Classics For All: Future Antiquity From a Global Perspective

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GUEST EDITORIAL

CLASSICS FOR ALL: FUTURE ANTIQUITY FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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Classicists are skilled in examining the past, and Dan-el Padilla Peralta and Patrice Rankine's recent contributions have shown how the tainted legacies of American Classics continue to reverberate in our field today. Padilla Peralta's demographic study of three American classical journals, including *AJP,* demonstrates a troubling dearth of publication by scholars of color, and Rankine's *AJP* editorial exposes the inextricability of racial thinking from the history of our profession in the United States.[1] In addition, the highly publicized attempts to delegitimize our colleagues of color at this January's SCS annual meeting are symptoms so obvious and menacing that they cannot be ignored.[2] While it may be difficult to confront our past failures, however, we are even less well-suited to contemplate future scenarios. I therefore propose a thought experiment: to "look backwards" from a future point (for example, 2050, which is apparently the new expiration date of human civilization) to help us perceive an existential risk to our profession. Perhaps this more familiar retrospective position will paradoxically encourage us to appreciate Classics' potential to create innovation in the humanities, and for our profession to take a leadership role in transforming academia. In response to some potential objections, I will conclude by presenting an example of Classics on the "periphery," outside of the Anglo-American or European context, to illustrate one potential strategy for future resilience. Globalizing Classics may ensure our profession's evolution and survival, and even fulfil our

[1] Padilla Peralta 2019a, Rankine 2019.

[2] Our field is certainly not the only discipline with diversity and inclusion concerns: Medievalists had their own public exposure in 2018, and Philosophy has consistently been critiqued for its cultural, racial, and gender exclusivity in both subject matter and demographics; see note 14 below. For reporting on the incidents at the SCS annual meeting, see Flaherty 2019a; 2019b, and Pettit 2019a; 2019b. For personal reflections on those incidents, see Padilla Peralta 2019b.

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field's implicit claims to universality and temporal transcendence, if we are brave enough to look forward.

TEMPORAL FRAMES AND A "GREAT DERANGEMENT"?[3]

We as a profession cannot see 2050, because we are all working on our own individual temporal frames in the present. Department chairs are eyeing their budgets for the financial year. Senior faculty are contemplating their own retirement funds and asking whether they can or should retire, and whether their institutions will authorize replacements for them in the form of new tenured lines. Fortunate junior professors in permanent positions are thinking about key dates in their tenure clocks. Adjuncts and other temporary faculty are always anticipating the next round of applications on a completely different, and cruelly unpredictable schedule.

Perhaps our current disciplinary blindness arises from a misplaced confidence in the relatively enduring continuity of academic institutions: medieval cloisters and Germanic models of the research university transmuted into collegiate gothic, the tenure system, and prestigious, "classical" Great Books curricula like those of St. John's College, the University of Chicago, Yale's Directed Studies, and the Columbia Core.[4] One might add to this list even our broader conception of Classics' place in the past, and inevitably, the future of "Western civilization." Some threatening factors are not within our control or of our making. Despite the fact that STEM and applied degrees, especially in computer sciences, are swallowing all other undergraduate majors, despite the fact that college tuitions rise exponentially and student debt balloons, and despite the fact that volatility in financial markets could wipe out university endowments and retirement funds, we simply carry on as though Classics departments will miraculously attract enough enrollment to sustain undergraduate and graduate programs and our institutions will continue to support us. There are already many indications to the contrary, and the reports of the SCS' Classics Advisory Service certainly show that organization's

[3]This reference to Amitav Ghosh's book on climate change is not incidental: Ghosh 2016 suggests that art and literature are complicit in the cultural "modes of concealment" that allow the developed world to continue our energy intensive lifestyles. Ghosh's analysis is surprisingly applicable to our profession's inability to confront our imminent demographic demise.

