status of the classical canon. The consequence of this tension is that the novel both reinforces and redefines classicism.

“Novel classicism,” the capacious term that demarcates my subject, has three intertwining threads: first, the tendency of the novel to incorporate classical elements such as stylistic tropes, subjects or even settings. Second, the way in which criticism theorizes the novel’s literary status in relation to canons and critical practices structured by the exemplarity of classical texts. Third, the renovation of the classical tradition to be accessible to a greater proportion of the public, a new kind of classicism that is more normal than normative, or in other words more quotidian than qualitative, yet still burnished with ancient prestige. It exists as a whole because British culture and society were saturated with the traditions of antiquity, those that were their own and those they had appropriated. Between 1740 and 1840 the novel altered the nature and terms of the relationship between new writing and old, gradually transforming the idea of the classical into the classic by expanding its frame of reference to encompass texts that did not originate in Greco-Roman antiquity but which resembled them in their exemplary character.

A vast range of texts that belong to the sometimes divergent and sometimes overlapping British classical tradition and the tradition of British classics can therefore be marshaled to demonstrate the classicism of the novel and the novelty of classicism in the period. Translations, treatises, history, biography, and criticism all connect to the novel increasingly as the decades progress, culminating in its centrality to the literary field in the late 1810s and 1820s, the heyday of the Waverley novels. The novels under discussion are also diverse and are classical in different ways. A group of Romantic novels set in classical antiquity receive attention here, in a manner that pre-Victorian classical novels have not.¹¹ This set of texts is itself differentiated by period, politics, and the nature of their relationship to classical texts. Some, for example Cornelia Knight's *Marcus Flaminius*, are novelizations of a single author, in this case Tacitus. Others suture the scraps of entire curricula together to realize a many-layered and anachronistic generalized classical setting, even when their story purports to be of a specific period. Certain novels with British settings from this period may also be considered part of the classical tradition, reflective of how the formations of classical antiquity were meaningful (or not) in the present. An irony of this collection of texts preoccupied with the nature of literary durability (or, immortality, as it was sometimes put) is that very few have themselves become canonical. This is partly a consequence of a particular period's conception of what is temporally transcendent being itself highly temporally specific, and partly a consequence of the heavily Latinate style of these classicized and classicizing works. This alienates the modern reader, who has become less

¹¹ Simon Goldhill finds the Romantic novel's engagement with the classics too fragmentary to fit the scheme of his magisterial study, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction and the Proclamation of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). This is also perhaps because Romantic classicism is sufficiently ambivalent about modernity as not to proclaim it.

familiar with the cadences of the Ciceronian period as the tradition of vernacular classics began to usurp and marginalize the classical tradition.

In attempting to account for the genre across the century, this study is more closely aligned with classical reception studies on Simon Goldhill's model of examining broad cultural patterns and public engagement than focusing on particular engagements of canonical authors. In his imperious 2011 study of Victorian classicism Goldhill declares that classical reception studies is most productive when it is attentive to the cultural significance of the representation of the past in the present. Rejecting but also refining Charles Martindale's foundational claim that the meaning of a (classical) text is constituted at the moment of reception, Goldhill calls for classical reception studies to be "aware of how meaning takes shape over time."¹² This study shows how the rise of the novel changes the meaning of classical antiquity in British culture, making it a mass cultural formation. Classicism in the novel (even in the same novel) is sometimes expressed with wondrous enthusiasm and at others as hackneyed convention. This is to say that the novel mimetically represents both a culture saturated with the legacies of antiquity and a time in which it is still possible to be struck anew by the clarity of a voice or image resonating across millennia. Both of these have meanings, just as Romantic anti-classicism has its own. The Romantic novel has been too long occluded in classical reception studies. This study rectifies this.

¹² Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity*, 13. Charles Martindale's seminal *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) is heralded with inaugurating the burgeoning field of Classical Reception Studies. Shane Butler's recent edited volume, *Deep Classics: Rethinking Classical Reception* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016) shows that the reception of classical antiquity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is especially marked by a concern for temporality and the elusive comprehension of time.

Chapter one shows the breadth of reception of a classical author across culture in a reception study of the Roman historian Tacitus. Rather than focusing on Fielding's neoclassicism, it instead tracks a less playful and more rigorous genealogy of sentiment between classical literature and the eighteenth-century novel. The sentimental readings of the Roman historian Tacitus in eighteenth-century translations and criticism show that representations of feeling and the engagement of the reader's emotions had become hallmarks of the classical canon. This, then, prepares the ground for the novel to be theorized as taking over moral and didactic functions from classical literature. The case of Tacitus is, on one hand, exemplary of a general practice of interpreting classical authors in this manner. On the other, the specificity of his style and subject matter make him a strikingly strong example for establishing links between classical historiography, modern history writing, and fiction. From Edward Gibbon forward, Tacitus has been read as a proto-Enlightenment historian, on account of ethnographic studies of Britain and Germany which describe the manners of the northern tribes and reveal uneven cultural and commercial development in Europe in the first-century AD. He was also read as a sentimental historian, powerful in both his compressed axiomatic style and his ascription of historical events and the nature of Roman government to individual psychology.

The chapter shows how, in the decades between Gordon's Whig-sponsored translation (1728) and Murphy's of 1793, the emerging discourse of sensibility shaped the reading (and rewriting) of classical texts. Conversely, criticism by Adam Smith and Hugh Blair from the 1750s and 60s shows how Tacitus's style was analyzed as an exemplar for effective prose narrative, the kind that would engage the reader's emotions but also encourage the exercise of their judgment. A censorious note was sounded almost contemporaneously by vicar Thomas Hunter, however, who warned that undirected reading of Tacitus was as morally deleterious as novel-reading. It is two

female authors from very different backgrounds, however, who make Tacitus into reading material suitable for novel-readers. *Memoirs of Agrippina, Wife of Germanicus* (1804) is biography and conjectural history of women by Elizabeth Hamilton, a Scottish pedagogical writer from a missionary background who could not read Latin but was advised on translating Tacitus by Adam Smith's protégé, Edinburgh mathematician and economist Duguld Stewart. *Marcus Flaminius* (1792) is an epistolary novel by Cornelia Ellis Knight, who was brought up on the periphery of the Bluestocking circle and acquired both Latin and Greek. Knight's is a true historical novelization of the *Annals* and the *Germania*. It is a Waverley novel *avant la lettre*, in which the story of a fictional protagonist is interpolated into Tacitus's history and given descriptive richness with details drawn from his ethnography. Rather than a political mastermind, in short, the Enlightenment's Tacitus was a novelist.

Even already, in this case study of a classical author, Enlightenment Edinburgh emerges as an important center for the analysis of antiquity and the reevaluation of its cultural legacies. As Ian Duncan has convincingly established, Edinburgh was an alternative capital in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain, a northern cultural capital with its own institutions.¹³ The neoclassical architecture in its New Town (planned in 1763 by James Craig) was the environmental incarnation of the city's styling itself as a northern and modern Athens. With the twin acropolises of Edinburgh Castle and Calton Hill overlooking the city, Edinburgh's landscape juxtaposed sublime terrain with classical architecture in a manner reminiscent of Greece itself. In the absence of a parliament, however, Edinburgh's institutions were cultural and, in the institutions of the periodical reviews and the novel itself, the city established itself as an alternative to London as a center for literary production. Walter Scott is central to both this

¹³ Ian Duncan, *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), chapter 1.

literary center and to my argument about the changing nature of literary classicism in this period. His life and work is a fulcrum between the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the fully commercialized mass-market literary sphere of the nineteenth century and beyond.

The polarity between Edinburgh and London is nowhere clearer than in the conflict between the Blackwood and Hunt coteries over the reading and adaptation of classical texts. While the radical “Cockneys” embraced a bucolic Greek cult of laughter and political and sexual freedom, the Scottish literary establishment practiced a more circumscribed and almost Hebraic Christianity, in line with their conservatism. The Whig *Edinburgh Review* espoused a rigid classicism in its criticism, while the Tory periodicals upheld classical erudition as a normative marker of gentility. The “Athens of the North” was, ironically, the most fearsome detractor of Romantic Hellenism. When Marilyn Butler dubbed the activities of the Hunt circle at Marlow in 1817 “the cult of the south” the term referred to both the reverential emulation of the southern Mediterranean cultures but also to the coherence of this group in opposition to the northern literary center.¹⁴

A crucial fusing of the classical and the Romantic, then, occurs in the Edinburgh literary sphere. This project’s key coinage, the idea of a “vernacular classicism,” begins to emerge in the *Waverley Novels*, the subject of chapter two. Scott’s classicism is characteristically ambivalent. He disavows his own classical erudition, stating in his correspondence that he prefers the folklore of Northern Europe. How, then, to explain or systematize the abundance of Latinity and classical allusions in, especially, the Scottish-set *Waverley Novels*? Male characters of the middle and upper classes speak in a professional (legal, medical, religious) or quasi-professional (antiquarian) Latinate patois, or discuss events through analogies to classical history. In a gently

¹⁴ Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), chapter 6.

satirical strain their little, sometimes blundering, but always highly prized erudition is a distinctive feature of national manners, a native and quotidian classical tradition. The classicism of Scott's Scotch characters is, in fact, part of the conjectural historical scheme of his novels: the most distinctive and pathos-drawing characters (such as Elspeth Mucklebackit, Edie Ochiltree, or Madge Wildfire) are deliberately classicized by the narrator to emphasize their anachronistic status in the present. These paupers on the margins are ancients, characters of nature, either preserved by the uneven development of Scottish society and threatened by the homogenizing manners of commercial modernity or rendered mannerless as a consequence of suffering an outrageous breach of manners. That they are at their most classical when also at their most gothic testifies to the persisting effectiveness of classical allusions and archetypes even in Romantic fiction.

The novel's vernacular classicism is theorized by Scott and allied critics, most notably John Gibson Lockhart, in the 1810s and 20s. Romantic Studies has long been fascinated by the notorious canon wars raged in the periodical and pamphlet press over whether the polishedly neoclassical Pope should be allowed to remain in the English poetic canon, or the stakes of middle-class Cockneys writing classical verse. Chapter three argues that while this was going on, the same writers in the same periodicals were adopting and adapting the terms of criticism to forming a novelistic canon and making the case for the genre's accession to the national literary canon. Nature and manners, also key terms for theorizing the Waverley Novels, are unsurprisingly key terms in theorizing what Lockhart called "the classical novels of the English tongue" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Novels that achieved the delicate balance of representing transhistorical human nature and eliciting grand feelings (as classical texts were

believed to do) alongside a convincing portrayal of temporally and nationally specific manners (the novel's subject matter) were admitted into the canon.

The novel's status as both classical and (therefore) canonical was articulated in prefaces to collected editions, but also, essentially, in periodical reviews. While the reviews addressed themselves to a homogenous readership, they prized national vernacular culture, applying their classical critical argot to its artifacts. Yet just as the Tory *Blackwood's* policed the use and abuse of the classics in contemporary culture, with a particular eye for political subversion, so too was it an organ for the broader dissemination of classical knowledge to constituencies without formal classical education. The entanglement of the literary and the political for Lockhart was most explicit in his writing about the classics. His engagement with the question of whether writing non-satirical poetry in a classical mode in the nineteenth century was possible led him to conclude, along with Byron, that it was not. While the latter turned to comic epic in *Don Juan*, Lockhart decided that the novel was the ideal vehicle for literary classicism and set about writing a classically-set novel that would also be a British classic according to his own critical rubric.

By the 1830s both the novelty of the novel's classicism and the inaccessibility of antiquity had worn off. Both novels and the classics began to be marketed by publishers to a greatly expanded market in standardized series at cut prices. The politically and commercially motivated non-fiction series of the late 20s and early 30s made knowledge of the classical languages and cultures available for readers to educate themselves. Binding the life of Alexander the Great into the same series as a treatise on the insect kingdom mirrors the leveling of the intellectual disciplines that began as the arts and sciences were institutionalized in the nineteenth century. In this way the classics found their way onto domestic bookshelves and became familiar.

Just as the Romantic novel was also being collected into a uniform series titled *Bentley's Standard Novels*, Edward Bulwer Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii* erupted onto the scene to make the ancient world the site of sensory pleasure and sensational horror. I show how this novel embodies the connections between the classical and the classic novel: Bulwer Lytton's preface pays homage to the novel's serious intellectual capacity and proposes an ancient setting as the test of the form's capacity to represent both nature and manners. Here, and throughout the novel, he self-consciously sets out to produce a hybrid of the classical and novelistic traditions as he reanimates what was widely known as "the city of the dead:" the novel's repetitiously interruptive narration is a melodramatic update to the sentimental tradition of reading the classics for representations of universal emotions; and the novel combines Scott's historicist scheme with elements of the novel of contemporary manners. *Pompeii* provides an ideal setting for this since the quotidian manners and material aspects of the ancient world can be lavishly represented with accurate details supplied from the excavations, which could be (in turn) readily cross-referenced in illustrated books, almanacs, and museum collections. The rich description of objects and daily life render the ancients at once strange (pagan, Mediterranean, dormice-eating, circus-going) and domestically familiar (at dinner, in the boudoir, in love) to the reader. The environmental cataclysm at the plot's climax completes the work of representing nature as it reduces the characters to mere nature by stripping away their possessions and affectations leaving them as they were to be seen centuries later by visitors to the excavations. The phenomenal success of this novel produces new kind of classical sensation that simultaneously combines the alien and the familiar, the sublime and the normal, the temporally specific and the universal.

I. “The Anatomist of the Heart”: Reading Tacitus in the Eighteenth Century

The rise of the novel shapes a variety of literary responses to the Roman historian Tacitus in the second half of the eighteenth century. From 1750 to around 1800, Tacitus was repeatedly extolled as an ancient exemplar of the sentimental in literature a recognition that generated a sought-for classical precedent for the novel. In finding an analogue for the novel other than epic poetry, the genre was liberated from connection with the perceived degeneration of the Homeric form through the excesses of the romance tradition. The alignment with history echoes the tendency of novels to describe themselves as such throughout the eighteenth century and, crucially, the classical analogue is able to neutralize the anxiety caused by these early novels’ claims to veracity. For all but the most conservative of commentators, Tacitus’s style induces the kind of readerly reflection that makes the representation of vice and impropriety morally innocuous. Furthermore, a compelling constellation of factors make Tacitus appear to contemporaries as the most modern of ancient authors: the prose narratives of the *Annals* and the *Histories* represent action both compellingly and with attention to individual psychology; their subject is the nature and manners of Roman society under the Principate, a regime that distanced the patrician class from political power; he seems to at once condemn and be enticed by the corrupt domestic drama of the imperial court. His works transform the idea of classical exemplarity in a manner that answered the period’s concerns about the example literature set to the rapidly expanding reading public.

The example of Tacitus in these decades, then, shows a multifaceted transformation in classical exemplarity. Since his ethnographic works, *Agricola* and *Germania* show northern Europeans their first-century forebears in a manner that transforms conceptions of ancient Britain

and Germany, exemplarity functions at a cultural level. By relocating virtue from the Imperial center to the peoples at the periphery of the Roman Empire, both these texts authorize ancient Britain and Germany in a way that influences Romantic conceptions of national identity. From Edward Gibbon forward, Tacitus has been read as a proto-Enlightenment historian because these works reveal, and moralize in their representation of the northern nations, the uneven cultural and commercial development in Europe in the first-century AD. Yet, because for Tacitus individual Romans could also still embody heroic virtue, classical antiquity still offered patterns for conduct. As I will show, Tacitus represents his good Romans as men of sensibility, emotionally expressive and morally staunch. He also represents these men of feeling as figures that stand apart from the general character of the age, a foregrounding that yokes feeling with political resistance. This stylistic tendency makes figures stand out in isolated relief from the backdrop sentimentalizes them too, however, making them objects of feeling and contemplation, models for resilience rather than spurs to sedition. The potential for sentimental interpretations of Tacitus how representations of feeling and the engagement of the reader's emotions had become primary concerns in reading and evaluating the classical canon. Translation, too, was influenced by the development of the discourse of feeling. in the decades between Gordon's Whig-sponsored translation (1728) and Murphy's of 1793, the emerging discourse of sensibility shaped the reading (and rewriting) of classical texts.

If, as I aim to show, Tacitus became a novelist in these decades, what does this mean for the British novel? The reception of Tacitus reveals an alternative classical tradition in the genre from that of satirical neoclassicism. Writers and commentators this period construct a less playful but more precise genealogy of sentiment between classical literature and the novel. This, in turn, prepares the ground for the novel to be theorized as taking over moral and didactic

functions from classical literature, as the indexing of sentiments in the 1751 third edition of *Clarissa* shows. While Thomas Hunter, an especially vociferous detractor of both Tacitus and contemporary novels, draws compelling comparisons between the two it is in women's writing that Tacitus makes his fictional debut. The two female-authored works discussed below exhibit oppositional approaches to classical material. The first is explicitly not a novel but an exemplary biography by an experienced pedagogical writer, who can read neither Latin nor Greek. The second is exuberantly fictional, at ease with the classical languages, and confident in dismembering and reassembling the Tacitean corpus into an epistolary novel. The dichotomy between the views of the novel espoused by these two writers is occluded by the resemblance between their works. Significantly, both texts have been composed in order to disseminate knowledge of classical antiquity to those unable to read classical languages. Both also read as fiction, even more so than Sarah Fielding's earlier *Cleopatra and Octavia*. This powerfully suggests that by 1800 the novelistic form was becoming an effective medium both for women to claim classical knowledge for themselves and to extend the reach of classical knowledge to sections of the population hitherto excluded.

This chapter collates a variety of texts under the heading of reception, indicating the capaciousness of that concept. There are three main categories: the texts, which includes both the Latin original and the two major eighteenth-century translations by Thomas Gordon (1728) and Arthur Murphy (1793); commentaries and literary-critical responses, namely Smith and Blair's respective *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1763, 1783) and Thomas Hunter's *Observations on Tacitus* (1753); and finally, a category of texts that excerpt and adapt Tacitean material for more diffuse ends. Under discussion here are works by female novelists: Ellis Cornelia Knight's *Marcus Flaminius; or a View of the Military, Political, and Social Life of the*

Romans (1792) and *The Memoirs of the Life of Agrippina, Wife of Germanicus* (1804) by Elizabeth Hamilton. Also in this category is *An Historical Miscellany* (1771), which selects passages from the works and resituates them in a didactic volume, recontextualizing Tacitus in the sphere of contemporary moral instruction.¹ Together these texts evidence the particular reciprocity between Tacitus and sentimental discourse, demonstrating on the one hand how the Roman texts invited this kind of reading and were reshaped by it, and, on the other, how this classical model was co-opted and harnessed to provide exemplarity in composition and conduct.

i. Tacitus and History in the *Belles Lettres*

Indeed, throughout all his work, Tacitus shows the hand of a master. As he is profound in reflection, so he is striking in description, and pathetic in sentiment. The Philosopher, the Poet, and the Historian, all meet in him. Though the period of which he writes may be reckoned unfortunate for an Historian, he has made it afford us many interesting exhibitions of human nature. The relations which he gives of the deaths of several eminent personages, are as affecting as the deepest tragedies. He paints with a glowing pencil; and possesses, beyond all Writers, the talent of painting, not to the imagination merely, but to the heart.²

Hugh Blair's superlative praise for Tacitus's works is organized around the response that the Roman historian's style elicits from the reader. The tricolon of profound reflection, striking description, and pathetic sentiment neatly encapsulates a number of eighteenth-century intellectual concerns. This passage, from *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), demonstrates the reciprocity between ancient and modern literature in the literary-critical and didactic spheres. The eighteenth-century reception of a Roman text, that is to say its reputation,

¹ The miscellaneous nature of this last group demonstrates the diffusion of Tacitus's influence within the sphere of cultural production and might be expanded to include the following: the sentimental motifs in Gavin Hamilton's painting *Agrippina Landing at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus* (1772) and the single-figure *Agrippina Weeping Over the Ashes of Germanicus*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1770; Arthur Murphy's tragedy *Arminius* (1798).

² Hugh Blair, 'Lecture XXXVI: Historical Writing', *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* ed. Linda Ferreira-Buckley and S. Michael Halloran (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 407; subsequent references to this edition are parenthesized within the text.

interpretation, and assimilation in contemporary culture, is influenced by the prevailing literary currents. In turn, the characteristics of the classical text shape and authorize that commentary. My argument here will therefore consider how Blair and other writers do not merely overwrite the ancient text with presentist norms but use the classical example to shape standards and define a critical idiom for modern texts, one primarily concerned with reader response.

Blair's mobilizing of contemporary technical literary buzz-words, "reflection... description... sentiment" in the analysis of Tacitus's style contrasts, as a critical mannerism, with the more conventional references to Tacitus's historical works as providing "examples of human nature," equaling tragedy in affective power, and resonating with the heart. The latter are indicative of a critical register based on the invocation of the transhistorical constancy of human nature whereas the former privilege a highly subjective response to the text. The tension between the historical particularity (the eighteenth-century-ness) of Blair's response and the universality it discovers and lauds is constitutive of contemporary historiographical texts, both histories and historical novels, which derive their appeal from the oscillation between the specificity of historical detail and the grandeur of universality. This is an early instance of the critical vocabulary that condenses around the novel in the wake of Walter Scott's *Waverley Novels* as critics begin to recognize the novel's capability for representing universal human nature at the same time as richly describing societal manners and objects.

The sentimental reading of Tacitus practiced in the eighteenth century by Blair and others (and indeed much of the criticism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) poses a challenge to twenty-first-century classical reception studies. In the inaugural editorial of the *Classical Receptions Journal* (2009), Lorna Hardwick observes the field's increasing effort to "explain the continuing transhistorical impact of Greek and Roman culture without falling back into

intellectually dubious forms of universalism or reductionist formalism.”³ Enlightenment commentary on Tacitus exhibits both universalism and formalism in abundance, as this chapter shows. However, the foregoing tradition of Tacitean exemplarity in terms of style and conduct is disrupted by the rise of Enlightenment historicism and the development of ‘philosophical history.’ The transhistorical impact of Greece and Rome in the late eighteenth century becomes more complex with the modification of universalism brought about by developments in the English prose tradition. In these decades the possibility of transhistoricality is interrogated; the classical example is subjected to rigor and reevaluation, yet superlatives and hyperbole persist. The tradition discussed below is characterized by continuity, difference, and temporal distinctiveness as Tacitus, and the classical example in general, moves into the nineteenth century.

From the Renaissance forward, the reception of Tacitus’s works has been equally focused on exemplarity in two spheres: the political and stylistic. While this continues to be the case in the eighteenth century, politics and style are joined, significantly, by feeling. Peter Burke’s tabulation of the European editions and commentaries on ancient historians in the period 1450-1700 attributes Tacitus’s rapid ascendance from around 1600 to the relevance of his account of the Tiberian court to the absolutist monarchies of the period and also to the peculiarity of his style.⁴ Dedicating his edition of Tacitus to Richelieu, the French translator Nicholas D’Ablancourt writes, “it is he who has engendered all the policies of Spain and Italy...it is he whom the Princes of the House of Austria still consult each day...”⁵ Exemplary status extends beyond the content of the work to the life of the author. Tacitus’s own pragmatic career as a

³ Lorna Hardwick, “Editorial” *Classical Receptions Journal* 1.1 (2009), 2.

⁴ Peter Burke, “A Survey of the Popularity of Ancient Historians, 1450-1700” *History and Theory*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1966), 135-152.

⁵ Nicholas D’Ablancourt, *Les Oeuvres de Tacite* (Paris, 1665), dedication, quoted in Burke, *ibid.*, 150.

senator under the late-first-century Principate made his work a manual for courtiers as well as princes; Nicholas Amelot de la Houssaye's commentary *La Moral de Tacite: De La Flaterie* (Paris, 1686) was published in England, explicitly declaring its transhistorical qualities, as *The Modern Courtier* (London: J. Taylor, 1687).⁶ Tacitus' didactic force arises from the combination of style and substance. His terse analytical style produces a proliferation of pithy generalizations that may be excerpted into moral maxims. The widespread decontextualizing practice of excerption spanning the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries demonstrates the perceived transhistorical applicability of Tacitus's examples and opinions to differing and distant political and personal circumstances.⁷ Adherence to the topos of *historia magistra vitae* defines the reception of Tacitus until the mid-eighteenth century when developments in Enlightenment historiography begin to challenge this model.⁸

The acknowledged heyday of what is termed Tacitism, then, is the seventeenth century. Examining the eighteenth century Tacitean tradition, Howard Weinbrot finds a threefold influence: "Tacitus is the mentor of constitutional balance, contributor to literary judgment based on political purity, and, paradoxically, definer of British anti-Roman, northern, and commercial national identity."⁹ This is to say that Tacitus's political stance, his promotion of republican *libertas*, was co-opted by both parties in framing the idea of a loyal opposition in early-century politics. Secondly, Tacitus was a model for authorship independent of the patronage to which the Augustan poets Horace and Virgil were beholden. Finally, the ethnographic depiction of the

⁶ Jacob Soll, "Amelot de La Houssaye (1634-1706) Annotates Tacitus" *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Apr., 2000), 167-187.

⁷ D'Ablancourt, again, "people have made maxims out of every line of him." (Quoted in Burke *ibid.*, 149.)

⁸ Reinhardt Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), see especially chapter two.

⁹ Howard D. Weinbrot, 'Politics, Taste, and National Identity: Some Uses of Tacitism in the Eighteenth Century' in T. Luce and A. J. Woodman, eds. *Tacitus and the Tacitean Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 169.

barbarian societies of northern Europe in the *Germania*, *Agricola* and the early books of the *Annals* was seen to show the origin of British manners and freedom in favorable contrast to the decadence and tyranny of Rome.¹⁰ The influence of these texts in shaping modern Britain's conception of its own origins constitutes an important element of the late-eighteenth century novelizations of Tacitean material discussed below.

Weinbrot's analysis does not, however, address the developments in intellectual history that define the response to Tacitus in the second half of the century by opening the possibility of a sentimental interpretation. The connection between the two is made by Mark Salber Phillips in his account of the expansion of Enlightenment historiography to include "the social world of everyday life as well as the inward world of the sentiments."¹¹ Phillips defines this new historiography against what he calls a "classical" understanding of history, the narrative of public military and political actions undertaken by great men, articulating the relationship between ancient works and modern commentators in the following way: "This was an age that paid the highest tribute to the literary artistry of ancient historians while undermining some of the central assumptions on which classical politics and historiography were founded." (81) The latent separation of style and content in this statement implies that the eighteenth-century commentators and historians were unaware of the challenge posed to their classical exemplars by their work. Tacitus would appear to be the exception that proves the rule.

For reasons peculiar to both historical and personal circumstances, his works fit the paradigm of Enlightenment history neatly: the *Agricola* (a biography of his father-in-law) and

¹⁰ The impact of the *Germania* on German nationalism and Romanticism is enormous. For a recent survey of the influence of the *Germania* in Germany up to the twentieth century and a full bibliography, see Christopher Krebs, "A dangerous book: the reception of the *Germania*" in A.J. Woodman, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Tacitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 280-99.

¹¹ Mark Salber Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain 1740-1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), xii.

Germania present ethnographic studies of early Britain and Germany respectively; the *Annals* and *Histories* are themselves acutely self-conscious of their narrow domestic sphere and paucity of heroic action. Gibbon dubs him the first philosophic historian:

In their primitive state of simplicity and independence, the Germans were surveyed by the discerning eye, and delineated by the masterly pencil, of Tacitus, the first of historians who applied the science of philosophy to the study of facts. The expressive conciseness of his descriptions has deserved to exercise the diligence of innumerable antiquarians, and to excite the genius and penetration of the philosophic historians of our own times.¹²

Tacitus's recurring presence in Phillips's account compels a more thoroughgoing analysis of why his works should fit so precisely the overarching scheme of a historiography motivated by the concerns of manners and sentiment. Rather than insidiously undermining the exemplarity of ancient historians, the reception of Tacitus in fact demonstrates a persisting and diffusive influence within and beyond the sphere of historiography and it is an influence in which form, style, and content are entangled.

Tacitus is not unique in being lauded by eighteenth century commentators. Blair lists "Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus" as writers all "conspicuous for the Art of Narration" (406). The claustrophobia of the *Annals* and *Histories* as well as their obscurity of style have been brought into close and unfavorable comparison with Livy's genial expansiveness.¹³ This chapter singles Tacitus out for three primary and related reasons. First, the sentimental effect of Tacitus' style is both uniquely his yet also uniquely Smithean in the way in which it couples passages that represent or provoke feeling with distanced and general

¹² Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* ed. David Womersley (London: Penguin Classics, 2005), Vol. I, 230.

¹³ The full title of a collection of essays by one Rev. Thomas Hunter is *Observations on Tacitus. In Which His Character as a Writer and an Historian Is impartially considered, and compared with that of Livy* (London: Richard Manby, 1752). Hunter's vehement repudiation of Tacitus is part of the polarized response that characterizes Tacitean reception from the Renaissance to the present and is discussed below.

reflections. Phillips's declaration that, "[i]t is a measure of Tacitus's greatness that he could sustain such a reading. But he was not the only classical author open to this kind of sentimentalist rereading" (145), is correct to the extent that the potential for reading accounts of social life and psychological motivation back into other ancient texts was abundant. However, Tacitus's explicit thematization of these concerns and the evolution of his style around them differentiate both his work and the texts that interpret it.

Secondly, on account of the common currency of Latin in the school curriculum and the perceived similarities between Roman and British political and imperial concerns, Roman historians exerted a wider and more pertinent influence than their Greek counterparts. The pedagogical and didactic infrastructure supports the promotion of the Roman example as *the* classical example for English prose genres. Godwin's *Enquirer* essay "Of the Study of the Classics" (1797) promotes the close reading of Roman history in the original language for its simultaneous bracing and relaxing effect on the mind:

[T]he best ages of Rome afford the purest models of virtue that are any where to be met with. Mankind are too apt to lose sight of all that is heroic, magnanimous and public-spirited. Modern ages have formed to themselves a virtue, rather polished, than sublime, that consists in petty courtesies, rather than in the tranquil grandeur of an elevated mind. It is by turning to Fabricius, and men like Fabricius, that we are brought to recollect what human nature is, and of what we are capable. Left to ourselves, we are apt to sink into effeminacy and apathy.

But, if such are the men with whose actions it is most our interest to familiarise ourselves, we cannot do this so successfully as by studying them in the works of their countrymen. To know them truly, we must not content ourselves with viewing them from a distance, and reading them in abridgment. We must watch their minutest actions, we must dwell upon their every word. We must gain admission among their confidants, and penetrate into their secret souls.¹⁴

In this articulation of classical exemplarity, Godwin mobilizes Roman republican virtue as a model for a rational, radical politics based on the constancy of human nature. Sloughing off the

¹⁴ William Godwin, "Of the Study of the Classics," *The Enquirer* (G. G. and J. Robinson: London, 1797), 41; subsequent references are to this edition and parenthesized in the text.

vener of polished manners to uncover the unadorned nature of heroes such as the third-century (and Livian) hero Fabricius. The effectiveness of the example depends also on the proximity created between character and reader by the text and by the ability to read it in the original. Style is again intrinsic to the exemplarity effect. Accessing the interiority of the personages of Roman history to heighten the efficacy of the example is achieved not only by syntactical structures but also through the nature of the Latin language itself. The “tranquil grandeur” of the mind necessary for contemplation of the example is achieved, at least in part for Godwin, through the “transparency” and “precision by which [Roman historians] communicate the strongest sentiments in the directest form.” (39) The simultaneous grandiloquence and muscular parsimony of Latin prose renders it as expansive as it is terse, achieving a forceful simplicity that makes “their lines dwell upon our memory; their sentences have the force of maxims.” (40) There is a compelling contradiction between Godwin’s praise of polish in the style of the ancient historians and his condemnation of polish in modern manners. His mobilization of the paradoxically refined simplicity of the former to correct the excesses of the latter is symptomatic of the contemporary interrelationship between style and manners and the way in which they shape each other.

Godwin’s reference to the “best ages” of Rome foregrounds the duality of the conception of Rome in the period. From the Roman perspective, the opposition between republican and imperial Rome in terms of manners and institutions is a distinction between ancient and modern. This internal differentiation disrupts the binary between ancient and modern for eighteenth century Britain: imperial Rome is ancient in terms of chronological distance and religion but modern in terms of its manners and literature. Writing the history of the first dynastic transfer of power in the *Annals* less than a century later, Tacitus is acutely aware that he is recording the

consolidation of a change in manners. Tacitus's proto-historicism, his registering of the stadial development of Roman society, constitutes a further dimension of his specific relevance to the literary field of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The oft-quoted digression at *Annals* IV.32-3 constitutes an apologia for the kind of historiography that the period necessitates. Tacitus acknowledges that elements of his history may seem "parva" and "levia," literally small and light or trivial and unimportant, when compared to the histories of early Rome:

They, with freedom to digress, would recount the history of mighty wars, the storming of cities, or the defeat and capture of kings...My area of work is restricted and without glory [*nobis in arto et inglorius labor*]: peace unbroken or only weakly challenged, grim episodes in the city, and an emperor with no interest in expanding the empire. Even so, it may not be without profit to examine these incidents, which initially seem trivial, but by which important events are often set in motion.¹⁵

The contraction of the sphere of Roman history and the field of action to within the urban boundaries, the domestic intrigues of the imperial family, and the inert and sycophantic senate have an impact upon the propriety and success of the historiography. The deprecating claim "nobis in arto et inglorius labor" echoes the structure of eighteenth-century mock-heroic, which invests traditional forms with contemporary subject matter just as Tacitus's ironic claim for the devalued nature of his history is presented in a rhetorically calibrated triadic comparison of ancient and contemporary subjects.¹⁶ Indeed, his ironic use and strong-arming of the republican annalistic form as a medium for the history of the Principate underscores the discrepancy

¹⁵ Tacitus, *Annals* trans. J. C. Yardley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 153; subsequent translations, where not otherwise indicated, are from this edition and parenthesized within the text.

¹⁶ For a brief account of the irony operating in the digression, not least in its very status as a digression (a trope beloved of ancient history) see Martin and Woodman's commentary: R. Martin and A. J. Woodman, eds. *Annals IV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 169-70.

between the objective of the work and its subject matter.¹⁷ Tacitus identifies a problem for this history of triviality in fulfilling the traditional ends of the genre, namely to instruct and entertain (IV.33).

A different kind of exemplarity evolves, of a kind that requires the critical engagement of the reader:

... Thus it will prove edifying for these apparent trivialities to be gathered together and recorded, because few have the foresight to distinguish the decent from the dishonourable, or the useful from the harmful—most people learn from the experiences of others. [*plures aliorum eventis docentur.*] However, useful though such information will be, it has little entertainment value. [*Ceterum ut profutura, ita minimum oblectationis adferunt.*] For the topography of peoples, fluctuating battles, the famous deaths of leaders—these are what hold and refresh the minds of readers. [*retinent ac redintegrant legentium animum.*] In my case, I am presenting a series of cruel orders, endless accusations, faithless friendships, and calamities befalling innocents, with the causes of their ruin being always the same—for I am faced with a tedious abundance of recurrent material. (154)

This passage is wryly equivocal, affecting nostalgic regret for the passing of great heroic actions, but also making a claim for the exemplarity of the new material. Tacitean history therefore demands more from its reader than history in the heroic mode; reflection and evaluation must be deployed in separating the good example from the bad. Tacitus's style promotes this ideal manner of reading and reflecting on an ambiguous narrative, offering a structured alternative to propulsion by the unquestioning momentum of an uninterrupted narrative. The eighteenth-century commentators explore the connections between subject matter, interiority, and engagement in relation to exemplarity in critiques that echo the concerns of contemporaneous novelistic discourse.

For Adam Smith, it is precisely the uneventful nature of the analogous periods in and about which Tacitus wrote that generates the sentimental history: "Such a people, I say having nothing to engage them in the hurry of life would naturally turn their attention to the motions of the

¹⁷ Judith Ginsburg, *Tradition and Theme in the Annals of Tacitus* (New York: Arno Press, 1981).

human mind and those events that were accounted for by the different internal affections that influenced the persons concerned, would be what most suited their taste.”¹⁸ The subordination of events to their psychological motivations brings a new significance to the ‘different internal affections’ of individuals, a development shared by history and fiction alike. Smith suggests here that representations of interiority and the examination of human nature in psychologically inflected narrative were determined by contemporary manners. The argument is also applied to Smith’s scene of writing in mid-century Scotland, connecting the Scottish Enlightenment as a whole to the evacuation of the Scottish political life in 1707.¹⁹ While the origins of the Scottish Enlightenment are more complex and contested, this contemporary rationale makes a strong case for the equation of first-century Rome and eighteenth-century Britain in terms of societal development. This historicist understanding of the desire to penetrate motivation in a psychologically inflected narrative shows that the eighteenth-century conception of the constancy of human nature was not, (that which Hardwick warns against) an intellectually dubious retreat into universalism, but rather a methodically conceived entity. Its relation to stadial equivalence is crucial to the functioning of exemplarity in history and fiction.

Returning to *Annals* 4.33, the translator Arthur Murphy’s response to the passage can be seen to address Tacitus’s fulfillment of the objective “retin[ere] ac redintegra[re] legentium animum.” Elements that contribute to engaging attention and the imagination combine with those that induce contemplation and judgment:

¹⁸ Adam Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* ed. J. C. Bryce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 112; subsequent references are to this edition and parenthesized within the text.

¹⁹ David Hume, another sentimental historian, writes to Gilbert Elliot in 1757, “Is it not strange that, at a time when we have lost our Princes, our Parliaments, our independent Government, even the Presence of our chief Nobility...; is it not strange, I say, that, in these Circumstances, we shou’d really be the People most distinguished for Literature in Europe?” (J. Y. T. Greig, *The Letters of David Hume* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), Vol. I, 255.)

But the genius of Tacitus surmounted every difficulty. He was able to keep attention awake, to please the imagination, and enlighten the understanding... The *Annals* are written in a strain more subdued and temperate [than the *Histories*]: every phrase is a maxim: the narrative goes on with rapidity; the author is sparing of words, and prodigal of sentiment: the characters are drawn with a profound knowledge of human nature, and when we see them figuring on the stage of public business, we perceive the internal spring of their actions; we see their motives at work, and of course are prepared to judge of their conduct.²⁰

The “prodigal[ity] of sentiment” does not merely refer to Tacitus’s representation of interiority and feeling within the text. It encompasses the entirety of the reader’s experience and depends on the consecutive pairing of affective engagement and reflection. This beneficial conjunction allows for the achievement of the second part of Tacitus’s standard for history. Neatly construed as “refresh” in Yardley’s 2008 translation, “redintegrare” has the literal sense “to make whole again,” and may also be rendered as “restore” or “renew.” The therapeutic effect of reading the “subdued and temperate” *Annals* derives from the narrative’s psychological portraiture and its progression from engagement to reflection, varying its pace between description and analysis. The representation of individual characters’ interiority in particularized situations is followed by generalized maxims, aphoristic phrases that punctuate the narrative by extending its scope to an analysis of human nature. The case at hand is seen to be exemplary and experience of evaluation and closure invigorating and restorative.

ii. A Hostile Critic: Thomas Hunter

For hostile critics, however, Tacitus’s domestic and mundane subject matter make positive exemplarity an impossibility. In this, his writing resembles the worst indelicacies of contemporary novels. Thomas Hunter, a Lancashire clergyman and correspondent of Oxford scholars, finds that the “barrenness” of the material is unworthy both of “the dignity of the

²⁰ Arthur Murphy, *The Works of Cornelius Tacitus* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1793), 4 vols., I, xxii; subsequent references are to this edition and parenthesized within the text.

Roman nation” and, the seriousness of historical writing itself: “the same Littleness appears in the domestic Occurrences he recounts; many of which are below the Dignity, and worthy the Notice of any Author who professes to write for the Instruction of the present and future Ages.”²¹

Hunter’s vituperative attack on Tacitus’s exemplarity is exhaustive in its enumeration of vices:

You read many a page in *Tacitus*, without finding any Traces of Virtue or public Spirit; without one bright Example or illustrious Action. You are more frequently entertained with Scenes of Adultery and Murder, Debauchery, Oppression, enormous Prodigality, brutal Luxury, unnatural Cruelty, and unnatural Lust; intermixed with the supposed Practice of Astrology and Charms, Potions and Witchcraft, infernal Arts, Mysteries of Magic, and new Modes of Prostitution. (176)

This catalogue reads not unlike a précis of a gothic novel and may, in the manner of the hostile reviews of early novels, serve only to entice readers rather than deter them.

In spite and because of its overwhelming anti-Tacitean animus, Hunter’s commentary serves as a counterweight to the more generalist commentaries of Smith and Blair and to the puffing prefaces of Gordon and Murphy. Taken as a whole, Hunter’s invective is dominated by overarching contempt for Tacitus’s character, which governs and contaminates his literary sensibility: “Tacitus is not a just Writer, tho’ we allow him a great Wit. He is void of Candour, wants Judgement, exceeds Nature, and violates Truth. He may be instructive, but is less so, because not agreeable. We acknowledge his extraordinary parts, which are sadly abus’d by a superior Vanity.” (xv) For Hunter the combination of debased subject matter and an absence of geniality obstructs the didactic effectiveness of the work. However, the specificity of the painstaking abundance of textual citations marshaled by Hunter pinpoints aspects of the Roman texts most germane to the eighteenth-century literary field.

An explicit connection between the novel and the Roman history is made by Jonathan Sachs in two related claims. Sachs argues that “the ancient precursors of the novel of the 1790s—

²¹ Thomas Hunter, *Observations on Tacitus*, 90; subsequent references are to this edition and parenthesized within the text.

and quite possibly the English novel of the eighteenth century—are not ancient novels, but rather ancient histories with their emphasis on civic virtue and individual exemplarity.”²² Subsequently he claims that “the novel usurps the pedagogical function of classical knowledge” by promoting a republican social morality in an exemplary Plutarchan mode.²³ The case for the exemplarity of Tacitus for the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British novel emphasizes the way in which Tacitus produces sentimental effects from a narrative of unheroic events, producing a new form of exemplarity that the novel also adheres to. Sachs’s claim for seeing classical exemplarity operating in the novel is too tentative. It operates in the eighteenth-century novel at large, rather than just the explicitly republican Jacobin novels of the 1790s. This may be proven by addressing the modification of heroism that occurs in both Tacitus’s histories and in sentimental and historical novels from the 1770s forward. Both Tacitus’s style and his protagonists embody a mode of behavior that the novel comes to promote: that of the sympathetic pragmatic hero.

