

## **Yesterday's Men: The Myth and Commodious Vicus of Humanism - Jacobs (Harpers)**

<https://harpers.org/archive/2024/07/yesterdays-men-alan-jacobs/>

DISCLAIMER: As many of you know, my own background and principal field of interest is exactly the pre-postmodernist, structuralist, cultural anthropologist myth criticism arena this Alan Jacobs article champions. I am, without doubt, with more than a little sorrow in more ways than one, one of yesterday's men. And quite unrepentantly so. While the article, like my own education and inclination focuses on literary topics, the reach of the approach (admittedly, sometimes even shamefacedly, exceeding its grasp) extends well beyond philology, etymology and "the text" (in the pre-Derrida sense), even unto the political realities and political unconscious of critical theory and Lacanian psychotherapy and the death of the subject.

"Philology, in tracing the development of images, myths, and concepts in a given language, prepares us to make comparative studies of societies—which in turn would allow for a philosophy both grounded in eternal verities (what Vico called “the true”) and attentive to individual contingencies of the real world (“the certain”). Philological particularity, Vico believed, was the royal road to universal knowledge."