[4]Despite the fact that these specific American curricula were historically developed in the 20th century for higher education, they claim temporal transcendence. Delbanco 2012, Zarenby 2006.

increasing responses to the ongoing contraction in our field as threatened departments and programs reach out for support.[5]

It is difficult and certainly unpleasant for us to imagine a world without Classics programs, a world in which students no longer learn Greek and Latin or write dissertations on Greek and Roman topics, one in which even the tiny readership of our scholarly journals and monographs has disappeared. Such a world seems hardly conceivable, but we have all seen other humanities programs shrink and even vanish; maybe some of our departments have adopted orphaned scholars of biblical Hebrew, or have watched faculty from Slavic, German, and Japanese coalesce awkwardly, albeit gratefully, into what my friend, then a junior professor of Comparative Literature and Japanese, used to call his program: "The Department of Unromantic Languages" (in 2006!).

There are of course, much worse examples in academia, including the massive defunding of public universities, as is currently threatened in Alaska. Maybe in 2050, when we are living in caves and earning our keep as storytellers and mythologists, we will be lucky if there is any kind of higher education at all. As in the case of climate change, the indicators of our future are already with us, and we must realize that the established among us (myself included), are operating on the implicit expectations of our privileged past experiences, and are ill equipped or even unable to appreciate other time frames and the perspectives they demand. Our undergraduates are confronting a bleak future of student debt peonage at best, and at worst, planetary extinction in their lifetimes. Their own futurist perspective contains an urgency and desperation that seems incompatible with the privileged narratives of intellectual contemplation and retrospection that the Humanities and Classics have conventionally presented. Why should any of them choose Classics, much less the ones whose backgrounds fit awkwardly into increasingly exclusionary narratives of "Western Civilization" and its "legacy"? Our graduate students are now entering a Humanities job market that would have looked like a post-apocalyptic wasteland to me when I finished my PhD in 2004.

We are all aware that there is already a "precariate" in the humanities: our colleagues in temporary positions who make up an increasing number of our ranks.[6] But now that this precarity is affecting the white majority who, as they cope with the disadvantages entailed by their limited or temporary affiliations, experience significant difficulty in obtaining

[5] See the online archive of SCS Vice President reports from 2011 to 2016 which cover the activities of the Professional Matters committee.

[6] Birmingham 2017.

permanent positions and publishing in top journals, how might we reflect on the number of potential scholars of color who were "not a good fit" for an all-white department, or whose scholarly topics (e.g., race, reception studies) were not considered "mainstream" enough for publication in top journals in the relatively well-resourced past?[7] What kept these numbers so low in our field for so long? Maybe it is worth considering how the marginalization of some groups (initially all the women, and today in most departments, people of color) has been keeping the job market a little roomier for the majority demographic.[8] Can we really afford not to recruit actively among groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in our classrooms and our profession? If we do nothing about this predicament and only protest the appropriations of white nationalists and misogynist groups like the Proud Boys, does our profession even deserve to exist?[9] This seems to be the moral question posed in a statement asserting this journal's rejection of the way "Classics has been and continues to be raced as white" in America and elsewhere.[10] In this effort, *AJP* is setting an example for other institutions in our field of how to make our profession more resilient by taking moral responsibility for their long-term decisions.

Imagine if at the highest level of our profession, the senior leadership of the SCS made enhancing the demographic resilience of Classics

[7] I observe that the racial insult to Dan-el Padilla Peralta at the SCS Presidential Panel came from a self-described "independent scholar"; Rankine 2019, Padilla Peralta 2019b. For a firsthand account, see Bracey 2019, and another pseudonymous first-person account in "Sankasharna" 2019. In the SCS reports I was surprised to see that the name of the "Committee on the Status of Women and Minority Groups" was only changed into committees on "Gender and Sexuality in the Profession" and "Diversity in the Profession" in the institutional reorganization of 2017 (no further reports available online); given the CSWMG's proactive efforts in 2015 and 2016, a change to the original marginalizing name of the committee was long overdue.

[8] The SCS seems to be working on new, professionally recorded census data, but the data from 2004 to 2014: as of 2014 only 9% of undergraduate majors and 2% of tenured faculty were from minority groups according to the information available, which may not be complete, and only reflects race, not all underrepresented groups, including first generation college students. https://classicalstudies.org/about/cswmg-report-comparing-2003-2004-and-2013-2014-departmental-surveys.