The depiction of Germanicus in the first two books of the *Annals* provides the most extended example and interrogation of conventional republican heroism in its collision with the modern reality of the Principate. Agrippina (granddaughter of Augustus) and Germanicus are the last embodiments of the republic and its virtues: the former distinguished for her domestic virtue and fertility; the latter for his military command. Both are represented by Tacitus as passionate characters, straightforward and anachronistic in their simplicity. Hunter comments on the way in which Tacitus’s depiction of their emotions violates not only the propriety of modern conceptions of gender but also that of literary heroism. Declaring that, “[m]any of *Tacitus*’s

²² Jonathan Sachs, *Antique Modernity: Romanticism, Republicanism, and the Matter of Rome* (Dissertation submitted to the University of Chicago, 2000), 123.

²³ Jonathan Sachs, *Romantic Antiquity: Rome in the British Imagination 1789-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 93.

Women are Heroes, and his Heroes, Women,” (71) Hunter comments upon the volume of masculine tears in the text:

While his Women are thus represented above the Frailties and Tenderness of their Sex, his most renowned Generals with their Armies, vanquish'd and Victors, nay his Emperors are sensible of the most timorous Passions, and very lavish of their Tears upon most Occasions.

It would be tedious to enlarge upon this Weeping Subject. The Armies are again and again represented in Tears: The chief Officers importune their General *Caecina* with many Tears: *Tiberius* is represented *crebris cum lacrymis*: *Valens* and *L. Vitellius* with the Emperor his Brother are all Weepers... (73)

These effeminate Roman men of feeling represent, for Hunter, an anachronism belonging to a different stage of societal development:

I cannot think it a natural Description or proper Expression of the Manners of Men in this period of civil History. Of old indeed when mere Nature prevailed in the Breasts of the first rude Inhabitants of the Globe, we find the Passions bold, urgent, and undisguised; and it was no Discredit to the Heroes of Antiquity to say of them

—'απ' ὀφρυσι δακρυα λειζον ὙHom.)

But more artificial Manners seem to have been in Fashion in the Times which our Author describes. (74-5)

Underscoring the eighteenth-century conception of an internally differentiated antiquity, Hunter's criticism of Tacitus's violation of temporal propriety in fact anticipates Christopher Pelling's 1993 conclusion regarding the “complex and qualified” characterization of Germanicus in *Annals* I and II. For Pelling, Germanicus's display of competence and inadequacy under the pressures of the new public life, as well as the recurrence of Virgilian allusion in accounts of his action, show him, “not merely as unworldly, but also as distinctively connected with the [republican] past.”²⁴ Germanicus's lachrymose and Agrippina's wrathful modes of feeling may be outmoded but Tacitus is sufficiently ambivalent to treat them with an ennobling nostalgia that bypasses Hunter's notice.

²⁴ Christopher Pelling, “Tacitus and Germanicus” in Woodman and Luce eds., *ibid.* (59-85), 85; 73.

iii. Translating Tenderness: The Ancient Man of Feeling

The dynamics of Germanicus's passions undergo a subtle reinterpretation in different version of Tacitus over the course of the century. His administration of funeral rights in the Teutoburg forest, the scene of the slaughter of the three Varian legions in AD 9, illustrates the commensurability between Tacitus's representation of feeling and the evolving discourse of sentiment. The affective vocabularies of the variant translations evidence the interpretative freighting of the Roman text with contemporary emotional formations. Gordon's 1728 version reads:

Hence Germanicus became *inspired with a tender passion* to pay the last offices to the Legions and their leader: *the like tenderness also affected the whole army*. They were *moved with compassion*, some for the fate of their friends, others for that of their relations here tragically slain: they were strick with the doleful casualties of war, and the sad lot of humanity.²⁵ (italics added)

Murphy's 1793 translation renderings the beginning of the scene thus:

Touched by this affecting circumstance, Germanicus resolved to pay the last human office to the relics of that unfortunate commander, and his slaughtered soldiers. The same *tender sentiment* diffused itself through the army: some felt *the touch of nature* for their relations, others for their friends, and all lamented the disasters of war, and the wretched lot of humankind. (64, italics added)

The description of Germanicus's motivation to perform the rites is, in each case, an extrapolation from Tacitus's construction "cupido Caesarem invadit" (desire seized Caesar), signposting the sentimentality of the episode for the modern reader. Both translators amplify the description of the movement of the feeling from the general to the army: Gordon duplicates and embellishes Tacitus's single ablative absolute "permoto ad miserationem omni...exercitu" into the repetitious combination of "like tenderness" and "compassion" emphasizing the communality of the feeling. For Murphy, a similar doubling takes place but the vocabulary becomes more technically

²⁵ Thomas Gordon, *The Works of Tacitus* (London: Thomas Woodward, 1728-31), I, 46; subsequent references are to this edition and parenthesized within the text.

sophisticated and concerned with the transmission of emotion between persons: “passion” and “compassion” have been replaced by “sentiment;” the agency of the shared feeling during its diffusive progress and the reference to common human nature as the basis of the feeling all mark the translation as distinctly post-Smithean in its enumeration of the attributes of sympathy.

The episode closes with a description of Germanicus as “praesentibus doloris socius” (the comrade in grief to those present). Gordon’s translation is literal: “Germanicus was a partner in the woe of the living.” (47) Murphy invokes the concept of sympathy by name, showing Germanicus “discharging at once the tribute due to the legions and sympathizing with the rest of the army.” (66) The characterization of the 1793 Germanicus as a sympathetic and benevolent general models the correct channeling of feeling and the formation of a new model of heroism based on *pietas* (both social and religious piety). Written to replace Gordon’s overtly Whiggish *Tacitus*, Murphy’s tendency to paraphrase the Latin, though condemned by purists, gave him the freedom to grant aspects of the *Annals* a new inflection. Dedicated to Edmund Burke, Murphy’s reactionary translation remained in print throughout the Romantic period with a spate of new editions issued between 1829 and 1836 that continued into the Victorian period. The integrity of Germanicus’s isolated sympathetic virtue makes him simultaneously the embodiment of a past age and a model for stoic survival in a turbulent but inevitable present. The Tacitean expression of ambivalence with regard to progress is registered in the same innately conservative sentimental mode as Scott’s historical novels were later founded upon.

iv. Tacitus and Women Writers

Published almost simultaneously with Murphy’s translation in 1792, the first volume of Ellis Cornelia Knight’s novel *Marcus Flaminius* opens with an epistolary account of the Varian disaster and details the experiences of a Roman aristocrat held captive amongst the German

tribes until Germanicus revisits the Teutoburg. Immediately striking is the novel's female authorship and its temporal setting. Novels with classical Roman settings were relatively rare, because men were reading Roman history in the original Latin at school or for leisure and were therefore disinclined to fictionalize it for a broader audience and also because there were relatively few women possessed of sufficient classical education to do so either.²⁶ These early examples of a genre that flourished in the mid-nineteenth century are largely overlooked.²⁷ Critics of these later tales have focused on their setting in late antiquity and the presence of early Christians to overcome historical distance and engage modern readers, presuming that Rome in ascendancy and at the beginning of imperial power would not produce a compelling or recognizable account.²⁸ The two Tacitean novels, *Marcus Flaminius* and Hamilton's *The Memoirs of Agrippina Wife of Germanicus* are strongly didactic in the way in which they express a gendered exemplarity.²⁹

Knight's novel fuses action from the *Annals* and ethnographic description from the *Germania* (always footnoted and often in direct translation) within a fictional framework of

²⁶ The three most prominent Roman novels before 1814 were all written by women writing other kinds of novels too: Sarah Fielding, *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia* (1757) and Elizabeth Hamilton, *The Memoirs of Agrippina Wife of Germanicus* (1804).

²⁷ Stanwood S. Walker shows the genre to gain popularity only with the publication of Bulwer Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), deeming John Gibson's Lockhart's attempt to write 'a Roman Story' in 1821 a 'false start'. "A False-Start for the Classical-Historical Novel: Lockhart's *Valerius* and the Limits of Scott's Historicism," *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (2002), 179-209.

²⁸ Richard Jenkyns, "Late Antiquity in English Novels of the Nineteenth Century," *Arion*, Third Series, Vol. 3, No. 2/3 (Fall, 1995-Winter, 1996), 141-166.

²⁹ Of these, the former is largely unexamined. Hamilton's biography of Agrippina has been situated within her didactic output by Gary Kelly in *Women, Writing, and Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 265-304, and Jane Rendall "Writing history for British women: Elizabeth Hamilton and the *Memoirs of Agrippina*" in Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed. *Wollstonecraft's Daughters: Womanhood in England and France 1780-1920* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 79-93. Both Kelly and Rendall point out that while Agrippina's domestic and patriotic virtues are clearly expressed the limit of her exemplarity for the nineteenth century is the failure to model the Christian virtue of humility.

individual exile and return. Both volumes explicitly thematize and debate societal progress and improvement as well as individual morality: the first shows the initially improving but ultimately corrupting influx of Greek and Roman customs and ideas into primitive German society; the second sees Flaminius return to Tiberian Rome in AD 16 to find his uncle and cousin held hostage to a political and erotic intrigue which exposes the hypocrisy of the imperial court. The novel's epistolary conceit allows Knight to accompany the historical material with subjective reflections on events. The fictional Marcus Flaminius moves amongst world-historical events and is on intimate terms with world-historical individuals, most notably Germanicus, whose attractive characterization and otherworldliness adhere to the Tacitean model. The two father figures of each half of the novel model primitive German wisdom (Cariovaldus) and Roman republican values (Valerius) and are permitted to continue in their steadfast adherence to old ways, which also means retirement and acceptance of the status quo. The hint of *translatio imperii* manifests itself in the presence of British princes at Rome, who are advised to appraise the living museum of Rome's greatness critically and only "transplant into your island the laudable institutions of our forefathers; the learning that makes men wise and good; the exact discipline, the manly eloquence, and lofty sentiments that form the real greatness of this nation."³⁰ Rome has already conceived of itself as a text to be read, evaluated and excerpted.

Amidst the statements of Rome's incipient degeneracy numerous works of art project old classical exemplarity onto the modern scene: tableaux from Roman history painted by the virtuous Valeria; in a move that reduplicates the historical perspective an ancient precursor to Knight's friend Gavin Hamilton's 1775 Homeric painting *Hector's Farewell to Andromache* appears as the work of one Lysias, with Andromache bearing Valeria's features. The most

³⁰ E. Cornelia Knight, *Marcus Flaminius; or a view of the military, political, and social life of the Romans* 2 vols. (London: Cadell and Davies, 2nd ed., 1808), I, 167; subsequent references are to this edition, parenthesized within the text.

significant reflexive moments for textual exemplarity punctuate the end of each volume when Livy and Valerius produce their own didactic texts. Livy's is a notebook laid out with the names of the great patrician families at the head of a blank page, waiting to be filled in with the deeds of the present generation. This narrative tabulation of the state of the nation constitutes a moral index of Roman society:

Where I am obliged to leave blank pages, I consider that family as extinct for the present generation. Behold under the title of the Claudii [Germanicus's *gens*] how much I have been writing! ...I only wish that they, whose ancestors names are the only ornament of the page, were to cast their eyes on the void space, surely they would be roused from their apathy and endeavour to fill it. (I. 274-5)

The 'void' in Livy's commonplace accounting of the present encapsulates the failure of exemplarity and emulation that is symptomatic of Rome's degeneracy.

In the novel's final pages, the young historian Valerius Maximus proposes a similar project, declaring his intention to produce a historical miscellany, "a volume of memorable examples, selected from the Roman history, and from that of foreign nations, which he would class under the distinct heads of virtues and vices." (II. 171)³¹ Valerius senior advises perspicacious caution in this political endeavour and proposes that Maximus instead compose a more popular history for the example of future ages:

Content yourself with recording those anecdotes which may teach our descendants to support the cause of virtue, and to stop the progress of degeneracy. You have studied much; your reflections will be elegant and accurate; you will preserve the memory of many great actions performed by obscure persons, and consequently omitted by historians in general; a pleasing, and I could almost say, a god-like task! (II. 172)

The proposed pragmatic contraction of historical scope becomes a novelistic manifesto. This Tacitean novel ends by reflexively announcing itself as simultaneously amongst the last of its race and in the vanguard of the new literary order. With conventional heroism in retreat and its

³¹ The asterisk denotes Knight's own footnote, confirming the continued existence of Valerius Maximus's work.

protagonists immersed in private life, literary attention will seek exemplarity in a more constrained sphere. The novel takes on the function of classical history in the most overt manner.

The materiality of Livy and Maximus's history books points to a significant afterlife of Tacitean sentimental exemplarity. Tacitus's reflective style produces *sententiae*, generalizations that are excerptable and portable and resurface in decontextualized form either in printed or manuscript collections for memorization or abstract contemplation. The habitual elision between "sentiment" and *sententia* in eighteenth-century texts creates a duality in the former term meaning that it becomes something that may be both inwardly experienced and outwardly professed, automatically elicited or called to mind. Sentimental fragments of the texts therefore circulate independently as examples applicable to contexts other than those in which they arose as reflections. An examination of the excerption practiced on Tacitean texts concludes this account of Tacitus's sentimental reception.

Smith and Blair both praise Tacitus's apparently seamless movement from description to reflection, finding the overall force (didactic and therapeutic) of the narrative to derive from the combination of the two. The motion from perceiving the specific circumstance narrated to the contemplation of a truth about human nature is intrinsic to Tacitus's sentimental effect and also makes for good history. Blair opines:

When observations are to be made concerning human nature in general, or the peculiarities of certain characters, if the Historian can artfully incorporate such observations within his narrative, they will have better effect than when they are delivered as formal detached reflections... This Historian has a particular talent of intermixing after this manner with the course of his narrative, many striking sentiments and useful observations. (404)

The effectiveness of Tacitus's style for these commentators, advocates of classical narrative purism, lies in the absence of heavy-handed narrative interruptions. Moral reflections are

rendered less “abstract and philosophical” (404) when integrated with narrative. Is there, then, a value to the sentiment that has been decoupled from its context?

The detachability, memorability, and resonance of Tacitus’ reflections are based upon the way in which they concisely encapsulate truth about universal human nature. Murphy praises him for his science of man rather than for his historical detail.

Tacitus may be fairly called the anatomist of the heart. The passions, and, if the expression may be allowed, their antagonist muscles were perfectly known to him; he saw their inward workings, however disguised, and, being a strong colourist, he has painted the prominent features of all that rose to eminence by their vices or their virtue. As long as it shall be thought that *the proper study of mankind is man*, so long the Annals of Tacitus will be the school of moral as well as political knowledge. (xxxiii)

The eighteenth century historiographical developments which Tacitus’s works were able to reflect end up superseding their model. As the proper study of mankind becomes the study of man under a particular set of circumstances such universality must retreat from the library to the schoolroom. Where for Smith, Blair, and Murphy the revelation of general truths about human nature was an attractive and restorative aspect of reading Tacitus, increasing the worth of the individual example, for Hunter it devalues it: “What he says of particular Persons, and on special Occurrences, may frequently, by altering the Tense or Time of the Verb, be formed into general Proverbs, equally applicable to other Persons, other Times, and other Occasions.” (163-4)

Each of the texts included in this chapter excerpt something from Tacitus, evaluate it by their own standards, and put it to contemporary use. In this they all consider Tacitus to present some kind of compelling example for the eighteenth century, whether as a philosophical historian, psychological portraitist, or the purveyor of examples of pragmatic domestic withdrawal. Emergent historicism placed a value on the specific circumstances of history, on particularity, which an example that depended upon a universal truth about human nature could not sustain. In the eighteenth century, Tacitus’s reputation straddles the divide between

demonstrating a sufficient understanding of historical change and progress to show the deficiency of his own example and providing a narrative that continues to engage and stimulate the imagination. So much is this the case that he was found to be a classical proto-novelist and, paradoxically, for a brief moment the historian for all time

II. Scott: Vernacular Classicism

I was too much permitted to study what I liked and when I liked which was very little and very seldom. To mend the matter I stuffed my brains with all such reading as was never read and in the department of my memory where should be a Roman Patera lo! there is a witches cauldron. I am more apt to pray to Thor or Woden than Jupiter think of the fairies oftener than the Dryads and of Bannockburn and Flodden more than Marathon and Pharsalia.¹

Scott's correspondence and biography abound in disavowals of his credentials as a classical scholar, focusing especially on his ignorance of Greek.² In this letter of 1810 the grateful anticipation of a volume of Apollonius is tempered by the profession of the worthlessness of his opinion on classical subjects. This account of a "desultory" education governed by indulgence and enthusiasm, which consequently defaults from the prescribed gentlemanly curriculum, is mirrored in that of the eponymous hero of *Waverley* (1814). Edward Waverley's habit of reading a classical author for "story" alone and his refusal to submit to the rigors of accidence and syntax prevent him from "acquiring habits of firm and incumbent application, of gaining the art of

¹ Walter Scott, Letter to Rev. Mr. Berwick, ESCLOR, LEIXLIP (10th April, 1810) in H.J.C. Grierson, ed. *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Constable and Co., 1932) 12 vols. II. 322-3.

² Scott's own account of his interest in classical history and literature is inconsistent. He meditated a journey to Rome with his son Walter in 1817, writing in a letter, "Methinks I will not die quite happy without having seen something of that Rome of which I have read so much." Yet the plan never came to fruition and in September 1822 he wrote to Lady Abercorn, "It is a pity to miss Rome but I am not very classical and time will not serve me." Grierson, ed., IV.477; VII.243. Sir William Gell, classical antiquarian and resident of Naples, was host and chaperone to Scott on his journey to Italy in the winter of 1831-2. Gell recalls that on arrival at Pozzuoli, "His observation was, that we might tell him anything and he would believe it all, for many of his friends, and particularly Mr. Morritt, had frequently tried to drive classical antiquities, as they were called, into his head, but they had always found 'his skull too thick.'" Sir William Gell, *Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott's Residence in Italy, 1832* ed. James C. Corson (London: Nelson and Sons, 1957), 4.

controlling, directing, and concentrating the powers of his own mind for earnest investigation.”³

Here Scott presents the primary contemporary use for classical culture, namely that of a pedagogical scheme considered to instill discipline and civic virtue. The pedagogical use of classical literature stands in opposition to the imaginative pleasure induced by that of Northern Europe, devaluing the latter as didactic and erudite material:

The earlier literature of the northern nations did not escape the study of one who read, rather to awaken the imagination rather than to benefit the understanding. And yet, knowing much that is known but to few, Edward Waverley might justly be described as ignorant, since he knew little of what adds dignity to man, and qualifies him to support and adorn an elevated situation in society. (15)

From this passage and from his letters to his young sons, Walter and Charles, it is clear that Scott subscribes to the contemporary privileging of the classics as a social marker, a discipline of the mind, and training for public life.⁴

The juxtaposition of classical literature with the ancient literature of northern Europe in these passages, however, challenges the supremacy of classical culture as both precept and pedagogy. The passage from the letter becomes a justificatory apologia for Scott’s intellectual predilections, with the “should” in the second sentence introducing a series of substitutions that makes an argument for the equivalence of the classical and Northern European histories and traditions. While the mock-heroic “lo!” self-deprecatingly indicates the widely perceived

³ Walter Scott, *Waverley* ed. P. D. Garside (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 13; all subsequent references are to this edition, parenthesized within the text.

⁴ See, e.g., the letters to Charles at school in 1820-22, which encourage and commend assiduity in classical study: “A perfect knowledge of the classical languages has been fixed upon and not without good reason as the mark of a well educated young man and though many people may have scrambled into distinction without it, it is always with the greatest difficulty just like climbing over a wall instead of giving your ticket at the door.” And, “I am glad to find by your letter just received that you are reading Tacitus with some relish. His stile is rather quaint and enigmatical which makes it difficult to the student but then his pages are filld with such admirable apothegms and maxims of political wisdom as infer the deepest knowlege of human nature and it is particularly necessary that any one who may have views as a public speaker should be master of his works as there is neither ancient or modern who affords such a selection of admirable quotations.” Grierson, ed., VI. 293-4; VII. 157-8.

inferiority of these northern entities, Scott maps the alternative traditions onto each other, demonstrating their commensurability. This comparative practice, biographically evidenced in the account of Scott's visit to Italy, not only raises ancient northern European culture to the status of the classical but simultaneously integrates and contextualizes classical culture within broader Enlightenment theories of societal development, recalibrating the value of each in relation to the other.⁵ It is a practice, this chapter contends, that is sustained across and throughout the Waverley Novels, generating both a classicized north and a renovated sense of the classical, a novel and vernacular classicism.

The comparison between classical and vernacular cultures in Scott's letter ranges across ancient superstition and myth (encompassing sacrificial cup and cauldron; the king of the gods and the god of thunder in each mythology; equivalent *genii loci*) and successfully establishes the anthropological equivalence of the ancient Mediterranean and Northern European cultures. Moving from myth and superstition onto the terrain of history, the comparison of the great classical battles Marathon and Pharsalus with the Scottish battles of Bannockburn and Flodden produces a more precise and finely grained equivalence. Following the logic of the sentence, the battles fall into two pairs. Bannockburn (1314) and Marathon (490 BC) are each great nationalist victories, Athens repelling a Persian invasion, and Scotland regaining independence after 25 years of English control. The pairing of Flodden (1513) and Pharsalus (46 BC) is less straightforward and indicates a contradiction in Scott's thinking about British history. Flodden, the subject matter of *Marmion* (1808) was an ignominious and ill-conceived invasion of England

⁵ Gell's memoir records both Scott's preference for medieval over classical sites and his habitual comparison of what he saw in Italy with Scottish landscapes and history. Gell writes, "As an antiquary I felt that my citadel of Cumae with my Greek and Roman tombs had produced little effect on the mind of the poet", who quoted snatches of Scottish ballads and landscape descriptions in response (Gell, *Reminiscences*, 22-3).

by Scottish forces under James IV, who was killed in the battle.⁶ The comparison with Pharsalus, Caesar's decisive victory in the civil war that killed Pompey and firmly established his autocracy, suggests that Scott viewed Flodden (but not Bannockburn) from a post-Union, British perspective, seeing it as a civil war, an internal conflict, in the same way that he conceived the eighteenth-century Jacobite risings as such.⁷ The comparison between Scottish history and the Roman civil wars of the first century BC elaborated later in *Redgauntlet* (1824) and discussed below, is symptomatic of Scott's general comparative historical habit of situating events in conversation with each other across time and space. Comparisons with the classical function in a specific manner, however, on account of the privileged status of the Greek and Roman cultures. Occurring across millennia rather than generations and across Europe rather than within the British Isles, comparisons with the classical elicit a forceful transhistorical exemplarity. Scott's active project of placing the elements of national culture and the events of national history in proximity to this model is neither a straightforward rejection of, nor homage to classical tradition but a multifaceted negotiation of classical registers and allusion within the contemporary literary field.

After the decline of the neoclassical and mock-heroic period of eighteenth-century poetry, the appropriation and mobilization of the classical tradition in British literature and culture undergoes an apparent crisis in the literary-historical periods delineated by the rise of the novel and Romanticism. It remained, however, a persistent entity. For Scott, on one hand, the

⁶ Scott's choice of subject matter was considered anti-Scottish by Jeffery in the *Edinburgh Review* and others, a concern which Scott countered with the remark that Flodden was a battle in which everything was lost *except* Scotland's honour, thus making it a topic for poetic representation.

⁷ Scott's fascination with Pharsalus has been examined in light of his allusion to "Lucan's witch" in the Dedicatory Epistle to *Ivanhoe*. See James Chandler, *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Representation and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 166-74.

presence of the classical was such as to be quotidian and pervasive as an authoritative discourse continually utilized (but largely uninterrogated) in his public life as lawyer and landowner. On the other, it was actively negotiated in his veiled, imaginative career as the Author of *Waverley*, the overwhelmingly dominant commercial novelist of the day. This chapter seeks to investigate the nature and consequences of Scott's engagement with the classical, to define his particular classicism and the classicism of the *Waverley Novels*, and to show how the use of the classical in the novel engages with broader currents in Romanticism.

The saturation of the *Waverley Novels* with Latin phrases and classical reference appears inconsistent with Scott's disavowals of classical learning and his ardent championship of native traditions and history. To earlier commentators, however, these novels seem ostentatiously classical within a genre that had largely abandoned such standards or strategies. The anonymous reviewer for the *British Critic* declares, "The humorous and happy adaptation of legal terms shew no moderate acquaintance with the arcana of the law, and a perpetual allusion to the English and the Latin classics no common share of scholarship and taste."⁸ At the intersection of the native and the classical, traditional and modern genres, Scott produces a vernacular classicism that synthesizes apparently opposing impulses. The practice of classicizing the native is not unique to Scott, as the national tales of Edgeworth, Owenson, and the Irish gothic of Maturin evidence.⁹ Scott's version of the classical, in contrast that of these Irish novels, engages with literary form and the generic institutionalization of the novel in a wholesale manner.

⁸ "Waverley, supposed by W. Scott", *British Critic*, n.s., 2 (1814), 209. Conversely, more than a century later, Virginia Woolf finds his Latinity displeasing in her essay on *The Antiquary*: "The first charge that is levelled against Scott is that his style is execrable. Every page of the novel, it is true, is watered down with long languid Latin words—peruse, manifest, evince." Virginia Woolf, *Collected Essays* ed. L. Woolf (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), 140.

⁹ See especially Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) and Ina Ferris *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Vernacular classicism also differs crucially from Augustan neoclassicism in the way in which it focuses on the commonality as well as the discrepancy between ancient and modern, between Greco-Roman and Scottish as it compares the two through the application of classical tropes to native entities. The mock-heroic register denigrates modern manners through the discrepancy between form and subject matter and also exposes the inadequacy of the classical to represent modernity. Scott's use of the classical has been generally dismissed as straightforward mock-heroic but the way in which it promotes the transhistorical and universal makes it an intrinsic element of his novelistic practice.

Ina Ferris's study of Scott's achievement of literary authority, amply demonstrates the effect of Scott's "manly intervention" on the history of the novel through readings of the novels' critical reception.¹⁰ Focusing on the relationship between critical discourse and novelistic discourse, Ferris sees a "crucial alteration of the generic hierarchy in place at the turn of the nineteenth century. The Waverley Novels moved the novel out of the subliterate margins of the culture into the literary hierarchy." (1) Ferris's attention to the reception of the Waverley novels in the periodical reviews shows how Scott's novels are perceived to reinvigorate the genre with accuracy and breadth of representation and also imaginative and emotional expansiveness. What Ferris describes as a move into the literary hierarchy also becomes a modification, and eventually a wholesale novelization of the literary field. The erudition that the Waverley novels manifest won them critical approval and, accompanied by their appeal to the popular imagination, raised the historical novel to generic hegemony.

Elements of Scott's classicism have been uncovered and remarked upon in passing in major critical studies of the Romantic period in the past three decades. In 1981, Marilyn Butler

¹⁰ Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), chapter 3; subsequent references are to this edition and parenthesized within the text.

drew attention to the elements of neoclassicism that persisted into British Romanticism, undermining the commonplace that the classical and the romantic were antithetical and mutually exclusive formations. Butler describes the range and flexibility of classical formations and discourses during the period 1760-1830, demonstrating how, on one hand, the reactionary conservatism of the French War years in the periodical reviews located cultural authority in a traditionalism that fussily insisted on the tenets of a classical education in terms of composition and allusion whilst abandoning the universality and rationalism of the Enlightenment. On the other, she traces therein the preservation of the Enlightenment's ideals, "a fidelity to the tastes and values of the Enlightenment [that] made possible the distinctive and remarkable late flowering of Neoclassicism in the second decade of the [nineteenth] century."¹¹ The "revived and conscious classicism" (123) that Butler ascribes to the second-generation of Romantic poets is radical, atheist, and predominantly Hellenist, adjectives not easily applicable to Scott. In the early decades of the nineteenth century different aspects of the classical tradition were appropriated for different political ends, as Jeffrey N. Cox's discussion of an eroticized, aesthetic Hellenism in the radical poetics of the Cockney school demonstrates.¹² Also descended from Enlightenment universalism and rationalism, Scott's use of the classical tradition is generally conservative and is enmeshed with his historicism.

James Chandler's study of Scott's Romantic historicism demonstrates its origin in Scottish Enlightenment historiography. For both Butler and Chandler the persistence of

¹¹ Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 117; subsequent references are to this edition and parenthesized within the text.

¹² Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School: Keats, Shelley, Hunt and their Circle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapter five.

Enlightenment thought shapes the Romantic neoclassicism of Scott's work.¹³ The entanglement of Enlightenment rationalism with Romantic impulses is essential to characterizing Scott's classicism because the application of general Enlightenment precepts to the highly particularized artifacts and events of native history produces a hybridity that contributes significantly to the establishment of the historical novel's generic hegemony: critically because it is a coherent intellectual project and commercially on account of its blending of the populist and the erudite. Chandler's claim that the defining characteristic of the Romantic period was in fact the very *consciousness* of the spirit of the age raises the question of the particularity and specificity of the conception of spirit.¹⁴ Chandler effectively reconstructs the intellectual genealogy of Lukács's declaration that Scott's epochal innovation was the introduction of "the specifically historical, the derivation of the individuality of characters from the historical peculiarity of their age."¹⁵ If the characters of a historical novel derive from the historical conditions under which they live, how then are they going to constitute engaging and recognizable examples of human behavior? This crucial feature of the historical novel appears, then, to pose a direct challenge to a fundamental contemporary value of the classical, namely its transhistorical exemplarity in the moral, political, historical, and literary spheres. Scott's novelistic historicism interacts with the classical mode of exemplarity to produce a reconfiguration of exemplarity for the genre that allows the two to coexist.

From Ferris's survey of contemporary responses it can be seen that the critical register and vocabulary that engaged the Waverley novels was similar to that applied to classical

¹³ Butler does identify Scott as classical when she observes the stoicism and realism of "Shelley, Keats, the ambivalent Scott" as united by a less than fantastical worldview. (127)

¹⁴ Chandler, *England in 1819*, 105-14. For an earlier study, see also Duncan Forbes "The Rationalism of Sir Walter Scott," *Cambridge Journal*, 7 (1953), 20-35.

¹⁵ Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. H. & S. Mitchell (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 19.

literature and history, that they were subjected to similar reading practices. Scott's novels were thus found to induce similar effects and perform similar functions for their leisured readership as did the canon of classical literature in the school curriculum. This extrapolation from Ferris' material is indebted to Jonathan Sachs's recent claim regarding the fiction of the 1790s that "the novel usurps the pedagogical function of classical knowledge" through its modeling of exemplary behavior in both public and private spheres.¹⁶ This development in turn renovates the conception of the classical, at the same time as the novel achieves a fully authoritative, or classic, status of its own.

i. Exemplarity under the Conditions of Historicism

One of the key elements in this new classicism arises from the adjustment to the notion of exemplarity that Scott's wholesale historicism necessitates. This is difficult terrain since the universal and transhistorical constancy of human nature and passion is not completely watertight in Scott's formulation. The initial formulation in the first chapter of *Waverley* states that the novel will surmount the problem of appearing old-fashioned "by throwing the force of my narrative upon the characters and passions of the actors; those passions common to men in all ages of society and which have alike agitated the human heart, whether it throbbed under the steel corslet of the fifteenth century, the brocaded coat of the eighteenth, or the blue frock and white dimity waistcoat of the present day." (5) This is an argument for transhistorical exemplarity and identification of a kind that the *Waverley* Novels partially deliver and ultimately extend themselves beyond. Manners are of crucial importance in determining the way in which that passion is expressed, as Scott concedes:

¹⁶ Jonathan Sachs, *Romantic Antiquity: Rome in the British Imagination 1789-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Upon these passions it is no doubt true that the state of manners and laws casts a necessary colouring; but the bearings, to use the language of heraldry, remain the same, though the tincture may be not only different, but opposed in strong contradistinction. The wrath of our ancestors, for example, was coloured *gules*; it broke forth in acts of open and sanguinary violence against the objects of its fury. Our malignant feelings, which must seek gratification through more indirect channels, and undermine the obstacles which they cannot openly bear down, may be rather said to be tintured *sable*. But the deep-ruling impulse is the same in both cases; (5)

Manners therefore modify the complexion and expression of human nature, mediating and concealing the constant substance. Scott's reader and critics desired not only an accurate and convincing portrayal of manners, but also to access and engage with the transhistorical nature of the characters. This is especially problematic for reviewers of the later novels with settings that extend chronologically and geographically beyond the Scottish eighteenth century.

Paradoxically, the fact that characters in these novels appear to be moderns in costume becomes a critical problem. Scott's negotiation of exemplarity can be tracked through his own use of classical example in the novels and his attempts to integrate it with his historicist scheme.

This chapter reads a number of episodes from the Waverley novels that portray Scott's vernacular classicism. The term endeavors to encapsulate the multiplicity of Scott's incorporation and modification of the classical tradition within the Waverley novels. Using passages from *The Antiquary* (1816), *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822), and *Redgauntlet* (1824) I shall demonstrate Scott's negotiation of the classical legacy. This complex negotiation intersects with questions of genre and literary tradition, national particularity, and the use of extant pieces of the past in the present. In each category, Scott's treatment of the classical combines satire and seriousness, realism and sentiment. The entity is anomalous and ironic, therefore, in a way that seems almost programmatic of the novels in general. The existence of a 'vernacular' classicism, of course, follows this logic of ambivalence and encapsulates Scott's realization of various intellectual crosscurrents in the post-Enlightenment period. It is a vernacular classicism partly

because the novel is a vernacular form that Scott authorized with an injection of classicism. It is vernacular classicism because it is peculiarly Scottish and is evidenced primarily in two particular national types, the primitive and the pedant and is not merely confined to characters that might be termed genteel. It is vernacular on account of its source in the heterogeneous origins of Britain and the subsequent parallel advancement of national history and classical tradition. There is a vernacular element to its subjection to the Scottish Enlightenment scheme of conjectural history. For Scott and for the Waverley novels the classical was not a discourse to be repelled from the canon of national literature, it was an entity to be negotiated and understood as forming a constituent part of it at a moment of generic and institutional change.

ii. The Unwritten Scottish Epic: *The Antiquary* instead of the “Caledoniad”

The Antiquary makes a strong case for the fusion of the literary and historical classical traditions in its negotiation of the presence of both the Roman past and classical genres in near-contemporary Britain. The Roman occupation of Britain is an important context for the novel because of both its 1790s setting, with imminent threat of French invasion, and Jonathan Oldbuck’s personal pursuit of the site of the battle of Mons Graupius (AD 84), the battle that completed Agricola’s conquest. The novel stages a confrontation between classical antiquity and Romantic literary modernity when Oldbuck proposes the composition of “The Caledoniad; or, Invasion Repelled” to his reluctant protégé Lovel, providing a detailed outline for the work of counterfactual historical literature, in spite of his continuous and much satirized antiquarian quest for accuracy. In the modern literary recasting of the battle of Mons Graupius, the romantic hero Lovel is urged to refute both history and its record and “defeat the Romans in spite of Tacitus” (135) by composing an epic of triumphal Scottish nationalism. The desire to repel the

Roman invasion can be interpreted within a national-historical frame, further demonstrating Oldbuck's patriotism. Within the literary-historical frame, however, Oldbuck's expatiation on the choice of genre illustrates the complexity of Scott's negotiation of Britain's classical heritage on the combined level of form and content. The dynamics of this episode further exhibit the tension between classical influences and national vernacular traditions that the novel negotiates in an exploration of its potential as a learned and respectable genre.

Oldbuck's design for "The Caledoniad" is motivated by personal interest (to furnish the work with an historical apparatus, thus fulfilling his desire for publication but remaining sheltered from the critics), a sense of northern-European nationalism, and the imminent threat of French invasion, a modern counterpart to that of Agricola. In spite of his desire that "The Caledoniad" should figuratively repel both Roman and French invasions and celebrate native resistance to imperial conquest, his prescription for the work's formal attributes undermines this endeavour:

Then we will revive the good old forms so disgracefully neglected in modern times. —
You shall invoke the Muse — and certainly she ought to be propitious to an author, who,
in an apostatizing age, adheres with the faith of Abdiel to the ancient forms of adoration —
— Then we must have a vision — in which the genius of Caledonia shall appear to
Galgacus, and show him a procession of the real Scottish monarchs — (108)

The importing of classical epic machinery (the invocation, the personification of Caledonia, and the parade of future heroes) into this national epic is indicative of the successful prior invasion and colonization of British literature by classical forces, or the imposition of the classical literary hierarchy on British literature. In restoring these classical tropes to modern literature with the successful publication of the Caledoniad Oldbuck would, in conflict with his patriotic intentions, be undoing the modernizing work of the nationalizing impulses in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literature and effecting a reconquest of native territory by classical genres.

The reality, however, it is not so strongly oppositional. The neoclassical, Augustan Caledoniad is a product of Oldbuck's active, but outdated and ultimately thwarted literary imagination. At both the 1794 setting and the 1816 scene of composition the standoff has culminated in a non-event: the Caledoniad remains unwritten and the French invasion never materializes. Lovel's truthful rejoinder, "But the invasion of Agricola was *not* repelled," (135) in fact dissolves the tension between native and classical for contemporary Britain at least. The Roman presence in Britain is, as Penny Fielding terms it, "a sign of the heterogeneity of national origins", and part of its function in *The Antiquary* is to reflect this.¹⁷ The Roman occupation of Britain, both historical and literary-historical, produces a long-standing and diverse tradition of Latinity, so long entrenched, in fact, that it has become a constituent part of the vernacular and a distinguishing marker of Scottishness in the Waverley Novels. Scott's acknowledgement of this is ambivalent. On the one hand his most Latinate characters are presented satirically or as caricature and the mock-heroic register is most often deployed in a comic or non-event to indicate the inappropriateness and outdated nature of applying such weighty words and comparisons to modern life. On the other, his use of classical reference often makes a serious intellectual point about the state of Scotland's culture and society. The figures of the pedant and the primitive are the two sides of the vernacular classicism the Waverley novels represent.

From Oldbuck's first appearance, boasting a newly-purchased folio volume of Alexander Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale* (1726) an account of Roman antiquities in Scotland and the north of England, his classical antiquarian enthusiasm becomes the object of satire almost as soon as it surfaces. Scott's satirical critique of antiquarianism's methods is also a critique of the dominance of classical theory over the possibilities of native history. Finally embarked in the

¹⁷ Penny Fielding, *Scotland and the Fictions of Geography: North Britain 1760-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 118.

coach with an educated and intelligent auditor, his antiquarian cant transports Lovel onto a “sea of discussion concerning urns, vases, votive altars, Roman camps, and the rules of castramentation.”¹⁸ As they break their journey, Oldbuck offers the following methodological commentary, outlining the conflict between narrative history and antiquarianism: “...I’ll be very happy to finish the account I was giving you of the difference between the mode of entrenching *castra stativa* and *castra aestiva*, things confounded by too many of our historians. Lack-a-day, if they had ta’ en the pains to satisfy their own eyes, instead of following each other’s blind guidance!” (20) This is an ironic foreshadowing of the infamous scene at the Kaim of Kinprunes, in which Oldbuck will be interrupted in full flow, not by the comforts of a roadside inn, but by an alternative eyewitness account of the origin of a ditch.

Based on a familial anecdote of his friend William Clerk, Oldbuck’s misidentification of the Kaim of Kinprunes as the site of Mons Graupius places two historical authorities in opposition to one another. This episode is a critical touchstone for accounts of Scott’s satirical critique of antiquarianism that draw attention to the opposition between Oldbuck’s textually derived theory and an oral eyewitness testimony.¹⁹ Complicating this binary between scholarly and popular, erudite and vernacular, however, is a particularity in Oldbuck’s method of analysis that derives from his reading of classical texts, which constitute a distorting lens in their authoritativeness and relative plenitude.

At the Kaim of Kinprunes, Oldbuck draws Lovel’s eyes from the prospect to the ground. As Oldbuck had pronounced in the coach, the survey proceeds from a visual examination. Lovel observes “frankly and naturally” that he has seen “something like a ditch, indistinctly marked.”

¹⁸ Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, ed. Nicola J. Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 18; subsequent references are to this edition, parenthesized within the text.

¹⁹ See Nicola J. Watson’s introduction to the Oxford World’s Classics edition; Penny Fielding, *Writing and Orality: Nationality, Culture and Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

(40) Oldbuck's consequent rebuke chastises Lovel's individual apparatus whilst interposing a number of distorting lenses tempered by his own specialized knowledge:

Indistinctly?—pardon me, sir, but the indistinctness must be in your own powers of vision—nothing can be more plainly traced—a proper *agger* or *vallum*, with its corresponding ditch or *fossa*. Why, Heaven help you, the lassie, my niece, as light headed a goose as womankind affords, saw the traces of the ditch at once. Indistinct! why, the great station at Ardoch, or that at Burnswark in Annandale, may be clearer, doubtless, because they are stative forts, whereas this was only an occasional encampment. Indistinct! why, you must suppose that fools, boors, and idiots, have ploughed up the land, and, like beasts and ignorant savages, have thereby obliterated two sides of the square, and greatly injured the third; but you see, yourself, the fourth side is quite entire!
(40)

The imaginative exhortation to envisage four times what the eye discerns is the moment at which Oldbuck's analysis departs from empiricism as if it were merely a springboard for the imagination. In spite of the protestation, "I appeal to people's eye-sight" (42), the rest of Oldbuck's analysis, the least specious part of his evidence, designed to sound like a phrase from Tacitus, is a fabrication: "It was near to the Grampian mountains—lo! yonder they are, mixing and contending with the horizon!—it was *in conspectu classis*,—in sight of the Roman fleet; and would any admiral, Roman or British, wish a fairer bay to ride in than that on your right hand?" (41) As David Hewitt points out in the notes to the Edinburgh edition of the novel, the Latin phrase is not a quotation from Tacitus's *Agricola* but an *ad lib* of the Antiquary's.²⁰ Furthermore, beheld by *either* an ancient Roman or contemporary British general, the bay itself is a bearer of transhistorical constancy and a marker of the presentism at work in the Romantic negotiation of surviving aspects of classical history. It fits Oldbuck's present concerns to locate the ancient battle on his land and he finds, or invents, evidence to support it. Similarly, the other piece of ancient textual evidence marshaled to make the case, the quotation from Claudian, "Ille Caledoniis posuit qui castra pruinis" (42), which by some etymological wrangling and

²⁰ Walter Scott, *The Antiquary* ed. David Hewitt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 462.

mistranslation places a Roman camp at a place called *Prunes*, must be discounted since it dates the camp about three centuries after Agricola's battle.²¹ The difficulty of matching classical evidence to the surviving residue on the face of the landscape is overcome by skirting the dictates of reason and logic and entering into the register of fiction.

