An International Journal in Philosophy, Religion, Politics, and the Arts

Existenz

Volume 15, No 2, Fall 2020 ISSN 1932-1066

From Nietzsche's "Educational Institutions" to Jaspers and MacIntyre and Newman on "The Idea of the University"

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***In memoriam*: Tracy Burr Strong (6 August 1943 – 11 May 2022)**

Abstract: Friedrich Nietzsche's Basel lectures, *Concerning the Future of Our Educational Institutions* are here read alongside Karl Jaspers' *The Idea of the University* and Alasdair MacIntyre's "The Very Idea of a University." MacIntyre in turn focuses on John Henry Cardinal Newman's celebrated essay on the university in the context of the contemporary university. As Giorgio Agamben has cautioned that the digitalization via teleconferencing of the university has altered, effectively by fiat, our own educational institutions in the United States and elsewhere, this essay makes the case that it is worthwhile to read between Nietzsche, Jaspers, and MacIntyre on the future of the university, "our" educational institution. To this extent, we might need to begin to rethink the relevance of presence, including a reflection on listening and bodily presence with respect to hearing and encountering one another.

Keywords: Hume, David; Illich, Ivan; Newman, John Henry Cardinal; St. Severus; STEM vs. humanities; acroamatic; classics; teleconferencing; *Sense and Sensibility*, *Harry Potter*.

Demnach ist nun freilich *die Philosophie selbst* von der Universität verbannt.[1]
Nietzsche, *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten*

Nietzsche's Future Educational Institutions and the Global Reset

The current political and socio-economic crisis on the world stage promises—thus one is explicitly informed—to "reset" everything,[2] globally speaking, and university education has already experienced the first wave of such a reset. Gone is the experience of face-to-face learning (in contrast to mask-to-mask) along with professors lecturing in lecture halls, students listening in lecture halls and asking questions in dynamic exchanges with professors and with their colleagues.

Much rather and now for more than two years, lectures are delivered, perhaps in person and perhaps virtually (assuming an instructor's facility with the

[1] Therefore now, of course, *philosophy itself* is banished from the university. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten: Sechs öffentliche Vorträge," in *Friedrich Nietzsche: Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe, Vol. 1*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Berlin, DE: de Gruyter 1980, pp. 641-763, here p. 743 [Henceforth cited as *ZB*; all Nietzsche translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated.]

[2] The proposed international actions related to this term were announced at the 50th meeting of the World Economic Forum, June 2020, https://www.weforum.org/focus/the-great-reset (last accessed August 28, 2022).

technology involved), here to use a new word, negative or positive to indicate time—synchronous or asynchronous or hybrid—and not spatial, haptic, actual physical contact: one with another. At once the language of referring to contact hours became a quaint left-over from a by-gone time, as universities struggled to satisfy time requirements for accreditation but corresponding to nothing real; as Nietzsche writes of applied education (this is the kind celebrated with the valorization of STEM) offered in the so-called *Realschule* by contrast with the classical gymnasium—the prestigious Schulpforta—where Nietzsche had been educated, and later in Basel, where he taught. Thus Nietzsche understands practical education in utilitarian terms, urging that one not confuse this last if often dominant meaning of *Bildung*, with another, expressly ideal conception of *Bildung*, here tenderly, indulgently described as a "soft-footed, cosseted [*verwöhnte*], aetheric goddess" (*ZB* 715). Nietzsche will go on, not without a certain irony, to use the phrase *in usum Delphinorum* in *The Gay Science* aphorism "A Word for the Philologist," to underscore the elevated rarity of this conception of education in his own discipline of ancient philology; as

> assuming a noble conviction [*Glauben*],—that for the sake of a very few who always "will come" and are not there—a very great deal of embarrassing, even unclean work had to be readied in advance.[3]

In his reflections on education, this is contrasted

> with that useful maid that is sometimes named "education" [*die Bildung*] but is only the intellectual servant-girl [*Dienerin*] and advisor on life-necessities, earnings, neediness. Such education, however, which holds out the vision of an office or profit at the conclusion of its course, is no education [*Erziehung*] toward cultivation [*Bildung*] as we understand it, much rather it is only an indicator [*Anweisung*] in the direction of the very ways that might secure and guard one's subject in the struggle for existence [*im Kampfe um das Dasein*]. [*ZB* 715]

Nietzsche's style here is elusive and yet he invokes Hegel's language. He denounces the specifically remunerative value of an education as incompatible with education, here a reference, among other things, to Lucian of Samosata's claim in Βίων πρᾶξις, usually translated as "Philosophies for Sale,"[4] just as Lucian argues, using figs and gold as example of bait to test a philosopher's motivations, that many claim to be philosophers for the sake of remuneration or the opportunity to dine with the wealthy, a claim Nietzsche repeats, "only cease to compensate them," and as swiftly one will be free of claimants to the profession.[5] Seemingly for good measure he adds a parodic allusion to G. W. F. Hegel in terms of the philosopher's position on rationality, irrationality, and the real (*ZB* 742-3), thus extended throughout this 1872 series of what had been planned as a series of six lectures (of which five were presented). At issue in Nietzsche's discussion of education, culture, and its institutions is what Tracy B. Strong called "a cultural revolution or transformation,"[6] quite where as Strong explains,