[9] Zuckerberg 2018; Kennedy 2017.

[10] Farrell 2019, echoing the SCS Board of Directors statement of 2016. The racialization of antiquity was a long process: on medieval notions of race, see Heng 2018; Traweek 2018; Bond 2017; and Flaherty 2017, covering attacks on Bond from white nationalists. See also note 14 below.

a strategic priority for our growth as a discipline.[11] This would require significant commitment to new goals and activities, such as establishing an SCS initiative for active recruitment among underrepresented groups, and supporting departments in their efforts to do so. Obviously, the SCS does not have unlimited independent fundraising capacity, but declaring a commitment to a new vision of the field, and showing significant institutional dedication in creating new organizational structures and retasking financial resources would align the SCS with the broader social justice and educational goals of foundations like Mellon, Ford, and Onassis.[12] Strengthening partnerships with these foundations could enable the SCS to co-sponsor prestigious, high-profile fellowships for underrepresented classicists at all levels (undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral fellowships, as well as research grants). Such alliances could also provide research support for faculty who are developing innovative, inclusive approaches, complete with syllabi, for teaching Classics through seed grants. The SCS committee structure could provide a national platform to share and disseminate materials on inclusive practices in scholarship, teaching strategies, and hiring to individuals and departments. The SCS has the potential to bring Classics programs together in order to pool information and resources and to incentivize new collaborations between departments of varying resources through matching grants. These unifying

[11] This means taking an active, not only reactive, position on transforming the field. I support Padilla Peralta's proposal to create an "equity team and an ombudsperson" to address racial incidents "in real time" (Padilla Peralta 2019b): the SCS website on the 2020 meeting indicates that plans to appoint an "ombuds" for the meeting are in the works (SCS 2019c). This is another measure that is long overdue in regard to sexual misconduct as well, and I think we can do still more as a professional organization. I also applaud the efforts of Sportula, EosAfricana, and the newly formed Asian and Asian-American Classical Caucus in their activism, creating community, and providing leadership on diversity issues. But in my view, demographic change is critical to the field's survival, and should therefore be taken on as a responsibility of the professional organization, not treated as a supererogatory volunteer job for its under-represented and primarily junior members of color.

[12] From the 2018 Mellon Foundation report on grantmaking: "In this climate, enrollments in humanities majors and courses have been declining at greater rates than in previous decades. The HESH program responded to this constellation of challenges by supporting initiatives that revitalize undergraduate curricula in the humanities; reimagine the humanities doctorate for career opportunities within and outside the academy; encourage the participation of humanists in interdisciplinary research that addresses grand challenges; and inform the public more clearly about the salience of the humanities for all citizens." Reed received a one million dollar grant to revise a single course (see note 25 below). Imagine how much innovating an entire field could be worth.

activities would show our real disciplinary commitment to counter the appropriation of Classics by white nationalists, and provide leadership to other disciplines who are also struggling with demographic exclusivity. Bringing and keeping more students of Classics in the pipeline, especially those from under-represented backgrounds, is no longer a "philanthropic" option for our field: it is necessary for our survival.

The 2019 annual meeting program featured scholars and social activists exploring and embodying more diverse versions of the field in panels and presentations. Institutionalizing a commitment to demographic development will signal our profession's intent to generate and sustain more innovative work of this kind. As the SCS presidential panel on "Global Classics" indicates, connecting to new intellectual communities worldwide can also strengthen our field's resilience by establishing an even larger global network of students, colleagues, and ideas.[13] In one scenario of the future, Classics could be a leader in the Humanities by focusing unprecedented professional attention on developing our field's demographics to advance our scholarship, and maintain our relevance to the broadest number of people.

MORE ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS AND A VIEW FROM THE PERIPHERY

There are depressing alternative scenarios unfolding in other humanistic disciplines like Philosophy and Medieval Studies, where debates on the history of the disciplinary canon, on constructions of "European heritage," and on "whiteness" within the professions reveal significant generational, racial, and political fractures.[14] Canon-based curricula in American higher education are historically contingent in their construction, yet paradoxically they make ideological claims to stability, comprehensiveness, and most perniciously, teleology ("The West = Us").[15] In a political environ-

[13] SCS 2019a.