Oldbuck's imaginative habit of historical supposition reaches a climax in his heady interpolation of both himself and Lovel into the place of the Roman general via the quotation of lines from Beaumont and Fletcher's Jacobean play, *Bonduca* (1613-4), which dramatizes the history of Boadicea's rebellion. This passage is significant not only for its extrapolation of Oldbuck's method, but for the perspective it offers on classical genres and their relation to historical fiction.

'From this place, now scarce to be distinguished but by its slight elevation and its greener turn, from the rest of the fortification, we may suppose Agricola to have looked forth on the immense army of Caledonians, occupying the declivities of yon opposite hill, the infantry rising rank over rank as the form of ground displayed their array to its utmost advantage, the cavalry and *covinarii*, by which I understand the charioteers—another guise of folks from your Bond-street four-in-hand men, I trow—scouring the more level space below—

———See, then, Lovel—See———

See that huge battle moving from the mountains,
Their gilt coats shine like dragon scales;—their march
Like a rough tumbling storm—See them, and view them,
And then see Rome no more!———

Yes, my dear friend, from this stance it is probable,—nay, it is nearly certain, that Julius Agricola beheld what our Beaumont has so admirably described!—From this very Praetorium'— (42-3)

The visual retains its centrality in the scheme as Oldbuck progresses from exhorting Lovel's sensory perception, to presenting a scene to his mind's eye. The insistent triad of "See", repeated as "See...view...see" in the final lines quoted from the play reinforces the visionary character of

²¹ See Fielding, *Fictions of Geography*, for an extended account of the basis of antiquarianism in etymology and the interrogation of the relationship between language and history. Fielding shows persuasively that language cannot be an adequate bearer of history because it is too "functional and adaptable in the present" (119).

the Antiquary's treatment of sources and fashioning of argument. The fictionalization of the scene through Oldbuck's imaginative interpretation of evidence points to the indeterminate status of the classical literature as somewhere between history and fiction. The epics of Homer, Virgil, and Lucan and especially the Roman histories of Livy and Tacitus were read and critiqued as literary narratives of quasi-historical events in the eighteenth century in particular, a view also taken in the nineteenth century of Scott's novels.²² Furthermore, by routing Agricola's view of the scene backward through Beaumont's seventeenth-century dramatic description of a broadly analogous but not identical historical event, Scott exposes the unmethodical selection and marshaling of material from the classical tradition at work in Oldbuck's antiquarianism.

Across the range of classical quotation and illusion in *The Antiquary*, it is clear that the characters who deploy Latin idioms in their speech, or argue point for point from classical precedent, view the classical tradition as an undifferentiated, unhistoricized, and unimpeachably authoritative entity. These Latinate characters, recurring throughout the Waverley novels, invoke the solidity of the dead language to attempt to pin down meaning in present concerns, such as antiquarian or legal disputes. They generally and comically fail to do so. To Oldbuck, and to the lesser antiquary Wardour, classical quotation constitutes an authority that does not require

²² See especially Hugh Blair's view of Homer as history in the "Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian." Blair writes, "In every period of society, human manners are a curious spectacle; and the most natural pictures of ancient manners are exhibited in the ancient poems of nations. These present to us, what is much more valuable than the history of such transactions as a rude age can afford, the history of human imagination and passion. They make us acquainted with the notions and feelings of our fellow-creatures in the most artless ages; discovering what objects they admired, and what pleasures they pursued, before those refinements of society had taken place, which enlarge indeed, and diversify the transactions, but disguise the manners of mankind." Reprinted in Howard Gaskill, ed. *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 345. Adam Smith's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1762-3) analyses Tacitus's and Livy's histories in terms of their sympathetic effects. Before Scott's death in 1832, both Ranke and Macaulay would write that they believed Scott to be writing history, though they took opposite views of the desirability of his example to other historians.

precision of reference to carry its point. Consoling the blushing Lovel whilst believing him to be embarrassed by his profession as an actor (itself a fanciful misreading of Lovel's remarks on the ancient dramatists) Oldbuck attempts to refute Ochiltree's insinuation of (in fact, erotic) scandal with a quotation from Cicero:

You remember what old Tully says in his oration, *pro Archia poeta*, concerning one of your confraternity—*Quis nostrum tam animo agresti ac duro fuit—ut—ut—* I forget the Latin—the meaning is, which of us was so rude and barbarous as to remain unmoved at the death of the great Roscius, whose advanced age was so far from preparing us for his death, that we rather hoped one so graceful, so excellent in his art, ought to be exempted from the common lot of mortality? (44)

The abortive rendering and misapplication of the Latin sentiment is comically symptomatic of Oldbuck's use of the classical canon. The excerptability and portability of such phrases as *sententia*, like the unmethodical accumulation of evidence demonstrated above, is symptomatic of the decontextualized nature of classical history and literature beyond its designation as classical. The classical stands as its own context and is not subjected to further internal differentiation or historicization. This runs contrary to the overarching methodology of the Waverley Novels and is part of Scott's satire of antiquarian peccadilloes. Through the satirical representation of late-eighteenth-century, antiquarian, amateur classicism, *The Antiquary* comes to recontextualize the classical by subjecting its own representation of classicism to Scott's historicism. Scott's historicization of the classical integrates, at the nineteenth-century moment of composition, the oppositional entities of the novel and the classics by appropriately contextualizing the latter within the diversity of the contemporary literary field.

With this statement of the historical novel's interaction with the classical in mind, it is worth returning to the Kaim of Kinprunes and the interruption of Oldbuck's visionary exuberance by the first, and therefore representative, utterance of the mendicant Edie Ochiltree, "Praetorian here, Praetorian there, I mind the bigging o't." (43) Ochiltree's Anglicization of

Oldbuck's final word "Praetorium" signals the irruption of popular tradition, individual testimony and, above all, the vernacular into the episode, which has hitherto been rich in jargon. The entire utterance deflates Oldbuck's Latinate rhetoric and begins the tirade into local (but recent) tradition that allows the reader to deconstruct Oldbuck's reasoning for the site's authenticity. Edie's account discloses information such as the meaning behind the inscription "A.D.L.L.," which is not "Agricola Dicavit Libens Lubens" but rather "Aiken Drum's Lang Ladle" (41, 44). This disclosure is made in such a way as to present it to the attendant Lovel, and to the reader, as an alternative version for appraisal. Rather than engaging Oldbuck in a scholarly register, Scott has Ochiltree offer a narrative from his own experience that contrasts with Oldbuck's imaginative mobilization of textual sources to support his account.

Ochiltree's challenge to Oldbuck's version of events at Kinprunes may be construed as the triumph of native resistance against the invasion of an imperial and colonizing force. However, as the competing narratives combine to make one comedic episode, so too are the antiquary and the mendicant united in signifying the site's national particularity. To make the purchase Oldbuck has exchanged arable land for barren, and he justifies this piece of financial imprudence with the logic, "But then it was a national concern; and when a scene of so celebrated an event became my own, I was overpaid.—Whose patriotism would not grow warmer, as old Johnson says, on the plains of Marathon?" (41) Again, the Greek battle features as a marker of native resistance and national liberty. In nationalistic terms, however, the native and vernacular are not the opposite of the classical, but each is constitutive of Scottish particularity. In Scottish culture from the Renaissance forward a relationship to the classical was a defining national characteristic and a "tradition of Scottish Latinity" has been traced from

Boece forward.²³ The Waverley Novels participate in this tradition in two main ways. Firstly, they represent the functioning of Latinity as an aspect of Scottish national character, historicized across the various periods they depict. Secondly, as novels, they modify and modernize the tradition by incorporating the classical into their negotiation of form and literary tradition.

iii. Scott's 'Ancients': The Pedants and the Peasants

Jonathan Oldbuck is Scott's archetypal pedant in some respects but more than a caricature of that quality in others.²⁴ The significance of his position as the novel's protagonist and the pathos generated by his sympathetic consolation of Saunders Mucklebackit on the death of his son serve to render him as fully rounded a character as exists in Scott. More often, Scott's pedants are more peripheral to the action and especially the emotional focus of the novel, serving as comic relief or providing impediments to the flow of speech or narrative as exemplified by the parade of lawyers, litigants, and schoolmasters through the series. In their Scottish peculiarity, characters such as Bartoline Saddletree (*The Heart of Midlothian*), Peter Peebles (*Redgauntlet*), and Dominie Sampson (*Guy Mannering*) are exemplars of Scott's technique of presenting vibrant and highly individualized secondary characters from the types he encountered in contemporary Scotland, and set out to preserve in print as he saw them disappearing from

²³ The term is John MacQueen's; he traces the classical influence on Scottish poetry in particular from the Middle Ages to the post-Enlightenment in *The Enlightenment and Scottish Literature: Progress and Poetry*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1982), I.5 and passim.

²⁴ Michael Goode and Ina Ferris have recently demonstrated that the figure of the antiquary in Scott is one that generates both humour and pathos. Both have articulated the social isolation of the antiquary, focusing on his exclusion from normative modes of masculine feeling and his excessively intimate entanglement with text throughout the novel. Mike Goode, *Sentimental Masculinity and the Rise of History 1790-1890* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), see especially chapter four. Ina Ferris, "Pedantry and the Question of Enlightenment History: The Figure of the Antiquary in Scott", *European Romantic Review* 13.3 (2002) 273-83, 278.

society.²⁵ The national particularity of these characters derives from the uneven development of Scottish society, which has produced primitive characters possessed of an education and erudition that outstrips their social position and politeness. These pedantic characters, generally lowland Scots, have arisen through the unique conjunction of a generally unimproved society with a disproportionately developed educational system. Their Scots-Latin patois is their distinguishing feature.

Scott's vernacular classicism, then, participates in the "denial of coevalness" within his representation of Scottish society.²⁶ The representation of Highlanders and lower class or classless characters as primitive is achieved for either comedic or pathetic effect by classicizing them. This applies especially to women. In *The Antiquary*, the fishwife, Maggie Mucklebackit, is given the epithet "naiad", "virago" or "nereid" (112, 259) as she bargains to sell her fish. For mock-heroic effect, and in a comic interlude that displays Scott's virtuosity in recording Scots speech, the Fairport postmistresses are afforded an epic simile: 'Meanwhile the gossips, like the sibyls after consulting their leaves, arranged and confined the information of the evening, which flew next morning through a hundred channels, and in a hundred varieties, through the world of Fairport.' (143) The erroneous inferences drawn from the illegal consultation of other people's letters almost compares with the elliptical vatic utterances of the Cumaean sibyl. The subject matter of the modern sibyls is erotic intrigue, financial difficulty, and the inflated supposition that Lovel is a French agent, not the foretelling of national destiny. Superficially this seems like an ironic deflation showing the incompatibility of modern life with the heroic register of the past.

²⁵ See the "Advertisement" to the Magnum Opus edition of *The Antiquary* (1829) and the final chapter of *Waverley*, the "Postscript which should have been a preface" for Scott's views on the fast-eroding particularity of character to be found in Scotland in the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century.

²⁶ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983) passim, especially chapter two.

However, these erotic and bourgeois concerns are closely connected to national and military matters: the veneer of civilized society is thin in 1790s Fairport. Jenny Caxon's vigilant pilgrimage for news of Lieutenant Taffril's safety and the suspicion aroused by Lovel's secretive presence in the town both indicate the proximity of warfare and discord. When, finally, neither prove to be cause for alarm (Taffril is safe and still going to marry Jenny, Lovel turns out to be a British officer) the surface of modern life remains unbroken and it seems part of Scott's ambivalent and ironic scheme for modern romance to bring the narrative and characters to the verge of an heroic action.

In a tone of greater gravitas and pathos, however, vagrants such as Meg Merrilees (*Guy Mannering*) and Madge Wildfire (*The Heart of Midlothian*) are similarly described as harpies or witches. Meg Murdockson, mother of Madge Wildfire, is described "seated by the charcoal fire, with the reflection of the red light on her withered and distorted features marked by every evil passion, seem[ing] the very picture of Hecate at her infernal rites."²⁷ The women who are classicized in this manner are often holders of a piece of information, or bearers of a narrative crucial to the elucidation of the particular novel's plot. Their past experience and possession of information, which precedes the action of the novel, has sent them mad and pushed them to the margins of society. The disclosure of the narrative generally brings about their disintegration. Elspeth Mucklebackit, who holds the secret to Lovel's legitimacy, lingers in a vacant state of semi-existence, "lost in the apathy of age and deafness, the aged sibyl...plying her spindle without understanding the appeal made to her." (A, 259) The scene of her narrative is set in a mixed register.

The window...was opened as she commanded, and threw a sudden and strong light through the smoky and misty atmosphere of the stifling cabin. Falling in a stream upon

²⁷ Walter Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian* ed. Claire Lamont (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 286.

the chimney, the rays illuminated, in the way Rembrandt would have chosen, the features of the unfortunate nobleman, and those of the old sibyl, who now, standing upon her feet, and holding him by one hand, peered anxiously in his features with her light blue eyes, and holding her long and withered fore-finger within a small distance of his face, moved it slowly as if to trace the outlines, and reconcile what she recollected with that she now beheld. (309)

The scene is set for the tale in a fusion of classical allusion, Dutch art and Scottish poverty. The restoration of Elspeth's firmness of voice and mind for this scene contributes to the supernatural quality of the utterance and, ultimately, the effort of narration subsumes her frame. Scott's presentation of such women as guardians of Scottish superstition and popular tradition is rendered in a comparative mode that is calibrated to accentuate the particularity of the Scottish chronotope by drawing attention to the recurrence of common cultural tropes, such as the possessed female narrator, in different times and spaces. This use of classical reference to signal the simultaneous historicity and transhistoricality of an entity is characteristic not only of Scottish Enlightenment classicism, but also of Scott's novelistic effect, which aims to produce characters that are at once derived from their historical context yet exemplary types recognizable to a broad spectrum of modern readers.

The Antiquary brings the pedantic and primitive eighteenth-century Scottish classicisms into conflict in the tempestuous relationship between Oldbuck and his nephew Hector M'Intyre. A highland officer, Captain M'Intyre's pride and temper are stereotypically fiery, especially on matters of honor and genealogy; his passion for Isabella Wardour is treated as a bright-burning but superficial attachment. Hector's mixed status as the offspring of a highland soldier and Oldbuck's sister means that certain aspects of his behavior display and preserve the remnants of highland character. Not quite a living relic in the manner of the Baron of Bradwardine or Hugh Redgauntlet, Hector nevertheless brings traces of the past into the novel's present. Like Bradwardine's (but significantly *not* like Redgauntlet's) his presence in the novel is partly

comedic. Hector's overblown and mock-heroic presence in the second half of the novel also functions as a plot device since the upshot of the duel he provokes with Lovel necessitates the latter's flight and subsequent return as Major Neville, Lord Geraldin, and the preserver of the Wardour estate. The developing relationship and eventual reconciliation between uncle and nephew, however, takes up a significant part of the third volume and is mediated by the dialectic of their opposing approaches to the past. This familial reconciliation between landowner and heir contributes to the reintegration of the antiquary into both normative modes of feeling and the regular transmission of property.²⁸ Through the interaction of antiquary and living object, this aspect of the novel exemplifies the status of the mock-heroic as a productive discourse in terms of its effect on each character and as commentary on Scott's representation of Highlanders.

Oldbuck consistently classicizes his nephew, by referring to him as "Hector, son of Priam" and resigning himself to the behavior of the unruly dog, Juno, through recourse to mythological precedent: "However, as Jupiter, according to Homer, could not rule Juno in heaven, and as Jack Muirhead, according to Hector M'Intyre, has been equally unsuccessful on earth, I suppose she must have her own way." (291) Oldbuck's mock-heroic stance to his nephew is contradictory and reflects a split in the contemporary literary-historical approach to the Highlands. On one hand, it is founded on the belief that Highland culture is classical in its primitivism, representing a stage of development equivalent to that of the Homeric epics, generating 'Doric' as an eighteenth-century synonym for Gaelic. On the other, it is symptomatic of his view of native tradition as inferior to classical, or for that matter, Germanic. "Very hard

²⁸ To an extent, the relationship between Oldbuck and his nephew falls into Michael Goode's scheme of the opposition between "morbid antiquaries and vital men of feeling", although Goode's discussion focuses on the relationship between Lovel and Oldbuck, rather than the more oppositional, intrafamilial pairing.

this, thought M'Intyre, that he will speak with such glee about everything that is ancient except my family." (294)

When Oldbuck asserts that Gothic invaders (his own German ancestors) were the overlords of the Celts (the ancestors of the Highland clansmen), he continues this splitting in his apology:

'[They] were great and gallant chiefs, I dare say, Hector; and I did not really mean to give you such immense offence in treating a point of remote antiquity, a subject on which I always am myself cool, deliberate, and unimpassioned. But you are as hot and hasty, as if you were Hector and Achilles, and Agamemnon to boot.'

(294)

The inflation of Hector's Highland pride into the triplicate rage of Homeric protagonists underscores the contradiction in Oldbuck's classicizing impulse. Hector *is* Hector, but if he is also to be Achilles and Agamemnon then he is in excess of the heroic permitted in late-eighteenth century society. For Hector, classicism is a mode of feeling and existence, but is only recognized as such by observers such as Oldbuck and Scott. The self-delusional assertion of objectivity (belied by Oldbuck's every interaction with an historical artifact) in such historical matters exposes the difficulty in Scott's mind in assuming a purely rational position towards Scotland's highland culture.

Hector's very existence is, then, complementary to his uncle's antiquarian enthusiasm, though he must bear the brunt of its constant onslaught. When his and Juno's misadventures destroy two of Oldbuck's treasured artifacts, the substitutes he provides enlarge the scope and enhance the authenticity of the Antiquary's collection. The lachrymatory of Clochnaben, evidence of the Roman presence around Fairport, is broken by the dog jumping for a pat of butter, shattering both its fabric and Oldbuck's theory into "such fragments as might be the shreds of a broken—flowerpot!" (288) From his own experience Hector argues against the singularity of the "paltry pipkin", claiming the vessel to be "just such a thing as they use in

Egypt to cool wine, or sherbet, or water;—I brought home a pair of them—I might have brought home twenty...we brought home a parcel to cool our wine on the passage—they answer wonderfully well—” (289) This revelation allows Hector to replenish Oldbuck’s collection and also to expand its geographical scope beyond the confines of north-east Scotland. Hector’s military experience itself characteristic of his status as a Highlander, furnishes the study with items from the ancient civilizations, giving Oldbuck the opportunity to practice some Enlightenment comparative history: “To trace the connection of nations by their usages, and the similarity of the implements which they employ, has been long my favorite study. Everything that can illustrate such connections is most valuable to me.” There are two versions of this exchange. Either Hector has brought back an artifact that proves the stadial equivalence between eighteenth-century Egypt and Roman Scotland, or the sudden profusion of amphorae casts doubt on the provenance of the original, supposedly unique, lachrymatory, which may have been the detritus not of Roman legionaries but of Scottish officers all along.

Other imperial artifacts brought to delight Monkbarrow, include the ring containing a cameo of Cleopatra, obtained from a Frenchman in Alexandria, which occasions a lament for the lack of historical curiosity amongst the commercially minded citizens of Fairport, and a cane to replace one cut “in the classic woods of Hawthornden” (296) but broken during Hector’s ill-advised single combat with a seal.²⁹ The provenance of the cane is charted across the globe: “I bought it from the drum major, who came into our regiment from the Bengal army when it came down the Red Sea. It was cut on the banks of the Indus, I assure you.” (370) These new artifacts, given as peace offerings, close the circle of Hector’s connection with antiquity. His imperial experience renders such objects quotidian and their circulation through the army

²⁹ Hawthornden was the home of William Drummond (1585-1646), a poet whose work Ben Jonson dubbed “too much of the schooles” during a fortnight’s visit in 1618.

recontextualize them as part of the British present, uniting foreign with local, with ancient with modern.

The instantiation of classicism in *The Antiquary*, then, can be seen to be dependent on the interplay between the pedantic and primitive, between scholarly and vernacular modes. Mock-heroic, which is predicated on the inadequacy of quotidian modernity to fulfil the expectation of inherited literary forms amidst the desire that it should, is a governing principle of the novel. In the presentation of Hector M'Intyre, especially, what appears as hollow and pedantic bombast is also subtly connected to Scott's sentimentalized portrayal of the particularity of Scottish life in the eighteenth century. The classical functions as an idiom that is simultaneously decontextualized and transhistorical (in its pedantic mode) and yet continually recontextualized (in the primitive) into both the present of the novel's setting and the present of its composition and publication. In this present, both modes become vernacular through the mediation of novelistic form, which supplants the wished-for epic by providing an alternative more neatly calibrated to its subject matter. The virtuosic satirical displays of erudition are absorbed by the capaciousness of the form just as they backhandedly raise it to canonical status.

iv. Classicism in a different period: Scott's Jacobean

Scott's Jacobean novel *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822) negotiates the classical in a manner attuned to its setting. Elements of the vernacular classicism found in *The Antiquary* are refashioned as they are transplanted to London and the court of James I. The resultant formation demonstrates a further aspect of the interaction between novelistic form and the classical, specifically through the drama. Criticism of the novel has focused on two set-pieces. The first is the "Introductory Epistle", a dialogue between the fictional editor Captain Clutterbuck and the Eidolon of the

Author of *Waverley* in the back room of a bookseller's shop in Edinburgh. In a discussion of the importance of plot the Author praises Fielding for, uniquely, "challeng[ing] a comparison between the Novel and the Epic" in the plot of *Tom Jones* (1749), a "regular and connected epopeia."³⁰ Such exegetical material, concerned with framing the narrative and mediating its reception with the public is littered with classical allusion in acknowledgement, and partial satire, of the classical idiom of contemporary critical reviews. Clutterbuck's deferential greeting "*Salve, magne parens!*" is "cut short" by the author who proceeds to outline his desire to satisfy the taste of the public for his novels rather than that of the reviewers. His concern for posterity, articulated via a quotation from Horace, "*non omnis moriar*" [I shall not perish entirely] (*Carm.* III.xxx.6), and the hope that his works will please the public taste in present and future ages contrasts with the shadowy representation of the author himself.³¹

The second is the hero's extensive soliloquy in chapter 22, which Alexander Welsh terms "the best introduction to the hero of the *Waverley Novels*" in his 1963 formulation of the idea of the passive hero. Welsh notes that the novel is "imbued with the spirit of the public stage of that era...giv[ing] free play to his fondness for the drama."³² The soliloquy reveals Nigel to be one of Scott's most psychologically developed heroes but the novel's interrogation of dramatic modes is thoroughgoing. Scott's 1825 'Essay on the Drama' for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is a social history of drama from Aeschylus to the nineteenth century that takes especial notice of the

³⁰ Walter Scott, *The Fortunes of Nigel* ed. Frank Jordan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 7; subsequent references are to this edition, parenthesized within the text.

³¹ Ian Duncan examines the diffusion of what he terms "Scott's Shadow" throughout the Romantic literary marketplace in *Scott's Shadow: the Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

³² Alexander Welsh, *The Hero of the Waverley Novels, with New Essays on Scott* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 21.

formation of the public into an audience through the fabric of the theatre.³³ Scott's conception of the public as an arbiter of taste can be traced from the classical period. The unsurpassed "critical authority" (275) of the Greek audience may be devalued but the power of the audience to generate forms through preference persists into the Renaissance:

While the learned laboured to revive the Classical Drama in all its purity, the public at large, to which the treasures of the learned languages were as a fountain sealed, became addicted to a species of representation which properly neither fell under the denomination of comedy or tragedy, but was named History or Historical Drama.
(326)

The consciousness of a division between the erudite and the mass publics is qualitatively defined along the lines of classical knowledge and taste. Combined with the assertion that Shakespeare "vindicated for ever the British theatre from a pedantic restriction to classical rule" (401) this statement of dramatic historical representation as a popularly approved alternative to tragedy or comedy indicates the rise of a vernacular national tradition in drama, to which the historical novel is heir.

The *Fortunes of Nigel*, however, does not enact a wholesale supplanting of the classical by the vernacular tradition over the course of its narrative. The novel in fact incorporates two distinct dramatic traditions into its depiction of Jacobean London, the one populist, the other erudite. The novel resembles a city comedy of the Jonsonian variety in its depiction of life outside the royal court. Characters such as the pair of apprentices Jin Vin and Frank Tunstall, Ursula Suddlechop, and the landlady Dame Nelly Christie inhabit the world of *Bartholomew Fair*.³⁴ Playing in front of this urban backdrop is a collection of Scottish characters of different

³³ "A theatre, at first of wood, but afterwards of stone, circumscribed, while it accommodated, the spectators, and reduced a casual and disorderly mob to the quality and civilisation of a regular and attentive audience." *Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (Edinburgh: Cadell and Co., 1827) six vols., VI, 263; 275.

³⁴ Scott's remarks on Jonson in the "Essay on the Drama" are illustrative of an internal division between popular and erudite, vernacular and classical within the dramatist. Criticizing the

classes, whose national particularity is accentuated (or rendered a peculiarity) by the juxtaposition. Jonson is a particularly apt point of comparison for Scott in terms of his humorous characters and their individualized canting “harangues” and it is in Scott’s presentation of these characters that the two dramatic traditions intersect.³⁵ The range of Scottish characters, from the palace cook Laurie Linklater to James himself, embodies the types of Scottish vernacular classicism found in *The Antiquary*, but with greater or lesser modifications to reflect the early seventeenth-century setting. Deriving from these characters’ erudition, the second dramatic tradition present in the novel is that of Roman comedy. The following paragraphs illustrate the relationship between the Scottish Jacobean exiles and the tropes of Roman comedy, showing that classical discourse is mobilized by Scott as a means to manage the effects of generational tensions exhibited on domestic and societal levels.

Contemporary reviewers found Scott’s reliance on textual sources for the post-*Ivanhoe* novels to lessen the capacity of his characters to engage the reader:

When we came to *Ivanhoe*, *The Monastery*, and *The Abbott*, we seemed to be called to a lecture upon an ancient cemetery, where the bones and ashes of priests, chieftains, and buffoons were indeed discoverable, and, by means of the mutilated inscriptions, partially distinguishable, but which not all the galvanism of genius could make again to move as they moved, or feel as they felt. We saw the personages of these romances, as a person, intimately acquainted with theatrical performers, sees a tragedy; they were everyday companions assuming ancient dresses and extravagant attitudes.³⁶

classical tragedies, Scott finds Jonson unable to invigorate material drawn from Tacitus and Sallust: “he laboured in the mine of the classics, but overloaded himself with the ore, which he could not, or would not, refine” (404). The comedies, by contrast, show “a man whose mind was coarse, though possessing both strength and elevation, and whose acute perception of comic humour was tintured with vulgarity.” (403)

³⁵ Robert Mayhead calls *The Antiquary* Scott’s “most Ben Jonsonian work” on account of his treatment of humorous characters and a direct quotation from *The Alchemist* after the unmasking of Dousterswivel, whose alchemical cant is an updated version of that of Jonson’s *Subtle*. “The Problem of Coherence in *The Antiquary*” in *Scott Bicentenary Essays* ed. Alan Bell (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), 144.

³⁶ Unsigned review, *General Weekly Register* 2nd June, 1822 in *Walter Scott, the Critical Heritage* ed. John O. Hayden (London: Routledge, 1995), 262.

The “higher antiquity” of the novels with settings earlier than eighteenth-century Scotland detracts from the power of even Scott’s humorous characters, belying the transhistorical capacity of the type. Scott’s types, here the priest, chieftain, and buffoon, are precisely typifications of their period, coming into existence at the intersection of human nature and social conditions (or, to use the Scottish Enlightenment term, manners). If there is not sufficient evidence existing for the accurate delineation of such a character, then it fails and appears as a modern ridiculously arrayed. This is the nature of the challenge posed by historicism to classical exemplarity. The constancy of human nature and passions that Scott depends upon in the opening chapter of *Waverley* here works against the effectiveness of his characterization. The critical desire for the characters of a historical novel to be accurately rendered in emotional terms presents a problem for novels set in these earlier periods, yet if human nature is unchanging then it *is* only the costumes that should need to change and it is a readerly and critical desire that identification and engagement should take place on the level of a universal humanity. Rigorous historicism of characterisation cannot be effective beyond the reach of two generations or the testimony of memory on account of the difficulty of knowing how, precisely, people might have “moved” and “felt”. In *The Fortunes of Nigel*, however, Scott is able to present one fully historicized type in the form of the pedantically erudite monarch, James I.

The characterisation of James in the novel is consistent in presenting the monarch’s inconsistencies between thought and action, power and authority. From James’s own writings, Scott was able to construct an accurate picture of his intellectual predilections and intersperse them throughout his involvement in the novel’s plot. James’s pedantry is consistently connected to his Scottishness with his speech oscillating between Scots patter and quotations from Virgil and Horace. The first audience between James and Nigel regarding the restoration of the

Glenvarloch estate begins with an extended Latin dialogue, designed to test the latter's education. The footnote that Scott appends to the scene assures the reader that the conversation was all style and no substance:

Lest any Lady or gentleman suspect there is aught of mystery concealed under the sentences printed in Italics, they will be pleased to understand that they contain only a few common-place Latin phrases, relation to the state of letters in Holland, which neither deserve, nor would endure, a literal translation. (111)

This dismissal of the content of the conversation, part of Scott's satire of James, also evidences Scott's conception of his readership as not necessarily classically educated. Nevertheless, Scott was at pains to get the Latin right, as the two sets of proofs for these pages and a note requesting help in composition attest.³⁷ However, the conversation is leveraged by James to make a point about national particularity. Nigel's canny compliment to James's polemic powers tickles the monarch, who says to two English bishops:

Ye see, my lords, no bad specimen of our Scottish Latinity, with which language we would all our subjects of England were as well embued as this, and other youths of honourable birth, in our auld kingdom; also, we keep the genuine and Roman pronunciation, like other learned nations on the continent, sae that we can hold communing with any scholar in the universe, who can but speak the Latin tongue; whereas ye, our leaned subjects of England, have introduced into your universities, otherwise most learned, a fashion of pronouncing...whereby Latin, *quoad Anglos* ceaseth to be *communis lingua*, the general dragoman, or interpreter between all the wise men of the earth. (111-2)

The tradition of Scottish Latinity, then, is not only a marker of difference from England, but also of Scotland's links to the cosmopolitan European centres of learning. Scottish erudition is therefore less constrictive and isolationist than the satirical portrayal of its pedantic aspects would suggest. The sixteenth-century controversy over the refusal of Cambridge and Oxford to adhere to Erasmus's desire to restore the pronunciation of Latin and Greek to their classical

³⁷ See Frank Jordan, "Essay on the Text: Composition" in the Edinburgh Edition of *The Fortunes of Nigel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 421.

(rather than ecclesiastical sounds) had continued resonance in the 1820s.³⁸ The mysterious deliverer of Martha Trapbois is marked by his pronunciation of “*Scaandalum Maagnatum*, sir—*Scaandalum Maagnatum*” and the reader is invited into complicity with his identification as a Scot through their reading of Scott’s typology: “(for such our reader must have already pronounced him, from his language and pedantry)” (288).

That this gallant is Richie Moniplies, the recently released manservant of Nigel Olifaunt and son of an Edinburgh butcher, shows the penetration of classical erudition across Scottish society. It is on the level of the absurd that the conjunction of Scottish Latinity and Roman comedy first arises. In an encounter between the cook Laurie Linklater and the publican Ned Kilderkin, the former, who as already been introduced in mock-heroic vein as “one of those priests of Comus” confirms his own importance by means of a quotation from Terence: “—if you had but the just sense of the dignity of our profession, which is told of by the witty African slave, for so the King’s most excellent Majesty designates him, Publius Terentius, *Tanquam in speculo—in patinas inspicere jubeo.*” (299) This injunction to “look into pots as you look into a mirror” i.e. compare yourself with my pots, comes from Terence’s *Adelphoe*, 428-9 where the Athenian slave Syrus parodies Demea’s strict parenting program of telling his son to judge other people’s lives as an example for his own by telling his kitchen slaves to look into their saucepans

³⁸ Scott lost a night’s sleep in 1827 considering whether the pupils of the newly founded Edinburgh Academy should be taught the English or Scottish pronunciation. Believing the Scottish and European mode, endorsed by Buchanan and Milton, to be correct, he nevertheless considered the question in terms of national pride: “But the question is whether youths who have been [taught] in a manner different from that used all over England will be heard if he [*sic*] presumes to use his latin at the bar or the senate and if he is to be unintelligible or ludicrous the question [is] whether his education is not imperfect under one important view. I am very unwilling to sacrifice our *Sumpsimus* for their *Mumpsimus*—still more to humble ourselves before the Saxons while we can keep an inch of the Scottish flag flying——” Entry for January 25th, 1827. Walter Scott, *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott* ed. W.E.K. Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 269. Ultimately it was decided that Edinburgh schoolboys were to be taught *both*, in a compromise that acquiesced to both literary authority and social coercion.

as an example for future behavior. The trope of the wise cook and wily slave in classical comedy jibes neatly with Scott's portrayal of canny Scottish servants. The scene from *Adelphoe* is revisited with a Scottish vernacular twist when Linklater intersperses a conversation with Moniplies with orders to his kitchen hands: "Look to the broches, ye knaves—*pisces purga—Salsamenta fac macerentur pulchre*—I will make you understand Latin, ye knaves, as becomes the scullions of King James." (348)

As "the learned rival of the philosophical Syrus" (300) Linklater's erudition, he explains, derives from two sources, his proximity to James and his education at the Royal High School in Edinburgh. Linklater's claim to owe much to "the stripes of the Rector of the High-School, which imprinted on my mind that cooking scene in the *Heautontimorumenos*" (302) is ironic. As Jordan observes in his edition, there is no cooking scene in Terence's *Self-Tormentor*. It is unclear whether this is an accidental slip by Scott or a deliberate misreference, introduced to deflate the cook's tirade. On one hand, Scott's habit of quoting from memory rather than text generates a looseness of reference in the novels. On the other, David Hewitt has shown that mistakes in Latin and Gaelic in the early editions of the *Waverley Novels* do not usually occur in the manuscripts leading to the conclusion that "Friar Tuck's Latin in *Ivanhoe* is deliberately full of errors."³⁹ Scott's deliberate mistake in classical attribution would then be another example of his vast storehouse of literary allusion virtuosically deployed.

The novel's engagement with Terence's play is multiplicitous and goes beyond the use of the classical to prove and to satirize Scottish erudition. The classical play pits the oppositional parenting methods (strictness and leniency) of two brothers (Demea and Micio) against each other, as they apply them to their son (Ctesipho) and nephew (Aeschines) respectively. In the

³⁹ David Hewitt, "General Introduction" to the Edinburgh Edition of the *Waverley Novels*, printed in each volume of the series.

1831 introduction to the Magnum Opus edition, Scott names as the source of his information on Whitefriars, Thomas Shadwell's 1638 play, *The Squire of Alsatia*, which is itself based on the *Adelphoe*. In Shadwell's play the son of the strict father is seduced by the vices of the city and ends up in Whitefriars. Whilst Scott took characters and the general milieu of Alsatia from Shadwell, the Roman play's theme resonates more profoundly in the historical scheme of the novel, further demonstrating Scott's integration of classical precedent with his novelistic program.

The theme of filial obedience is central to both the novel and the Roman play. Against a vow made to his dead father, Nigel embarks upon a career as a gambler, making small bets against small opponents in order to mitigate the error. The indignity of his preying on and ruining his inferiors in fact compounds his disgrace. Nigel's moral waywardness is temporary and unintentional, though, since his primary purpose in London is to secure a means of restoring and preserving his patrimony. The other father-son pairing in the novel is that of the Earl of Huntinglen and his son, Lord Dalgarno, who occupy the lenient Micio-Aeschines axis in Terence's scheme and also, crucially, are exemplars of a generational shift that Scott traces at the court of James I after the union of the crowns and reconfiguration of the nation. While Huntinglen won James's favor with his sword, Dalgarno secures his position at court through political operations. The transition is repeatedly and explicitly marked in terms of old and new: "There live the old and new fashion. The father is like a noble old broad-sword, but harmed with rust, from neglect and inactivity—the son is your modern rapier, well mounted, fairly gilt, and fashioned to the taste of the time—And it is time must shew if the metal be as good as the show." (129-30) Huntinglen's belatedness is evidenced not only by rust but also in his description as a "trust[y] old Trojan" (136), representative of a superseded warrior age, outmaneuvered by the

wives of his successors. The clustering of this variety of classical reference around the theme of historical and social change is symptomatic of the general conception of the classical world as exemplifying not only a completed cycle of development and decline but also providing a structure and series of (paradoxically transhistorical) examples for expressing and managing that process of historical and social change.

The historical novel, in its heterogeneity and capaciousness, incorporates and assimilates classical genres as a means of negotiating its subject matter. Classical comedy, that is Greek New Comedy and Roman comedy, is domestic in setting and revolves around a dual plot of generational conflict and marriage, both important to the novel. The comedies of Plautus and Terence were translations and Romanizations of Greek originals and it is believed that the latter modified the ending of Menander's original *Adelphoi* to assert the stricter values of the Roman paterfamilias over the more lenient approach of Micio.⁴⁰ Along with Cicero, Terence was a staple of the Renaissance humanist curriculum until at least the early eighteenth century on account of his knowledge of human nature and moral correction of youthful indiscretion.⁴¹ The presence of the play in *The Fortunes of Nigel* offers a commentary and an example for father-son relationships that favors both stringency and forgiveness. At the height of Huntinglen's wrath towards Dalgarno, James urges the father to "speak more in the vein of Demea than Mitio, *vi nempe et via pervulgata patrum*, but as for not seeing him again, and he your only son, that is altogether out of reason." (360)

⁴⁰ John Barsby, *Terence: The Eunuch, Phormio, The Brothers: A Companion to the Penguin Translation* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1991), 22.

⁴¹ Ronald Berman, "The Values of Shadwell's *Squire of Alsatia*" *ELH* 39.3 (Sep., 1972), 375. See also Marvin T. Herrick, *Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), passim and T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke* 2 vols., (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944), I, 103-17.

The revelation of Dalgarno's spectacular villainy to his father in chapter 32, from which this quotation is drawn, mobilizes additional classical structures as ways of containing emotion. To soften the blow of the revelation, James had prescribed the reading of stoic and Neo-Platonist philosophy in preparation for the audience, "some of the most pithy passages of Seneca, and of Boethius *de Consolatione*, that the back might be, as we say, fitted for the burthen" (357). The diversity of classical content of this scene of paternal wrath and disappointment contributes to the pathos of the Earl's position even as it rises from the well of James's pedantry. James dispenses his stoic advice claiming, "Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco" (357). Dido's tragic words (I learn to console the unhappy, being not unfamiliar with misfortune, *Aeneid* I.630) are the occasion for a characteristic quibble on the matter of changing the gender to the masculine *ignarus* and disrupting the scansion of the hexameter, but the force of the Virgilian quotation is not completely negated. The recurring coincidence of emotional climaxes with classical quotation indicate Scott's attitude to the usefulness of the classical as an expressive mode, which is best described as ambivalent since it is so continually subjected to ironic and deflationary treatment.

Classical allusion and quotation punctuate such moments not only in this novel but also in Scott's letters and journal.⁴² Samuel Baker's 2009 study of stoic characters in early Waverley Novels examines Scott's conception of stoicism as a literary practice for the management of feeling that acts as a balance to sentimentality and holds the two in ironic juxtaposition.⁴³ Baker,

⁴² Compare the ironic distance in this profession of Stoic philosophy, a comment on the departure of his daughter and grandchildren on the 5th November 1825: "I hate red eyes and blowing of noses. *Agere at pati Romanum est*. Of all schools commend me to the Stoicks. We cannot indeed overcome our affections nor ought we if we could, but we repress them within due bounds and avoid coaxing them to make fools of those who should be their masters" with the stark clarity of the entry on the day news of his bankruptcy came: "Ballantyne calld on me this morning. *Venit illa suprema dies*. My extremity is come." (Scott, *Journal*, 25; 38)

⁴³ Samuel Baker, "Scott's Stoic Characters: Ethics, Sentiment, and Irony in The Antiquary, Guy

however, decouples Scott's stoicism from its classical context and places it in the broader current of a European tradition of reception. This move, I contend, flattens and obscures the way in which Scott's engagement with the classical provides its own scheme for managing transhistorical distance, exemplarity and feeling in combination with each other.

When, at the end of the scene at hand, James himself reflects on the discrepancy in character between father and son it is with recourse to Horace:

But the world grows worse from day to day, Geordie. The juveniles of this age may weel say with the poet—

Ætas parentum pejor avis tulit,

Nos nequiores—

This Dalgarno does not drink so much, or swear so much, as his father; but he wenches, Geordie, and he breaks his word and oath baith. (361; *Carm.* III.vi. 46-7)

Horace's ode links domestic morals with national decline, comparing the loose morals of contemporary Roman women with the virtuous austerity of the lives of farmer-soldiers of the past, concluding the portrait of dissolution with this statement of generational decline (the age of our parents, worse than that of our grandfathers, has borne us, more wicked still). The pessimism of the final stanza is an acknowledgement of the moral degeneracy that occasioned the century of civil war and a call for moral renewal under Augustus. The quotation and James's commentary is a serious expression of the anxiety that progress and improvement ultimately precipitate decline. Locating this quotation in the mouth of the novel's world historical individual, whose paranoia and inconsistency has contributed to the creation of the climate in which Dalgarno flourished, simultaneously integrates classicism with historicism and raises the question of individual responsibility in relation to the long-range workings of history. The continuing historicization of the classical in *The Fortunes of Nigel* reveals the sustained and thoroughgoing nature of Scott's engagement with the classical within the heterogeneity of the novel.

Mannerling, and 'the Author of Waverley'" *Modern Language Quarterly* 70:4 (December 2009), 445.

v. Towards the novel's English classicism

Redgauntlet (1824) constitutes an appropriate conclusion on account of its integration of classicism with its reflexive commentary on novelistic form. Published a decade after *Waverley*, Scott's return to Jacobite subject matter (the plot is that of a fictitious third attempt to restore the Stuart line) is in some ways a meditation on the capacities of fiction and historiography. With the subtitle "A Tale of the Eighteenth Century" and set in the summer of 1765, *Redgauntlet* historicizes itself within the tradition of the rise of the novel by thematizing the development of the form alongside its representation of contemporary events. In its parade of epistolary, confessional and third-person narrative forms and in its incorporation of folktale and family history, the novel interrogates the representational strategies of historical genres. An epistolary correspondence constitutes the entire first volume and Darsie Latimer's surreptitious journal-keeping and assumption of feminine disguise has been remarked upon as an invocation of Richardson's *Pamela*.⁴⁴ Scott's epistolarity is of a masculine sensibility, however, and a significant departure from the Richardsonian paradigm is its classicism.