> All of the characters are, in different ways, *Nietzsche*—as he was, as he is, as he aspires to be, as he is afraid of becoming. [*PP* 6, emphasis added]

Thus, the popular political commentator John Gray offers a response including a far-too swift misreading of Nietzsche's lecture series on education in the wake of a recent translation,[7] which last for reasons that seem to have to do with marketing and perhaps the translator's bafflement, adds its own invented title: *Anti-Education*.[8]

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[3] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Die fröhliche Wissenschaft ("la gaya scienza")," in *Friedrich Nietzsche: Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe, Vol. 3*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Berlin, DE: de Gruyter 1988, pp. 343-651, here §102.

[4] Lucian, "Philosophies for Sale," in *Lucian, Volume II, Loeb Classical Library #54*, transl. Austin M. Harmon, London, UK: William Heinemann Ltd 1915, pp. 449-511.

[5] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Schopenhauer als Erzieher," in *Friedrich Nietzsche: Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe, Vol. 1*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Berlin, DE: de Gruyter 1980, pp. 335-427, here p. 422 [Henceforth cited as *SE*]

[6] Tracy B. Strong, "Philosophy and the Politics of Cultural Revolution," in *Nietzsche After Hundred Years: A Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, eds. B. N. Ray and Tracy B. Strong, New Delhi, IN: Authors Press 2006, pp. 1-26, here p. 4. [Henceforth cited as *PP*]

[7] John Gray, "Anti-Education by Friedrich Nietzsche Review—Why Mainstream Culture, not the Universities, is Doing Our Best Thinking," *The Guardian* (8 January 2016), https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jan/08/anti-education-on-the-future-of-our-educational-institutions-friedrich-nietzsche-review.

[8] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Anti-Education: On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, transl. Damion Searls, New York, NY: New York Review Books Classics, 2015.

Nietzsche never worked through the lectures for publication, although he solicited—and was offered the option—from his publisher. Some part of the reason he never went on to publish these lectures may have been due to enthusiasm yielding to disappointment in the wake of a lack of auditors where the audience of colleagues and friends, a phenomenon well known in university courses and serial events, tended to wax and wane: certain participants show up once and not again, significant in Nietzsche's case as, for example, Richard and Cosima Wagner attended the second lecture, and Nietzsche reported headcounts up to 300, but just this can set the stage for disappointment.

In addition, the elliptical question regarding the Nietzschean contrast between esoteric and exoteric, must be added as Nietzsche writes in his later published writings, here in these lectures expressed in philological terms as the "acroamatic." Elliptic, complicatedly esoteric, it is this reference that is nonetheless central, introduced as a technical device to describe the local educational institutions, an allusion not only to Lucian but also echoing one of David Hume's fabled travelers from "another world."[9]

Nietzsche knew Lucian well, as any classicist would, and had written on his work already as a student. In his unpublished notes, Nietzsche refers to Hume's hypothetical question concerning the challenges that one would face if one found oneself compelled to explain to an alien who "suddenly landed on our planet" (*wenn ein Fremder plötzlich auf unsere Erdkugel verschlagen würde*) as to what might be the difference between illustrations of suffering, such as experiences one might have in hospitals, battlefields, or prisons, by contrast with illustrations of pleasures, and examples drawn from our institutions for cultural enjoyment. Thus, and note its enduring significance in Anglophone popular culture, Hume asks, how one might show "the cheerful side of life" to an alien, how "give him a notion of its pleasures"? Where, Hume asks, would one recommend taking him, would it be "to a ball, to an opera, to court?" Thus, Hume argues that this alien "might reasonably think" he was only being shown "other kinds of distress and sorrow" (*F29* 668).

Unusual as the reference may seem it was all-too-timely rather than untimely in Nietzsche's sense, as it was no less relevant to then and current cosmology, including echoes in Kant's own concern of 1755 about hypothetical rational inhabitants of other planets,[10] together Hume's fondness for the extremity of the example, key, ceteris paribus, to Hume's critique of causality.

Thus contextualized, Nietzsche's outlander [*Ausländer*] is imagined as inquiring in a perfectly Platonic, and fairly, non-earthly (*nicht-irdischen*) in Kant's sense, that is, in a fairly *Star-Trek*-style voice, asking:

> How for you people is the student related to the university? We answer: Through the ear, as listener.—The outlander stunned: "Only through the ear?" he asks again. "Only through the ear", we answer again. The student listens.[11]

Nietzsche clarifies, author as he is of both the philosopher querying and his interlocutors in turn, "We answer" that in everything else the student does: speaking, seeing,

[9] Section 29, U II 2, Sommer-Herbst 1873 in *Friedrich Nietzsche: Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe, Vol. 7*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Berlin, DE: deGruyter 1980, pp. 621-723, here p. 668. [Henceforth cited as *F29*]