[14] Medieval studies: Schuessler 2019; Bartlett 2019. Philosophy: Garfield and Van Norden 2016; Cherry and Schwitzgebel 2016; Van Norden 2017 has recently issued a strong challenge to the field.

[15] Mandatory programs with their coercive authority have faced especially strong criticism from students (Bodenner 2017) and revisions have also been attacked from the right as capitulations to "political correctness" at Columbia and Reed (Vilensky 2015; Lydgate 2018). A significant reflection on the implications of canonicity and rethinking our scholarly dimensions in Classics as aggregate and creative, rather than fixed and delimited in Güthenke and Holmes 2018.

ment where the swarthy, ethnically diverse ancient Mediterranean is polemically "raced as white" by Identity Evropa (*sic*), claims to cultural patrimony are all too easy to weaponize for exclusionary identity politics.[16] Let me propose another case study that may address these concerns: since 2013, I have been working as a classicist in a different country at a liberal arts college that has created a new kind of Common Curriculum and a Global Antiquity minor. Yale-NUS College could be one interesting model of an alternative future for Classics.[17]

To a classicist, Singapore in 2013 seemed to represent a depressingly technocratic future of American higher education: STEM disciplines dominated educational institutions at all levels and consumed nearly all of the research funding. (Humanities grant applications are reviewed together with those of the social sciences and business.) There are still very few Humanities departments in Singaporean universities, and research funding is directed by the Ministry of Education into "strategic areas" with a strong presentist and futurist emphasis on application and industry for national development.[18] This reflects the long history of the island as an international trade entrepôt, and the pragmatic bent of most students and parents, who persevere through the highly streamed, early specialization A-levels system to gain a place in the most competitive professional BA programs: law, medicine, engineering, and business. No ancient languages besides some classical Chinese are taught in high schools.

In 2015, Singapore ranked at the top of PISA scores for 15 year-olds in mathematics, science, and reading (with the United States scoring below the mean in 21st place), and in 2019 the National University of Singapore was ranked number 2 in Asia by the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings.[19] By these prestigious measures, Singapore's education system has been as spectacularly successful as its economic growth. Why, then, did the Ministry of Education decide to found a brand

[16] McCoskey 2017 and 2019; Whitmarsh 2018.

[17] Garsten et al. 2013; Seo 2017.

[18] For example, "The Social Science Research Thematic Grant aims to encourage high-quality and impactful social science and humanities research in areas of strategic relevance to Singapore. It supports social science and humanities research projects with bearing on key societal and economic issues affecting Singapore and the region. It aims to catalyse collaborations among existing research performers in Singapore, and encourage the effective use and adoption of innovative and inter-disciplinary methodologies, techniques and approaches. It also aims to support pathways to impact, including the test-bedding of ideas arising from research." Singapore Ministry of Education 2019.

[19] OECD 2018; *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings 2019.

new liberal arts college in partnership with Yale University in 2012?[20] In public statements, government officials frequently made the case for broad-based inquiry, residential learning communities, and creative thinking as essential to Singapore's longer term future, and thus Yale-NUS was meant to contribute a significant, new hybrid model currently missing from the educational landscape of Singapore.[21] Along with the Yale partnership came a Directed Studies-inflected Common Curriculum and sixteen humanists to design it, among them some classicists like me.

It remains to be seen what (if any) national impact a small liberal arts college can make on Singaporean society as a whole, but whatever its outcome, Yale-NUS would not exist without strategic planning and resource commitment at the highest level of government. It is hard to imagine any institution, Singaporean or American, that would have independently hired an unprecedented number of humanists to create a new curriculum from scratch, or even more absurdly, considered starting a Classics department. Can our profession follow a Singaporean model in strategic planning by setting transformative goals and dedicating the resources to achieve them? And if tiny, multiethnic Singapore can create and sustain the conditions for a new Classics community, maybe there's something for the "old world" of Classics to learn from this ongoing innovation.