The correspondence (and, therefore, the novel itself) between the joint heroes, Darsie Latimer and Alan Fairford, opens with a slight misquotation from Horace: "*Cur me exanimas querelis tuis?*" [Why do you deafen me with your complaints? *Carm.* II.i.17]. The friendship between Fairford and Latimer is expressed in a tone of confident Augustan neoclassicism. Freshly released from the rigors of the High School and the University both write in a manner similar to Scott's early letters, enlivening and interspersing the quotidian narrative with Latin

⁴⁴ Kathryn Sutherland, "Introduction" to *Redgauntlet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), xii; subsequent references to *Redgauntlet* are to this edition and parenthesized within the text.

phrases and classical comparisons.⁴⁵ It is in the overtly sentimental and reflexive parts of the letters, the salutation and the sign off, that exhibit a particularly neoclassical sensibility. Latimer concludes his first letter by likening their relationship to ancient examples of male friendship:

We have an advantage over the dear friends of old, every pair of them. Neither David and Jonathan, nor Orestes and Pylades, nor Damon and Pythias—although in the latter case particularly, a letter by post would have been very acceptable—ever corresponded together; for they probably could not write, and certainly had neither posts nor franks to speed their effusions to each other; (18)

The filtering of this homosocial bond through classical reference that is itself ironically contrasted with the relative modernity of the eighteenth-century postal service is typical of Scott's method. The distance and difference between the experience of Latimer and Fairford and that of Damon and Pythias that appears to make the comparison overblown is, in fact, itself undermined by the events of the novel. Latimer is forcibly transported by his tyrannical uncle Redgauntlet from modernity into the romance of a Jacobite conspiracy. The double narrative of the second and third volumes follows Fairford's efforts to secure Latimer's freedom, putting himself in danger in the same manner as the mythological Damon did for Pythias. Scott's accustomed deflationary mock-heroic is here *not* misapplied to events because Redgauntlet and the residual Jacobite conspirators live in an alternative but coexistent society that still operates a strict code of unquestioned loyalty and futile heroism. The possibility for the exercise of classical virtues in eighteenth-century Scotland actually exists as a by-product of uneven development.

The loyalty and devotion between Fairford and Latimer and Fairford's heroic action on behalf of his friend is a classical paradigm in opposition to Redgauntlet's fanatical devotion to

⁴⁵ The autobiographical nature of the novel has been sufficiently commented on not to require further elaboration. See the "Essay on the Text" in the Edinburgh Edition of the novel for a comprehensive history of this tendency. *Redgauntlet*, ed. G.A.M. Wood (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 382.

the Jacobite cause and the loyalty he demands from Latimer. Ian Duncan has masterfully drawn out the conflict, experienced by both young men, between these two types of classical precedent, *pietas* (expected and unquestioning vertical loyalty to hereditary structures) and *amicitia* (horizontal, contemporaneous loyalty founded upon exchange) without situating them in the classical tradition of the novel or drawing attention to their classical antecedents.⁴⁶ Scott's portrayal of Fairford's interaction with both classical modes is in keeping with the structural positioning of the novice lawyer's character as at once the double and opposite of Latimer. Belonging to the city professional class, rather than the dispossessed heir of an ancient house, Fairford operates in a modern world and thinks in its terms whereas Latimer inhabits a more imaginative and romantic perspective on events. Fairford's struggle between maintaining allegiance to his father in persisting in the great legal cause of Peebles vs. Plainstones or coming to Latimer's assistance is analogous to the latter's struggle to sever allegiance with the Jacobite cause. Both choose *amicitia*, the modern iteration of *pietas* in a commercial world founded upon financial and sympathetic exchange.

Fairford's navigation of the Jacobite conspiracy is framed by classical reference that is founded upon both his Latinate legal training and also on Scott's comparative historicism. The major classical precedent for the fictional-historical event of *Redgauntlet* is the Catilinarian conspiracy of 63BC, although the novel systematically references the civil wars of the entire first century BC in conjunction with Hugh Redgauntlet, likening him to Marius looking on the ruins of Carthage in the introductory character sketch (40) and later to Cassius in his disinterested devotion to the ideals of the cause (314). The analogy between each century of civil dissention furthers Scott's general conception of eighteenth-century Scotland as a classicized chronotope.

⁴⁶ Duncan, *Scott's Shadow*, 261. Duncan instead locates the reference to "the core ethical virtue of *pietas*" in the novel's Shakespearean epigraph (*As You Like It*).

John Macqueen makes a convincing case for the novel's Horatian quotation, drawing biographical parallels between Scott's sentimental ambivalence and the apostasy of Augustus's panegyrist who also fought with Brutus and Cassius at Philippi.⁴⁷ The sustained example of the Catilinarian conspiracy, is of greater importance to Scott's vernacular classicism since it is perceived from Fairford's particularized point of view.

Flanked by the pedantic Scottish Latinity of his lawyer father and his client Peter Peebles, Fairford's relation to the classics is, by contrast, moderate and productive. His diligent and obedient adherence to his studies produces an accomplished first address to the Court of Session, which Scott glosses in a footnote, thus: "Till of late years, every advocate who entered at the Scottish bar made a Latin address to the Court, faculty, and audience, in set terms, and said a few words on the text of the civil law, to show his Latinity and jurisprudence." (404) Noting the fact that this ceremony has been dispensed with to save the court's time is at once a means of signaling historical distance and the accuracy of Scott's representation of legal matters and of the novel's 1760s setting. The wistful tone that records the passing of this ceremonial rite is countered by the greater efficiency of the new system, typifying Scott's relation to Scottish tradition.

On a more personal level, but also as a consequence of his education, Fairford carries a "little Sallust" with him on his quest in the footsteps of Latimer, "that the perusal of a favourite classical author might help to pass away a heavy hour." (269) The scene that passes between Fairford and Nanty Ewart aboard the latter's smuggling brig (during which the Sallust is produced) models a number of classical reading practices and elaborates the parallel between the Jacobite and Catilinarian conspiracies. The analogy between the two events stems from their status as ultimately unsuccessful attempts by a charismatic leader to overthrow the state.

⁴⁷ MacQueen, *Progress and Poetry*, II, 80-1.

Fairford's turn to Sallust in "a heavy hour" is indicative of the invigorating and consolatory effect of the reading of classical texts, and especially Roman history in the period.⁴⁸ Instead of the Sallust in this instance, however, Fairford selects the volume gifted to him by the hypocritical minister and smuggler Thomas Trumbull, "Merry Thoughts for Merry Men; or Mother Midnight's Miscellany for the small Hours" which has been masquerading as a psalter. (270)

The ironic contrast between the tone of these two texts is dissolved by the similarity of reading practice that the miscellany invites and to which Sallust is subjected. Each is to be read piecemeal and in short bouts with material excerpted for reflection and the reader's gratification. Scott's acknowledgement of "the laudable practice of skipping" by novel readers also echoes this paradigm, indicating that contemporary reading practice allowed for the practice of excerption and its consequences for exemplarity (141).

The scene enacts a form of bibliomancy, termed by Ewart the "Sortes Sallustianae" (271), which produces passages of severe moral censure to each man. Consulting the volume on his own behalf, Ewart returns the following, read in the Scottish accent:

"Igitur ex divitiis juventutem luxuria atque avaritia cum superbia invasere: rapere, consumere; sua parvi pendere, aliena cupere; pudorem, amicitiam, pudicitiam, divina atque humana promiscua, nihil pensi neque moderati habere."—There is a slap in the face now, for an honest fellow that has been buccaniering! ...Fie, fie, friend Crispus, thy morals are as crabbed and austere as thy style—the one has as little mercy as the other has grace. By my soul it is unhandsome to make personal reflections on an old

⁴⁸ See, for example, William Godwin "Of the Study of the Classics," *The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1797). It is worth noting that Scott's novels came themselves to be viewed in this light, by reviewers and by readers. Virginia Woolf's insertion of the reading of *The Antiquary* into *To the Lighthouse* (1927), whilst designed to show the challenge of modernism to Scott's novelistic style, illustrates the emotional force of Scott's representation of human nature: "His lips twitched. It filled him. It fortified him... This man's strength and sanity, his feeling for straightforward simple things, these fishermen, the poor old crazed creature in Mucklebackit's cottage made him feel so vigorous, so relieved of something that he felt roused and triumphant and could not choke back his tears... [he] forgot his own bothers and failures completely in poor Steenie's drowning and Mucklebackit's sorrow (that was Scott at his best) and the astonishing delight and feeling of vigour that it gave him." Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (London: Harcourt, 1981), 119-20.

acquaintance, who seeks a little civil intercourse with you after nigh twenty years' separation. On my soul, Master Sallust deserves to float on the Solway better than Mother Midnight herself. (270)⁴⁹

This decidedly deliberate random selection typifies both Sallust's style and censure of the morals of his age. The passage drawn on behalf of Fairford illustrates the ruinous influence and contagiousness of dissolute and dissentious behavior on even upright youths, which Ewart calls "plain speaking on the part of the old Roman." (271) The applicability of these excerpts to the characters and plot of *Redgauntlet*, which is itself concerned with the younger generation's possible inveiglement with Jacobitism, indicates both the transhistorical exemplarity of the classical example in terms of human nature but also the analogy between the historical periods represented in both novel and Latin text. This is where Scott's historicization of the classical feeds back problematically into his own novelistic practice. The examples may fit the dynamics of the novel's setting, but they also resonate with similar emotional force for the reader of the 1820s. Fairford's denial of the applicability of the quotation to his imminent contact with the Jacobite cause indicates his unwavering allegiance to modernity and the outdatedness of the classical example. The exemplarity of *his* behavior is the model that Scott's readers are to draw from the novel, even as the novel presents the fictional alternative that is classicized, romanticized and ultimately foreclosed.

⁴⁹ The Latin is footnoted by Scott in the first edition in the 1806 translation by Sir Henry Steuart of Allanton as: "The youth, taught to look up to riches as the sovereign good, became apt pupils in the school of Luxury. Rapacity and profusion went hand in hand. Careless of their own fortunes, and eager to possess those of others, shame and remorse, modesty and moderation, every principle gave way." Wood, ed., 249.

III. Making Modern Classics: The Novel amidst the Canon Controversies

Although the novel was canonized in an age of canon controversies, its canonization was relatively uncontroversial. This is not to say that either the establishment of a canon of British novels or the genre's inclusion in the canon of British literature was a swift or smooth accession to a stable, well-proportioned national literary pantheon. Recent work by Michael Gamer, Mary Poovey, and Deidre Lynch has shown canonizing the novel to be a protracted, elusive, and belated process. It was more through encroachment than iconoclasm that, over the course of the nineteenth century, the novel reframed the canon in order to accommodate what were then considered its distinctly anti-canonical attributes: modernity, popularity, commerciality, female authorship, and physical bulk.¹ In this chapter I will show how the novel's journey towards becoming *the* canonical genre of the nineteenth century began amidst (and was considerably assisted by) entrenched warfare over the poetic canon in the periodical press, a decades-long conflict in which a considerable amount of ink and even some blood was spilled.²

A period of concerted novel-canonizing activity in the 1810s and 20s intersects compellingly with two notorious Romantic literary spats: the Pope-Bowles Controversy and the so-called Cockney School attacks on Keats and the Hunt circle in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Each of these critical skirmishes was a flashpoint in the continuous and contentious

¹ Michael Gamer, "A Select Collection: Barbauld, Scott, and the Rise of the (Reprinted) Novel" in *Recognizing the Romantic Novel: New Histories of British Fiction, 1780-1830*, ed. Jillian Heydt-Stevenson and Charlotte Sussman (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 155-191; Mary Poovey, *The Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Deidre Lynch, *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

² Richard Cronin's study of post-war print culture, *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture after Waterloo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) begins with accounts of two duels fought over authorship and of the duel between John Scott (editor of the *London Magazine*) and Christie, who stood in for John Gibson Lockhart.

negotiation of two related abstractions, namely the nation's literary canon and the notion of the classical. Both canon and classicism had been inimical to the novel hitherto, but the contested and overlapping conceptions of the canonical and the classical in the controversy-laden and invective-fueled criticism of these decades come to shape an emerging critical discourse surrounding the novel.

When James Chandler called the Pope controversy “the canonical canon controversy in English literary history” in an 1984 essay, he observed that, “a poetic canon can obviously be useful in the self-definition of any national character, but more especially so where a nation regards itself, as England increasingly does in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as having a distinctively *poetic* collective identity.”³ The critical texts I marshal below strenuously argue for the novel as the genre characteristic of modern, pluralistic British identity. They show how criticism in novel series and in periodicals classicizes and canonizes the novel. One particularly critically self-conscious classical novel, John Gibson Lockhart's *Valerius, A Roman Story*, offers an English origin story in the form of a British novel. The novel critiques early-nineteenth-century classicism while making a case for the novel as its new, but also (crucially) its natural, incarnation.

i. Classics, Canon, Controversy

Keats's sonnet “On First Looking into Chapman's Homer” exemplifies the tempestuous intersection of the canonical, the classical, and the critical at this juncture. Its first publication by Leigh Hunt in *The Examiner* on December 1 1816, presents the poem in a provocative manner. What will become one of Keats's most frequently anthologized poems, a poem about reading a supremely canonical classical text, is from its first appearance embedded in critical prose that

³ James Chandler, “The Pope Controversy: Romantic Poets and the English Canon,” *Critical Inquiry* 10, no. 3 (1984): 481.

positions the poem as both a challenge to the existing literary canon and worthy of a place in it. Both poem and frame demonstrate that at this juncture in literary criticism any discussion about the English canon is shaped by its relationship to classical literature, most importantly how and *by whom* it is interpreted and repackaged in the present.

Hunt's *Examiner* article, titled "Young Poets" recognizes three writers (Shelley and J H Reynolds being the two others) whom he deems potential ornaments to a "new school of poetry rising of late, which promises to extinguish the French one that has prevailed among us since the time of Charles the 2d." This is a claim for an epoch-making departure from the practices and standards in poetry and criticism that have held sway in the recent past. By drawing the trio around himself as well as into a recognized school, Hunt walks the line between criticism and self-promotion as he describes the ongoing revolution in English poetry:

It began with something excessive, like most revolutions, but this gradually wore away; and an evident aspiration after real nature and original fancy remained, which called to mind the finer times of the English muse. In fact it is wrong to call it a new school and still more so to represent it as one of innovation, it's only object being to restore the same love of Nature, and of *thinking* instead of mere *talking*, which formerly rendered us real poets not merely versifying wits, and bead-rollers of couplets. (11-2)

There is more than straightforward nationalism to this welcoming of the resurgence of the English muse, associated with thought and nature, over and against French wit and artifice. Concomitant with the reclaiming of poetry from foreign influence is a return to ancient authenticity, which had been essential to the framing of the English canon in the eighteenth century.⁴ Behind the English-French division lies a distinction between two kinds of neoclassicism, Augustan and Romantic. It is worth characterizing these varieties of

⁴ Jonathan Kramnick suggests the recursive cycle of how English canon-making reshaped perceptions of the classical canon. The patterning of English canon on classical canon leads to ancient classical texts being read in terms of characteristics of ancient English texts, i.e. coarseness, sublimity, and simplicity became prized in the classical canon as the texts of English antiquity gained attention. *Making the English Canon: Print-Capitalism and the Cultural Past, 1700-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapter 1.

neoclassicism because the contrasts (and overlap) between them are at the root of the conflict about the nature of the classical that was so heated in the post-war decade.

From the perspectives of Wordsworth and Hunt, Augustan poetry (like the classical period after which it is named) is characterized by its twofold refinement: in subject matter, its focus on polite society and man-made environments or objects in general; and in style, the smooth polish of the rhyming couplet as exemplified by Alexander Pope in particular. Pope himself is not named in Hunt's *Examiner* article, though he is most likely the chief "bead-roller" in opposition to whom the new school has defined itself and his canonicity was under attack throughout the post-war decade. Augustan poetry's adherence to stringent rules of composition (some inherited from classical critics, others perennially enshrined through tradition to the extent that they seemed of classical origin) made it self-consciously canonical, that is to say, composed with an awareness of its place in a literary tradition rooted in antiquity. Pope writes of ancient rhetoric and criticism,

Those RULES of old discovered, not devised,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodized;
Nature, like liberty, is but restrained
By the same laws which first herself ordained.⁵

This organic, natural view of classical rules was antithetical to the Romantic conception of nature, and represented an artificial, restrictive and homogenizing rubric against which they defined themselves.

For the Romantics, Augustan poetry's problem was that of its manner. Since, at bottom, both Augustan and Romantic poetry seek to represent nature it is their methods that are antithetical. This poetry could not express authentic emotion through its formal smoothness and rigidity, which stifled human nature with a marmoreal overlay. Its subject matter, so often

⁵ Pope, *Essay on Criticism* (1709, 1711), 88-91 in Pat Rogers, ed. *Selected Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

contemporary societal manners, was the antithesis of nature. In subscribing to a cosmopolitan (French) rubric in the manner of its verse and urban subject, it repressed national character. Manners are a medium for the human nature in any given period and the Romantic poets found the manners of Augustan poetry inadequate to the expression of nature on every level. Although the literary manner of the Augustan period is accommodated to contemporary manners and how nature was viewed in that period, the Romantics found its refinement and self-consciously classical cosmopolitanism artificial, disingenuous and distasteful.

All this is, of course, testament to the tendency of a succeeding age to find that the immediately preceding era had it all wrong. Precisely what the Augustans believed to be a universal expression of universal human nature was seen by the Romantics as misguided and inauthentic. Hunt's poetic revolution, then, promises a return to the "finer times" of English antiquity. The tradition stretching from Chaucer to Milton is vigorous and authentic: here are "real nature", "original fancy", and "real poets." It is here that the English canon and Romantic neoclassicism coincide. It is not that a reverence for the classics had been entirely displaced by the raising of English literature and the formation of an English canon in the mid-eighteenth century, rather that the classical and English canons were brought into an analogous relationship.⁶ Through this language Hunt suggests that English antiquity was a golden age of thought and literature until (like the classical cultures) it was stifled by refinement. Jonathan Kramnick writes that at the mid-eighteenth-century moment of English canon formation the differences between periods within English literary history widened so that "English ancients

⁶ "Critics established English antiquity as the moment of literary achievement against which all subsequent writing would be measured. A national canon formed on the precedent example of the classical canon took shape. This canon was necessarily old and carried with it much of the aura of antiquity: difficulty, rarity, sublimity, masculinity. In the effort to make the national literature weighty and recondite, canonical English began to take on the qualities of Latin and Greek." Kramnick, *Making the English Canon*, 4.

were now more like the classical ancients than were the [Augustan] English moderns. The criteria of canonicity likewise shifted, from the graceful regularity of the classics to their sublime weight.” (4) Understanding this shift is essential for understanding the late-Romantic canon controversies and the context and content of Keats’ sonnet.

Hunt’s framing of the sonnet, then, argues for the canonicity of the ancient and the extremely modern not because of polished elegance but on account of an ability or intention to encapsulate the sublimity of nature. When he claims future canonicity for Keats here, it is because his poems seem remarkable for “the truth of the their ambition, and ardent grappling with Nature”. The new, or even the about-to-be-written, is preferable to the literature of the recent past because it is more likely to fulfill an ideal of authenticity found in ancient texts. As the story of the novel’s canonization will show, the canonicity of eighteenth-century literature was under scrutiny in the early-nineteenth century: the newly old seemed merely old-fashioned unless it could be shown to fit the criterion of expressing nature in the right manner. For Hunt and Keats, that Pope and his contemporaries distinctly failed this test could be proven in their translations of the ancient epics. Translation, by removing the variable of subject matter, highlights the manner of poetry. In its implicit comparison of Homeric translations Keats’s sonnet dramatizes his belated discovery of the authentic.

“On first looking into Chapman’s Homer” encapsulates Romantic neoclassicism in its championing of an English ‘ancient’ alongside its classical modeling of the canon, and in its responsiveness to contemporary criticism, indeed, in its status as a piece of criticism (a “review poem”) itself.⁷ The truism that the poem’s epiphany is Keats’s discovery of his vocation as poet

⁷ See Andrew Franta, *Romanticism and the Rise of the Mass Public* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), chapter 3, “Keats and the Review Aesthetic.” Franta argues that “the tendency to see his poetry as an attempt to escape the kind of debate it engendered has obscured

is of less significance to this argument than Andrew Franta's observation that this is a "professionalizing gesture" of a critic, whose duty was to "extend the possibility of recognizing poetic value to new readers." (108) In the "realms of Gold" and "western islands" Keats gives the canon both geographical extent and priceless value. It is a polity organized in accordance with the classical pantheon, with Apollo as deity. This is an indication of the persistence of the classical as foundational to literature's self-conception; its persistence is partly conventional and probably a little satirical. However, the center of the poem, in the last two lines of the octet, expresses an appreciation of the classical that is far from empty or ironic. It is here that Romantic neoclassicism receives its most eloquent articulation.

Significantly, this is the part of the poem revised between publication in *The Examiner* and in Keats's first collection, *Poems* (1817). Befitting a periodical, the *Examiner* version makes fuller mention of commonly held opinions about literature. In each version, Keats has "been told" about Homer's supremacy in epic poetry, but in the periodical these central lines read, "Yet could I never judge what men could mean, / Till I heard CHAPMAN speak out loud and bold." (14) The context is explicitly conversational, critical, and didactic indicating the general tone of the collective and public reception of canonical classical literature. This version of the poem highlights how Chapman's translation help Keats experience and understand what others thought of Homer. A matter of weeks later, in March 1817, these lines had been revised into, "Yet did I never breathe its pure serene / Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:" (54) As Keats described the revision to its addressee and fellow reader, Charles Cowden Clarke, the original was "too simply wondering."⁸ This is more sophisticated, both in terms of Keats's self-presentation (the toning down of perplexity) and his description of reading Homer through

the striking way in which, in a series of early poems in particular, Keats does not oppose poetry and reviewing but rather asserts, and capitalizes on, their similarity" (93).

⁸ Quoted in Franta, *Mass Public*, 209.n.

Chapman. The new formulation connects the spatial metaphor of Homer's "demesne" with the subjective hearing-into-feeling experience that connects the octet with the sestet. Breathing in the "pure serene" is a taking possession of Homer through Chapman (making him Keats's Homer) that allows Keats to replicate that experience for his own reader in the sestet. The explanatory function of poetry and the recommending function of criticism are very close.

Despite the elision of Chapman in Keats's (literally) inspirational taking possession of Homer, the poem's revelatory moment returns focus to Chapman's mediating role. To hear 'Chapman speak out loud and bold' is to hear Homer speak in a way that had been hitherto impossible for a reader unable to read Greek. Significantly, familiarity with Homer's most famous (and commonplace) passages in Pope's translation served as an index to the borrowed volume, so an essential point is that the manner of the translation defines the transmission and experience of the original text. Chapman speaks in a way Pope did not. The perceived orality of the earlier translation, its rougher and heavier versification and less regular couplets, seems more authentically Homeric in the early nineteenth century than Pope's Augustan polish. Chapman's Homer is a text simultaneously part of English and classical antiquity. While the classical text has been Anglicized, crucially, it has not been Frenchified so, to Keats, reading two hundred years after publication, Chapman's Homer seems bold and unapologetically English. "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" therefore champions a vernacular Homer mediated by English antiquity, all the more canonical and all the more accessible to modern English readers on that account.

Despite its advocacy of this vernacular canonical classicism Keats's reading of Homer through Chapman was to later become an Achilles heel repeatedly attacked by John Gibson Lockhart, writing as "Z" in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in the series of articles "On the

Cockney School of Poetry.” In these articles, the deficiency of the Hunt circle’s classical education (school but not university) becomes an index of the type of men they are and the type of verse they produce. Lockhart scathingly references this poem in the infamous review of

Endymion:

From his prototype Hunt, John Keats has acquired a sort of vague idea, that the Greeks were a most tasteful people, and that no mythology can be so finely adapted for the purposes of poetry as theirs. It is amusing to see what a hand the two Cockneys make of this mythology; the one confesses that he never read the Greek Tragedians, and the other knows Homer only from Chapman; and both of them write about Apollo, Pan, Nymphs, Muses, and Mysteries, as might be expected from persons of their education.⁹

Chapman’s vernacular classicism (English, archaic, Homeric) is precisely what *Blackwood’s* recommends as authentic and nationally valuable in literature. Neither Keats’s own subtle acknowledgement of his belated-because-mediated discovery of Homer (in Charles Rzepka’s reading of the sestet) nor (in Marjory Levinson’s allegorical reading) the sonnet’s corners of deliberate badness with which Keats styles himself as someone of the type that would write like this, counts for much with Lockhart in full anti-Cockney flight. The conservative, elitist, reactionary riposte to the Cockney claim on the classical canon and to be writing canonical verse proves the subversive nature of the Keats-Hunt claim. Keats’s vernacular classicism is controversial in a way that Scott’s mixing of the classical and vernacular traditions, authorized by his class position, was not.

The right to use and the right-using of the classics in contemporary literature, then, was directly connected to personality (which enfolded class position) and character. In the Pope controversy, the poet’s canonicity was threatened by his unpatriotic veneration of ancient writers through French rules. Relatedly, a significant element in the Pope controversy was how a question mark over personal character, namely the morality of his relationship with Martha

⁹ Z., “On the Cockney School of Poetry IV,” *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* III, 17 (1818): 522.

Blount, might mean the work was morally dubious. In both controversies, an author's work was questioned by criticism as being inauthentically classical and therefore inauthentically canonical. Ironically the participants on each side of these controversies were preoccupied by the same question with regard to literature: how were contemporary writers to make the classics (still acknowledged culturally and critically to be of great importance) "speak out loud and bold"?

The satirical impulse of Augustan mock-heroic had implicitly acknowledged the waning of its relevance as an analogue to modern life and manners. The Hunt circle believed that mythological verse celebrating nature and liberty was the answer. Byron, who had staunchly defended both Pope's character and classicism but realized that the latter was not suitable for modern poetry, rerouted the mock-heroic impulse into *Don Juan*. It was Lockhart and the *Blackwood's* circle, surprisingly, that proposed a new kind of canonical classicism through periodical criticism. It was located in the populist and non-classical genre of the novel.

If the novel's canonization is uncontroversial, how did it remain so in the midst of the periodical and pamphlet-based canon controversies? It is in early-nineteenth-century criticism that the novel is first theorized as classical. Just as chapter one showed how classical texts (the works of Tacitus) were read as if they were novels and were rewritten as novels, this chapter shows how novels were read, written about, and even written *as* if they were classical texts. Put most simply, this chapter shows how criticism classicizes the novel as it curates the canon. Criticism in the period does this in a variety of ways across different formats: by drawing direct analogies between novels and classical works; by endowing the novel with a classical origin and genealogy; and by applying its classical argot (a direct legacy of criticism's own classical patrimony) to the novel as critical object, measuring it against standards set down by ancient critics such as Aristotle and Horace.

In the broader history of literary canon-formation none of this seems especially strange. These means of giving British vernacular literature authority and presenting it as the legatee of the classical tradition have been practiced in poetry, history, and drama since the Renaissance. It is not an exaggeration to say that the connection between classicizing and canonizing was intrinsic for genres with classical precedents. To canonize the novel, a genre with tenuous classical analogues and occluded classical origins, however, some explanatory critical legwork was required in order to harness the classics' legitimizing power. It emerges that classicizing was so intrinsic to criticism's canonical purposes that it was taken for granted. This classicizing work was carried out across a variety of formats in the early decades of the nineteenth century in order to insert eighteenth-century and contemporary fiction into the canon at large and to establish a canon for the novel as a genre.

There are two ironies here: first, that although the process of installing the novel in the national canon depended on the classics, the successful accomplishment of this task decisively severed the link between the classical literature and the national canon going forward; second, that the novels that were produced during (and were responsive to) this period of canon-orientated classicizing all but disappeared from the canon and from the main current of academic criticism until the 1990s. In the previous chapter, I showed how the *Waverley Novels* vernacularized and gothicized the classical on one hand and, on the other, classicized and neo-classicized the native and gothic. In the critical texts under discussion in this chapter there is a similar reciprocal process at work: in canonizing the novel they vernacularize, modernize, and familiarize the canon and simultaneously antique, de-vernacularize and defamiliarize the novel. The terms shift slightly, but the main thrust of the arguments are the same, and they become

perhaps all the clearer here because criticism is far less ambivalent and equivocal about classicism than Scott ever was in his novels and letters.

ii. Novel Collections: Classics and Canons

Different types of novel-criticism from the 1810 and 20s each invoke and employ classicism in subtly differing ways. First, early-nineteenth-century editions of eighteenth-century novels classicize and canonize the genre simultaneously. Two different editions of Defoe and two collections of British novels curate and re-present novels and novelists as meriting a place in the national canon by classicizing the works they contain. These collections couple high-cultural and commercial arguments for their existence in their prefaces and packaging, showing how the novel forces the canon to accommodate popular taste even as it observes its preexisting codes and procedures.

In the service of curating a national canon of literature, these critical formats exhibit different tones and temporalities. In periodical criticism, where authors were living and texts newly published, personality and politics heated the debate, raising its stakes to destroy or enthrone the reputations of both authors and critics. Many studies of Romantic periodical culture have addressed the polemical and performative nature of review writing as constitutive of Romantic politics. The classicism of criticism and the criticism of classicism in the Romantic period was never not politically charged. And so it could be said that the novel and its classicizing criticism is just as political as the Cockney School essays, for example. Though often composed by the same writers, prefaces and paratexts to the hefty and magisterial new novel collections (of works by mostly deceased writers) tend more towards the hagiographic. These different kinds of criticism share one crucial temporal aspect, however: they are both oriented towards literary posterity. Canon-shaping collections bring works from the past into the

present based on the understanding of what stands the test of time, that they are analogous to classical texts in having intrinsic interest or telling a crucial part of a developmental story. These editions hazard on the future too, since they are designed to adorn library shelves and promise to constitute a literary inheritance for generations to come. Periodical criticism surveys and sorts through contemporary literary commodities and projects its own (present) conception of the classical onto the future. What emerges from these classically saturated critical texts is that although criticism was itself so much of its present moment as to be almost ephemeral, it was governed by its conception of the near and distant pasts, and made claims on the future accordingly.

Robinson Crusoe has been a perennial starting point, even an anchor, for novel collections. As such, it is an important case study in tracking the canonization of the genre. A version of *Robinson Crusoe* from 1820 neatly encapsulates the connection between classicizing and canonizing, revealing along the way the educational and exemplary purpose of a national canon. In a reversal of the more typical classical-to-vernacular linearity, *Robinson Crusoeus* is a translation of Defoe's English story into Latin. The book is therefore a very literal, letter-by-letter, classicization of a vernacular English novel. However, its provenance is more complicated than the straightforwardly didactic 1820 preface suggests and it also complicates the national-canon-enhancing function of classicizing a vernacular text. The translation is the work of F.J. Goffaux, a teacher at the Lycée Imperiale in Paris, which had been published there in 1810 and had reached a fourth edition by 1813. While Goffaux is credited as the author of the Latin ("Latine script") on the English edition's title page, its preface obscures its continental origin in a significant way. The Latin preface that ran in the French editions has been loosely translated but also selectively edited to conform to the norms of the contemporary British literary sphere. In

effect the English edition re-Anglicizes the Latin translation, making this what can be messily (but uniquely) called a classical classic English novel.

The nationalizing features of this English *Crusoeus* restore the text to the British canon by eliding the translation's continental treatments. The book has been devised for schoolboys, to mitigate the boredom of the early years of studying Latin during which the texts studied do not excite interest in their story: 'It was thought that a work in the Latin language, which, while it demanded attention and exactness, should at the same time, attract and insensibly excite by its matter, would not be unacceptable in the present day. No work seemed more adapted to this purpose than Defoe's History of Robinson Crusoe.' (1820, v) Here the translation and Defoe's novel are credited with combining to make an ideal pedagogical text, one that both delights and instructs. However, the French preface had put this rather differently, laying its own national claim to the work: "Atque is mihi visus est, qui finem hunc assequeretur, scriptus apud Anglos de *Robinsonis* casibus liber, de quo *Russoeus* noster: Hunc primum leget *Aemilius*." [And it seemed to me, that the answer to this problem was the book written in England about the story of Robinson, about which our Rousseau said, 'Let Emile read this first of all.] The French edition not only references Rousseau's special pedagogical selection of *Robinson Crusoe* in *Emile*, but also (and more specifically) the Rousseauvian adaptation of Defoe's novel by Heinrich Campe, published in Germany in 1765. Rousseau and Campe famously deprive Robinson Crusoe of the luxury of wrecked ship from which to draw tools and materials, throwing him entirely on his own resources.¹⁰ It is from Campe's abridged pedagogical Crusoe, rather than Defoe's, that the narrative of *Robinson Crusoeus* (in both French and English editions) is translated.¹¹

¹⁰ The 1823 reviewer of an American edition of *Crusoeus* produced by Maxwell in Philadelphia disapproves of this alteration: "We are far, however, from allowing that, in the arrangement of his abridged Robinson Crusoe, he has preserved all the charm of the original story; on the

Nonetheless, the English edition makes no reference to Campe and obscures all references to Germany. By making a straightforward alteration to the continental text, it restores Robinson Crusoe's birth (and *Robinson Crusoe*) to England. Its first sentence reads, 'Erat Eboraci, in urbe apud Anglos celeberrima, vir quidam, cui nomen *Robinson*. Suscepit ex uxore tres filios.' [There was at York, a city most renowned amongst the English, a certain man, whose name was Robinson. By his wife he had three sons.'] The German version and the previous Latin editions had all had the hero a native of Hamburg, the most celebrated German city. For all that the original abridgment isn't credited, Goffaux is praised for having included 'the most interesting facts.' 'Digressions' have been culled, and the narrative has been stripped back to its essential parts: 'This little history was the more readily selected, as the sentiments throughout are pious, and the whole interspersed with maxims and sentences conducing to sobriety and virtue.' Confirming the argument I have been making about how novels are analyzed as if they were classical texts, the justification for the literal classicizing of this English novel is that it is already classical by nature. In getting this treatment it becomes simultaneously both a classic novel and an ancient text.

In its Latin translation *Robinson Crusoe* has become an ideal pedagogical text, sitting between classroom and leisure time. As is apparent from even the first sentence, the Latin is very simple. The text has been devised for boys who can read above its level of difficulty in class to read at leisure. Crusoe's story functions as the honey on the lip of the cup of medicine, the English editor quotes an educational authority (most likely Vicesimus Knox), "I am sensible that to read Latin is an amusement not common among students; the reason is easily assigned,

contrary, we object to several alterations, and particularly to the omission of the wreck, from which Robinson derived so many comforts in his *solitary* state."

¹¹ The British *Classical Journal* published a notice of the French edition in 1813 and noted its source in Campe's Rousseauvian text.

they seldom can read it without more difficulty than is compatible with mere amusement. But let every means be employed to induce the boy to devote some part of his leisure to this private reading. If he has natural abilities, *he will derive more benefit from it than from any formal instruction.*” Without naming Rousseau, *Crusoeus* fits into a modified, moderate, English, Rousseauvian paradigm. While it may appear a curious detour in the story of the classic novel, *Robinson Crusoeus* shows how the classical and the vernacular canons coexisted for a while at least as exemplary models of literature.

Crusoeus's charm resides partly also in the pleasure an adult reader, editor, or reviewer derives from the simplicity of the Latin. The style is, as the editor remarks, ‘perspicuous’ - the simple and direct Latin is easily readable even for those whose Latin is many years in the past. There is pleasure in being able to read the text casually, reading Latin without having to decode it, although the story’s island-setting allows it to be a vehicle for practicing (or learning, since some words are glossed) the ornate natural vocabulary that schoolboys would find in Virgil’s *Eclogues* or in parts of the *Aeneid*. This adaptation of *Robinson Crusoe* is an instance of classics speaking “out loud and bold” in a unique manner: one that still retains an epic flourish. The translation has reduced the novel to a simple adventure story with its flattened protagonist in perpetual motion. Anticipating the eventual terminus of a classic novel’s trajectory on children’s bookshelves, in this 1820 classicization Robinson Crusoe has become a character in a children’s book, a schoolroom text, like classics tend to be.

If the Latin translation of *Robinson Crusoe* is an extreme version of what it means to classicize a vernacular text by reproducing it in a new edition, the same text is subjected to a less defamiliarizing and grander kind of classicizing canonization through the collected edition. Before he was a novelist, but at the height of his poetic fame, Scott collaborated with John

Ballantyne to produce a twelve-volume collected edition, *The Novels of Daniel De Foe* (1809-10). Though it would be tempting to cite his editorship as instrumental in canonizing Defoe, making the edition ‘Scott’s Defoe’ in the same way that the act of translation produced “Chapman’s Homer,” it is not clear that Scott brought his celebrity and authority to the collection as editor. He is not named on any title pages or elsewhere and it appears from his own collected edition of Prose works that it was in fact John Ballantyne who wrote the preface to the collection. Nonetheless, this Defoe was the first collected edition and did much to stabilize the canon of Defoe’s novels for the nineteenth century.¹²

Andrew Piper has called the collected edition, “the sovereign of all book formats” because of its organizational capacity for “regulating, institutionalizing, and stabilizing the category of literature in an age of too much literature.” (2009, 55) Unified and homogenized by the figure of the author, the collected edition confers canonical status on both the body of work and on the individual, differentiating them from the melee of literary productions by placing them in the singular, demarcated context of an extraordinary life. The practice honored living authors (sometimes quite literally garlanding them with laurels) as well as dead.¹³ Nonetheless this posthumous selecting and collecting of Defoe adds an historical perspective, important for the collection as a canonizing exercise. The edition begins with a “Biographical Memoir” that reflects on Defoe’s mixed fortunes and how his “genius” was only “incited to action by the pressure of necessity.” Ballantyne’s commentary on Defoe’s work is a very particular kind of biographical criticism. He distinctly refuses the evaluative: “It does not fall within our plan to attempt a critical analysis of Robinson Crusoe, or a detailed view of the character of Daniel De

¹² See Homer. O. Brown, *Institutions of the English Novel from Defoe to Scott* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 179 and 193-4.

¹³ Andrew Piper describes the presentation by the publisher to the author of Wieland’s collected works in a classical pastiche in 1794. *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009), 53-55.

Foe.”¹⁴ Instead, as befits a publisher-critic, it focuses on reception and market success as an index of both novelist and novel. This is canonicity with new criteria.

Of *Robinson Crusoe*, Ballantyne writes, “Perhaps there exists no work, either of instruction or entertainment, in the English language, which has been more generally read, and more universally admired, than the *Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.” (i) Ballantyne outlines the problem of pinpointing why a particular work is successful and hazards that its long-term approbation may derive from individual readers’ nostalgia for the reading of their childhood.¹⁵ Instead of pondering this question too much, Ballantyne sees sales as the acid test of a work: “The sale of *Robinson Crusoe* was, as we have already stated, rapid and extensive, and De Foe’s profits were commensurate. The work was attacked on all sides by his ancient opponents, whose labors have long since quietly descended with their authors to merited oblivion; but our author, having the public on his side, set them all at defiance; and the same year, he published a second volume with equal success.” (xxx) The novel, Ballantyne suggests, upset the critical applecart. By aligning *Robinson Crusoe* and the genre firmly with the ‘modern’ faction in the figurative battle of the ancients and moderns, he shows how popularity usurped critical opinion and became the guarantee of literary endurance.

The editor thus emerges as the pragmatic anti-traditionalist: “with the public on his side” Defoe’s immortality triumphs over the forgotten writers and critics who fruitlessly upheld the ancient tradition. This supports the idea that the classical tradition’s grip as a model for literary

¹⁴ Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (Edinburgh: Ballantyne, 1810), 3 vols., I, xxxii. Further references are parenthesized in the text.

¹⁵ He concedes that “it is difficult to say in what the charm consists, by which persons of all classes and denominations are thus fascinated,” but remarks melancholically that the recollection of reading a book in childhood can produce a positive adult opinion because there remain, “still associated with *Robinson Crusoe*, the sentiments peculiar to that period, when all is new, and glittering in prospect, and when those visions are bright, which the experience of after life tends only to darken and destroy.” (ii)

composition and reception begins to loosen in the eighteenth century and that the novel plays an important role in this development. While this is broadly true, it discounts the ebbs and flows, the retreats and resurgences of that change. What happens in this moment is that the novel is being assimilated into a tradition at once commercial and modern but also a folk-tradition, where popularity, sales, and circulation are the markers of success. This is a new kind of classic and, in establishing itself as such, it borrows from the classical tradition it appears to disrupt and which has certainly disowned it.

It is important to note here that the edition does not hail *Robinson Crusoe* as a revolutionary text that radically transformed the literary landscape. Rather, it notes that the novel exemplifies a new kind of tradition in literature, one that has come to hold sway ever since. It is not especially *avant-garde*, nor is it overtly erudite. It is essentially middlebrow and of mass appeal but it does co-opt the old terms, wrangling some more than others along the way, in establishing, first, a canon of its own and, second, itself within the canon. In his discussion of collected editions, Piper notes that, “a classic was not just an agreed-upon interpretative consensus, . . . , a classic was a work whose identity depended upon a fundamental aspect of reproducibility.”¹⁶ The interpretative consensus in the early nineteenth century was fragile around *everything but* the novel during the years that the novel was canonizing itself, partly because its sales figures were a matter of fact rather than opinion. Over time the interpretative consensus became consolidated by sales rather reviews, reinforced by the action of repeated and simultaneous acts of reading rather than the dissemination of opinion. The reproducibility of a classic, then, depended on the market, on whether its republication was a viable commercial enterprise. Long-term repeated reproduction compounded the market power of the same set of available texts. The opinion about such works is thus formed in step with the work’s

¹⁶ Piper, *Dreaming in Books*, 54.

reproduction and consumption rather than prior to it. These were not works intended for canonicity, in fact it seems that the elite and erudite (and classically educated) critics were scrambling to catch up with the novel's popularity, to theorize it in its wake.

The collected edition, concentrating an author's bibliography through biography, can reveal the homogeneity of an output. Editing and prefacing the collected edition of Defoe's novels turns out to be a form of anti-criticism, or a sort of semi-criticism. For, as Ballantyne notes in the biographical memoir, Defoe was both aware and dismissive of critical opinion. After his second novel, *The Life and Piracies of Captain Singleton* (1720), he squarely opted for public approbation, "finding it safer, it would seem, as well as more profitable, to amuse the public, than to reform them, he continued this course, with little variation, for the rest of his life." (xxxii) In this casting of his life and work, Defoe deliberately chose only to heed the first half of the perennial Aristotelian critical requirement to delight and instruct. Perhaps this relieves his future editor from addressing the second? He covers over the challenges of propriety posed to a nineteenth-century editor in collecting Defoe's novels. Though the edition is called simply, *The Novels of Daniel Defoe*, the implied completeness is illusory. Along with some other lesser novels, *Moll Flanders* is not included in the collection, although its existence is recorded in the annotated bibliography included at the end of volume twelve. Others of Defoe's factual memoirs are included, so the problem is less likely to be one of genre than of morality.

