

In *The Grammar of Our Civility*, Lee T. Percy offers a bold critique of classical education in the United States and an equally bold solution for the malaise of the profession as he sees it. I find myself in agreement with much of his criticism of *Altertumswissenschaft* and his support for contextual studies that engage in interdisciplinary discussions and draw attention to the differences between antiquity and modernity. He has, however, underestimated the diversity of approaches that American scholars of ancient Greece and Rome have applied to their field within the last thirty years, the importance of their contribution in their dialogue with their European counterpart as well as experts of other fields. More importantly, the emphasis on outdated theories and methodologies in training students, especially at the graduate level, is not unique to classical studies, but I suggest from my experience in other academic fields that classics faces obstacles that many departments in the humanities and social sciences can avoid because of the size and diversity of their faculty.

To be sure, classicists have drawn on the important theories and methodologies of the twentieth century, such as structuralism, post-modernism, new historicism, memory studies, and now even post-colonialism. They, however, often make headway in classics only after other fields have turned to newer approaches, and as result, classics has not benefited as much as it could from this cross-fertilization of ideas. One could blame our graduate curriculum with its emphasis on traditional knowledge, such as prose composition, history of Greek and Latin literature, and pro-seminars that focus on methods used in *Altertumswissenschaft*, so that the newest members of the profession, who are in the best position to introduce new theoretical frameworks, lack the necessary training to do so. Yet, faculty in other departments have lodged similar criticism about their own fields. Inevitably, the teaching of any field lags behind the most recent scholarship.

The large departments in the humanities and social sciences are less susceptible than classics departments to such structural limitations because faculty and graduate students have the opportunity to learn both formally and informally about the research of their colleagues—though they may work in fundamentally different areas—through departmental workshops, seminars, and social gatherings. The solution lies neither in a new integrated vision of the field as Percy suggests nor the incorporation of classical languages and literatures into a department with its modern counterparts. Rather classics as a profession needs to become more active, as many individual classics departments and organizations have, in promoting venues for interdisciplinary dialogue so that its members can both benefit from such discussions and contribute more directly to paradigm shifts within the wider academic community.