CLASSICS WITHOUT HERITAGE

Making a case for Classics in an Asian cultural and educational context, and a highly commercial one at that, has been illuminating. Lacking historical connections to European or Anglo-American heritage and traditions, not to mention any precedent for Classics in the Singaporean educational context, we confront even greater cultural distance and

[20] Some vocal faculty at Yale and other campuses opposed the collaboration with Singapore, citing critiques of its political and judicial systems by Amnesty International and others (Han 2014). The inaugural faculty (myself included) who lived and worked in New Haven in 2012–13 engaged in many conversations with Yale colleagues and interlocutors in different fora, both public and private. Although we did not all agree, we learned by listening to concerns from our Yale and Singaporean colleagues, from Singaporean political activists, and through our own research (Gjorgievska 2012). The first Yale-NUS inaugural faculty vote adopted a statement on academic freedom: "We are firmly committed to the free expression of ideas in all forms—a central tenet of liberal arts education. There are no questions that cannot be asked, no answers that cannot be discussed and debated. This principle is a cornerstone of our institution."

[21] Lee 2015.

heightened parental skepticism about the practicality of studying ancient languages for future earnings and outcomes. Our globalized local and international students are passionate about urgent environmental and social justice crises that in Southeast Asia are very much in their own backyards. Furthermore, as our multiethnic Singaporean students are from Chinese, Indian, and Malay backgrounds, and our international students come from over 60 countries, very few of them can or would respond to claims about "our" heritage. (White students are a definite minority.) As a Korean-American transplant to Singapore myself, I am especially careful to avoid such implications when teaching ancient Mediterranean material.

Obviously, a "Western Civilization" curriculum would be even more irrelevant in Singapore, as well as embarrassingly colonial, than it is the United States. Our diverse teaching team, tasked with designing an interdisciplinary, first-year humanities course, struggled for an entire year to learn from each other. Requiring students to give up half of their first-year courses to our two, year-long humanities classes in the Common Curriculum, which are called "Literature and Humanities" and "Philosophy and Political Thought," is a big ask for students at the beginning of their college career. All of the "Literature and Humanities" faculty had to make a case, on multiple levels, on behalf of every text they wanted to teach. There was no canon of indispensable works on which we all could agree and which we were collectively competent to teach. Rethinking the canon was not a luxury for us, or an aspiration, but an immediate necessity; our global focus was not a self-indulgent, politically correct capitulation, but the criterion of cogency.

After a year of in-depth reading and discussion, our teaching team oriented itself away from a canon-based civilizations model (Greece, Rome, India, China), and towards an entirely different way of constructing meaning through the arrangement of texts.[22] Our guiding principle became one of global comparativism, as articulated by the Columbia Sanskritist Sheldon Pollock in his foundational article, "Comparison without Hegemony."[23] As a historically conscious philologist, Pollock requires that artifacts or trends under comparison be read within their own historical

[22] For a more detailed account of the syllabus construction, see Gould 2014 (an account by one of our former colleagues) and Seo 2017.

[23] As he argues for comparatist intellectual history, comparativism (as opposed to simple comparison) is a perspective that requires "*no necessary content* of any sort," i.e., "no given model of intellection can be held to be universal" (Pollock 2010, 190; original emphasis). One simple example of what Pollock opposes might be an assumption that an analogue to an American version of a Western "Great Books" canon should exist in the "East," or that every "great" literary tradition should contain a "Homer."

and geographical specificities, rather than through essentialized, ahistorical categories like "the West." For instance, the modern category "European," with its assumption of nation-states as a key point of reference, is historically irrelevant to Herodotus, the Halicarnassian; India as the source of Buddhist texts is China's "West" in the Ming novel, *Journey to the West*.

In our course—which is required of all students in the college—the still vital *Ramayana* performance traditions of southeast Asia illustrate the persistence and translation of mythological narrative into other media, and can help students understand the original performance and even compositional contexts of Homer's oral poetics. When constructing the initial year-long trajectory, a focus on the vernacular at the midpoint of our course reframed the issue of what it means to be "modern" as a genuine question for different global regions, rather than imposing a Western European definition and chronology of "modernity" on world history.