In his own collected works, Scott included Ballantyne's memoir of Defoe but extended it significantly, to include "a brief attempt to account for that popularity, which, in his principal work at least has equaled that of any author who ever wrote."¹⁷ This version expatiates on the absence of these texts. Though the original memoir had mentioned both *Roxana* and *Colonel*

¹⁷ Walter Scott, *Lives of the Novelists*, ed. Austin Dobson (London: H. Frowde, Oxford University Press, 1906), 364; subsequent references to this edition are parenthesized in the text.

Jack only the latter was published in the collection. Altogether, though, Scott issued a moral advisory concerning *Colonel Jack*, *Moll Flanders*, *Roxana* and *Mrs Christian Davis*:

All contain strong marks of genius. . . . But from the coarseness of the narrative, and the vice and vulgarity of the actors, the reader feels as a well-principled young man may do, when seduced by some entertaining and dissolute libertine into scenes of debauchery, that, though he may be amused, he must be not a little ashamed of that which furnishes the entertainment. So that, though we could select from these *picaresque* romances a good deal that is not a little amusing, we let them pass by, as we would persons, howsoever otherwise interesting, who may not be in character and manners entirely fit for good society. (367)

This criticism casts not reading these romances in the terms of a romance itself. It is a neat dramatization but reveals the conservative moral exemplarity that the canon continued to enshrine.

For the editor-critic of the original preface, taking the literary-historical long view, the point to be made about the didactic merits of the novels is that they were immediately and always subordinated to market realities. Scott's role as editor-critic and sponsor of the collected edition in fact resembles Defoe's because, for all the prestige and recognition it affords Defoe's posthumous reputation, it is designed as a commodity primarily to serve readers rather than critics. As Scott would later find as novelist himself, repetition and reproducibility was crucial for authors of new books to maintain their popularity and its associated preeminence. This 1809 collection of vernacular fiction shows how a new kind of literary prestige was recognized and its origins placed in eighteenth-century. It began to canonize and stabilize the terms of discussion as it transmitted a literary tradition. The pair were aware of prestige of a collected edition, closing the memoir with the grandiose proclamation, "As the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, his fame promises to endure as long as the language in which he wrote." (xxxii) The criteria of novelistic canonicity were therefore a mixture of old and new, as two further novel collections will show.

A collected edition of novels has the effect of inducting an individual author into both the national and supra-national canons. Two novel collections follow this “Defoe” in classicizing and canonizing the genre: Anna Barbauld’s *British Novelists* (1810) and Scott’s *Ballantyne’s Novelist’s Library* (1821-4). Taken together, these collections do something different: with an array of modern, vernacular authors of prose fiction brought together into a multivolume set, a group is canonized and their works classicized *en masse*. Through these collections a self-contained, genre-specific canon, or a novelistic canon, begins to take shape. Since this is analogous to the national canon its formation borrows specific classicizing and nationalizing strategies. Both lean on recognizable institutions (the nation, the library) to authorize themselves. In their respective prefaces Barbauld and Scott theorize the novel as classical in different ways but their use of classicism as a prestigious but appropriable discourse is foundational to their individual theorizations of the novel. In these substantial prefaces it emerges that to criticize is to classicize and both criticizing and classicizing is canonizing. The effect of this is not only to change the shape of the canon but also change the idea and meaning of the classical. In these texts, it begins to change lexically, turning into the merely classic, a more capacious term with less cultural and temporal specificity, that nevertheless retains some of its original luster.

Barbauld’s national rubric makes her fifty-volume collection a substantial national and representative novelistic canon--as she puts it, “the novels of the country.”¹⁸ In doing so she also aims for an expansion of the broader national literary canon, allowing the British novelists to rub shoulders with poets and dramatists. In the prefatory essay, titled ‘On the origin and progress of novel-writing’ she writes,

¹⁸ Anna Letitia Barbauld, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2002), 416; subsequent references to this edition are parenthesized within the text.

When the range of this kind of writing is so extensive, and its effect so great, it seems evident that it ought to hold a respectable place among the productions of genius; nor is it easy to say why the poet, who deals in one kind of fiction, should have so high a place allotted him in the temple of fame; and the romance-writer so low a one in the as in the general estimation he is confined to. (377)

This is a distinctive, pre-Waverley call for the novel's canonicity. Significantly, its focus is on the authors' personal reputation rather than on the esteem in which a work might be held.

Barbauld recognizes the novel's shaping effect on society and the shape of the literary field as hierarchical, with a figurative classical architecture. The "temple of fame" is a metaphorical pantheon. Her use of the term "romance-writer" here parrots the dismissive appellation indignantly, suggesting that the '*Novelists*' of the collection's title have progressed from their romance origins. This evolutionary claim is important because the progress of the vernacular European romance tradition is an essential thread in her argument for the novel's accession to the canon.

Barbauld charts the traditional evolution of the novel through European romance, positing a genealogy for the British novel that originates in the classical period. As Thomas Pavel and Margaret Doody have done in recent histories of the novel, she argues that the novel is, and always was, classical in origin.¹⁹ This argument for the novel's classicism roots it in the vernacular literature and culture of the ancient societies and, as such, can be termed traditional classicism. Barbauld connects this vernacular tradition to older British literature and, thereby, to show the novel's development from the classical period and cultures as both organic and embedded in British soil.

Alongside this elaboration of the romance tradition, however, an analogical classicism is at work too. Through the ages, Barbauld draws attention to characteristics the modern novel shares

¹⁹ Thomas Pavel, *The Lives of the Novel: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013) and Margaret Anne Doody, *The True Story of the Novel* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996).

with its predecessors, such as popularity and the perennial subject of virtuous romantic love. Aristides's *Milesian Tales*, she relates, "were very popular among the Romans" during the Marian civil wars (378) and she notes that as the Roman Empire Christianized under the Greek emperors, a "most perfect" novel was produced by the bishop Heliodorus, *Theagines and Chariclea* (also known as *Aethiopica*). Barbauld recommends a 1789 English translation to "the customers to circulating libraries" with perhaps only slight condescension. In reading it, "they may have the pleasure of reading a genuine novel, and at the same time enjoy the satisfaction of knowing how people wrote in Greek about love, above a thousand years ago." (379)

Both analogical and traditionary classicism are essential to Barbauld's critical argument for the novel's canonicity. She concludes the opening section of her advocacy with the claim that, "A good novel is an epic in prose, with more of character and less (indeed in modern novels nothing) of the supernatural machinery." (378) In the context of her essay, this claim is both traditionary and analogical. The novel is both the heir of the epic tradition and resembles it, in length and in its function within society.

Barbauld argues strongly for the twofold delight-and-instruct rubric, stating that the capacity to entertain is a *sine qua non*.²⁰ However, she claims that novels are beginning to adopt a political and philosophical seriousness, which makes them essential objects for critical oversight. She mentions *Anna St Ives* and *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* and praises Godwin, but passes over them, selecting instead Radcliffe, Inchbald and Bage to represent the 1790s. Reflecting fiction's own development, this is a movement away from the author-centric idea of genius and fame canonicity to a more text- and ideas-based theory of the novel.

²⁰ "The unpardonable sin in a novel is dullness: however grave or wise it may be, if its author possess no powers of amusing, he has no business to write novels." (408)

A key aspect to Barbauld's theorizing of the novel is measuring its reception and influence in society. "Some perhaps may think that too much importance has been already given to a subject so frivolous, but a discriminating taste is no where more called for than with regard to a species of books which every body reads." (416) As befits her dissenting background, Barbauld envisages a progressive history of society in which texts and their ordinary readers have agency in stabilizing and/or reforming it.

Fictitious adventures ... have been interwoven with the manners of the age,—and, in return, have influenced the manners of the succeeding generation by the sentiments they have infused and the sensibilities they have excited. (377)

For Barbauld, manners, sentiments and sensibilities are key terms for describing how fiction works in and on society. Representations of manners produce sentiments (feeling translated into moral or axiom through judgment) and sensibilities (modes of feeling and being) in the reader that, in turn, influence manners over time. In this scheme, the novel's representation of contemporary manners will work dialectically generation by generation in the nation to either preserve or reform the manners of the next. A collection of good novels, her selection is of "the most approved" popularly and critically, will be a benefit to the nation.

Barbauld's sense of the efficacy of the novel in the present supports her collection's broadly representative selection of novels. She presents 28 novels by 21 novelists, of whom eight are female.²¹ The *British Novelists* aims to be representative of the field as a whole, but more selective as to choosing a single work representative of each individual author. This is another aspect of Barbauld's organic, traditional approach. Just as her classicism was traditional, so too is her approach to making a collection. Preface and collection taken together describe a

²¹ The seven novelists allotted two works in the collection are Richardson (*Clarissa*, *Sir Charles Grandson*), Fielding (*Tom Jones*, *Joseph Andrews*), Henry Mackenzie (*The Man of Feeling*, *Julia Roubigné*), Inchbald (*Nature and Art*, *A Simple Story*). Edgeworth (*Belinda*, *The Modern Griselda*), Burney (*Evelina*, *Cecilia*) and Ann Radcliffe (*The Romance of the Forest*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*).

tradition beginning in the third century BCE and runs to Edgeworth's *The Modern Griselda* of 1805. This is an inclusive and antiquarian collection, weaving its vernacular tradition through centuries and projecting into the future.

Begun more than a decade later, as "Mrs Barbauld's novels" were beginning a second edition, *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library* is a collection with a different structure. A number of critics have noted that the earlier collection shaped the contours of Scott's *Library*.²² What they haven't explored in their pairing of the two collections is how a different historicist mode, namely a different kind of classicism structures Scott's collection. In the *British Novelists* the canonization of a group of vernacular texts is achieved by placing novels in a tradition contiguous with classical literature and culture. Scott, by contrast, creates a classical tradition of the novel that is analogous with the exemplary corpus of classical literature than directly connected to it. His will be a pan-European tradition. The *Library* as produced contains the works of Le Sage and Smollett's translation of *Don Quixote*. Though the series didn't get that far, it advertised itself as containing the best German and Italian works as well. This cosmopolitanism makes European novels, not just its English incarnation, heirs to the classical tradition. This is a different way of canonizing a group of authors and texts: make it look like the preeminent group of authors and texts.

Ballantyne's Novelist's Library is Scott's venture in canon making *as a novelist*. It is effectively an extension of the collected Defoe, expanded to encompass the complete works of a number of writers, with its plurality and material bulk making it into a library. Bound by the idea of biographical completeness, publishes a series of *oeuvres*. Issued in ten royal octavo volumes

²² A number of critics have noted how Scott's collection differs from and was perhaps shaped in opposition to Barbauld's. See Claudia Johnson, "'Let Me Make the Novels of a Country': Barbauld's 'The British Novelists' (1810/1820)" *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 34, 2 (2001); Gamer "Select Collections;" Brown, *Institutions of the English Novel*.

over three years, the edition contains 36 eighteenth-century novels by fifteen novelists with each novelist's works prefaced by a biographical memoir. In its physical dimensions and layout, and in its selection of authors, the *Library* unifies and makes uniform of the novelistic tradition of the eighteenth century. This, of course, flattens a number of texts: *Tristram Shandy's* marbled and black pages, for example, are not reproduced in the massive, columned volumes.²³

The collection's analogical classicism primarily derives from the way in which it shapes itself around the masculine authority an author's life represents. Claudia Johnson has condemned Scott's selection as unrepresentative of the best novels of the era it purports to represent because it only includes the work of two female novelists, Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe.²⁴ In constructing a canon of novels Scott focused on male writers, even to the exclusion of Maria Edgeworth's works, which he had lauded in the introductory chapter to *Waverley*. A primary reason for doing so was to select those male writers that positioned their novels a continuation of the classicized British literary canon.²⁵ Beginning the collection with the novels that come from the mid-century moment of English canonization (even though that moment of canon formation coalesced in opposition to the novel's popularity and vernacularism) gives the novelistic canon a confident beginning.

For this reason and likely because of the 1810 collected edition, Defoe does not feature in the *Library*. Duplicating the 1810 edition and cannibalizing his own market would be an unlikely choice for Ballantyne to make. Commercial considerations taken into account, both the *Library's*

²³ The following footnote appears at the end of chapter 36, the usual insertion point of the marble page in editions of *Tristram Shandy*: "In the early editions, there occurred here a marbled leaf, as elsewhere a black one. It has been thought unnecessary to retain them here." *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library* (Edinburgh: J. Ballantyne, 1821) 10 vols., V, 75.

²⁴ Johnson, "Barbault's 'British Novelists,'" 170.

²⁵ Though Scott has chosen Reeve's *The Old English Baron* for the collection, Reeve had demonstrated her classical chops in her conversation novel, *The Progress of Romance* (1785), which made a strong case for female authorship and produced a history of the novel that produced a continuous line between the novel and classical antecedents.

construction and its reception show that this canon-making enterprise employs the authorizing force of the classics to give the novel a very particular history that didn't include Defoe. As early as 1808, when the collection was first mooted, Scott had written to Ballantyne, "Fielding and Smollett will lead the van," choosing these two writers because of their neoclassical stance towards what they referred to as 'the republic of letters'. It is a long-established tradition to begin works with an allusion to the classics. The practice is deferential and situates a work in relation to a tradition which it can either emulate or overthrow (or both). As chapter two showed, Scott is not such a committed classicist that Greco-Roman antiquity holds prime intellectual sway for him. Nonetheless, the classicizing strategies of the *Library* show that the authority of the classical cultures still holds sway in the way in which the literary sphere organizes itself. Scott's placing Fielding and Smollett in his collection's portico is therefore a grand-scale structural homage to the classical tradition that classicizes both genre and collection at once. What Scott says about his novelists offers a more considered and deliberate elaboration of how and why the idea of the classical is used in criticism and what criteria for the novel's canonicity might be.

Fielding's is the first biographical memoir in the *Library*. As a piece of biographical criticism it shows Scott outlining his own idea of literary classicism for which he is able to harness Fielding's own classicizing reflections on beginning a new literary enterprise, an appropriate starting point for the collection. Scott names him "the first of British novelists" (iv) and the "father of the English Novel" in the prefatory essay. For Scott, Fielding's first-ness is both chronological and evaluative, while the patriarchal appellation shows how the *Library* structures the novel-genre as a dynasty with a classical progenitor.

Scott casts Fielding, then, in a proto-Leavisite 'Great Tradition' as an innovator whose work expands the potential of the form. Fielding's work fulfills the functions that the classical

corpus did: it is both exemplary and originary. Fielding's relationship to classical literature is therefore one of analogy, his is the earliest and best example of a (vernacular) form but he is therefore also (declaredly) perpetuating the classical tradition. Scott bases these claims on the conjunction of chronology with two key features of Fielding's writing: his habitual references to classical literature and his "painting from nature" (xvii). The former is a consequence of his privileged social origin: Fielding's facility with classical references stems from his education at Eton, which Scott notes, "imbued [him] with that love of classic literature, which may be traced through all his works." But the opportunity to write mimetically from nature was afforded by his always precarious but generally declining social and economic fortunes: moving among the "lowest and most miscellaneous" gave Fielding the opportunity to become "immortal as a painter of national manners" (ii). Fielding's mock-heroic classical allusions are related to the idea of him as a painter of nature and national manners. How and why is this?

A new conception of classicism, which is vernacularized and novelistic, connects them. Scott makes nature and manners a variation on a theme of Fielding's painterly skill but the difference and overlap between the two is important, since a good British novel must represent "nature" and "national manners". For Scott and other nineteenth century critics, the blending of the universal and the particular, the classical and the native, is intrinsic to a canonical novel. They have their eye on both in assessing a novel's classicism, which makes Fielding the ideal progenitor of the classical British novel.

Scott, then, is devising a new critical discourse for the novel. It resembles that of his prefaces to *Waverley* but is more expository. Before criticism began to borrow the Enlightenment's historiographical discourse of manners, it focused on nature. Pope's *Essay on*

Criticism (17??) shows how the representation of nature was, and remains, the yardstick by which works should be measured. His instruction to modern critics is to:

First follow *Nature*, and your judgement frame
By her just standard, which is still the same:
Unerring NATURE, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of art. (68-73)

Scott follows this eighteenth-century prescription in his 1821 critical essay on Fielding, an eighteenth-century novelist. These aspects of nature (a universal light, vivacity, and boldness) are the confident neoclassical aspects of Fielding's novels that contribute to making him, for Scott, the originator of a tradition of the English novel. Yet Fielding's own classical allusions (like Scott's in the *Waverley Novels*) are partly satirical, showing the discrepancy between classical ideal and British modernity. For example, Fielding's country villagers brawling in the churchyard over Tom Jones's spurning of Moll (?) is "A Battle Sung in the Homeric Style." The satirical mock-heroic comparison elevates the low subject matter while keeping it funny. So classical allusions in novels are also partly an authorizing strategy to show the manners of all classes of the nation as worthy of literary representation and, indeed, how that representation is vitally constitutive of that literature's seriousness.

Fielding's representation of English manners, then, is constitutive of his preeminence. His primacy stems from his capacity to represent, for the English nation, the epitome of its Englishness. Scott opens the preface with these sentences: 'The reader is here presented with the Novels of the celebrated Henry Fielding, in a form at once portable and comprehensive. Of all the works of imagination, to which English genius has given origin, these are, perhaps, most decidedly and exclusively her own.' (i) This is a claim for the genre's unparalleled capacity for national representation, an essential aspect of its canonicity.

Fielding's painting of nature and of manners is therefore key to Scott's framing of the *Library* as an exercise in canon formation. It is also a key to Scott's conception of the novel as a novelist and to the critical reception of the Waverley novels. That Scott should foreground the aspects of Fielding that most characterize his own novels is no accident. The novel can be described as a classic, canonical genre in the early nineteenth century because it has, by then, become (and been recognized) as the genre most fitting for the representation of human nature (like classical texts) but under particular national or temporal conditions of manners.

The rapidly expanding discipline of literary history (of which the critical text discussed in this chapter are all constitutive) recognized that certain genres were popular in, or part of the manners of, certain societies. Just as epic was the genre for Ionian Greece, so was drama for fifth-century Athens, or satire for imperial Rome. When Pope writes of Virgil's attempt to write epic in Augustan Rome, '... when t' examine every part he came / Nature, and Homer were, he found, the same,' (*Essay*, 133-4) he describes the exemplary, precise overlap between the epic form and the expression of manners and nature. When form and manners match precisely, human nature appears unmediated. Yet this is because a genre is, in itself, a societally-specific manner (or style) for expressing important ideas and narratives.²⁶ Scott's *Library* is therefore working by stadial analogy: the novel is now classic and canonical because it is at the height of its development, best adapted to capture the manners of the period.

Scott's critical writing on the novel is part of the gradual change in the specificity of reference as the word 'classical' comes to be replaced by 'classic' as a cultural descriptor. By the 1820s, the term ceases to refer exclusively to Greco-Roman antiquity and comes to mean

²⁶ There was therefore (even in the classical era) always a connection between genre and nation, though the classical tradition as it unfurled across Europe over centuries obscured that with its cosmopolitanism until Enlightenment historiography placed the universal in conversation with the historically specific.

‘renowned for all time’, so analogous to the ancient cultures but not evoking them directly. Novels that are truly ‘classic’ in this new less specific and transcultural meaning of the word are so because they represent the specific manners of an age and nation accurately but also in just such a way that the universal can be discerned in them, striking a compromise between authenticating detail and transhistorical resonance. Scott believes that works such as Fielding’s will be perennially popular.²⁷ The *Library*’s classicized framing devices suggest that the genre is the latest incarnation of the classical spirit in literature but also draw attention to the way in which that spirit is vernacularized and nationalized. In this way, the novel challenges and reworks classical cultural hegemony by classicizing vernacular and popular literary works.

The *Library* exhibits this semantic change in miniature. Whereas in 1821 Fielding’s canonicity and classicism was complex, a tradesman author so deficient in classical education that he was rumored to have had help finessing the classical *bons mots* of his gentleman characters, has become “an English classic.” Added in 1824, Richardson is a late inclusion in the *Library*, sitting out of chronological sequence in volumes V-VIII, but his novels merit their place on the strength of his innovation in the form *in spite of* his unpopularity in the present. Scott hails him as “the discoverer of a new style of writing... a cautious, deep, and minute examiner of the human heart.” (xlii) On Richardson’s inclusion and literary immortality, Scott writes,

The reader is presented with a complete copy of the Works of an English classic, without which a collection of the present nature must have been deplorably deficient. The change of taste and of fashion may, perhaps, from the causes we have freely stated, have thrown a temporary shade over Richardson’s popularity. Or perhaps, he may, in the present generation, be only paying, by comparative neglect, the price of the very high reputation which he enjoyed during his own age. For if immortality, or anything approaching to it, is granted to authors and to their works, it seems only to be in the conditions assigned to

²⁷ Scott is wrong about this because, although the work of distinguishing how manners mediate nature in a particular time and place can give readerly pleasure, literary manners and style become more visible and obfuscatory to readers unfamiliar with them.

that of Nourjahad, in the beautiful eastern tale, that they shall be liable to occasional intervals of slumber and comparative oblivion.²⁸

The use of the term ‘classic’ for Richardson makes him into a venerable English ancient and his novels a foundation for the genre now slumbering on library shelves.

Scott, it turns out, finds Richardson’s novels to have an excess of nature. Although Richardson had peeled back the grotesque typological masks worn by characters of the romance tradition to produce an “unexpected return to truth and nature” by representing his characters “bare-faced in all the light and shade of human nature” (V.xx), Scott’s judgment is that there is *too much* nature in Richardson’s novels.²⁹ While Richardson’s innovation in restoring nature to fictional prose narrative benefits the genre as a whole, Scott’s preference is for the bolder, more masculine tradition of the English novel starting from Fielding that he promotes in the *Library*.

Scott and the *Waverley Novels* are undoubtedly the *telos* of *Ballantyne’s Novelist’s Library’s* biographical history of the genre. Yet the collection’s title presents literary ownership as a conundrum. The identity of the titular novelist of *Ballantyne’s Novelist’s Library* is unspecified: it is each of the fifteen novelists at once; it promises that the collection’s owner (or prospective owner) might garner professional expertise from studying it; finally, there is *the* great unknown novelist, Scott himself, whose editorship was trumpeted in review puffs for the collection.³⁰ That these possibilities combine reflects how authors, readers and buyers, and critics each play their part in canonizing the novel.

²⁸ This is the second time in the preface that he dubs Richardson an “English classic;” the first credits *Clarissa* rather than *Pamela* as meriting the accolade because the work was more genteel.

²⁹ Scott glosses Samuel Johnson’s watch-making metaphor about Richardson as a novelist of nature and Fielding as a novelist of manners ‘Richardson’s characters show ‘a great deal of the internal work by which the index is regulated; while those of Fielding merely pointed to the hour of the day, being all that most men desire to know.’ (xlii-iii)

³⁰ See especially the review in *Blackwood’s* in April 1824. Ballantyne is coy about Scott’s editorship in the advertisement printed in the edition’s first volume: “the high source from whence [the publisher] derives his Literary aid, will be at once recognized.”

Bringing together groups of novels and novelists in collections such as Barbauld's and Scott's, then, is an enterprise in canon formation that collates the literary works of the recent past with eyes on the tradition emerging from the ancient past and on the future. In evaluating and arguing for the literary worth of the eighteenth- (and a sliver of the nineteenth-) century novel, both Barbauld and Scott write extended critical essays on the novel, on one hand connecting it to a continuous tradition of prose fiction originating in antiquity, and on the other showing how the novel is the latest genre in which the classical tradition has been routed. To canonize is therefore to criticize, and to criticize is very often to classicize. For all that Scott's collection was intended to contain works from France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, both of these are national collections, shaping a national canon. For all that Barbauld's organic, diverse, and representative collection of works produced between 1719 and 1805 is recognizable to eighteenth-century studies and Romanticism and even (in terms of authors if not works) to student-oriented classics imprints, it was Scott's collection that resembles the canon of the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries. This is not because of either the *Library's* or even Scott's influence (the sales of the former were unimpressive) but perhaps because of the authority that accrued around the novel via Scott's biographical approach. Scott had emulated Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* in structuring the collection into a definitive-sounding national pantheon of writers. The novel was a classic, but it was still a little bit classical.

iii. Lockhart: Canon, Controversy, and Novel

While the two novel-collections of Scott and Barbauld make different cases for the novel's classicism in connection with its canonicity, the idea of the novel as the modern, vernacular classic is most explicitly explored in John Gibson Lockhart's criticism. In two essays on *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library*, Lockhart explores the interconnectedness of criticism,

canonicity and classicism. The first, written for *Blackwood's* in April 1824 is a straightforward puff for the collection, the value of which inheres almost exclusively on Scott's prefaces.

Lockhart describes the *Library* in a single sentence:

It presents us with the classical novels of the English tongue printed exquisitely and beautifully on a small but readable type; and in volumes large, but not unwieldy, –and astonishingly cheap; and to each set of works, we have prefixed a copious Essay, by the first author of our time, written in a manner altogether worthy of his genius, taste and knowledge; –is not this a pretty tolerable bill of fare?³¹

Lockhart's use of the word "classical" here is qualified in the same way as Scott's use of "classic" in 1824, by the descriptor "English." Whereas Scott had meant English in both language and nationality and often allowed English to stand in for British in literary contexts, Lockhart's sense is more precise and purely linguistic. Likewise, when Lockhart uses the term "classical" in this essay it retain its Greco-Roman specificity even as it is applied to a vernacular literary entity. Lockhart's precision is helpful in tracking the progress of decoupling the classic novel from the classical tradition.

The article expatiates on the idea of the novel having its own illustrious pantheon of authors. Lockhart formulates his objection to the inclusion of Charles Johnson [sic] by envisaging the group taking collective umbrage, "We confess we think the classical novelists of England have no great reason to approve of this companionship." (408) In a passage dripping with innuendo, he notes a significant omission in the collection:

...no allusion whatever is made to the author of *Waverley*; that author who alone, and within the space of ten short years, has produced a set of novels almost as bulky as the whole of this Novelist's Library contains, and exhibiting beauties singly equal to the best of what this record does exhibit, in the blaze of their connection sufficient to dim even the brightest name in that bright roll. (414)

³¹ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 5.15 (1824): 407; subsequent references to this article are parenthesized within the text.

Lockhart uses the opportunity of reviewing Scott's canonical collection to argue for his canonicity. He does so through a series of comparisons, for criticism about the canon is always about relative merits, the word itself being a unit of measurement.

In his comparison of the *Waverley Novels* with Scott's eighteenth-century canon Lockhart acknowledges that none are as perfect as *Tom Jones* in themselves. Yet he reels off a point by point comparison between Scott's novels and his canonical predecessors: Lockhart likens Bailie Nicol Jarvie to Fielding's Parson Adams, Jonathan Oldbuck to Sterne's Uncle Toby, and asks whether Meg Dods "is not in her single self, equal to all the innkeepers, from Don Quixote down to Fielding inclusive?" The tirade continues with a list of how Scott exceeds his predecessors. "The high romantic chivalries—the dark superstition—the witchcraft by which the dead are reanimated—the grace, the grandeur, the magnificence of the prose—that is all that poetry ever was, or ever can be." This proves once again that it is Scott's most distinctly unclassical characteristics (the gothic features here) that make the *Waverley* novels classics. However, it also shows how the novel is still making its case for canonicity by comparison with poetry even as the rest of the article and the collection itself avow the genre's self-confidence.

Installed in London as editor of the *Quarterly Review*, Lockhart writes a second article on Scott's prefaces, showing how even without Scott's direct agency the novelistic canon was achieving recognition. The article is a review of a pirated 1825 edition, published by Galignani in Paris in 1825 with the title, *Lives of the Novelists*. Lockhart urges two points. First and most straightforward he draws attention to the piracy and, in so doing, to suggest to Scott and Ballantyne that they bring out their own, authorized, edition to claim some of the profits from the work, which was selling well.³² This point is made succinctly: "Mr Galignani has taken the liberty to detach Sir Walter's Memoirs from the bulky tomes which they lay buried; and we hope

³² See Scott's letter from Lady Louisa Stewart, who had read them in this edition.

our notice of his publication may induce those of whose property he has availed himself to imitate the shrewdness of his example.” (1826, 349-50) While this publicizes the theft and shows how in only two years the *Library* has descended from majestic volume to dusty, “bulky tomes” it also points out Scott and Ballantyne’s intervening bankruptcy.

Lockhart’s second argument is to recommend the critical appraisal of the genre. The prefaces “must be considered as throwing a new and strong light upon a department of English literature, perhaps the most peculiar, certainly the most popular, and yet, we cannot help thinking, among the least studied of all we possess.” (350) Showing the overlap in the contemporary periodical press between criticism and scholarship, the article serves as an example of such scholarship, in which Lockhart addresses the question of the novel’s origin and ascent in a more polemical and philosophical manner than either Scott’s biographical and Barbauld’s traditionary account of the genre. In a move that underscores the proximity of criticism and scholarship in this period, he begins by addressing the novel’s relationship to classical civilization, the standard for learning and taste.

The absence of a classical antecedent is a pressing question in the study of the novel in 1826. Lockhart’s opening query is why, since the novel is so “natural” a form, did it remain “untouched by those who carried the drama on the one hand, and history on the other, to their classical perfection.” (349) In this affirmation of the exemplarity of classical literature, Lockhart takes the “classical perfection” of other genres as evidence to rubbish the claim that insufficient social sympathy (because of slavery, segregation of the sexes and paganism) in ancient society for the novel to evolve. He asserts this cannot be the case, since those societies were analogous to, or exceeded, modernity in terms of their analysis, understanding, and representation of human nature. He writes,

It is much to be regretted that we have no ancient novels:—but surely it is a strange vanity which leads us to decide that the materials for any form of imaginative composition could have been a-wanting among communities who were unquestionably familiar with the highest displays of human intellect in every walk of art and science, and with the exhibition of human character under every light and shade which could result from the conflicting influence of principle and passion of every possible variety of temperament and constitution. (350)

Lockhart discounts the ancient novel, which for Thomas Pavel, Margaret Doody and a whole field of classicists is the classical origin of the novel. He does so for two reasons: first, he has a very precise idea of the novel in mind; second, he considers the novels and romances of late antiquity to be uncanonical, not genres that reached any kind of classical perfection. The lack of novels in ancient society, for Lockhart, stems not from the capacity to conceive of its content but from the absence of demand for its form. Lockhart's argument is market-based: the classical civilizations did not develop the technology of prose fiction because they lacked a reading public.

To make this argument in the entertainingly erudite manner required of a periodical, Lockhart marshals an array of examples from Greek and Latin literature that could very well have furnished the pages of a novel. He conducts this thought experiment in counterfactual literary history in a manner that assumes his readership's familiarity with both classical literature and novels. The classical examples are well known, and by drawing them into comparison with the British novels featured in the *Library* (the article is, after all, still nominally a review) Lockhart makes the ancient texts new and imbues the novels with an antique heritage.

Horace is the first classical novelist-manqué examined at length: “Who, to take an example, can read Horace, and doubt that Horace might have written a novel? ... The scattered members of the novelist are found everywhere among the writers of antiquity; and the journey to Brundisium *in esse* is proof enough that the expedition of a Roman Humphry Clinker might have

been.” (352) This explicit reference to *Satires* I.v grounds the connection between Horace and the novel in a particular classical genre, in the gentle and genial tone of Horace’s self-parodic, charming and frank account of his journey to Brindisi with Maecenas. Horace’s poem is an account of the everyday, though they were journeying to meet Antony and finalize a treaty between the leaders of warring factions in a civil war, the story consists of mules, inns, and encounters with the distinguished (Virgil) and ordinary people they meet on the road. The analogy with Smollett’s novel is precise, supporting the satirical and masculine strain of classicism in the mid- to late-eighteenth-century fiction that the *Library* champions.

But in the passage above, Lockhart also makes a less explicit reference, one that opens the question of what makes high-canonical literature: the “scattered limbs of the novelist” to be found in classical literature is a twist on Horace’s famous description of what happens when epic poetry is turned into prose. The phrase “disiecta membra...poetae” has become shorthand for poetic fragments. However, its original context (*Satires* I.iv.62-3) is Horace’s discussion of whether satire is indeed poetry, a discussion analogous to the spectral question in this review: can the novel (lacking a classical antecedent) be considered high literature? Horace argues that the genius of a true poet, Ennius, will still be apparent even when his verse is sundered from its metrical arrangement. Lockhart suggests here that novelistic material may be found scattered throughout the classical corpus and lacked (or lacked) only someone to suture them together to make a classical novel.

Lockhart uncovers novel-materials lurking in other writers in genres in other times between Horace and the present, in all works ‘painting our manners and lashing our vices’ (356), in fact. Progressing from the suggestion that Horace *could have* written a novel, he bemoans the fact that Ben Jonson *didn’t* write one, since unifying the humorous characters of Jonson’s comedies with

what Lockhart calls the “profound mastery of passion” to be found in his tragedy *Catiline* would have produced a work of compound power. There are two important things to be drawn from this argument, first that form is dictated by stadial development and the market (both the desire and the capacity of the public). Second, that in every period the best literature, the classic genre, is the one best suited to display manners, depict and elicit emotion, and, therefore, to satisfy the public.

Lockhart argues that the novel “could not...have had a fair chance in [antiquity] in opposition to the drama” for it is the product of that “state of society in which *reading* is not a general accomplishment of the *people*.” The absence of a reading public and the communal experience of drama at the heart of the *polis* made the drama preeminent. For all that this lionizes classical drama, it also suggests that the modern public is more refined (“accomplished”) than the ancient. It is significant that the epic is absent from this discussion since, as the preeminent classical genre, both Scott and Fielding had claimed the status of modern epic for their novels. For Lockhart, the history and the drama offer more precise analogues for the novel, the former as a narrative prose genre, the latter as a classical genre of commercial urban society.

Lockhart sees the decline of drama and the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century as connected. Drama, while still popular as an evening’s entertainment, is in decline because reading is not as quickly wearisome as theatrical performance. Furthermore, the novel is more successful in representing emotion. Lockhart says that the most interesting part of any story “remains entirely within solitary bosoms” and that the novelist is able to show this “hidden part” whereas the dramatist can only hint at it. He is explaining the novel’s popularity by invoking the discourse around the novel at this moment of canonization. And, characteristically, the article ends with an apotheosis of the Author of *Waverley*. The encomium here is grandiose, he has

exceeded his predecessors by widening the field, embellishing it with ‘original graces’ and ‘ennobled it by the splendors of a poetical imagination, more powerful and more exalted by far than had ever in former days exerted its energies elsewhere than in the highest of the strictly poetical forms - epic and tragic.’ He also compounds Scott’s achievement by aligning it with attributes of the classical education, these triumphs were achieved without, ‘departing from that firm healthiness and feeling, that sustained and masculine purity of mental vigour’ seldom seen, he says, since Cervantes.

This exemplarity has spawned imitators, for good and bad: it has stimulated good, original, novels, such as Hope’s *Anastasius*, *The Trials of Margaret Lindsay*, and the works of John Galt. However, the Waverley phenomenon has also inspired a ‘deluge’ of poor imitations lacking the unteachable and inimitable qualities of the novels (those ‘far beyond the reach of knack’ (378) such as delicacy, simplicity, energy, variety, and graceful ease). There is an irony to Lockhart’s writing about Scott’s imitators, for he himself was a novelist whose works belonged in the order Francis Jeffrey had dubbed ‘Secondary Scotch Novels’ (*Edinburgh Review*, 1823). I introduce this class of novels here because they show how other writers were consciously emulating Scott and aspects of the Waverley novels. Contemporary criticism of these novels always measures them by that standard, the classical yardstick of the time.

Jeffrey’s article had dealt with seven novels by Galt, three by Lockhart, and two by his partner in the editorship of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, John Wilson. His argument is that though these novels are “inferior certainly –and what is not? to their great originals,” they are the best “imitations of the inimitable novels,” the result of Scott’s galvanizing the field of Scottish literature (180). Jeffrey notes how these writers each attempt to emulate an aspect of Scott, Galt his humorous characters of Scottish provincial life, the other two “the poetical, reflective, and

pathetic parts of their common model” (161). This reinforces the idea that Scott’s range was perceived as a major strength. Impugning their originality, Jeffrey calls Lockhart and Wilson “*mannerists* in the strongest sense of that term” and finds even their effective pathos to be “pathetic, for the most part, by the common recipes, which enable any one almost to draw tears who will condescend to employ them.” (161) The semantics of this charge are themselves interesting: aping the manner of a contemporary novelist (reducing him to mere formula and replicating it) does not produce the same results as capturing the manners of people in time from direct observation. The uneven development of Scotland is what allowed Scott to successfully capture the manners of eighteenth-century Scotland, the basis of his depiction of character (and thence his classicism) in the early novels.

Even Lockhart, writing about the Author of *Waverley*’s imitators in 1826 acknowledges this charge. The novelists following Scott (with the exception of Fenimore Cooper, who is preeminent amongst them) ‘have trusted to reading and imagination for the best part of their materials; and being inferior beyond measure to their master, both in the accomplishment and the faculty, they have produced, at the best, the mere *corpus exsangue* of the historical romance.’ (1826, 377) This is a macabre image with which to conclude a celebratory study of the genre, not least because it doesn’t wholeheartedly project a glorious future, perhaps because the logic of genres in the long *durée* (the logic of the article) dictates that it can only be all-downhill from a golden age. There is a wry melancholic irony to Lockhart’s tone at this moment in the article, that indicates that he includes himself in the number of writers who have wasted their energies in attempting to write historical romance on Scott’s model. The source of this regret, which is the subject of the next section of this chapter, is significantly absent from this examination of the classical novel and the novel’s classicism. For now, it seems important to sum up what is there,

namely the apotheosis of the Waverley novels as the most classic of the classic novels, combining as they do the best aspects of their predecessors, the other ‘classical novels of the English tongue’. The canonization of the novel in the 1820s connected and synthesized the novel’s oppositions, its erudition and popularity, its quotidian subject matter and capacity for eliciting powerful feelings, its prose and its poetry.

Behind the objectivity of his editorial and scholarly voices in discussing classical novels and novel classicism, Lockhart conceals from the readers of the *Quarterly Review* his authorship of *Valerius, A Roman Story*, published by Blackwood in 1821, a sustained attempt to produce a classical novel based on the model made classic by Scott. Begun in 1820, the year of Lockhart’s marriage to Sophia Scott and in the wake of *Ivanhoe*’s success, *Valerius* attempts to transpose a typical Waverley plot to the setting of Imperial Rome in 98AD. This novel closes the circle between the modern genre and the ancient world, its homage to Scott showing that the modern classic and the idea of vernacular classicism can still be directly connected to the classicism of the Greco-Roman cultures. As will become clear in chapter four, Lockhart is fighting a rearguard action here, since the two kinds of classicism are about to decouple decisively: going forward from this moment into the Victorian period and beyond, modern literary classics assume sufficient authority to stand either as part of an autonomous British tradition. Classical literature becomes a distant forebear and just one amongst many disciplines and discourses within literary and intellectual culture.

Nonetheless, Lockhart’s novel is an attempt to establish a connection different from the examples I’ve discussed before. This is not Henry Fielding’s mock-heroic neoclassicism, Sterne or Scott’s satire on classical pedantry, nor the conduct-books-come-translations of Sarah Fielding, Elizabeth Hamilton, or Cornelia Knight, although Lockhart’s irrepressible and hectic

shifting of modes means that the novel incorporates aspects of all of these foregoing classical novels, the comic, satirical, pathetic, and the didactic. *Valerius* is, instead, a thoroughgoing project to meld the classical form of the historical novel with classical (in this case Roman) culture. My claim for this novel is not to recuperate it as a forgotten classic, (the novel is hardly a success) but rather to show how it embodies what Lockhart (and other critics) believed to be the ideal of classicism in literature at the time. In spite of Lockhart's stylistic versatility, the novel's sutures are sufficiently apparent as to show quite clearly the constituent parts of this intentional exercise in producing novel classicism. Having addressed the question of how classicism operates in the novel's canonization during the 1810s and 20s at the start of this chapter, I have shown how it is intertwined with these canon controversies. I will show how the issues that inform these canonical controversies are refracted in the novels and (novel-) criticism of the period.

Valerius and Lockhart's three subsequent novels (appearing 1821-4) are inseparable from *Blackwood's* for a variety of interconnected reasons. Firstly, all four were published by William Blackwood who was a supporter of Scottish writers and the major publisher of the "Secondary Scotch Novelists" discussed above. Secondly and relatedly, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* was the periodical that gave the most regular review space to novels, both to puff house books and because its proprietor and editors took fiction seriously. Thirdly, around the time of Lockhart's marriage, Scott had encouraged his new son-in-law to turn away from satirical invective and the perennial controversies surrounding both William Blackwood and his "*Maga*." Scott wrote of Lockhart to Anthony Morritt within three months of the wedding, "His powers of personal satire are what I dread most on his account—it is an odious accomplishment and most

dangerous and I trust I have prevailed on him to turn his mind to something better.”³³ In *Peter’s Letters to His Kinsfolk* (1819), itself a satirical, novelistic, epistolary travelogue (or a Regency *Humphrey Clinker*), Lockhart himself writes, “Mr L– ...may soon find that there are much better things in literature than satire, let it be as good-natured as you will. Indeed, his friend W– tells me he already professes himself heartily sick of it, and has begun to write, of late, in a quite opposite way.” (Vol III.) The satirical self-reference seems to undercut its own point but a number of commentators have suggested that novel-writing is the “something better” to which Scott refers in the letter.³⁴ Finally, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* is itself an important organ in the diffusion of classicism in the early nineteenth-century.

This last requires some explaining. *Blackwood’s* has been an object of study in its own right in Romantic Studies since the 1990s, when its miscellaneous, fragmentary, experimental, collaborative character came to be recognized as reflecting key aspects of Romanticism, not least the simultaneous fracturing and celebration of national identity on Britain’s periphery. In the most recent decade *Blackwood’s* has been seen as a pillar of the institutions of Edinburgh as a cultural capital, as Ian Duncan puts it (*pace* Benjamin) “The Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” the center of British literary production. *Blackwood’s* was notorious for naming and eviscerating the ‘Cockney School of Poetry’ in its series of articles on Leigh Hunt, Keats, and the Hampstead coterie. Mockery of Leigh Hunt’s and Keats’ classicism is a key element in the Cockney School articles, where it is seen as an index of their social status, educational deficiency, pretension, prurient sexuality, and egotism. Jeffrey N. Cox and, more recently Henry Stead, have produced

³³ Letter to Morritt, July 1820 quoted in Alan Strout, ed. *John Bull’s Letter to Lord Byron* (Norman, OK: Oklahoma University Press, 1947), 39.

³⁴ Marion Lochhead, *John Gibson Lockhart* (London, 1954) and Gilbert Macbeth, *John Gibson Lockhart: A Critical Study* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1935).

thorough analyses of how these charges are both unmerited and politically motivated.³⁵ While I don't want to become an apologist for the attacks, the political and aesthetic conception of Blackwoodian classicism underlying them has not been adequately explained.

Both in spite and because of its Tory politics, *Blackwood's* is a vital example of vernacular classicism. The characteristic reflexiveness and heteroglossia of *Blackwood's*, both shaped by the discomfiting duality of Edinburgh's metropolitan-yet-provincial status, are intrinsic to its classicism. Because literary classicism is itself almost always self-conscious, Blackwoodian classicism is almost doubly reflexive and contradictory.³⁶ In 1822, the magazine describes itself in the following manner:

[Readers] take in his book not as a Review, to pick up opinions of new books from it, nor as a periodical, to read themselves asleep upon, but as a classical work, which happens to be continued from month to month; a real Magazine of mirth, misanthropy, wit, wisdom, folly, fiction, fun, festivity, theology, bruising, and thingumbob. He unites all the best materials of the Edinburgh, the Quarterly, and the Sporting Magazine – the literature and good writing of the first – the information and orthodoxy of the second and the flash and trap of the third.³⁷

This use of the adjective “classical” is self-aggrandizing, for there is certainly no precedent for *Blackwood's* in classical literature. Instead, the variety and comprehensive nature of the

³⁵ Jeffrey N. Cox, *Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School: Keats, Shelley, Hunt and their circle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Henry Stead, “Swinish Classics; Or a Conservative Clash with Cockney Culture” in Henry Stead and Edith Hall, eds., *Greek and Roman Classics and the British Struggle for Social Reform* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

³⁶ As I have established over previous chapters, literary classicism is almost always self-consciously highlighted as such. This is not only the case in Augustan neoclassicism but also in the vernacular classicism of the Romantic period. □ Even at the most gothic or Celtic moments of either *The Antiquary* or *The Wild Irish Girl*, for example, characters and incidents are explicitly interpreted as classical by the narrator of the tale, whether he is embedded in the text or not. Even at the most gothic or Celtic moments of either *The Antiquary* or *The Wild Irish Girl*, for example, characters and incidents are explicitly interpreted as classical by the narrator of the tale, whether he is embedded in the text or not.

³⁷ Quoted in Mark Parker, *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 105-6.

entertainment the magazine offers indicates the grandeur and range intrinsic to the word's meaning when applied to a literary work at this moment.

This quotation comes from the *Noctes Ambrosianae*, a series of dialogues between fictional but recognizable alter-egos of the magazine's contributors. The *Noctes* are emblematic of Blackwoodian classicism not only because they were the most popular, heteroglossic, experimental, and reflexive feature of the magazine but also because they dramatize the nature of that classicism. Running from 1822 to 1835, they are a series of after-hours conversations (or symposia) that draw the readership into a homosocial, convivial intimacy with the magazine's writers and the occasional visiting literary figure. The quotation above comes from an imagined meeting between Ensign O'Doherty and Byron on a beach at Pisa. The dialogues are littered with classical quotations, as the characteristic argot of literary men. The prevalence of these is such that it appears that the readership will also be conversant with the passages and allusions. In the intimate context of the tavern, classical references therefore function as a further means of binding dispersed readers into a community.

Yet at the same time as *Blackwood's* invites readers into its own coterie it is also an exclusive cabal. The presence of Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, does not make the circle less elitist since he is often (unequally since he is the least fictionalized of the participants) the brunt of jokes and porcine punning. *Blackwood's* imagines an aspirational upper-middle-class to aristocratic readership, as its incorporation of "flash and trap" shows. Though it circulates amongst the educated middle-class, *Blackwood's* is careful to maintain gradations of difference: middle-class intellectual pretension or working-class self-improvement (both exhibited by the Cockneys) are condemned as politically subversive and culturally gauche. Classics, then,

functions as a means of classifying both readers (and writers), inside and outside the magazine's pages.

Despite this fundamentally elitist coterie classicism, *Blackwood's* played a part in extending advanced knowledge about ancient cultures amongst constituencies without access to classical languages and scholarship. Shany Fiske, for instance, has shown how *Blackwood's* articles on ancient (especially Greek) literature expanded the Brontë sisters' knowledge of classical history, literature, and philosophy.³⁸ Within the bounds of a self-selecting, Tory, middle-class readership, writing about issues in ancient scholarship (such as the Homeric Controversy) was diffused to women. This is not, however, the same as the diffusive, democratic impulse of the classical novels by Knight and Hamilton discussed in chapter one. *Blackwood's* was really only concerned to circulate knowledge within the limits of its circulation. There, a working knowledge of schoolroom authors was assumed.

Nonetheless, translations of more obscure classical authors appeared regularly alternating with other European works, bolstering the magazine's cosmopolitan credentials and leveling the literary field into a single plain consisting of ancient and modern, northern and southern literature. The mixing of content even within a single issue of *Blackwood's* complicates the interpretation of its classicism as exclusive, elitist and static. Through *Blackwood's* Tory classicism, it turns out, was expanding to be quite Gothic: fragmentary, primitive, folkloric, and intertwined with Britain's native history. As Ian Duncan observes, the magazine's Tory politics manifest themselves in the creation and defense of national culture.³⁹ The dialogic incorporation of native history and vernacular voices into the fabric of a periodical review (to make something completely different, a *Magazine*) mirrors the way the national tale and the historical novel

³⁸ Shany Fiske, *Heretical Hellenism: Women Writers, Ancient Greece, and the Victorian Popular Imagination* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2008).

³⁹ Duncan, *Scott's Shadow*, chapter 1.

interweave vernacular subject matter with more neutral ‘literary’ (which is still at this point classical) conventions such as voice and structure to create modern, national classics.

What I am claiming about Blackwoodian classicism, then, is that it is capacious, evolutionary, and actively champions the novel as a modern classic. Both the novel as a genre and *Valerius* should therefore be inserted into the discussion about the *Blackwood’s* Cockney School articles. The articles have defined his career: from the nineteenth century onward it seems impossible to write about Lockhart without either vilifying or defending him.⁴⁰ Lockhart’s biographers through to the mid-twentieth century were at pains to redeem him by explaining the articles as youthful indiscretions, licensed and encouraged by the collective bravura of the *Blackwood’s* circle.⁴¹ Recent excellent work on *Blackwood’s* and Romantic-era periodicals, though, has drawn attention away from Lockhart as an individual by explaining the ideological positions of each of the *Blackwood’s* and the Leigh Hunt coterie.⁴² Richard Cronin has examined the essentially combative nature of periodical culture; David Stewart has shown how the metropolitan antitheses and antipathies between Edinburgh and Hampstead underlie the rhetoric of the articles. This work is extremely useful in explaining where and why the battle lines were drawn. Nonetheless, a dispute about what constituted appropriate classicism forms the basis of the attacks. Every accusation (of effeminacy, of vulgarity, of immorality, of pretension, of small-mindedness) was extrapolated from the Hunt coterie’s practice of styling themselves as classical poets (Hunt) or writing verse on classical themes (Keats).

Most recently, Henry Stead has championed Keats’s and Hunt’s classical abilities, showing the blinkeredness and elitism of Lockhart’s Oxbridge disdain. Stead is absolutely correct in

⁴⁰ e.g. Stead, “Swinish Classics.”

⁴¹ Or, they tend to blame Wilson, who as Lockhart’s senior by 10 years, should have known better.

⁴² Cox, *Poetry and Politics*; Franta, *Mass Public* et al.

drawing attention to the centrality of classicism in the eight Cockney School articles but these conflicting ideas of how to negotiate the influence and presence of the classical and native literary traditions in the present extend beyond poetry into the literary sphere as a whole. Since the writers involved in this discussion were all, to varying degrees, involved with many different forms of literary composition and criticism, it is essential to see the field as a whole. Lockhart's intervention in the Pope-Bowles controversy shows him broadening the discussion to broaden the definition of canonical literature. As I show presently, this dispute about the canon comes to involve the novel too.

Pope's primary defenders, Byron and Isaac D'Israeli, attacked the small-mindedness of his detractors, which they perceived in the rigidity of their systematized poetic principles and the benighted provincialism of giving a uniform national canon primacy over a variegated universal canon. In the *Letter to John Murray* (1821), Byron writes that Pope's enemies, the modern poets, have "raised a mosque by the side of a Grecian temple of the purest architecture; and, more barbarous than the barbarians from whose practice I have borrowed the figure, they are not contented with their own grotesque edifice, unless they destroy the prior, and purely beautiful fabric which preceded, and which shames them and theirs for ever and ever." James Chandler has made the essential point that Byron does not here propose Pope as a model for contemporary poets (indeed *Don Juan* is in part a parody of Pope). Instead Byron's metaphor champions Greek liberty and, crucially, a reverence for the achievements of the past, even if they are not replicable in the present.

Scott takes a sly swipe at Byron in the metafictional preface to *Peperil of the Peak* (1822) his next novel. Discussing the Waverley Novels' mixture of "romance or fictitious narrative founded upon history," the consistently pedantic antiquarian Dryasdust puts it to the Author that

learned readers find the combination sacrilegious. They will have such “respect for the foundation” that they may find fault with the superstructure “just as every classical traveller pours forth expressions of sorry indignation, when, in traveling through Greece, he chanced to see a Turkish kiosk rising on the ruins of an ancient temple.” (8) The Author’s response is twinklingly pragmatic:

But since we cannot rebuild the temple, a kiosk may be a pretty thing may it not? not quite correct in architecture, strictly and classically criticized, but presenting something uncommon to the eye, and something fantastic to the imagination, on which the spectator gazes with pleasure of the same description which arises from the perusal of an Eastern tale.

This echo of Byron’s metaphor places makes the novel into a modern curiosity, suggesting that it comes to poetry’s rescue. Scott’s kiosk is not the “grotesque edifice” that Byron sees in modern poetry, but it is perhaps a barbarous but appealing hybrid. This is a nod to the novel’s origins in the Eastern romance tradition. Nonetheless, the novel is inserted into this conversation as a charming, modern and largely unobjectionable entity. It makes sense that Scott would write his two most imaginative prefaces on the making of novels (those to *Pevekil* and *The Fortunes of Nigel* both published in 1822) during this period in the early 1820s: he was writing his ‘Lives’ of the novelists, his own fame and fortune were at their height, and questions of canonicity fueled the literary conversation conducted through the periodicals.⁴³

Lockhart himself made a more direct response to Byron’s ‘Letter to John Murray’. In late April or early May 1821 (just a month after the publication of *Valerius* in March), he had a pamphlet printed anonymously in London under the title, ‘John Bull’s Letter to Lord Byron.’

⁴³ Of the novels written after *The Antiquary* and before the great gathering and curating of the Magnum Opus in 1829, only *Ivanhoe* (1820), *Nigel* (1822) and *Pevekil* (1822) have contemporary introductions. [The 1827 three-part story collection, *The Chronicles of the Canongate* is prefaced in order to explain this departure from the conventional form than to discourse on the business of making a novel.]

This ‘letter’ was presumed to have been penned by John Wilson Croker but correspondence between Croker and Lockhart shows the latter at pains to conceal his authorship from Scott.⁴⁴ In styling himself as the guardian of English character, Lockhart appoints himself the guardian of the English canon. He chides Byron for interfering in the Pope controversy and giving it legs. He accuses Byron of “humbug,” on one hand taking himself too seriously as a poet and on the other not taking himself seriously enough. Establishing Byron’s superiority to Pope, he moves to suggest which modern writers might manage to achieve canonicity and why.

John Bull’s criterion for literary immortality is that a work should proceed from a basis that is fundamentally mimetic “taking things as they are, or representing them as they are.” (96):

In my humble opinion, there is very little in the literature of the present day that will really stand the test of half a century, except the *Scotch* novels of Sir Walter Scott and Don Juan. *They* will do so because they are written with perfect facility and nature—because their materials are all drawn from nature—in other words, because they are neither made up of cant, like Wordsworth and Shelley, nor of humbug like Childe Harold and the City of the Plague, nor of Brunswick Mum, like the Rime of the Ancient Mariner, nor of milk and water like Mr. Barry Cornwall. (93)

The syntax here shows the meaning of ‘nature’ sliding through various gradations: first, aligned with ‘facility’, it seems to refer to the author’s manner of writing, where writing with nature would be to write from one’s nature or character, provided that the latter were good. This moral dimension (the second sense of writing from nature is to write from your good nature) is a companion to the idea of great poets having the highest conceptions because with Lockhart there is always a moral dimension to discussion of mind and thought. Thirdly, though, writing from nature seems to be to depict the world as it is, keeping the ‘materials’ as unadulterated by personal bias or weak, artificial foodstuffs as possible. This many-sided conception of ‘nature’ is at the root of the idea of literary classicism proposed by the critical organs of the period, it a

⁴⁴ See Strout, *John Bull*; future references to this letter are parenthesized.

classicism that may be realized in both a historical novel and an epic poem. Though Disraeli had railed against resorting to ‘nature’ as a way of refuting critical disputes about poetry in the Pope controversy, Lockhart’s insistent claiming of ‘nature’ for the novel is a bid to establish the genre’s canonicity. On the macro-literary-historical plain, what is happening through these kind of longform, dispersed, and protracted print dialogues is that Lockhart and his fellow Edinburgh critics are recalibrating the national canon and shifting the locus and altering the nature of national identity within it. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries both the canon and national identity were English and poetic. After the Waverley Novels, and with the increasing influence of Edinburgh as a literary metropole, these became British and novelistic. This move can be seen as a conservative victory, largely because both canons and novels are intrinsically conservative.

The Cockney School articles have a diametrically opposite tone from the chumminess of John Bull. John Bull was respectful of Byron’s talent, gently upbraiding him for follies and egotism, while slating Wordsworth and the Lake School as Byron’s enemies. As “Z,” Lockhart draws the weight of the establishment together to squash the Cockney School. Eviscerating the second sonnet to Haydon in Keats’s *Poems* (1817), Z writes of Cockney presumptions, “Wordsworth and Hunt! what a juxta-position! The purest, the loftiest, and, we do not fear to say it, the most classical of living English poets, joined together in the same compliment with the meanest, the filthiest, and the most vulgar of Cockney poetasters.” (194) Here, and across the series, Z takes umbrage at Cockney pretensions to imitate Greek art and to see their work as continuing the great tradition of English poetry, that is, to be ‘classical’ English poets. Z finds this suburban cultural pretension small-minded, claustrophobic, and artificial but, nonetheless, still socially and politically unsettling.

The Cockney School articles set *Blackwood's* classicism against that of the Hunt circle. For both, the use of classical culture in modern literature was intrinsically political. For *Blackwood's* it was a source of authority and power that should be buttressed and protected; for the Hunt circle it was a means of expressing political and religious dissent, as Stead writes, the effeminate *Endymion* was 'designed to rile the establishment with its unchecked paganism, high levels of eroticism, and countercultural world view.' (141) It certainly hit its mark. But since for *Blackwood's* culture and politics were sufficiently synonymous that to attack Cockney poetry was to attack Cockney politics, Keats's lesser fluency in classical languages became enough to discredit both him and the poem. It is therefore only at the very end of the review of *Endymion*, that Lockhart writes wryly,

We had almost forgot to mention, that Keats belongs to the Cockney School of Politics, as well as the Cockney School of Poetry.

It is fit that he who holds Rimini to be the first poem, should believe the Examiner to be the first politician of the day. We admire consistency, even in folly. Hear how their bantling has already learned to lisp sedition. (201)

Lockhart cannot point to an attractive poetic and corrective to this dissenting southern classicism because (as the Pope controversy shows) conservative Romantic poets had repudiated neoclassical verse. After fulminating in the pages of *Blackwood's* over the course of six articles between October 1817 and October 1819, Lockhart produced his own corrective, in the form he believed to best fulfill classicism's most important criterion, that of capturing the nature of the classical age.

There is a politics to all this: it might be said that the Cockney school uses a classical setting as subversive allegory, Lockhart as a way of explaining and maintaining the status quo amidst the tension of the years 1819-21. Yet the case is more complicated. *Valerius*, for example, is an attempt to have Trajan's Rome speak to the British nineteenth-century reader as best it

might. On one hand, this is an extension of knowledge about the classical world to the English reader. On the other, the novel's classical allegory poses the question of how much seditious activity a state should tolerate. That the particular sedition at hand is early Christianity and that the state is the autocratic rule of Imperial Rome brings the Tory Lockhart out, surprisingly, on the side of morally upright sedition. In this novel, Lockhart attempts to achieve good classicism, a good novel, and good conservative politics.

With the success of Scott's extension of the Waverley framework (hitherto eighteenth-century and Scottish) to medieval England in *Ivanhoe*, it was a good time for a decorated classicist with an interest in novels to try something new, a historical novel with a classical setting.⁴⁵ It was Scott himself that called *Valerius* something "quite new," presumably having either not noticed or (more likely) forgotten Cornelia Knight's *Marcus Flaminius* of the 1790s.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, *Valerius*'s transposition of the Waverley plot to first-century Rome is a striking piece of near-plagiarism. Recounting his tale some *sixty years since* its incidents, the eponymous hero begins at a comfortable home in the south of England, half Roman and half British. When news comes of a significant but disputed inheritance, he must travel to Rome for the first time to settle the case. While there he becomes entangled in treasonous activity, into which he has been drawn by his attraction to a fanatical, aristocratic young woman. Amongst the sights of Rome Valerius and the reader see are the Forum, the Imperial Palace, the baths, the Apennine Way, the Colosseum, the catacombs and the Mammertine jail. The novel borrows elements of the *Bildungsroman* in the same way that *Waverley* did, Valerius must reconcile his duties as a man, a

⁴⁵ Lockhart had 'professed' an unheard of number of classical authors at his Glasgow University examination as a teenager. He was winner of the Snell exhibition to Baliol College Oxford and excelled there. An Oxford was foreclosed by the fact that Scots could not hold fellowships. See Andrew Lang, *The Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart* (London: John C. Nimmo, 1897), 69.

⁴⁶ Scott, letter to Lockhart, April 1820, quoted in Lang, *Lockhart*, 239.

citizen, and as a scion of an illustrious Roman family. The novel concludes in a marriage that binds the best of Rome to British virtues, the Roman patrimony is not directly transmitted but placed in trust, while Valerius and his wife Athanasia retreat across the *Mare Britannicum* as converts to introduce Christianity to forest-dwelling Britons.

While *Waverley* is an obvious intertext in terms of the novel's structure, Lockhart populates the novel with tropes from a catholic range of canonical texts from both the classical and British traditions. The Roman subplot is borrowed from Plautine New Comedy: the enterprising messenger-slave, Dromo; the merry widow, Rubellia, in love with the boy Sextus; Sempronia the virtuous girl loved by and in love with Sextus; the pedantic Stoic philosopher Xerophrates; the ribald but well-connected centurion, the *miles gloriosus*, Sabinus; and the frowning father/uncle the lawyer Licinius. Shakespeare's Roman plays are signaled by the epigraph from *Coriolanus*: "They'll sit by the fire and presume to know what's done i' the Capitol." Trajan goes walkabout in disguise in the manner of the Duke in *Measure for Measure* in order to sound his people's opinions on the presence of Christians at Rome. Pliny and Tacitus, the primary sources for the period, especially for Trajan's approach to the Christians, are glimpsed at the Imperial Games.

Just as it is peopled with canonical figures, the novel bristles with classical texts. The heterogeneity of this vast catalogue of references means that the novel shifts hectically between registers, in much the same manner as *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Quotations from Horace, Virgil, Martial, Tacitus, and Homer occur as elements of casual conversation as well as footnoted set-pieces. Pliny's two letters on the treatment of Christians appear in their canonical English translation as an appendix. These classical texts are marshaled for three reasons. First, to give authenticity to the novel's presentation of Roman life. Second, to fulfill a didactic remit of

transmitting classical knowledge via primary sources. Third, to afford readers the pleasure of recognizing the deeply familiar paradoxically made strange as it appears its original cultural context rather than in, for example, a contemporary British schoolroom. Words from the Book of Common Prayer also make anachronistic appearances, shoehorned into a fantasy of their origins. The stiffest criticism of Lockhart's novel is directed at its extreme 'textiness.' The novel is a suturing together of all the canonical scraps in Lockhart's brain. It is the feature that makes the novel Blackwoodian, authentic and unconvincing all-at-once.

Jeffrey praises *Valerius* in "Secondary Scotch Novels" as the most original of the novels under discussion. In fact he goes so far as to say that it "owes nothing" to the Waverley Novels, which is either a joke at Lockhart's expense or so wrong as to suggest a different sense of influence operating in criticism at this time.⁴⁷ Jeffrey is critical of the classical-historical-novel as an enterprise, however, since classical literature has not transmitted a sense of "the daily life and ordinary habits of the people" that a novel demands. (179) Echoing the Dedicatory Epistle to *Ivanhoe*, Jeffrey points to the impossibility of capturing ancient speech convincingly:

To exclude the tone of modern times, it is without idiom, without familiarity, without any of those natural marks by which alone individuality of character, or the stamp and pressure of the time, can possibly be conveyed, –and runs on, even in the gay and satirical passages, in a rumbling, roundabout, rhetorical measure, like a translation from solemn Latin, or some academical exercitation. (180)

This criticism occurs elsewhere in contemporary reviews and is repeated throughout the nineteenth-century, even by Andrew Lang, Lockhart's most thorough and sympathetic biographer.

⁴⁷ The review in the *London Gazette* for 21st April 1821, structures its comments around the similarities between *Valerius* and Scott's novels: "there are some strong family lineaments in Pona and Meg Merrilies, Boto and Gurth, Xerophrastes and Dominie Sampson." *London Literary Gazette* 222 (1821): 242.

The failure to capture the voice of the Romans, a key problem in the Dedicatory Epistle (fictionally solved by the Wizard of the North's Lucanian necromancy), is the severest and, I would suggest, inevitable criticism of Lockhart's novel. It is unsurprising that the critic who chastised Keats as appropriating the Endymion-Diana myth having "never read a single line of Ovid or of Wieland" would make his own classical characters speak English that sounds freshly construed from the Latin. For Lockhart, who at this time had not travelled to Rome let alone Greece, the classical world was authentically accessed through texts. His facility with languages meant that the classical authors spoke directly to him, "out loud and bold." In *Valerius*, Lockhart writes about the Romans just as might be expected from someone of his education.

Lockhart's devotion to texts and reading also gives shape to the moment in which modern commentators have looked for the novel's psychological climax, namely Valerius' conversion to Christianity. Comparisons with the richer portraiture of Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) have been unkind to *Valerius*.⁴⁸ There is a logic to the conversion that can only be understood in the context of Lockhart's professional critical writing. The protagonist's apostasy, which seems to be the conclusion to which Valerius' natural sympathies tend throughout the novel, is made apparent to him by his experience of *reading* the Gospel of Luke. Amongst the other texts, the scriptural canon makes an appearance in the novel in its original material form: Valerius is handed a scroll by Thraso, a condemned Christian, in his cell the night before the latter meets his death in the newly completed Flavian amphitheater (afterwards known as the Colosseum). Though he is handed the scroll early in the novel, it is not until the mid-point of the

⁴⁸ For example, John Carey in an introduction to James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* which rubbishes the possibility of the author of *Valerius* being capable of producing such a psychologically nuanced work. (James Hogg, *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, ed. John Carey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969). Stanwood Walker, "A False-Start for the Classical-Historical Novel: Lockhart's *Valerius* and the Limits of Scott's Historicism," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 57.2 (2002), 179-209.

second volume, the center of the novel, that he reads it alone in his bedroom. The account reads like a periodical review.

Valerius had expected “some obscure treatise of Asiatic lore, some semi-barbarous exposition of mystical riddles” but “I found myself engaged in the perusal of a plain and perspicuous narrative of facts, written evidently by a man of accomplishment and learning, and in Greek, of which the most elegant penman of these times could have had no occasion to be ashamed.” (II.127) The features of a review (expectations pleasantly confounded, judgment of author, remarks on quality of the material text) are so precisely present that this seems to be intentional self-satire. Lockhart’s description of the reading process is one of increasing wonder and rapture. Having begun with skepticism about the veracity of the incidents related, he finds that his

attention became more and more riveted, and that, occupied with the strange events and sublime scenes it unfolds – and agitated by turns with the pity, the wonder, the terror, and the admiration that matchless story must ever awaken either in believing or hesitating minds, – I had forgotten, for the time, everything beyond the page of the volume on which my finger was fixed. I had read so till the oil of my lamp was well nigh exhausted, and my eyes already began to feel strained, by reason of the feebleness and uncertainty of its light. (130-1)

This epiphanic reading of the original Greek is a knowing but nonetheless sincere testament to the power of solitary reading of numinous texts.

Valerius, then, is preoccupied with the power of texts. The majority of the novel’s quotations and allusions are to the most standard classical authors, staples of the school curriculum and gentlemen’s libraries. However, a remarkable sequence of references opens the third volume, showing the possibility for both naive readings of the classics and the social turbulence caused by Rome’s pagan cults. When the earnest Valerius questions the speed at

which Rubellia appears to transfer affections between suitors, Sabinus prompts him to remember the story of Adonis. Like a good schoolboy he rattles off the following,

“To be sure,” said I, “who is ignorant of the story of Adonis, or of the beautiful verses of Bion –

‘I weep for fair Adonis – for Adonis is no more,
Dead is the fair Adonis–his beauty I deplore;
His white thigh with a tusk of white, the greenwood monster tore,
And now I weep Adonis, –for Adonis is no more.’” (III.15)

Sabinus praises his delivery, “Well spouted, . . . and with an excellent gravity, and most dolorous cadences,” but then deflates this idealized portrayal of chaste grief by reeling off a list of Venus’s subsequent lovers: Mars, Anchises, Vulcan, and “a few more besides” (16). Sabinus’s corrective is Homeric, asserting the full-bloodedness of Homer’s epic mythology over the pretty minor Greek elegy of Bion. Although Venus is a goddess, Sabinus suggests that the epic gives a more accurate portrayal of human nature than the elegy. The scene is played for traditional comic misogyny, Sabinus the voice of experience, who ends up marrying Rubellia himself, tells the “innocent” Valerius to keep his spotless Athanasia away from monstrous Roman women. Lockhart’s juxtaposition of Greek authors, is nonetheless deadly serious.

In 1818, Leigh Hunt’s *Foliage* had been published, containing “Greenwoods” (original poems) and “Evergreens” (translations of classical authors). Introducing the volume, Hunt claimed, “the main features of the book are a love of sociality, of the country, and of the fine imagination of the Greeks.”⁴⁹ Save for the inclusion of Homer, the “Evergreens” offers a collection of translated fragments from Greek pastoral (Theocritus, Bion & Moschus, Anacreon), and two pieces from Catullus. As Stead has noted, Hunt’s knowledge of Greek verse extends beyond the typical schoolboy anthology and Hunt says that he has included these poems to give “the public” an idea of their “real genius and character” which translators had previously failed

⁴⁹ Leigh Hunt, *Foliage* (London: Ollier, 1818), 18. Hunt’s introduction, which is about poetry and cheerfulness, is a manifesto for his classicism.

to convey. Hunt attempts to evade charges of “voluptuousness” and “grossness” for having included Catullus 63. But he calls the poem “one of the most striking lessons ever thrown out against a gloomy and ascetic enthusiasm.” Bion and Catullus feature consecutively in this corner of *Valerius* in order to critique the Hunt circle’s naive use of Greek mythology and the impiety of what Marilyn Butler has called the Marlow group’s “cult of Greek laughter.”⁵⁰

As Butler notes, the concomitant joyous and celebratory “cult of sexuality...shows up in its most unfavorable light the authoritarian, ascetic and life-denying tendencies of Hebraic Christianity.” (131) While the main arc of *Valerius*’s plot is to transplant early Christianity from persecution at Rome to the safety of England’s woodland, Lockhart’s depiction of Roman religion is more nuanced than condemnatory. With a comparative historian’s eye, he shows how ancient theology resembles Christian: the devout Athanasia can sing almost all of a hymn to Apollo to the tune of an “old Delian chant” without blasphemy. (II.63-6) Formal state religion, the ceremonials offered to Jupiter Capitolinus, impress Valerius with their pageantry and order. In the ‘good Romans’ and, significantly, in the lineaments of the busts of canonical authors in the Palatine library, Valerius experiences and discerns sympathy and “intense perception.”⁵¹ Yet in

⁵⁰ Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries*, 129.

⁵¹ Here is Valerius in the library: “Here it was the high filleted front of Homer, that detained, for the first time, the contemplation of one in whose ears, even from earliest infancy, the melodious sublimity of the Maeonian verse had seized and possessed a resting-place of lofty delight. The large eyes of the divine old man seemed, even in sculpture, to be distinctly and visibly blind, while the dreaming serenity of the pale lips below, and the inexpressible sanctity of the towering forehead, revealed how the intense perception at once of the lovely and the great could compensate a thousand fold to the chosen prince of imagination, for all the shut out visions of earthly beauty. There again appeared the large mild visage of Plato, with all the depth of meditative genius slumbering in its noble lineaments, - while, close beside, the stern piercing glance of the imperious Stagyrite appeared, even in stone, to challenge rightful sway and domination. The beautiful face of Pindar, instinct with the intoxication of rapture—the modest majesty of Sophocles—the sarcastic yet noble pride of Aristophanes - and I know not how many likenesses of how many illustrious compeers, in every walk of intellectual exertion, succeeded each other as we passed along—each in his own sphere, reigning by himself; yet all connected

the street with Sabinus, he encounters a wild procession of eunuch priests of Cybele. Their hymn is an “awful music...origin[ating] in hoary woods, and beside old dark rivers rushing through the wilderness.” (III.32) Though Valerius, a good reader of classical authors, recalls Catullus’s “mournful lines” and shudders at the chant’s “continual glorying in the disaster of Atys,” in Rome’s streets the cult is a wild eastern dance (the cult of the Magna Mater had originated in Phrygia), an irruption of noisy paganism which draws people into its public spectacle in a degrading manner. By differentiating between the Catullan text and this pagan cult, the novel doesn’t directly condemn Hunt’s alignment with Atys in *Foliage*, but the reminder of the practices attached to classical texts in their original context points to the civil discordance of atheism.

The most grandiose set-piece of Lockhart’s novel is the 100-page amphitheater scene. Not only is this the first of such scenes that were to become a mainstay of the Roman novels of the Victorian period and from there a staple of sword-and-sandals cinema, but it is also a scene that combines pathos, dramatic tension, and only a few unnecessary detours. It is also the scene in which the novel performs a direct examination of human nature. The episode has two different methodologies for assessing human nature in ancient Rome: it contemplates the crowd, humanity at large, gathered together for entertainment on a scale unprecedented since the fall of Rome; and it stages a quasi-scientific consideration of human versus animal nature.

Lockhart brings Valerius into the Colosseum, where the crowd of 80,000 is the largest gathering the Briton has seen. It makes an inhuman noise, like the “sullen roaring of the illimitable sea” (I. 215) for the episode is calibrated to show how inhumane and barbarous the Romans had become by the time of the Principate. Valerius remarks, “how lavish in cruelty were

together by a certain common air of visible greatness, like so many successive princes, or glorious contemporary heroes of the same mighty empire.’ (II.72-73)

become the favorite pastimes of the most refined of peoples.” As he watches the gladiatorial contest Valerius observes how his fellow-spectators (mostly Romans) are transformed by the spectacle. As his own sympathies are awakened, theirs recede. Watching a female spectator becomes more horrific than watching the show:

the beautiful features...presented a spectacle almost as fearful as that from which I had just averted mine eyes. I saw those rich lips parted asunder, and those dark eyes extended in their sockets, and those smooth cheeks suffused with a steadfast blush...I hated Rubellia as I gazed, for I knew not before how utterly beauty can be brutalized by the throbbing of a cruel heart. (I.223)

The physicality of the effects of the spectacle is a theme of the episode, which takes a scientific turn almost at its climax.

A brief moment of scientific theorizing intrudes upon the moral horror the episode has been calibrated to produce. In the amphitheater Lockhart’s appraisal of human nature becomes physiological. Amidst the trappings of Roman state ceremonial Thraso has pleaded for his life. The story of his conversion to Christianity, a subsequent apostasy under duress, and his renewed determination not to recant his faith, which he hopes can be considered compatible with his oath of allegiance to Trajan, appears to move even the callous Roman crowd to sympathy. However, before Trajan can pass sentence, the crowd is distracted by the capering of “a little bald ape” moping and grimacing around the arena.⁵² Valerius speaks like a curious nineteenth-century gentleman:

Now for myself, who had never before looked upon any creature of this disgusting tribe, and had gathered only some general notion of its appearances, from the treatises of the physiologists, and the narratives of travellers, I could not, indeed, refuse to contemplate at first its motions, with some curiosity and attention; but of a truth, I knew not, after the scene had lasted for a little space, whether to be more humbled within myself by the monkey’s filthy mimickings of the form and attitudes of mankind, or by the display of

⁵² This is an early incidence of what Ian Duncan is talking about in “The Trouble with Man: Scott, Romance, and World History in the Age of Lamarck,” *Romantic Frictions*, ed. Theresa M. Kelley, September 2011, Pars. 1-33, *Romantic Circles*, 6 November 2016. <<http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/frictions/HTML/praxis.2011.duncan.html>>

brutish heartlessness, which burst forth from all that countless multitude, while gazing on that spectacle of humiliation. (I.294-5)

This bizarre and awkward incident, the scientific appraisal of human nature in the Colosseum, is perhaps not the logical answer to Lockhart's question, 'what if Horace had written a novel?' It is, however, the logical result of Lockhart's thoroughgoing insistence that the novel is the technology for showing man his own nature.

IV. “At Home” with the Ancients: Standardized Classics in the 1830s

In late 1831, bibliographer and bibliophile Thomas Frognall Dibdin diagnosed a new constellation of anxieties afflicting London society:

Things are strangely altered of late: and passions and tastes have taken a very opposite tone. Objects, which formerly rivetted attention, and begat attachment, are now considered almost as those of horror and alarm. Fear is the order of the day. To those very natural and long established fears of bailiffs and taxgatherers, must now be added the fear of Reform, of Cholera, and of Books.¹

Amidst the uncertainty surrounding the passage of the reform bill and the advance of cholera across Europe, both of which would reach their crises in London in 1832, Dibdin’s treatise is on the “fear of books.” *Bibliophobia* (1832), a slim volume subtitled “remarks on the present languid and distressed state of literature and the book trade” offers a survey of contemporary British literary commerce in a picaresque journey through the premises of metropolitan booksellers and publishers. In a day’s walk, reminiscent of Horatian satire, the classically named Mercurius Rusticus (a pseudonymous country bibliophile) gathers anecdotal evidence for what appears to be the imminent and catastrophic decline of literature. While the text’s self-satirizing impulse exaggerates the enormity of its protagonist’s discoveries, Rusticus’s observations nonetheless correspond with patterns that literary historians have connected to the social, economic, and political shifts of the late 1820s and 30s. From its eccentric viewpoint, Dibdin’s text testifies to a waning interest in aristocratic book-collecting, the sluggish recovery of the literary market in the wake of the 1825-6 financial crash and that market’s particular stasis amidst the growing political and economic uncertainty surrounding the question of reform.

¹ Thomas F. Dibdin, *Bibliophobia, Remarks on the Present Languid and Depressed State of Literature and the Book Trade* (London: Henry Bohn, 1832), 6; further references are to this edition and parenthesized in the text.

Bibliophobia stands Janus-like in 1831-2, looking backward to a flourishing antiquarian literary market orientated towards the elite and looking apprehensively forward to a literary future with pragmatic, more populist concerns. Cataloging the symptoms of the eponymous malaise (such as sparsely attended auctions or folio volumes gathering dust in bookshops) with reactionary horror, Dibdin detects a crisis of value in literature, one that first becomes apparent in the traffic of rare texts from both the classical and vernacular traditions. This is the end of the enthusiasm for rare books he had christened “Bibliomania” in 1809. *Bibliophobia* also shows, however, how publishers and booksellers began to respond to these changing circumstances. These changes in commercial literary production and literary value, I will show, decisively reshape both the idea of the classic text and the reception of classical literature and culture in British society. Dibdin serves as a starting point for this chapter because he shows how different groups within the literary sphere defined and valued certain texts as classics at this moment.

While bibliomania has received critical attention for the way in which its sufferer-practitioners prized the materiality of texts and performed their ownership of them, it also highlights a crucial aspect of how classical texts were transmitted to nineteenth-century Britain.² For this group, the value of texts from Greco-Roman antiquity primarily inheres in their early-modern European commentaries, print and bindings. The value of the texts is therefore linked to the value of the books which contain them. Emblems of the Renaissance tradition of reading ancient authors, as these books circulated on the pan-European book market they accrued value from the pedigree of their aristocratic owners and became English as they accumulated time on the shelves of English private libraries. Bibliomania itself was necessarily a largely upper-

² Deidre Lynch, “‘Wedded to Books’: Bibliomania and the Romantic Essayists” *Romantic Libraries*, ed. Ina Ferris, February 2004, Romantic Circles, 7 November 2016.

< <http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/libraries/lynch/lynch.html> >

Jon Klancher, *Transfiguring the Arts and Sciences: Knowledge and Cultural Institutions in the Romantic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

middle-class and aristocratic phenomenon on account of the expense of rare and valuable books, yet the new impulse in publishing was to attempt to engender the same affection and enthusiasm on a nationwide scale. Books, and the classics in particular, were about to become beloved, familiar, and domestic objects.

As *Bibliophobia* suggests, the same bookseller-publishers who had catered for this antiquarian vogue and a trade in high-priced commodities attempted to adapt to changing tastes as well as political and economic circumstances. Their change of tack, in step with the imminent expansion of the franchise, was to incorporate a new section of the public and embark on the broader dissemination of knowledge via the mass production of cheap books in serial volumes. As I will show, new works on classical history and culture were a key element of this new programme, standing alongside books about modern and natural history. Similarly, ancient texts were newly available in affordable translation and British classics were reissued in the new format. Not only was the novel included in this scheme that came to be known as “the march of intellect,” but it structured it by suggesting both the popularity of the longform narrative format and the market for these series. For publishers, both ancient and vernacular classics were commodities that could be standardized, mass-produced, and sold to readers not yet familiar with them. For these readers, history and literature became newly accessible as they became both affordable and demystified.

The publication of *Bibliophobia* in 1832, then, marks the midpoint of an important story: it reflects the movement of classical texts and increasingly scientific knowledge about the ancient cultures out of the libraries and schools of the upper echelons of society where they had been normative, to the homes of the middle classes where they became just normal. The novel was a crucial agent of this shift, since in short, ancient culture became novelized. At the same time as

the field of classics was standardizing itself through the commercial production of new translations, cheap but scholarly histories, and archaeological catalogues, the novel also helped to bring classics into more British homes. Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) was a sensational bestseller and a prime example of how classical antiquity moved into nineteenth-century popular culture. Just as classics entered British homes, Lytton is explicitly concerned with making his readers "at home with the past," an opportunity afforded him by the unique conjunction of genre and subject matter. The objects, artifacts, and skeletons yielded by the Pompeian excavations and detailed in a series volume richly furnish and populate the novel, giving a factual and material basis for the novel's representation of ancient manners. In writing a Pompeian novel, Lytton creates a corroborative relationship between fictional and non-fictional material of a different nature to that of the classical novels discussed in previous chapters, with the consequence of stabilizing and standardizing the tropes of the classical. He does so with an awareness of writing in a British novelistic tradition that combines erudition with popularity, updates the sentimental tradition of reading the classics for representations of universal emotions and human nature.

i. Rare Birds: Classics on the Antiquarian Market

When Dibdin notes that "passions and tastes have taken a very opposite tone" in 1831 from the days of "attention" and "attachment", he refers to the aristocratic practice of book collecting and private-library building as well as its brief intensification into bibliomania. In this section I show how personal attachment and commercial value accrue around renaissance editions of ancient classical texts on the antiquarian market as they are made part of British national heritage.

Classics are first of all brought home by the aristocracy. Kristian Jensen has shown that a trans-European network trading in fifteenth-century books emerged in the 1780s. Collectors began to

extend their attentions beyond the early-modern editions of Greek, Roman, and Italian authors to religious and vernacular texts. These books, prized for their age, were prepared for entry into private collections by undergoing transformative material processes (rebinding, washing, extra-illustration) that reconstituted them as eighteenth-century books.³ The treatment of old books demonstrates the old-but-evergreen temporality of classics materially and violently: both text and book are prized for their age, but both are subjected to modernizing practices that fit with the present's idea of oldness.

Dibdin was the chronicler of this moment as well as an expert consultant and agent to great collectors such as the Earl of Spencer. Whilst participation in these practices was exclusive, his celebration of them in a series of quasi-fictional works amplifies, probably more than it reflects, the enthusiasm of antiquarian collectors. In *Bibliomania* (1809) and *The Bibliographical Decameron* (1817) Dibdin had created narratives about book-attachment and book-mania, drawing readers into either a "Bibliographical Romance" (the former) or making them privy to a ten-night conversation (the latter) that elaborated and diffused the pleasures of books. *Bibliophobia* completes and closes this sequence by showing, in the figure of the fictional Rusticus, a Bibliomaniac adrift in a changing world.

In precarious circumstances, Dibdin's 1832 text can be seen to fight a kind of rearguard action for the enjoyment and stewardship of Britain's literary heritage as the preserve of the upper classes.⁴ The text proposes that the literary canon is their preserve in the triple sense that they should physically preserve it, be morally preserved by it, and be distinguished from the rest of society by participation in the rare-books market. The relationship between this group and the canon is multivalent, combining private interests and public display, personal attachment, and a

³ Kristian Jensen, *Revolution and the Antiquarian Book: Reshaping the Past, 1780-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), chapter 4.

⁴ By dint of being incorporated into British collections, the European texts have become British.

sense of responsibility for national literature. More exclusive than explicitly exclusionary, the bibliomaniac activities represented in *Bibliophobia* demonstrate the intrinsic conjunction of intellectual and economic activity, of affective and financial investment in this literary subdivision of antiquarianism.