Team teaching is a humbling experience. No single instructor ever has full mastery over all of the materials, nor are connections easy to make between texts that derive from very different cultures and periods. In a truly global syllabus, meaning emerges from thematic juxtapositions, and the teaching team can engineer the course narrative to feature different aspects of faculty expertise that may evolve over time. That is, we not only teach together, but we learn from each other.

By participating in this project, I discovered that Classics' innate interdisciplinarity is a practical advantage. The imaginative distances we traverse and the range of skills we bring to bear in attempting to fill distant cultural and historical gaps make us ideal cross-cultural interlocutors, if that is our goal. This skill set allows us to position our scholarship and teaching as not limited to dialogue with historically related European or reception traditions, but essential to broader transdisciplinary conversations in the humanities.[24] This may mean sacrificing some prestigious real estate on the syllabus, and checking our own disciplinary sense of privilege as the *fons et origo* of "Western Civilization," as Reed College's bold, comparatist revision of Hum 101 has demonstrated.[25] But relinquishing the (tainted) cultural capital of the ivory tower can be an opportunity for evolution, not a loss. Engaging in comparative study across other ancient worlds and acknowledging the relevance of the present enables us to demystify the metaphors of inheritance, legacy, and patrimony that lend themselves so easily to ideological weaponization. It also requires being

[24] Detienne 2014; similar injunctions in Güthenke and Holmes 2018, 72 and *passim*.

[25] On the Mellon Foundation's one-million-dollar grant to Reed College to update Hum 101 see Lydgate 2018a and the course website, https://www.reed.edu/humanities/hum110/index.html.

brave enough to make the laborious, technical, and genuinely esoteric work of Classics just another field in the humanities that has something to contribute, and to learn from other disciplines.

At Yale-NUS, exposing students to a variety of global texts that speak to each other has forced us to think about familiar ancient works in new ways that emphasize their cross-cultural relevance, and help us appreciate their transhistorical value. It has led us to see the field of Classics as comprising not only the study of Mediterranean culture, but also of the ancient cultures of Asia, India, and Africa. This has made it possible to build a program that might contribute to our field's resilience in the future by bringing students who would otherwise not have considered Classics into language learning in Singapore and other institutions abroad, and even graduate programs.

In connecting with our local and international student body we have also been helped by the institution's strategic hiring of inaugural faculty: putting a Korean-American classicist and a Chinese-American renaissance specialist into a teaching team with a Singaporean Chinese scholar of pre-modern Vietnamese history among other diverse faculty encourages our students of different backgrounds to see themselves in the ancient world and the humanities more broadly. With so many faculty in ancient traditions collaborating in the Common Curriculum, we were able to start a Works in Progress series with a grant from the college to create an interdisciplinary research cluster. This has become the Ancient Worlds lecture series, which brings together international visitors and local scholars in antiquity and classical traditions and reception from any region. Bringing to Singapore colleagues like Peter Struck of the University of Pennsylvania inspired further institutional collaborations, such as the student-exchange course on Ancient Epics he and I co-taught between Singapore and Philadelphia in 2019. Yale-NUS and Princeton's Comparative Antiquity Initiative have also co-hosted a conference on "Global Comparative Antiquity" in August 2019.[26]

The payoff was immediate: as a result of their exposure in the first semester of the Common Curriculum, our students were eager to begin ancient languages, and we have been teaching ancient Greek, Latin, Classical Chinese, and Sanskrit since 2013. This was not part of the original plan for the college; it was the result of student demand—inconceivable in an American context—and that demand was fueled by a cross-cultural approach to antiquity. We also founded a Global Antiquity independent

[26] Co-organized by Andrew Hui and Mira Seo (Yale-NUS), and Brooke Holmes and Martin Kern (Princeton University): https://www.postclassicisms.org/workshops/forthcoming-2/comparative-global-antiquity/.