Bibliophobia's opening reminiscence of "the 'good old times' of Bibliomania" celebrates its exclusivity, presenting bibliomania as a self-consciously coded activity through language that suggests both vaunted privilege and sincere attachment. Rusticus narrates his journey in a highly classicized idiom. The pamphlet is littered with classical quotations and mock-heroic hyperbole aggrandizes literary activities, combining tropes from classical and medieval traditions in an elevated literary register. Rusticus describes the frenzy in which men latterly "hunted hole and corner for black letter, and large paper, and uncut copies of the several works they were in search of." Bloodsports metaphors intertwine with the language of devotion and feeling as he describes his habitual journeys to town for the "season" of book sales as "book pilgrimages" (6, 13); he recounts that he "learned to 'hit my bird'" and "store my larder with a profusion of game" but relates how, alone in his home library, he draws emotional solace from "'my book-gems'" (7). Invoking the coterie's watchwords, the quotation marks deployed in this description also reveal the self-consciousness of this mock-heroic posturing. The bibliomaniacs are a group that make book-love into a simultaneously sociable and private activity. But if collective bibliophilia is conducted with an elevated pomposity that is slightly tongue-in-cheek, individual bibliophilia is more sincere. Nonetheless, even when bibliophiles are in solitary communion with their collections, when the book-love might be at its most simple and authentic, its pleasure seems to derive less from reading a particular book than the comfort and solace of owning and being close

to one's entire library. This mock-heroic self-dramatizing account of book-love is a rare example of classical tropes being appropriate to the subject matter they describe.

The attributes and attraction of a classic text for this group, or the way in which a text becomes truly classic for them, is paradigmatically illustrated in Dibdin's presentation of the case of a particular edition of Livy's Histories. Crucially for this chapter's interest in the novel and its sense of this moment as a tipping point for literary classicism, the tale of the Livy is enfolded into Rusticus's narrative of the recent sale of the Autograph Manuscripts of the Waverley novels. The mock-heroic account contrasts the lackluster auction of Scott's manuscripts in 1831 with the glory days of great literary sales two decades previously, showing how ancient classics eclipse modern. The account is punctuated with cataclysmic epic quotations (Virgil and Statius), a Shakespearean reference and Latin tags intersperse the narrative in a manner that is simultaneously mundane and pedantic. Its register shows, furthermore, how literary activity persists in its recourse to classical frames that are authoritative, authorizing, and exclusively allusive.

Rusticus mentions the sales of famous books, the Valdarfer Boccaccio and the "vellum Livy of Sweynheim and Pannartz," as if his reader will be conversant with the references.⁵ Yet for readers not conversant with these matters, a footnote has been appended to the text by his neighbor, one Cato Parvus. The note tracks the changing value of the 1469 Livy on the rare books market, showing how it circulated. Sold to Sir M. Sykes, Bart. in 1815, the volume commanded a sum of £903; it was bought by dealers Payne and Foss for only £472.10s in 1824 and was subsequently sold by them for 500 guineas; in 1827 it was repurchased on decease of the owner for £262.10s, before reaching its current home: "It is now - and long may it continue -

⁵ Dibdin's ideal reader would be, especially since these sales are described in his own *Bibliographical Decameron* (London, 1817), 3 vols., III, 62).

in the very fine library of the Rt. Hon. Thos. Grenville.” The volume flits between gentlemen’s libraries, public auctions, and booksellers’ premises – between the shelter of private shelves and public appraisals, fluctuating in value and in the pedigree of its owners. The note concludes plaintively, “Could its first English possessor have survived the intelligence, that his DARLING LIVY would one day droop its wings so low?” (10n.) Livy has been transformed from author to book by this avian metaphor: the Italian-printed book itself is the valuable *rara avis*. The rhetorical question reveals the matrix of different values that contribute to the book’s worth. There is the affective attachment of the book’s unnamed “first English possessor,” which is imagined as unalloyed. He, in turn, stands at the head of the series of exchanges that has, over time, made this book containing a classical text, printed by Germans in an Italian monastery part of Britain’s literary heritage. In Dibdin’s conscientious accounting of the prices and the social position of each owner, we see how ownership can confer value on a book: though the price of book has declined (an early symptom of *Bibliophobia*), its peregrinations end with it ensconced in the library of a Whig statesman and trustee of the British Museum, whither it would be bequeathed on his death in 1846.

Parvus’s explanatory note draws attention to how the enthusiastic antiquarian love of detail can open up the exclusive closedness of the antiquarian world. Dibdin has dispersed *Bibliophobia*’s authorship between three personae, in a manner that resembles contemporary antiquarian novels. The ostensible writer, Rusticus, resembles Jonathan Oldbuck in his affective attachments to objects, his tendency towards outsize emotional reactions, and in his ready sympathy with others. Cato Parvus serves as the editor and the advertisement relates that the letter is being published with his encouragement. He adopts a corrective but still supportive position in relation to his friend: his reactions are more moderate, he provides factual

corroboration for Rusticus's observations, yet he is still (as his comment on the Livy shows) affectively engaged by bibliography. Behind these is Dibdin himself, who, in a manner reminiscent of Waverley prefaces, is invoked as the addressee on the title page with the shadowy attribution, "Author of the Bibliomania." Like a historical novel, the narrative is playful with the boundary between information and fiction, between pleasure and didacticism. As Jensen observes, Dibdin's texts offer readers access to the world of antiquarian book collecting, giving them the "important ability to maintain a conversation about books." (135) This didactic and improving impulse in the text, embodied by Parvus, is in fact a key element of Dibdin's literary vocation. Furthermore, the splitting of his persona in *Bibliophobia* reflects the divisions and overlaps between bibliomania and the nascent field of bibliography.

For Jon Klancher Dibdin's well-attended lectures at the Royal Institution, where he had been appointed to curate the newly installed bequest of antiquarian manuscripts from Thomas Astle, presented a distinctly non-narrative version of literary history in a tirade of editions, publication dates, auctions, and reasons why readers should not fear old books.⁶ This (disorganized) impulse towards public instruction is in step with the formation of national libraries as a means of organizing the British public's literary inheritance. Bibliography began to become a public pursuit as people of all classes begin to curate their own libraries.

Dibdin's first work of bibliography was published in 1802, entitled *An Introduction to the Knowledge of Rare and Valuable Editions of the Greek and Roman Classics*. Listing the known printed editions of Greek, Roman, and biblical texts from the fifteenth century to the present, it fulfills many functions: it is a bibliographic record for antiquarians of varying means; it is a catalogue from which those who could afford to could fashion their libraries; and, as an introduction, it seeks to open the subject (and its treasures) to a new public. The first edition sold

⁶ Klancher, *Transfiguring the Arts and Sciences*, 86-92.

out in six weeks. Four more, continually expanded and corrected, were issued before Dibdin's death in 1847.⁷ Its continuing popularity tells us a lot about the reception of classical texts in this bibliophilic moment. Firstly, classical texts acquired as much distinction and value through how they were edited and produced in modern, northern Europe as they derived from their status as ancient works from the Mediterranean cultures. Through transcription, typesetting, and circulation they have been vernacularized. Secondly, the book catalogues texts written in the ancient languages but its title shows the need to qualify the designation "classics" with further descriptors. As I showed in chapter three, by the early nineteenth century the term no longer refers exclusively to texts from the ancient cultures, but instead paradoxically, now refers both to a common Western canon of texts, and a different canon embodying national specificity.

Altogether then, and in spite of their esoteric and eccentric character, Dibdin's works show how a reflexive and historicist interest in books as books, particularly old books as old books, became popularized. It records the simultaneous privatizing and publicizing of literary property, broad processes which took place in different ways across society. When Deidre Lynch argues that the bibliophiles of the 1810s and 20s "appeared to reprivatize th[e] public domain" of the national canon, which had, in the late eighteenth century begun to be viewed as a common cultural inheritance, she refers not just to the aristocratic bibliomaniacs but to members of the middle and working classes too.⁸ For the aristocracy reprivatizing had to do with acquisition and the physical shutting of particular valuable books away. However, non-aristocratic bibliophiles cultivated an anti-bibliomaniacal stance citing their own intensive reading and cherishing of mass-produced books as guarantors of their more profound book-feeling. The content of their personal libraries to some extent resembled the holdings of the great aristocratic

⁷ John Windle and Karma Pippin, *Thomas Frognall Dibdin, 1776-1847: A Bibliography* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1999), 4.

⁸ Lynch, "Wedded to Books", 3.

collections and they took considerable pride in ownership of books. In a manner similar to aristocratic collectors, though, the middle- and lower-class readers imagined the national canon as a scene of private intimacy with books, likewise emphasizing the materiality of the canon and the ownership of the objects themselves.

This privatization and building of personal libraries across classes poses a question to emerging public institutions about how representative they should be of the nation's literary tastes. By the late 1820s, after the popularity and critical reception of Scott, the novel begins to pose a question to both grand and modest collections: does the attachment fostered by novels amongst readers merit its inclusion in either personal or national collections? So far, *Bibliophobia* has revealed how an ancient text garners especial prestige on account of the contours it acquires during centuries of transmission: its material characteristics, ownership, and exchange. But, as chapter three showed, the novel was making a bid for canonical treatment. Was it assimilable to this kind of literary economy? Dibdin suggests that it should have been, but that it was not, since it is at a sale of novels that Rusticus discerns the first symptom of *Bibliophobia*.

ii. The Autograph Manuscripts: Do Novels Belong in Collections?

Novels are anomalous newcomers to the antiquarian market and, with their novelty as their primary characteristic, they are most vulnerable to, and reflective of, changes in fashion. Dibdin's portrayal of the sale of the Waverley Autograph Manuscripts at Richard Evans's auction house in Pall Mall on 19th August, 1831 shows that novels are wanted by neither private collectors nor public institutions despite popular and critical acclaim. In an age of literary celebrity novel manuscripts are the opposite of editions of ancient texts, their value should inhere in their immediacy: as 'autographs' they are in the hand of a still-living author and are unique.

The valuable “black-letter” editions prized by the antiquarian market were neither original nor as ancient as the texts they transmitted. The Waverley manuscripts pose a problem of literary value to the market. Dibdin appears to hope that the manuscripts will fit into the index already established for the antiquarian market by sales of old books and the papers of other men of letters. The sale’s failure provides commentary on both Scott’s status in the early 1830s and the novel’s relation to the national literary canon, to the idea of it as a classic, at this moment.

Significantly, Rusticus elides the differences between the new manuscripts and the old printed books, between novels and classics. His outraged tirade against absent, aristocratic former-bibliophiles shows, once again, the contemporary discourse the Waverley novels shared with classical texts:

Are the fire and spirit and emulation of our young nobility and gentry quite extinct? Is the love of legendary lore wholly defunct? Are the gewgaws of jewellery, the tawdriness of furniture, the trickery of horse dealing, the brittleness of Dresden and Sèvres ware, and ‘such like,’ to form paramount objects of purchase and speculation, by those, whose purses are usually well lined with pistoles? In what an age of effeminacy among men, and of utter nonchalance and apathy among women, do we now live! (8)

Fire, spirit, and legendary lore are all considered commonalities between Scott’s novels and classical texts, they are the properties of the latter that make the former modern classics. With the production and appreciation of great literary works long indexed to a masculinized conception of society’s health and vigor, Dibdin records a reversal in the way novel-reading was viewed. In view of the eighteenth-century anxieties over novel-reading and -writing as a feminized activity, it is significant to see a *lack* of interest in novels indexed to social degeneracy. The first two questions here invoke classical exemplarity (“emulation”) alongside the recent vogue for British history and folklore, connecting the two in a way that reflects Scott’s vernacular classicism explored in chapter two.

Nonetheless, the great fallacy in the contemporary reception of the Waverley Novels, that they so definitively embodied contemporary ideas of the universal that they would be perennially popular, has been exposed, namely Scott's neat trick of making what was novel about his novels both the sense that they weren't new and that they would speak to all men for all time. The fashion for the universal has waned by the 1830s. As Dibdin remarked in the first quotation above "passions and tastes" have changed and those who have the resources to participate in fashionable life have moved on from books and Scott. The list of new objects of desire (particular furniture and special porcelain) contains objects less durable than literary classics, objects that ironically furnish both real houses and the drawing rooms of the novels of fashionable life that typify the late 1820s and early 30s. Fiction plays a crucial role in the interplay of money and taste, reflecting but also inciting consumer desire.⁹ For Dibdin, then, this collapse between life and fiction shows how each mirrors the crisis of the other. Just as reading both Scott's novels and classical texts was supposed to instill moral uprightness, so too did purchasing those texts. If the moral character of the upper classes is firmly reflected in its consumption, the shift of desire away from valuable literary objects and the failure to value others is indicative of social degeneracy.

The Waverley manuscripts bring in only a combined total of £317, around one fifth of their estimated price, which Rusticus interprets as a calamity, "Excidat ille dies aevo, heu postera credant/Saecula!"¹⁰ This quotation from Statius, with its reference to centuries of posterity, fits with the *o tempora, o mores* thrust of Dibdin's satire, yet its grand scale is at least somewhat

⁹ Richard Cronin, *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824-1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).

¹⁰ Dibdin's footnote gives the amounts fetched by each novel: the top seller was *Rob Roy* in perfect condition for £50; the lowest a tie between *Ivanhoe* and *The Monastery* (both incomplete) which sold for £12. Evans' account book of the sale is available in the British Library and it shows that Dibdin didn't get all these amounts correct in *Bibliophobia*.

appropriate for the next target of his invective. For all the ire directed at the *ton*, Rusticus diagnoses *Bibliophobia* in another quarter: “‘What’ (said I to myself,) ‘not one specimen for Bodley—for the British—for the London—for the Royal—for the Advocates—for Dublin?’” (11) The libraries and institutions that were in the process of becoming the homes of national collections had neglected to purchase any one of the 14 Waverley manuscripts offered in separate lots. Cato Parvus comments further, and only slightly more objectively, in a footnote: “There is, I fear a sad state of torpor—a chilling indifference to the genuine book-feeling—possessing many of the guardians of the above several public repositories. How hesitatingly, and how rarely, are purchases made!’ (12n.) These comments point to a new, institutional culture of collecting, collections held and curated to create and conserve a literary heritage in trust for the nation.¹¹ When Dibdin accuses them of failing to calibrate their system to “genuine book-feeling,” and accuses them of “torpor,” it is partly an unfavorable comparison with the personal enthusiasm and massive resources directed towards private libraries by great aristocratic collectors such as Spencer, but it is also a comment on the question of how, when, and why certain literary works might be incorporated into a national collection. For all the work that the Waverley novels have done to “legitimize” the novel as a respectable literary form, for all that they have become British classics, there appears to be no place for the manuscripts in the national collections.

There are many reasons why this may be. The sale appears to have been mismanaged by Scott’s agents.¹² Parvus narrates how the Advocates Library had offered £1,000 for the set. This offer was refused by Scott’s creditors, who requested double that sum. Upon refusal, the

¹¹ Not all of these libraries were public at this point. The Advocates Library, for example, though now part of the National Library of Scotland, was a private collection. It’s interesting that Dibdin saw these professional societies as performing a public function.

¹² They were also directing their energies towards the Magnum Opus edition, an authoritative, classicized scholarly reprint of the novels that generated significantly more income than the one-off sale of manuscripts ever could have done.

manuscripts were sent to London for auction. Parvus comments: “We know there are such things as ‘out-standing one’s market.’ The general impression was, at the outset, that they would average £50. a lot.” (12.n) This misreading of the market was based on a recent sale of letters and manuscripts but it appears that Scott’s advisors overreached, possibly for reasons of financial expediency in these post-bankruptcy years. It is possible that the manuscripts’ immediacy was a double-edged sword: they were not old enough to warrant interest, or the fact that Scott was still living and writing novels in 1831 meant that their value could not be fixed.

Another factor likely to play into this failed sale is an internal differentiation within the British market too great for Scott to bestride, certainly at this moment and even in perpetuity. Even without Scott as a member of the Faculty, the Advocates Library in Edinburgh would have been the appropriate repository for the “Scotch novels.” While Scott shaped and overshadowed the entire cultural sphere in Edinburgh and was in himself an institution, in London’s broader marketplace, his celebrity and the popularity of the novels especially could appear to be more of a passing, lucrative fad.¹³ Ever-sympathetic towards a fellow antiquarian, Rusticus simultaneously shames his fellow Englishmen and casts Scott as a provincial rejected by metropolitan elites: “The man, whose genius had supplied such abundant food for delightful recreation and instruction, for the last thirty-years, had the mortification to learn that the autographic taste of his vaunting Southern neighbours was a capricious impulse - a childish and fickle conceit - without intelligible motive or object.” (12-13) The presentation of the Waverley sale within *Bibliophobia* is significant because it shows, first, that the antiquarian book market was not ready to assimilate the novel into its indexes of value and, second, that one of that

¹³ See Ian Duncan, *Scott’s Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) or, for a contemporary satire on Scott’s faddishness, Sarah Green’s *Scotch Novel Reading: or, Modern Quackery, a Novel Really Founded Upon Facts by a Cockney* (London, 1824).

market's most vocal spokespersons thought that at least the manuscripts of Scott's novels should be.

In Dibdin's view, the sale of the Autograph Manuscripts ought to have enacted a canonization in itself, one reliant on a kind of literary value derived from proximity to the figure of an author enshrined as a totem of national culture. In the event, the market is unable to accommodate the idealized contours of this particular lot. The sale places the manuscripts in a kind of evaluative limbo in which they are sold but not taken off the market. They end up in booksellers premises, deferred for later sale. The episode shows that, despite his runaway popularity, even Scott's novels fall at this early hurdle of canonization because, despite the best efforts of publishers and critics the novel does not yet have its own made-to-measure section in the figurative library of the national canon.

I have been arguing through the second half this dissertation that the canonization of the novel is shaped by the classical tradition's continuing influence on the way in which the literary sphere imagines itself and promotes its products. Authors, editors, and publishers all still see themselves as working in a continuous tradition of literary production that begins in antiquity and moves through cycles of efflorescence and decline. As I've mentioned before, this happens through the dual yet contradictory processes of imagining analogies between classical past and modernity, and constructing a progressive tradition leading forward from antiquity. In order to assimilate modern literature into this tradition by making the case that the best new writing was analogous to great ancient works, they emphasize the similarities between new writing and classical literature by adorning books with (standard) classical embellishments, pointing to the commonalities in reviews, and translating elements of classical culture into contemporary genres.

Bibliophobia records the apparent breakdown, or, at least, the disruption of this constructed continuity in the face of financial crisis.

The slowing of the market in both ancient and modern books, the exhaustion of the model and perhaps also the metaphor, is described to Rusticus by the bookseller Henry Foss through an analogy between ancient and modern literature: “Modern books and ancient books – the Row and the Via Appia – are equally destitute of attraction. The Reform, Sir, the Reform, or perhaps booksellers, like the Romans, have had their day.” (29) In this construction, places as well as books signify the long tradition of London publishing and the history of the Roman Empire. Though Foss conducted business in Pall Mall, “the Row” is the medieval center of London publishing in Paternoster Row by St Paul’s. In the same way as Anna Barbauld imagined a future North American (or Macaulay his New Zealander) contemplating the ruins of London, the Row is imagined into picturesque ruin like the Via Appia. There is a sense of inevitability in this invocation of *translatio imperii*. The force of the analogy is to minimize the difference between London and Rome, binding ancient and modern together more tightly in their decline as they both become sites of past greatness, as if the Reform might be only the symptom rather than the cause of the end of an epoch for the trade. It is testament to the dual view of modern society as both analogue and heir to antiquity that the inevitable cyclical decline also breaks a continuous linear tradition. As Dibdin notes, the recalibration of the market during the Reform years would be distinctly miniaturized by comparison.

iii. “A revolution in the art and traffic of bookselling”

Years before Dibdin, but approaching a ruinous precipice of his own, Archibald Constable had outlined a scheme to extend the reach of the book trade to new sectors of the population. The

tone of his exposition displays capitalist excitement at expanding the British market and readership. The scheme also, crucially, outlines a wholesale novelizing of literary production. Lockhart, who was present at the scheme's inception at Abbotsford in May 1825, writes up Constable's plans in 1837 as "nothing less than a total revolution in the art and traffic of bookselling" and an imaginative reformulation of the "philosophy of the trade" envisioned with "exulting and blazing fancy."¹⁴ Constable opens his proposal by making an important distinction between literature and literary commerce, the one stretching back to antiquity, the other very modern: "Literary genius may, or may not, have done its best; but printing and bookselling, as instruments for enlightening and entertaining mankind, and, of course, for making money, are as yet in mere infancy. Yes, the trade are in their cradle." (28) His proposal to advance the trade will be to levy a metaphorical tax on newly quantified sectors of population, ripe for entertainment, moral improvement, and profit.

The plan is based on a fiscal document, the "annual schedule of assessed taxes", showing that the book trade has failed to capitalize on the "hundreds of thousands" of people paying tariffs on commodities. Although Constable's methodology is based more on numerical rhetoric rather than on rigorous statistics, he is beginning to "aggregate" the population in a manner identified by Mary Poovey as characteristic of the 1830s.¹⁵ A figurative book-tax will be levied on lower classes capitalizing on both their large numbers and the perceived need for their moral improvement. Constable envisages the production of excellent, cheap books that would be not

¹⁴ John Gibson Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1837-8), 7 vols., VII, 28; subsequent references are to this edition and are parenthesized within the text.

¹⁵ Mary Poovey remarks upon "the aggregation so essential to the constitution of the social body in the 1830s" in her study of James Phillips Kay's statistical accounting of the Irish population in Manchester in the 1830s Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation 1830-1864* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 21.

only mass-produced, but also sold in a series to incentivize purchases and keep revenue steady throughout the year:

A 3 shilling or half-crown volume every month, which must and shall sell, not by thousands or tens of thousands, but by hundreds of thousands—ay, by millions! Twelve volumes in the year, a halfpenny of profit upon every copy of which will make me richer than the possession of all the copyrights of all the quartos that ever were, or will be, hot-pressed! Twelve volumes, so good that millions must wish to have them, and so cheap that every butcher's callant may have them, if he pleases to let me tax him sixpence a week! (31)

It is this kind of exuberant sales projection that upends the model of literary value mourned by Dibdin. Here Constable foreshadows the languishing quartos that the bibliophile noticed at Paternoster Row and imagines a Bibliomania specifically the opposite of Dibdin's rarefied pursuit.

Furthermore, the series will furnish libraries for houses of all sizes. Books will be as essential to a home as salt to a kitchen: ““But if I live for half-a-dozen years, I'll make it as impossible that there should not be a good library in every decent house in Britain as that the shepherd's ingle-nook should want the *saut-poke*. A, and what's that?”” he continued, warming and puffing, ‘Why should the ingle-nook itself want a shelf for the novels?’” Constable's fiscal metaphor allows him to imagine literary sales penetrating every level of society: just as even the shepherd pays a tax on the bag of salt by his fireplace, so too should even the humblest dwelling contain a library. The vision of a shelf of novels in the shepherd's ingle-nook shows that the genre was foundational to a domestic library.

Constable's Miscellany, as the annual series was to be called, was to alternate fiction with non-fiction across its volumes and would enlist known and respected authors. Listening to the plan, Scott remarks wryly that Constable will become “the grand Napoleon of the realms of *print*” (31) at the head of a modern literary empire rather than an ancient one. In its uniformity,

however, a series of volumes would resemble an edition of classical texts and the idea was to be weighty, authoritative, and erudite with just the right amount and kind of pleasure. Fiction would be enfolded with non-fiction and each would resemble the other. In this way Constable's scheme anticipates both the vogue for producing cheap series that increased as parliamentary reform became inevitable and the early Victorian periodical.

iii. Classics in Series: Just Another Sort of Knowledge?

Constable's idea of a library in each house was pursued with alacrity in a variety of series produced between 1827 and 1834 that were grouped together in "The March of Intellect." The status and value of classical knowledge are distinctively and explicitly altered at this juncture as it enters the homes of buyers in a different format from either the schoolbook or the collectible renaissance edition. Within the limits of their 300-page duodecimos, the non-fiction series condensed and aggregated classical knowledge. Through mass production, sales, and circulation they played a part in standardizing it across the population, too. The series therefore reaffirm antiquity's social and cultural value while diluting it by making classics just another type of knowledge. Yet the various forms in which classical culture circulated across different series (translation, history, biography, catalogue, for example) were devised for different political and/or commercial objectives and, accordingly, take different shapes and produce different effects.

To understand the diffusive trajectories of classical knowledge in the nineteenth century it is important to recognize that these various series aimed to improve the newly aggregated population by circulating specialized knowledge on the petty commodity market. It was what Simon Goldhill has described as a "top-down" venture in circulating classical knowledge across

the population: topics were selected and the majority of books were written by university-educated scholars, journalists, and clergymen.¹⁶ The importance of classical history and literature as the foundation of education was uncontested amongst these men, indeed they were the guardians of its supremacy. Nonetheless, their commercial activity allowed their knowledge to circulate at least amongst the lower middle class purchasers of these series and find a broader audience.

In 1827, with Brougham as Chairman, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK) commissioned Charles Knight to begin the *Library of Useful Knowledge*. Cheaply priced in weekly numbers at sixpence, the volumes were explicitly conceived to provide specialized knowledge to those for whom there had hitherto been no means to access it. The *Library of Useful Knowledge's* titles therefore intersperse standard curricular knowledge with more practical treatises. Its titles for 1829 are *The history of Greece from the earliest times to its final subjection to Rome*, the two-part *Art of Brewing*, and *The Horse*. A two-part *History of Rome*, *On Probability*, and *A History of the American Revolution* followed in 1830. These combinations indicate the continuing value of classical knowledge in educational programs but also show how other types of knowledge were equated with it.

The more conservative publishers, without the backing of a political organization and relying solely on the commercial appeal of their products, conceived of both their epistemological and political missions in more modest terms. The general consensus across accounts of this moment is that John Murray's *Family Library*, begun in 1829, was preeminent

¹⁶ Lorna Hardwick places “lived experience” alongside and as check on “‘top-down’ approaches that assume it is always what Goldhill has described as ‘high-level intellectual, theological, university-led argument’ that is being mediated instrumentally into popular culture through ‘lower’ art forms.” Lorna Hardwick, “Radicalism and Gradualism enmeshed: Classics from the Grass-roots in the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century Britain” in Edith Hall and Henry Stead, eds., *Greek and Roman Classics in the British Struggle for Social Reform* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 23.

in terms of both the quality of the books and popular success. During his *Bibliophobia* excursion, Dibdin enters the Albemarle Street premises with the observation that, “I have long considered Mr Murray as the greatest ‘FAMILY’ man in Europe; and was therefore not surprised to find him surrounded by an extensive circle of *little ones*.” (31) This play on the domesticity of the series’ title reveals the conservative orientation of the series as well as Dibdin’s elitist literary biases. The *Family Library* suggests a collection of texts suitable for fireside reading by readers of all ages and both sexes. With this image of unity and continuity, the series aims to diffuse knowledge only within discrete, easily comprehended, and uncontentious units across the country. It is reassuringly safe.

Despite the cuteness, Dibdin’s diminutive personification of Murray’s books as small offspring reflects the former’s view that the cheap books enterprise, the production and sale of new duodecimo volumes, is subordinate to the great business of selling pedigreed quartos and folios. He later describes the production of the *Cabinet Cyclopaedia* for Longman as the work of “a whole army of Lilliputians” taking place “below stairs” at 39 Paternoster Row (39). Both the allusion to Swift and the social subordination in his description of this mass production indicate condescension towards the enterprise at least in literary, if not political, terms.

Nonetheless, the *Family Library* did extend knowledge to new constituencies. Under the editorship of Lockhart, who directed the production of monthly volumes for five years while also editing the *Quarterly Review*, the series made the work of the publisher’s best writers available at a fraction of previous prices. On one hand, at five shillings per volume, the *Family Library* was more than twice the two-shilling price the SDUK eventually settled on and many times more than the sixpence Constable had fantastically envisioned taxing the butcher’s boy. On the other, when compared with the contemporary price of a new three-volume novel (31s 6d or 1.5

guineas), these books were a commercial innovation.¹⁷ It was, however, unsustainable. Even Murray failed here: by 1834 his series had been remaindered to Tegg. The enterprise failed not least because the series cannibalized their publishers backlists and had proved so popular that publisher after publisher had jumped on the bandwagon and saturated the market. Bulwer Lytton comments in *England and the English* (1833): “after showing us the illimitable ingenuity of compilation, [the series] have at length fallen the prey of their own numbers, and buried themselves amongst the corpses of the native corses they so successfully invaded.” This grisly Burkean metaphor suggests that an ersatz group of replicas have diminished the authenticity of English literature.

Yet while the market existed, a crucial and popular way in which classical knowledge circulated through the non-fiction libraries was as historical narrative or biography. It is here that these works are most clearly compared to novels, at least by editors and reviewers, if not authors. The second volume of the *Family Library*, which followed Lockhart’s adaptation and abridgement of Scott’s *Life of Napoleon*, was *The Life and Actions of Alexander the Great* by John Williams. Issuing consecutive *Lives* of two imperial adventurers, the one so modern as to be barely historical, the other ancient and almost mythical, attests to Lockhart’s conviction that biography and history were to be the most effective genres for a project that had to balance explicit didacticism with commercial appeal.

While the volume costs five shillings, the value of its contents is expressed in the discourse of improvement habitual to reviews. Williams makes a special case, though, for the value of facts to his young readers: “But as there is something more wholesome and invigorating to the mind, in the naked perception of truth, than in all the glowing colours of fancy, I trust that the

¹⁷ William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

following narrative may in some degree attract the attention of the mere English reader.” This championing of fact implies the further constituencies of intended readers that the book may improve: novel readers and those unschooled in classical languages, categories that overlap not only with each other, but with the “youthful reader” and the lower-class reader. This is evidence of the residual tendency of reviewers to see the reading public as divided into two categories, the classically educated reader and everyone else, despite the fact that, as I’ve shown in chapters two and three, the reception of Scott and the promotion of novels in periodicals indicate that this distinction begins to break down in the 1810s and 20s.

Williams, an undergraduate friend of Lockhart’s at Balliol, was in the business of educating the sons of those who could afford it. He had been a clergyman and tutor in Wales until he was appointed the first Rector of the Edinburgh Academy at its foundation in 1827. *Blackwood’s* observed that this made for a definitive, scholarly *Alexander* though one that prioritized erudition and improvement over pleasure: “the language is full of muscle and vigour but there is a considerable deficiency of ease and grace, which indeed are seldom acquired by anyone without much more practice in writing than the professional labours of Mr Williams can be supposed to have left room for.”¹⁸ For all that the aim of the volume was to “invigorate” and “improve”, critical criteria (influenced by commercial concerns) continue to keep the reader’s enjoyment in mind. For readers and critics, Williams may have gone too far from the historical romance from which he distinguishes his work. Its standards still appear to dominate discussion of historical narrative. Other early volumes in the series seem to have better fulfilled the Aristotelian criteria. Milman’s *History of the Jews* (1829) provides “delight, instruction, and comfort” in recontextualizing material familiar from biblical reading. *Blackwood’s* praises its style with the accolade, “rarely has profound research been disguised under a more charming

¹⁸ *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 157, 1829, Part II, 421.

appearance of easy and rapid eloquence,” and ascribes the work the “rank of an English classic.” (424) This ascription of classical status seems to reinforce the idea that a “classic” has become in this moment something that tells what is already known, that heightens the sense of the familiar, in a new and/or accomplished manner.

v. Classics for All the Family

The *Family Classical Library (FCL)* is perhaps the most direct attempt to put classical texts into the hands and onto the shelves of those to whom they had been most inaccessible. Begun in 1830, its full title is *The Family Classical Library; or English Translations of the Most Valuable Greek and Latin Classics*. While the ‘family’ in the title suggests conservatism, this library of translations does not condescend to the “mere English reader.” Produced by the respected classical editor and printer Abraham Valpy, who produced the Delphin Classics, *FCL* was also supported by Colburn and Bentley, the Whig-allied publishers who produced much of the notable fiction of the late 1820s and 30s.¹⁹ Its prospectus makes pragmatic claims for classical translations as both “valuable” and “useful” to many different types of reader. First, it is valuable to “those who are desirous of obtaining a knowledge of the most esteemed authors of Greece and Rome, but possess not the means or leisure for pursuing a regular course of study.”²⁰ The terms in which the prospective readership is described here are closer to those of the *SDUK* or the *Edinburgh Review* than those of *Blackwood’s*. The reader without either the “means” or “leisure” to pursue classical study encompasses the worker, those who are not able read the classical languages, those whose present occupation precludes their keeping up languages once acquired, and scholars looking for “occasional assistance.” The agency ascribed to men “desirous” of

¹⁹ Dibdin visits Valpy in *Bibliophobia* to inquire of the sale of the Delphins and finds him very low.

²⁰ Abraham Valpy, *Prospectus of the Family Classical Library* (London: 1830), 3.

knowing or renewing their acquaintance with these texts is positive. Women's access to the texts must be similarly mediated: "females" are specifically cited as a group for whom the only access "to the valuable stores of antiquity is through the medium of correct translation." (4) The prospectus reproduces the following snippet from the *Cambridge Chronicle*: "This work, from its reasonable price [4/6] will be the means of diffusing a knowlege [sic] of ancient literature among numbers of individuals to who it would be otherwise unattainable." (8)

Pragmatism and utility infiltrate even the prospectus's strongest statement of the undiminished normative force of classical education in 1830. Its quotation of Vicesimus Knox shows an accommodation to modern life. Translations will allow the man "engaged in other pursuits...to 'retain a tincture of that elegance and liberality of sentiment which a mind acquires by the study of the Classics, and which contributes more to form the true gentleman than all the supposed ornaments of modern affectation.'" (3) The syntax of the embedded quotation is ambivalent: is the "tincture" is sufficient in itself to produce elegance and liberality of sentiment, or might that be just another modern affectation? No matter: classics is now competing with other disciplines within "general education", with demanding work schedules, and with increasingly diverse literary pastimes.

The translation series does, however, include a couple of conservative circuit-breakers: the collection has curated the selection of authors in order to fulfill the "family" brief of the series's title. Those included are those who may be read "with propriety by the youth of both sexes." That certain classical texts can be either politically or morally dangerous to women and children was implied in the idea of "correct translation" and is supported by the significant absence of Ovid (and other erotic poets) from the series. This kind of policing is a further reminder of the fact that the editors of these series are speaking more to the series's subscribers and potential

subscribers than directly to their potential readers themselves. Publishers and critics perceive themselves as the gatekeepers of the classical tradition and offer reassurances that the material is not incendiary: the *Weekly Free Press* comments, “We see no reason why this work should not find its way into the boudoir of the lady, as well as into the library of the learned.”²¹ The idea of the classics getting into female spaces and women getting intimate with the classics requires an unimpeachable selection.

Finally, the series has its own aspirations to vernacular grandeur. Though a translation series is aimed at a non-elite audience, “all those who are incapable of drawing the golden stream of ancient lore from its fountainhead” (as the *Imperial Magazine* put it), steps have been taken to prevent the *FCL* from being a thing of lead. The series aims to be a compendium of the best English translations of classical works. Its *Aeneid* is Dryden’s, its Tacitus is Murphy’s, and volumes XVII and XVIII contain translations of Horace by a remarkably catholic pantheon of British writers: Dryden, Pope, Swift, Milton, Cowper, Johnson, Chatterton, Addison, Lord Byron, Croly, Barry Cornwall, James Cam Hobhouse, and Leigh Hunt, amongst others. The volumes are consistently praised for their neat handsomeness. Such is their appeal that the *Northern Whig* suggests that they would “almost induce the indolent to give it a perusal; and lead those to some knowlege [sic] of classical literature, who had scarcely before extended their studies beyond the three octavos of a novel.” (15) The connection drawn here between the books as attractive commodities and the novel-reader reveals residual suspicion of the superficiality of both novels themselves and the forces that drive the literary market. Novel readers may be enticed by seeing “the ancient classics...placed before the public in...cheap, fascinating dress,”

²¹ Quoted in Fiske, *Heretical Hellenism: Women Writers, Ancient Greece, and the Victorian Popular Imagination* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2008), 21.

an indication that the promoters of classical literature now see their texts as commodities, even as they condescend to the fiction market which their own model attempts to emulate.

vi. Multimedia Non-fiction: *The Library of Entertaining Knowledge*

The alternation of fiction and non-fiction in a cheap series had been integral to Constable's plan for his *Miscellany*. Though his scheme was never realized, his intuition was proved correct by the experience of the non-fiction series. After two years of *Useful* publications, the SDUK found it necessary to introduce the *Library of Entertaining Knowledge (LEK)* in 1829. Clad in buff and blue Whig livery these duodecimos cost two shillings and were conceived, according to the *Edinburgh Review* for "purpose of turning to some account the reading of that large class, in every rank of the community, who are not averse to all reading, but will consent only to read what is amusing." (183) This statement shows, once again, the desire to reform the habits of the general reader, or at least to direct their energies more profitably. Here, and across the materials associated with the non-fiction series, reading solely for amusement seems to be the vice of women, young people, the degenerate, and the lower classes. While novels are not the only reading material of this group, they loom large despite the fact that champions of fiction of assorted stripes (Murray, *Blackwood's*, Lockhart, Bentley, Colburn – those, in fact, who profit from it) believe that reading the right fiction is a means of improvement.

The novel's continued entanglement in the notion of unprofitable reading makes it possible to infer here that, by 1829, novels are recognized as the literature that circulates with the greatest penetration, across class divisions and in the greatest volume. That, in fact, it is the novel on which these libraries are modeling themselves. The novel is therefore working in a dialectic with non-fictional genres. it adopts, adapts, and popularizes the descriptive, ethnographic functions of

eighteenth-century histories only to make them available as recognizable and reliable tropes to be re-assimilated by non-fiction in these cheap series in the nineteenth century.

While the *Family Library* had pinned its hope to amuse and engage readers of novelized narrative prose in histories and biographies, the *LEK* tends more to commandeer the novel's descriptive capacities. Though two early volumes, *The pursuit of knowledge under difficulties* (1830-1) instrumentalize the Society's self-improving mission and two more, *Criminal trials* (1832-5), authenticate the fashionable Newgate novels with accounts of true crime, the series tends more towards place- and object-centric material. *LEK* adapts the show-and-tell approach of the *LUK*'s scientific treatises to produce engraving- and woodcut-rich volumes showcasing various topics. The series opens with Charles Knight's own *The menageries: quadrupeds* [sic] *described and drawn from living subjects*, which makes a spectacle and popular entertainment out of what might have been called natural history in another series. Ethnographic volumes include *The New Zealanders* (1830), *The Hindoos* (1834-5), *The Chinese* (1836), and *The Modern Egyptians* (1836-7). The descriptive impetus and the commitment to illustration tie these volumes to reality through objects. Ancient culture therefore circulates both within and via the *LEK* predominantly as collections of archaeological artifacts. The books serve as figurative showcases, miniaturizing, replicating, and circulating museum objects. Six volumes are devoted to the collections of the British Museum, including two volumes on the Elgin Marbles. Produced up to 1838, the *LEK* offers a fairly accurate survey of trends in British popular culture in the 1830s, showing how objects and discourses highly valued by the elites can be reprocessed for a broader audience.

Pompeii was a classical subject especially appropriate for the *LEK*'s popularizing treatment. The city was accorded its own two-volume set, titled just *Pompeii* without any

justificatory padding (subtitles, epigraphs, other endorsements) crowding the title page. As the work of numerous historians of British popular culture has shown, from the opening of excavations in 1748, the popular imagination was in thrall to Pompeii, the story of its destruction translated into poems, plays, paintings, dioramas, and pyrotechnic shows.²² In the early nineteenth century, finds from the continuing excavations were reported in the press and, in 1817, the archaeologist William Gell had produced a sumptuous two-volume collection of plates and descriptions of the city's treasures.

So powerful was the appeal of the city that in some contexts it appears to have transcended the designation 'classical' and become a self-contained cultural entity, ensconced in British culture and decoupled from the mundane routines of the British classical heritage such as language-learning. It presented a new version of ancient culture that resembled modern Italy more than ancient Rome. Pompeii offered a richly colored treasure house of artifacts that departed so overwhelmingly from ideas of what was considered 'classical' that it mediates a new conception of the ancient world as possessing an everyday life, different yet comparable to the present. Pompeii was interpreted by elite and popular culture simultaneously, being endlessly repackaged and replicated.

The two *LEK* volumes, then, constituted the four-shilling tour of the city. Opening with a meditation on the limits of the historical imagination and the fact that the past can only appear in the present as images distorted by present preoccupations and the passage of time, the introduction wishes for a magic device to look into the past, noting that it would find a ready audience in contemporary Britain:

If the romantic fictions of the middle ages could be realized, which tell of mirrors formed with magic art to represent what had formerly passed, or was passing, in distant parts of

²² See Nicholas Daly, "The Volcanic Disaster Narrative: From Pleasure Garden to Canvas, Page, and Stage," *Victorian Studies* 53, 2 (2011), 255-85.

the earth, the happy discoverer might soon make his fortune in this age of exhibitions. What exhibition could be found more interesting than a camera-obscura, which should reflect past incidents of historical or private interest, and recall, with the vividness and minuteness of life, at least the external characteristics of long-past ages.²³

Pompeii itself is a camera obscura of the ancient world, offering historical and private materials to view in an undifferentiated manner. Its discovery is coextensive with history's interest in the private and domestic sphere and the rise of the novel.

Pompeii's temporality, too, is unique amongst classical ruins. Burial had spared the site "the ravages of the barbarian conquerors of Italy, and the sacrilegious alterations and pillagings of modern hands." (3) Pompeii effectively telescopes historical distance, erasing the accretions of intervening centuries. For tourists, Pompeii provided an opportunity to experience the materiality of the classical world unmediated by centuries of tradition. For the reader, *Pompeii* will provide the opportunity to

See a flourishing city in the very state in which it existed nearly eighteen centuries ago: – the buildings as they were originally designed, not altered and patched to meet the exigencies of newer fashions; the paintings undimmed by the leaden touch of time; household furniture left in the confusion of use; articles, even of intrinsic value, abandoned in the hurry of escape, yet safe from the robber, or scattered about as they fell from the trembling hand, which could not pause or stoop for its most valuable possessions: and, in some instances, the bones of the inhabitants, bearing sad testimony to the suddenness and completeness of the calamity which overwhelmed them. (5)

The immediacy of the remains created by the entire city being frozen at the same time in the cataclysmic eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, brings both quotidian objects and the ordinary people who owned and used them to the fore. To some extent, the "suddenness" of Pompeii's destruction turns the linear and vertical idea of the classical tradition on its side, creating a horizontal parallelism between classical past and the present. The "completeness" of the disaster, sparing neither rich nor poor, means that Pompeii brings into focus the everyday life and work of

²³ William Clarke, *Pompeii* (London: Library of Entertaining Knowledge, 1831-2) 2 vols., I, 3; subsequent references are to this edition, parenthesized in the text.

those usually occluded by the classical tradition's tendency to prioritize the texts and matter of public life.