minor that requires two semesters of ancient language. The variety of course offerings allows our students to develop philological skills and focus their intellectual interests within majors like History or Literature, and to bring antiquity into other areas like Environmental Studies or Computer Science. Some of our students are already proficient in two to three ancient languages; they study Classics on their semesters abroad, and use ancient languages in the senior capstone projects (even in Computer Science). In 2018–19, our enrollments were 15 students in beginning Latin, 6 in Intermediate Greek, and 7 in beginning Sanskrit. Overall, our numbers are small: there have been altogether just ten official minors so far from three graduating classes. But these students are dedicated. One of our recent graduates, Pei Yun Chia (BA 2017) is a member of the "Ovid in China" project directed by Jinyu Liu of DePauw University and Shanghai Normal University, and is currently translating the *Medicamina faciei femineae* from Latin directly into Mandarin for the first time in history. Others are going on to graduate studies: Thu Truong (BA 2018), a Literature student from Vietnam who started Latin at the college, is entering the Classics M.Stud. program at the University of Oxford this Fall. A Philosophy major from the same class, Vincent Lee (who studies Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin), will begin the PhD program in Philosophy at the University of Toronto. While we are proud of our students' scholarly achievements, as an independent minor we seek to enhance our students' intellectual aims, whatever their professional goals after graduation.

The faculty affiliated with Global Antiquity include literary critics, philosophers, historians, archaeologists, and scholars of religion. Working together on ancient texts in the Common Curriculum has also helped us to see the importance of sharing our ideas across conventional academic departments and to create a different collective academic identity. As my colleagues and I stretch intellectually to appreciate the similarities in our philological approaches and intellectual questions in discussions of Chinese paleography or Sanskrit theories of language, this collaboration has modified the academic configurations within our institution. Such a transregional, interdisciplinary model requires resources, and for that reason is perhaps most commonly seen at the research level in humanities centers and other specialized settings; but it already exists in other undergraduate teaching programs, as well.[27] Recognizing this fact,

[27] For instance, UC Riverside's undergraduate program in Comparative Ancient Civilizations, https://complitlang.ucr.edu/undergraduate/comparative-ancient-civilizations/; University of Warwick, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/students/modules/ancientglobalhistory/.

even before the big foundation money starts rolling in, Classics departments can encourage collaborations and co-teaching arrangements with colleagues in other fields like Africana and Asian studies, Near Eastern studies, and Religion (where scholars in ancient periods might welcome such partnerships), and can consider cooperating with those programs to apply for target-of-opportunity hires or antiquity-focused "cluster hires" for shared faculty lines. Going it alone is hardly the best option in the Humanities anymore, and by globalizing the ancient world that we present to a new generation of students, we can assert the ongoing relevance of antiquity in contemporary multicultural societies. Even in practical terms, a globalized Classics major (or minor) can contribute to the sophisticated cross-cultural awareness students will need for their future careers.

Antiquity can be part of the future, but only if we accept that our place in academia isn't a birthright. In order to survive, we must make Classics as capacious and multiethnic as the ancient worlds we study. This will require a commitment from SCS leadership to lead institutional change, and to target its financial priorities for defined and accountable future goals. In Singapore, this kind of planning for the future is part of daily life. I hope the profession and its most influential institutions, especially the SCS, and our collegial community will share this pragmatic view from the periphery. Clearly, the possible disappearance of Classics by 2050 is less significant than the very real upheavals most of the planet will be experiencing as a result of climate change. A "world without Classics" is an especially rarified "first world problem," as my students in Singapore say. But I wonder how I will respond to an early Global Antiquity alum in 2050 if we do not treat our profession's current demographic crisis with the urgency it requires?[28]

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[28] I thank the editorial board of *AJP* for establishing these occasional guest editorials and for inviting me to contribute. I gratefully acknowledge the courage of all of the young scholars who have written about their own experiences and perceptions of the field in *Eidolon* (including its founder, Donna Zuckerberg, and her fellow editors), whose pieces have resonated with me, and from whom I've learned so much about the field. They are braver and smarter than I was at their age. Thanks also to my mentors, older and younger, who inspired and read versions of this piece: Geraldine Heng, Valerie Hansen, Jay Garfield, Caleb Dance, Barry McCrea, Nandini Pandey, John Tully, and Bobby Xinyue, among others.

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