The *LEK*'s cross-class didactic programming produced this book in order to make these materials accessible "to the English reader" and to correct an omission in the existing accounts and grand books such as Gell's, namely the "interesting branch of enquiry connected with the numerous articles which have been found, throwing light upon the private life of the Italians in the first century." (5) The first volume lays out the city's situation and public spaces (walls, gates, forum, temples, baths, theaters, and the amphitheater) while the second focuses on domestic architecture and interiors. Throughout, however, illustrations of the objects found in these spaces draw attention to the people of all classes who lived and worked in them. The introduction quotes a French visitor, M. Simond, who, noting the presence "of a new altar of white marble, exquisitely beautiful, and apparently just out of the hands of the sculptor" instead makes the wall surrounding the altar the focus of his account: the half spread mortar had not been drawn back and still stood out in relief for "the hand of the workman was suddenly arrested, and, after the lapse of 1800 years, the whole looks so fresh and new that you would almost swear the mason was only gone to his dinner, and about to come back immediately to smooth the roughness." (5) This juxtaposition of the sculptor and the mason encapsulates *Pompeii's* methodology, and the reception of Pompeii itself in British culture. Just as this passage oscillates between the conventional description of a classical art object (white marble, smooth, exquisite) and the pathos intrinsic to the trace of the artisan's trowel, so too did Pompeian artifacts of all types expand viewers' and readers' classical knowledge as well as their capacity to identify with ancient cultures.

Before examining how the knowledge and pathos generated by Pompeii is transposed into a novel that aims to make the ancients truly familiar and domestic through both factual detail and emotional identification it is important to sum up what the non-fiction libraries achieved for the expansion of classical knowledge. The examples discussed above show a top-down effort to extend knowledge of classical texts, history, and everyday life to everyday English readers. While the series did not aim to unseat classical proficiency as the normative standard of educational attainment and social distinction, they did have the immediate effect of normalizing classics. This was achieved by placing it on an equal footing alongside other discourses of knowledge in a uniform series of volumes that were devised to fill the shelves of middle-class parlors rather than the libraries of the gentry and aristocracy. These were not radical documents but rather a moderate expansion of provision that marched in commercial step with political and economic progress.

vii. A Classical Bestseller

Amidst the welter of classical activity in 1830s literature and culture, a single novel stands as a startlingly reflexive embodiment of the related and respective statuses of the novel and antiquity. Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) far outstrips the previously discussed classically-set novels in terms of sales, prestige, and influence.²⁴ The novel has been credited with singlehandedly setting the terms of nineteenth-century popular culture's conception of

²⁴ Consequently it has also received by far the most critical attention. In *Classical Reception Studies* there has been a lot of writing on the myriad ways in which the novel's scenes and characters have been excerpted and sent into circulation in popular culture in plays, burlesques, sculptures, and paintings (see Shelley Hales and Joanna Paul, eds, *Pompeii in the Public Imagination from its Rediscovery to Today* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)).[□] In Romantic and Victorian studies, its phenomenal and steady sales from its 1834 publication throughout the nineteenth century make it an important example for macro-analytic studies accounting for literary production and mass consumption (e.g. William St Clair and Annika Bautz, "Imperial Decadence: The Making of the Myths in Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii*" *Victorian Literature and Culture* 40 (2012), 359-396.)

classical antiquity going forward.²⁵ I argue that it does so because it orients the ancient world squarely towards contemporary novel-readers in order to make them “at home with the past.” (I.122) Even more than the replicating classical volumes of non-fiction series and certainly more so than Dibdin’s classical volumes, it is a novel that makes the peculiarities of classical antiquity familiar to British readers. Pompeii’s specific temporality and domestic immediacy as a classical site make for ideal novelistic subject matter. Accordingly, the novel melds the textual and material legacies of classical antiquity, which had been circulating in the series and periodicals, to the tropes of the novelistic tradition. By theorizing the classical and the novel together throughout the narrative Lytton makes the classical familiar in a particular manner and the familiar classical.

Lytton’s status as an established novelist, the novel is attributed to “The Author of ‘Pelham,’ Eugene Aram,’ ‘England and the English’ &c. &c,” immediately places *The Last Days of Pompeii* in conversation with other novels. Turning to a classical subject, however, makes for an especial awareness of precedent. The preface relates how, wintering in Naples in 1833, Lytton found Pompeii irresistible material yet immediately encountered obstacles. Extreme temporal distance and cultural otherness pose methodological problems for the historical novel.

Comparing his novel to *Ivanhoe*, Lytton emphasizes how familiarity depends on the familial:

To paint the manners and exhibit the life of the middle ages, required the hand of a master genius; yet, perhaps, the task is slight and easy, in comparison with that which aspires to portray a far earlier and more unfamiliar period. With the men and customs of the feudal time we have a natural sympathy and bond of alliance; those men were our own ancestors – from those customs we received our own – the creed of our chivalric fathers is still ours – their tombs yet consecrate our churches – the ruins of their castles yet frown over our valleys. We trace in their struggles for liberty and for justice, our present institutions; and in the elements of their social state we behold the origins of our own. (vii)

²⁵ Simon Goldhill, *Victorian Culture and Classical Antiquity: Art, Opera, Fiction, and the Proclamation of Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), chapters 5 and 6.

Lineal blood descent is prized here as the basis of “natural sympathy and . . . alliance” which make ancient men and customs familiar, that is, recognizable and personally connected. Here, the past is seen as both the primitive progenitor of the present and its watchful monitor rather than a burnished exemplar, showing the differing conceptions of English and classical antiquity.

Hailing Scott as a “master genius” and citing passages from the Dedicatory Epistle, calling them “the true canons of criticism, by which all Fiction that portrays the Past should be judged,”

Lytton establishes the historical novel’s credentials, showing Scott to be preeminent in 1834. (v, xiii)

In comparison with *Ivanhoe*, there is a problem of familiarity between Pompeii and England:

But with the classical age we have no household and familiar associations. The creed of that religion, the customs of that past civilization present little that is sacred or attractive to our northern imagination; they are rendered yet more trite to us by the scholastic pedantries which first acquainted us with their nature, and are linked with the recollection of studies, which were imposed as a labour, and not cultivated as a delight. (vii)

This general statement of alienation is based on unfamiliarity in the context of blood, religion, and customs and overfamiliarity through schoolroom tedium. It dismisses centuries of the English classical tradition for the sake of effect, proving however, that the northern imagination and gothic origins had supplanted the eighteenth-century idea of being modern antiques. In the presumption of the reader’s juvenile classical experience, the preface explicitly claims a classically-educated readership that the novel itself does not demand. Nonetheless, the novel strenuously compensates for these deficiencies, emphasizing the “household and familiar associations” that English novel-readers have with Pompeii. Against archaeological evidence early Christians appear not only at Pompeii but also at the center of the plot, in order to provide

pleasurable jolts of the familiar as the reader recognizes elements of their Anglican religion in the original classical context.

Scholarly overenthusiasm can be just as devastating to a novel as schoolboy reluctance, however. Lytton condemns previous classical novelists for giving their characters “the stilted sentences – the cold and didactic solemnities of the language which they find in the more admired of the classical writers.” These remarks are germane to the novels by Hamilton, Knight, and (especially) Lockhart discussed earlier, which draw authority from only thinly veiling their classical sources.²⁶ *The Last Days of Pompeii*, by contrast, prioritizes verisimilitude and ease in depicting “Romans in common life.” Lytton suggests that the correct idiom is a naturalized classicism achieved through many years of study:

Nothing can give to a writer a more stiff and uneasy gait, than the sudden and hasty adoption of the toga. We must bring to our task the familiarized knowledge of many years: – the allusions, the phraseology – the language generally – must flow from a stream that has long been full; the flowers must be transplanted from a living soil, and not bought second-hand at the nearest market-place. This advantage, which is, in fact, only that of familiarity with our subject, is one derived rather from accident than merit, and depends upon the degree in which the classics have entered into the education of our youth, and the studies of our maturity. (xiv-xv)

The idea of a gradually accumulated familiarity with the classical as purely an accident of birth is political. The tension between the recognition of classical knowledge as an accidental rather than merited inheritance and the aversion shown towards market-bought knowledge foreshadows his political apostasy.²⁷ The use of the traditional metaphor of classical language as flowers and

²⁶ As I argued earlier, the passages of these novels that are effectively translations from classical texts are barely disguised in order to lend the narratives authenticity. For Knight and Hamilton, precise translation was a way for women to assert their authority over source material and to disseminate that source material to other non-classicists; for Lockhart, it was a way to give the genre authority by giving classically educated readers the thrill of recognition.

²⁷ The question of classical knowledge as a social signifier is a theme of Lytton’s sensational second novel *Pelham* (1828). William St Clair and Annika Bautz remark that *Pelham* is “an exploration of the emerging construct, the ‘English gentleman’ with a classical education” but they do not elaborate. In an early chapter, *Pelham* gives a detailed account of the classical

garlands further expresses his view that classical familiarity is a naturalistic phenomenon: long-cultivated organic affinity eclipses the marketplace varieties. This is borne out biographically: Lytton's mother had read him Homer in childhood yet he weathered a chequered school career.²⁸ A nurtured familiarity with classical subjects naturalizes erudition in a way that fiction now demands. Classical erudition in *The Last Days of Pompeii* is utterly normalized partly because the preface's addressee is not completely synonymous with the novel's imagined reader. It is so normalized, in fact, was to normalize the novel's classical subject matter for the reader.

Lytton suggests that fiction now commands its own authority and calls for the eradication of pedantry. He writes that creativity can almost alchemically supplant erudition in the historical novel, that a general sense of antiquity is a more fruitful tool for literature than precision:

The intuitive spirit which infuses antiquity into ancient images is, perhaps, the true learning which a work of this nature requires – without it, pedantry is offensive; with it, useless. No man who is thoroughly aware of what Prose Fiction has now become, of its dignity – of its influence – of the manner in which it has gradually absorbed all similar departments of literature – of its power in teaching as well as amusing — can so forget its connection with History – with Philosophy – with Politics – its utter harmony with Poetry, and obedience to Truth, as to debase its nature to the level of scholastic frivolities; he raises scholarship to the creative, and does not bow the creative to the scholastic. (xii)

The novel's absorptive capacity has turned it into a library in itself. Of the properties Lytton claims for prose fiction in 1834, (dignity, influence, the capacity to delight and instruct in history, philosophy, and politics, and verisimilitude) the idea of its "utter harmony with Poetry" is striking. He had longed to emulate Byron in a poetic career and fame but found himself

proficiency attained by its eponymous hero at Eton and doesn't think much of it. The supposition is that the English gentleman doesn't really get much utility out of this kind of classical education and that perhaps the novel and the non-fiction libraries could supply it. (Bautz and Sinclair, "Imperial Decadence," 367)

²⁸ Leslie Mitchell, *Bulwer Lytton: The Rise and Fall of a Victorian Man of Letters* (London: London and Hambleton, 2003).

constrained by the necessity of making a living and turned to writing fiction for John Colburn in the fashionable mode.²⁹

That the preface was written in September 1834, after the novel had been mostly composed in the winter of 1833-34 means that it is responsive to Carlyle's attack on the fashionable novel in *Sartor Resartus* (1833-4). Turning to a classical subject, along with vigorously reediting *Pelham*, was part of a defensive strategy for asserting the novel's generic seriousness. Yet while *The Last Days of Pompeii*'s presentation of the ancient world interweaves elements of the intellectual discourses that Lytton enumerates above, he also makes the case for the seriousness of the novel as specifically popular entertainment.

In *England and the English* he points to the longstanding tradition of literature as public spectacle and its political effects. A stalwart campaigner for reform, Lytton vigorously defends fiction's political capacities by likening it to public classical rhetoric:

As with the increase of the crowd, appeals to passion become more successful, so in the enlargement of the reading public I see one great cause of the unprecedented success of fiction. Some inconsiderate critics prophesy that the taste for novels and romances will wear itself out: it is, on the contrary, more likely to increase as the circle of the public widens. Fiction with its graphic delineation and appeals to the familiar emotions, is adapted to the crowd—for it is the oratory of literature.³⁰

This reasoning yokes fiction's fortunes to the expansion of a literate and enfranchised public.³¹

While Lytton suggests that fiction's success is "unprecedented," the political landscape of the

²⁹ Lauren Gillingham has traced the foppishness of *Pelham*'s protagonist to *Don Juan*, arguing that the novel deals with the problem of heroic agency inherited from the Romantic period. "The Novel of Fashion Redressed: Bulwer-Lytton's *Pelham* in a 19th-Century Context," *Victorian Review*, 32, 1 (2006), 63-85.

³⁰ *England and the English*, second edition (London: Richard Bentley, 1833), 2 vols., II, 127.

³¹ Helen Groth writes that in the 1830s Lytton was interested in "the ways in which popular cultural forms such as the romance plot could shape both sympathetic identification and cultural memory at a time when the English reading public was rapidly expanding and diversifying."[□] "Cosmopolitan Sympathies: Edward Bulwer Lytton's Sensational Tale of Pompeii" in Anthony Uhlmann, Helen Groth, Paul Sheehan, and Stephan McLaren, eds. *Literature and Sensation* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 21.

1830s produces yet another classical precedent for the novel, one of a different sort from those encountered in previous chapters. While the novel's analogy to history or epic poetry had been established in similar terms (Scott's praise of Fielding's "painting," for example) Lytton highlights fiction's bold outlines and easy identification, suggesting a more democratic and middlebrow, but still positive, literary effect. This passage suggests little anxiety concerning the "crowd" of readers, but rather a sense that the "familiar" emotions unify society. There is a stability (almost conservatism) in the idea of the familiar here, suggesting that the evolution of fiction specifically towards the crowd denatures the latter's anarchic potential. In this Lytton resembles Barbauld's more liberal and optimistic vision of novels making the "laws" and shaping the social customs of the country than the reactionary warnings of Tory critics.³²

Crucially, rhetoric's effect depends on the deployment and manipulation of a set of tropes long recognized for their persuasive power, a power that marshals emotion in the service of reason. The repetition of these tropes renders their emotional effects familiar. An aspect of the novel's being adapted to the crowd and its resemblance to oratory is therefore its relation to repetition and replication. The aspects which make it popular are those with mass appeal, the popular romance elements that are marvelous and comic. In spite of its learned preface, *The Last Days of Pompeii* shows that novels must incorporate these familiar, traditional romance elements along with intellectual seriousness. Meeting a collective horizon of expectation becomes a new element of classicism in fiction. In turn this new aspect of classicism is woven into *The Last Days of Pompeii's* presentation of the ancient world.

³² By contrast, as I show below, when Lytton assembles a fictional crowd in the Pompeian amphitheater it is to display the deformation of sympathies in a cosmopolitan society that comes together to find its self-expression in a spectacle of barbarity.

viii. A Novel of Fashionable Life

For all that its classical subject matter sets it apart from the fashionable novels of the 1830s, *The Last Days of Pompeii* incorporates conventions of these genres, instrumentalizing, and capitalizing on, their familiar tropes in order to make the ancient world seem familiar to contemporary readers. Because almost none of the novels by writers such as Harrison Ainsworth, Disraeli, Catherine Gore, Mary Shelley or Lytton himself have become canonical, they are a startlingly often-forgotten context of *The Last Days of Pompeii*, even though Lytton's novel has received the most critical attention of the classical-historical novels in this study.³³ Lytton strives to make his classical novel just another novel, blending classical prestige with sheer novel-ness. This standardizes this classical novel in the process, making it just another fiction, in the same way as classical volumes in the non-fiction series took their place in line with other subjects.

An essential element *The Last Days of Pompeii* borrows from contemporary novels as a strategy for making its readers "at home with the past" is its thematizing of spectacle and display.³⁴ The characteristic genres of this period aim to show different classes of society to themselves and to each other, as they became more self-consciously aware of each other's existence. The novels of fashionable life, sometimes called silver-fork, showed fashionable society to itself and to middle class aspirants. Dandy novels were a subset of this group, indulging the pleasure of looking at the dandy while questioning his usefulness for society. Newgate novels showed the underclass to the middle and upper classes. Novels belonging to what Curtis Dahl terms the "school of catastrophe" such as *The Last Man* or *The Last of the*

³³ Classicist classical receptionists are really interested in the novel's Greek and Roman intertexts, to the neglect of its English intertexts.

³⁴ The critical reception of *The Last Days of Pompeii* is preoccupied with how both this novel and the city's story were staged as either dramatic or visual spectacles. Just as the *Library of Ancient Knowledge's* Pompeian camera obscura showed, books were private spectacles. The novel itself both makes a show of Pompeii and represents Pompeii's shows.

Mohicans showed humanity to itself.³⁵ The historical novel continued to tell tales of adventure. This proliferation of genres reflects the novel's attempt to survey the newly aggregated society as a whole.³⁶ *The Last Days of Pompeii* blends elements of all these to show first-century Pompeii as a cosmopolitan society resembling contemporary London.³⁷

The novel of fashionable life predominates, and Lytton's self-continuously interruptive narrator points draws attention not only to the connections between first- and nineteenth-century manners but also to the overlapping literary modes. The novel opens by indirectly introducing its hero, Glaucus, as the subject of conversation in a chance encounter between two men in the street. Titled "The Two Gentlemen of Pompeii," the chapter begins not only by referencing the English canon through Shakespeare's Veronese comedy, but also the kind of dialogue characteristic of ancient comedy. From Clodius and Diomed, the classical types of parasite and rich merchant, we learn that Glaucus gives the best suppers in Pompeii, that he is Greek, and that he is a man of elegance and extravagance, who may live beyond his means. Clodius and Diomed are cynical observers of the cycles of the *ton* and, in a moment of unwitting prolepsis, they observe that next season they will need to "find another Glaucus." (4) This opening dialogue is laden with classical touchstones: Petronian lampreys, a quotation from Horace's *Odes*, and a cheery "*Vale!*" Yet these are interlarded with the vocabulary of fashionable novels: Clodius wears "his tunic in those loose and effeminate folds which proved him to be a gentleman and a coxcomb." (3) In the Via Domitiana, "the bells of the cars as they rapidly glided by each other,

³⁵ Curtis Dahl, "Bulwer Lytton and the School of Catastrophe," *Philological Quarterly* 32 (1953), 428-442.

³⁶ The delineation of these popular genres also marks the beginning of disaggregation of the fiction market and especially the mass readership into the categories of so-called 'genre-fiction.'

³⁷ Nicholas Daly observes that Pompeii was a popular glass in which contemporary society could see itself during the Reform years, writing that the city's "historical otherness did not prevent it from being a mirror in which the nineteenth century sometimes liked to recognize itself—a complex and pleasure-loving urban society poised on the edge of cataclysmic change."³ Daly, "The Volcanic Disaster Narrative," 262.

jingled merrily on the ear, and Clodius with smiles or nods claimed familiar acquaintance with whatever equipage was most elegant or fantastic.” (5) In spite of the Latin embellishments this chapter places this tale of Pompeii firmly adjacent to contemporary London. The form of the chapter, its gossipy and informative tone, resembles numerous ‘conversation’ chapters in novels such as Disraeli’s *Vivian Grey* (1826-7), the original dandy novel.³⁸ Glaucus is, in fact, quite literally Mr Grey, his name being the Romanized form of γλαυκος the Greek adjective meaning grey.

To create a double familiarizing effect, Lytton’s intrusive narrator acts as the reader’s *cicerone*, as if they were a tourist to the Pompeian excavations as well as a watcher of the first-century action. Lytton’s mode contrasts, however, with Fielding’s equally intrusive and classically minded narrator in *Tom Jones*. While Fielding’s narrator drew back the curtain on fictional scenes, emphasizing their literary construction and mock-heroic irony, Lytton’s informationally points to actually existing architectural features. The description of Glaucus’s banquet shows his mixing of literary and archaeological sources to create both authenticity and wonder. The episode intertwines the conventions of silver-fork fiction, Clarke’s archaeological guide, and a classical text (in this case Petronius’s *Satyricon*, the archetypal representation of a feast). The dinner, itself richly descriptive with particulars of decoration and dishes, is prefaced by a lengthy description (six pages) conveying to the reader “a general notion of the houses of Pompeii.”³⁹ Subsequently the reader is conducted into “The House of the Dramatic Poet” on

³⁸ See, for example, *Vivian Grey* (London: Henry Colburn, 1826) 3 vols., II, iv, chapter 1, in which Grey and Cleveland walk amicably in the Parks discussing Christmas plans, the Catholic Question, and the books of the season. The reflexive literary gossip recalls a *Blackwood’s* skit too.

³⁹ It is eminently possible that this double description, the one of the general Pompeian dwelling, the other specific and germane to the story, originates not from any intention of Lytton’s to show how the general related to the particular, but rather from the need to pad a rather slender

account of the depictions of scenes from Aeschylus and Homer on its walls. Lytton corrects the archaeologists' error in ascribing ownership of the house to a poet rather than to a patron with a taste for mythology. He plays on the mistake, taking the opportunity to associate it with his hero, renaming it the "disburied house of the Athenian Glaucus." (32) This literary grafting of the novel's characters onto the site was so effective that subsequent nineteenth-century tourists visiting Pompeii referred to places by their fictional associations.⁴⁰

While Lytton's fiction makes the Pompeian excavations more real to the reader, the site itself confirms both the novel's plausibility and the truth of classical literature. Clarke's guide had noted that the emerging discipline of archaeology served to corroborate ancient literature's veracity: "The most interesting discoveries at Pompeii are those which throw light on, or confirm passages of ancient authors."⁴¹ Pompeii therefore also provides empirical evidence that the revered classical canon, too, was a history of private, domestic life. An effect of this is to level ancient literature and the novel, ancient and modern society into a less differentiated cultural field.

Lytton warns that the uncovering of Pompeii reveals an ancient deficiency in taste, altering the aesthetic ideal of classical simplicity and elegance: "The purity of the taste of the Pompeians in decoration is however questionable: they were fond of the gaudiest colors, of fantastic designs." (38) Glaucus is one of those young men whom Dibdin had chastised for choosing to

manuscript of only 150,000 words. Apparently Bentley requested additional material to make the novel fill three volumes. A later description of the routine at the baths quips about a list of unguents, "The number of these smegmata, used by the wealthy, would fill a modern volume—especially if the volume were printed by a fashionable publisher; *Amoracina, Megalium, Nardum, – omne quod exit in um.*" (138) The fashionable novel's attention to commodities made it infinitely expandable. (Note the schoolboy joke.)

⁴⁰ Clarke, *Pompeii*, notes that the house had only been excavated towards the end of 1824, indicating the relative freshness of Lytton's material. It was therefore included not in Gell's first *Pompeiana* in 1819, but in the 1832 edition. Clarke obtained permission to extract plates of Gandy's reconstruction from Gell.

⁴¹ Clarke, *Pompeii*, II, 116.

purchase delicate furniture and china over the Waverley manuscripts. His house “would be a model at this day for the house of ‘a single man in Mayfair’—the envy and despair of the coelibian purchasers of buhl and marquetric.” (39) Modern envy of the Pompeian house suggests a greater authenticity to its ostentation. Canonical matter adorns the house, which is “literally eloquent with Aeschylus and Homer, the epic and the drama.” Legendary scenes from classical mythology furnish the backdrop to everyday life in Pompeian society, but not unequivocally. On one hand this reflects Glaucus’s character as a virtuous and cultured Greek, establishing the long history of canon reverence. On the other, amidst the conventions of the fashionable novel reduces Homer to one commodity amongst many on display.

In adopting the conventions of the novel of fashionable life *The Last Days of Pompeii* aims to create not only a sense of familiarity for contemporary readers but also to amplify horror generated by the novel’s catastrophe. Ever wary of critical scorn, Lytton anticipates that his central pair of characters may appear “too slight and commonplace” and lacking “stronger individualities.” (54)

But in dwelling so much on their bright and birdlike existence, I am influenced almost insensibly by the forethought of the changes that await them, and for which they were so ill prepared. It was this very softness and gaiety of life that contrasted most strongly with the vicissitudes of their coming fate. For the oak without fruit or blossom, whose hard and rugged heart is fitted for the storm, there is less fear than for the delicate branches of the myrtle, and the laughing clusters of the vine. (54-5)

This defense of his deliberate strategy of diminishing characters to increase sympathy with them runs counterintuitively to the way in which a novel’s representation of interiority is linked to the elicitation of sympathy. Yet the “commonplace” nature of the characters makes them paradoxically exemplary in their ordinariness. The preface had promised a new kind of classical exemplarity than that provided by reading epic or history. The novel also represents the “ordinary habits of life, the feasts and the forum, the commonplace routine of the classic luxury”

to make an example out of an entire society (x). Yet Lytton's message for contemporary society is not this apocalyptic. While the sustained comparisons between London and soon-to-be annihilated Pompeii play on exaggerated cataclysmic Tory rhetoric, the comparison between the hardy English oak and the Mediterranean myrtle and vine buttresses English society.

ix. Pompeii and Rome: A Different Kind of Exemplarity

Pompeii's diminutive size in relation to Rome serves to change the nature of classical exemplarity, and to diminish it. Lytton's purposeful downsizing of characters is reflected in the city's relation to Rome. Lytton calls the city a "miniature" of the Roman Empire:

Pompeii was a miniature of the civilization of that age. Within the narrow compass of its walls was contained, as it were, a specimen of every gift which luxury offered to power. In its minute but glittering shops, its tiny palaces, its baths, its forum, its theatre, its circus—in the energy yet corruption—in the refinement yet the vice—of its people, you behold a model of the whole empire. It was a toy, a plaything, a showboat, in which the Gods seemed pleased to keep the representation of the Great Monarch of Earth, and which they afterwards hid from Time, to give to the wonder of Posterity;—the moral of the maxim, that under the sun there is nothing new. (20-1)

Pompeii's representative capacity stems from its comprehensibility and the lively appeal of its small, shimmering luster. As a "specimen" and a "model" it teaches about the ancient world but it is also an enticing ornamental plaything representing a very general lesson. The overarching lesson of *The Last Days of Pompeii's* familiarizing strategy is a commonplace about history's endless repetition, showing that big ideas are most interestingly proven in small circumstances.

Lytton keeps the novel deliberately provincial to make Pompeii beautiful in comparison to Rome's sublime. None of the novel's characters is a world-historical individual, and provinciality preserves the novel's formal unity and dramatic emphasis. Despite the temptation, Rome is not directly represented in the novel, because "placed in contrast with the mighty pomp of Rome, the luxuries and gaud of the vivid Campanian city would have sunk into insignificance.

Her awful fate would have seemed but a petty and isolated wreck in the vast seas of the imperial sway.” (ix) While Pompeii’s provinciality is not rustic but fashionable and luxurious, it is crucially decoupled from the political power of the metropole. In fact, as a resort town it is partly an overflow of Rome’s magnificence, and partly a relief from its politics, an economy existing for pure leisure and pleasure. This contrast with Rome reflects the idea that Rome is, already by AD 79, hackneyed and dull.

Rome’s inextricability from its image as the exemplar of the workings of power and politics make it dull subject matter for imaginative literature. When Glaucus declares, “ah, dull Rome! whoever was truly great was of Greece...!” he echoes not only the position of Romantic philhellenism but also Lytton’s weariness with politics (II.271). The novel reflects the contemporary view that Rome’s moral decadence is directly connected to its imperial political might. Pompeii, by contrast, wears its luxury lightly and, as the site of former Greek colonies, is culturally aligned with Greece. This, finally, is the key to the novel’s analogy between contemporary London and Pompeian society. Pompeii resembles high London society because it is proximate to political power but prizes frivolities. Glaucus remarks early on that Rome’s might overshadows its intellectual and aesthetic pleasures:

Talk to me no more of Rome....Pleasure is too stately and ponderous in those mighty walls: even in the precincts of the court—even in the golden house of Nero, and the incipient glories of the palace of Titus, there is a certain dulness of magnificence—the eye aches—the spirit is wearied; ... But here we surrender ourselves easily to pleasure, and we have the brilliancy of luxury without the lassitude of its pomp.’ (10-11)

In Glaucus’s words, Lytton slyly infers a weariness with the lesson and tropes of Roman decline.

With the publication of the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* in 1818, Rome had been compounded as a site of Romantic political melancholy. In the late 1820s and early 1830s it became a trope of the “School of Catastrophe” novels, which were preoccupied with sovereignty

and the consequences of deterritorialization.⁴² The “Last” novels are a mutation of the historical novel of the 10s and 20s, which eschew Scott’s progressive optimism and take his mourning of endangered cultures (the same ones as he classicized as ancients) to the logical extreme: complete extinction. The prevalence of comparisons with classical decline in these apocalyptic novels shows how the classical remained a site for the analysis of the human. Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man* (1826) is an important companion to *The Last Days of Pompeii* in showing this, not just because both were published by John Colburn or because the majority of each narrative richly depicts the world that the calamity will annihilate. With its framing by Sibylline prophecy and final scenes set in a deserted Rome, Shelley’s novel interrogates what it means to be left once society has disintegrated around one. By comparison with Shelley’s, Lytton’s catastrophe is a narrow and sensationalist drama.

Yet Lytton retains an aspect of Byronic and Romantic classicism. From post-eruption safety in Athens, Glaucus writes to Rome of his withdrawal from politics and commerce and the succor he draws from Athens’s environment. In a Byronic displacement, the ruins haunt him but on account of poor health and the traumatic memory of his experience at Pompeii have resigned him not to take action in the name of Greek independence. Glaucus lives in a state of Romantic withdrawal amongst “the melancholy haunts of a fallen majesty” finding “the ghost of our departed greatness is dearer to me than the gaudy life of [Rome’s] loud prosperity.” (III.302-3)

x. Literature and the Science of Man

The Last Days of Pompeii poses the question of what the lessons of the ancient world, of the legacies and especially the texts of classical antiquity, might be. It especially asks this question

⁴² Jonathan Elmer, *On Lingering and Being Last: Race and Sovereignty in the New World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

in the face of the emergence of competing and destabilizing disciplines of knowledge.⁴³ The rediscovery of Pompeii had provided the answer that there is nothing new under the sun, a proverbial idiom for the constancy of human nature. Lytton asks the same question of the novel, the genre specifically evolved for the representation of human nature originating at the same time as the Enlightenment science of man.⁴⁴ Political economy had especially destabilized the preeminence of the science of man in its depersonalizing aggregation of society. With literature now orienting itself towards the crowd, Lytton asks whether and how the novel will continue to support the science of man.

While *The Last Days of Pompeii* draws on specialized and scientific archaeological knowledge and the sublime aggregating grandeur of a volcanic eruption, it also adopts the epistemologically conservative position of retaining human nature as the prime object of study and source of knowledge. This is to say that it places the representation of human nature at its center and uses new disciplines for complementary support in the depiction of manners. Ironically, the ancient world and its literature, which had set the terms of the science of man and the study of human nature, posed a challenge to the novel's representative capacities because of its unfamiliar manners. It is in the representation of manners, providing authenticating detail, that the new disciplines are helpful. The novel's assimilation of classical literature, art, and archaeology shows progressiveness in its diffusion of knowledge, offering humanity to the massed populace as the non-fiction libraries had been conceived to do.

⁴³ Within the humanities a growing scientific objectivity in philology and archaeology had destabilized axiomatic beliefs about both the life of Christ and the existence of Homer.

⁴⁴ Ian Duncan writes that the "representation of human nature, the project of the Enlightenment science of man, provided a philosophical foundation for the novel as the distinctive literary genre of modernity." Ian Duncan "The Trouble with Man: Scott, Romance, and World History in the Age of Lamarck," *Romantic Frictions*, ed. Theresa M. Kelley, September 2011, Par. 4, Romantic Circles, 6 November 2016.

<<http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/frictions/HTML/praxis.2011.duncan.html>>

Lytton goes to repetitious lengths in *The Last Days of Pompeii* to underline the fact that literature, can (and must) still teach important lessons as a science of man. This is the crucial difference between novel and romance, between entertaining and learned fiction:

We should paint life but ill if, even in times the most prodigal of romance, and of the romance of which we most largely avail ourselves, we did not also describe the mechanism of those trivial and household springs of mischief which we see every day at work in our chambers and at our hearths. It is in these, the lesser intrigues, of life, that we mostly find ourselves at home with the past;—if you scorn them, you are *only* a romance writer and you do not interest the heart because you do not portray it. (I.121-2)

This gobbet of novel-theory contradicts Lytton's earlier assertion his characters as lacking interiority but it nonetheless attempts a quasi-scientific (or at least mechanical) explanation of the novel's sympathetic workings.

As the reading of *Valerius* showed in chapter three, the manners of the Roman amphitheater provide a scene for man to take pleasure in watching others *in extremis* and for the attentive modern reader to wonder at human nature's capacity for barbarism and whether such scenes prove the constancy of human nature (an unpalatable truth) or whether they reinforce a sense of modern, Christian superiority over the ancients. In *The Last Days of Pompeii* the only currents of sympathy in the amphitheater run only between the reluctant gladiators, who have become or (in Glaucus's case) are becoming Christian.

Lytton uses the same descriptive strategies as he applied to representations of domestic scenes and manners to describe the amphitheater and to fill it with action. The design and workings of the amphitheater are described with details drawn from archaeological and literary accounts.⁴⁵ The manners of the spectacle are intriguing but they also testify to a deformity of human nature in the ancient crowd. The show is,

⁴⁵ Amongst the gladiators peopling the arena are figures taken from the frieze from the tomb of Marcus Scaurus on the Street of Tombs by Pompeii's Herculaneum Gate. As on the frieze Gauls Berbix and Nobilior fight on horseback. Clarke includes a description of the frieze in the *Library of Entertaining Knowledge* guide (this does seem to be entertaining knowledge, at last). Though

an awful and imposing spectacle, with which modern times have, happily, nothing to compare;—a vast theatre rising row upon row, nearly five hundred feet in height, and swarming with human beings from fifteen to eighteen thousand in number—intent upon no fictitious representation—no tragedy of the stage; but the actual victory or defeat—the exultant life or the bloody death of each and all who entered the arena! (III.198-9)

The ancient crowd's inhumanity seems to stem from a failure of imagination. The lack of exercise in this essential component of sympathy is something that novel-reading guards against in the modern crowd.

While the Roman amphitheater appears to be a laboratory for observing human nature in both Lockhart's and Lytton's novels, in the latter it is eclipsed by the spectacle of the volcano. Vesuvius plays an essential role in showing the division between manners and nature, as it obliterates the city and sorts the named characters into those deserving or undeserving of survival. The novel's central trio, the love triangle of Glaucus, Ione, and the blind slave-girl Nydia, escape to a boat bound to return them all to their native Greece. In the hours of the eruption Lytton constructs a chaotic panic in the crowded streets. The Pompeians are reduced to mere nature as their possessions and accouterments are stripped away from them. Christians and proto-Christian Greeks survive with only their lives, while the pagan Pompeians are frozen in attitudes that reveal their nature. Lytton describes how the uncovered skeletons at Pompeii show the flirt Julia hiding in the cellar of a rich man, who had gathered his jewels before taking shelter. Greater sympathy is afforded the woman (an anonymous character) who died sheltering her child. The novel's sensational catastrophe places the focus entirely on human nature, inviting the reader's sympathetic identification with the Pompeians.

the novel footnotes Clarke for pictorial reference (III.215) and quotes the number of Berbix's victories from the frieze the reference is incorrect. Lytton, or the compositor, also appears to have misconstrued the gladiator's name. In the image from the frieze the mounted man is Bebrix not Berbix.

xi. The Standard Novels

For all its sensational effects and sensational popularity, *The Last Days of Pompeii* is literally standardized in 1839. Lytton was published by Colburn and Bentley, the publishers of fashionable three-volume novels, throughout his career. So fashionable, frequent, and similar were these titles that *Fraser's Magazine* had worried about the state of the genre, remarking on it as if it had an ancient and venerable history. In "Novels of the Season" in February 1831, the reviewer (probably Maginn) remarks that

since novel-writing has become a trade, never was it lower than at present. In old times when Fielding and Smollett contented the reading public with half a dozen novels in a couple of dozen years, there was some opportunity given the writers for polishing and perfecting their works; and accordingly the race of novel-weavers was as rare and chary as that of Epic poets.⁴⁶

The tradition of the English novel, the same one Scott had taken some rhetorical wrangling to establish as authoritative only ten years beforehand in *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library*, was now a sufficiently stable as to have "old times." For *Fraser's* the current crop of novels are a comic popular spectacle, a travelling menagerie with a Central European keeper:

Valk up, ladies and gemmen, and vitness all the monstrous and strange warieties of hanimals vich this here booth contains. ...Here is the rale lion from New York, in South America, a much finer specimen, of the brute creation than the Scotch lion sometime ago exhibited by one Constable, no true showman, but a cheat. Ve have also the Hook tiger, the Bulwer baboon, the Smith mocking bird, a hanimal remarkable for himitating the cry of better hanimals than himself...' (97)

This invective, which shows the commonalities between *Blackwood's* and the London *Fraser's*, surveys Bentley and Colburn's stable.⁴⁷ Of these, Bulwer and Cooper are significant because they are the authors selected for inclusion in a new kind of series, *Bentley's Standard Novels*.

⁴⁶ *Fraser's Magazine*, February 1831, 95.

⁴⁷ The "rale lion from New York" is James Fenimore Cooper, who is contrasted with Scott, who in turn is mentioned to vilify Constable as a crooked businessman.

The *Standard Novels* was to be a series of the British novel from the eighteenth century to the present, incorporating the best recent fiction.⁴⁸ Its on-the-spot canonizing now classicizes novels in accordance with fiction's own codes rather than in relation to a classical standard. The promise of novels classified "standard" on their own terms is uniformity in quality and appearance. This series of cheap books would prove more robust than the non-fiction series. Beginning with Cooper's *The Pilot* in February 1831, it ran through 126 volumes until 1861. These books were produced to the same material specifications of the non-fiction libraries, single volume editions selling for five shillings. Bentley evaded copyright, especially on American novels, by claiming these were new, improved, definitive editions. To do so, he commissioned new introductions by authors or whose works he was reprinting or by their friends or family. Appearing at this point in the 1830s, just a year before both Scott's death and the Reform Act, the *Standard Novels* provides an essential commentary on the critical and canonical status of the genre.

The collection's chronological span and Bentley's system of introductions combine to produce important canonizing commentary on the fiction of the Romantic period. Austen, who was popularized through Bentley's large print runs, is honored in the preface to *Sense and Sensibility* (1833) as "the founder of a school of novelists" whose "followers are not confined to her own sex, but comprise in their number some male writers of considerable merit."⁴⁹ *Caleb*

⁴⁸ This scheme was not realized in its entirety. Bentley purchased the copyright to *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library* from Thomas Tegg but found that Scott's introductions were not Tegg's to sell and had to abandon the *ab origine* plan. Also absent from the collection are the Waverley Novels which were going through their own authoritative rerelease with Cadell and Scott's Magnum Opus edition. Richard Maxwell remarks that Cooper serves as a substitute for Scott in Bentley's collection, ensuring that a contemporary historical novelist begins the collection authoritatively. *The Historical Novel in Europe, 1650-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 11.

⁴⁹ Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (London: Richard Bentley, 1833). The "Standard" introduction speculates on the mysterious alchemy of Austen's work: "One of the most remarkable traits of

Williams, the earliest novel in the collection, is the series' second number. Its introduction comments on the time elapsed between 1794 and 1831, calling Godwin "the mighty parent of all that the reformers of the day advance and uphold" Godwin's own preface bookends the period by "rejoic[ing]" at the improvements in the "prospects of the case of liberty and sound thinking." The Whig *Standard Novels* was the first series to include Godwin, the Reform years having made *Caleb Williams* a safely canonical English novel.

The Last Days of Pompeii was incorporated into the *Standard Novels* under a generic sign of the classical. It entered as No. 72, just five years after first publication, in a single-volume edition priced at less than 20% of the first and only previous edition, and with a fivefold increase to the print run.⁵⁰ Because Bentley already owned the copyright there is no new introduction but its frontispiece and title page are emblematic of the sentimental and classical discourses I have been tracking through a century of the novel's history. The frontispiece shows Nydia the blind slave girl kneeling to Glaucus with her lyre in the background, in a sentimental tableau showing the unrequited devotion that will lead her to conduct Glaucus and his lover Ione from the burning city and quietly drown herself on the boat to Greece.

The title page shows a general sign of the classical. It depicts Glaucus, poised like a Greek statue in only a loincloth and helmet, about to strike the lion with a weapon considerably more imposing than the puny "stylus" the novel describes, while a jeering crowd presses down from close quarters. It is a standard emblem of ancient Rome, showing the general classical subject matter. Yet the image portrays no moment of heroism. Beneath the impressive image is tiny copperplate text that undermines the majesty of the scene by explaining something not apparent

her genius may be found in the power by which, without in the slightest degree violating the truth of portraiture, she is able to make the precise everyday person a character of great interest. This is, indeed, turning lead into gold, but it would be difficult to detect the secret of the process."

⁵⁰ Figures are from St Clair and Bautz, "Imperial Decadence."

from the image, that the lion is not interested in Glaucus: “The beast evinced no sign either of wrath or hunger; its tail dropped along the sand instead of lashing its gaunt sides; and its eye, though it wandered at times to Glaucus, rolled again listlessly from him.” But the image is more striking than its specific context. In standardizing *The Last Days of Pompeii*, Bentley emphasizes the novel’s sentimental and classical commonplaces guaranteeing readers a sentimental story and a tale of derring do.

Within the cheap books series the *Standard Novels* makes a case for the longstanding popularity of fiction over non-fiction. Every volume is published with an epigraph that intertwines the modern novel and the romance tradition:

No kind of literature is so generally attractive as Fiction. Pictures of life and manners, and Stories of adventure, are more eagerly received by the many than graver productions, however important these latter may be. APULEIUS is better remembered by his fable of Cupid and Psyche than by his abstruser Platonic writings; and the Decameron of BOCCACCIO has outlived the Latin Treatises, and other learned works of that author.

Lytton’s classical novel, with all its tropes and tactics to make the ancient world seem normal and familiar, takes its place in the “standard” series more because of how its novel-ness has standardized classical material. This novel’s sensational success ultimately transmutes it into a standard of the genre. From the perspective of understanding how antiquity was interpreted in the 1830s, this standardization generates durable stereotypes of the ancient world. In terms of the history of the novel, the British novel can be viewed at this period as a tradition that draws its authority from *both* its popularity with “the many” and its resemblance to ancient and canonical works. In the cheap books of the early 1830s, in both fiction and non-fiction, classics are brought into the home. Through more affordable libraries both ancient and modern classics reached a wider audience for whom both ancient and modern classics began to become just as normal as they were normative.

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