[10] Kant's point in one of his last works is of a piece with his focus on propriety, as Martin Heidegger takes this up in his conception of authenticity. Here the question concerns the nature of the human as such as Kant writes in his anthropology: "Von der Gattung gewisser Wesen einen Charakter anzugeben dazu wird erfordert: daß sie mit anderen, uns bekannten unter einen Begriff gefaßt, das aber, wodurch sie sich von einander unterschieden, als Eigenthümlichkeit (*proprietas*) zum Unterscheidungsgrunde angegeben und gebraucht wird.—Wenn aber eine Art von Wesen, die wir kennen (A), mit einer anderen Art Wesen (non A), die wir nicht kennen, verglichen wird: wie kann man da erwarten oder verlangen, eine Charakter der ersteren anzugeben da uns der Mittelbegriff der Vergleichung (*tertium comparationis*) abgeht. Der oberste Gattungsbegriff mag der eines *irdischen* vernünftigen Wesens sein, so werden wir keinen Charakter desselben nennen können, weil wir von vernünftigen *nicht-irdischen* Wesen keine Kenntniß haben, um ihre Eigenthümlichkeit angeben und so jene irdische unter den vernünftigen überhaupt charakterisieren zu können." Immanuel Kant, "Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht," *Akademie Textausgabe VII*, Berlin: de Gruyter 1972, pp. 117-334, here p. 321.

[11] Wie hängt bei euch der Student mit der Universität zusammen? Wir antworten: Durch das Ohr, als Hörer.—Der Ausländer erstaunt. "Nur durch das Ohr?" fragt er nochmals. "Nur durch das Ohr" antworten wir nochmals. Der Student hört. [*ZB* 739]

walking, socializing, "in short when he lives," the student is utterly autonomous, self-determined, and "independent of the educational institution" (*ZB* 739). To be a student is to be a listener, university attendance is literally a matter of hearing, or following, lectures.

Here Nietzsche foregrounds Wilhelm von Humboldt's ideal of the solitude (*Einsamkeit*) and freedom (*Freiheit*) of the university, explaining that this extends from the teacher "who very often reads while he speaks" to the student in its fullest logical consequences:

> Very often, the student also writes while he listens. These are the moments in which he is attached to the umbilical cord [*Nabelschnur*] of the University. He chooses for himself what he wishes to hear, he need not believe what he hears, he can close his ears when he does not wish to hear. This is the "acroamatic" method of teaching. [*ZB* 739]

Teaching "goes from the mouth to the ear." Once again, repeated for the sake of the inquisitive outlander: "all instruction toward higher education is, as said, only 'acroamatic'" (*ZB* 740).

Early in his career as a university Professor at Basel, Nietzsche gave these public lectures. Almost all of what is reported regarding these lectures depends on his own correspondence. Most readers to date seem to agree in finding the lectures unusual in the context of Nietzsche's work (some use this observation for a revaluation of Nietzsche's other works) if some part of this derives from self-imposed blinders as scholars do not commonly read Nietzsche alongside Lucian or the pre-Platonic thinkers of the tragic age Nietzsche favored or Schopenhauer or Hume much less von Humboldt or, indeed, Immanuel Kant, or even as Nietzsche might routinely draw upon Plato's *Republic*. The last is perhaps particularly pernicious as Nietzsche, a classicist, was concerned with meter and rhythm and thus it may be expected that many of his readers tend not to grasp his allusions.

In the first text from Nietzsche's lectures cited above, we note that he uses the language of the "struggle for existence" (*Kampf um das Dasein*) typically associated with Darwin. Indeed, Nietzsche's usage of this phrase may be traced fairly directly to the German paleontologist Heinrich Georg Bronn who translated into German Darwin's 1859 publication of *On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection* in 1860, and to this extent one may draw on Sander Gliboff to argue that Nietzsche's usage of the phrase alludes to Bronn's translation. Gliboff writes:

> Bronn's version of *The Origin of the Species* appeared in 1860, mere months after the original. It was the first foreign-language edition on the market, and it immediately provoked debates and challenged German scholars to think about morphology, systematics, paleontology, embryology, and other biological disciplines in new ways.[12]

Later in his text, Nietzsche emphasizes the distinction between creativity of a poetic, artistic, and indeed scientific kind of activity out of necessity by contrast to the same creativity out of abundance, aware as he is of the more practical pressures of one's struggle for existence. Thus he writes,

> the harder the struggle [*Kampf*] is, the more the young human being must learn, the more must his every nerve be strained to make his powers felt. [*ZB* 715]

The weight is on the student and in "Schopenhauer as Educator," Nietzsche suggests that even the classical student, that is, the traditionally well-off student who has the privilege of enjoying a classical education, must also take responsibility for finding his own educator, to use Tracy Strong's language of "philosophical cruising,"[13] —a classical ideal that is of the essence of the same academic freedom Karl Jaspers foregrounds in his own discussion of *The Idea of the University*.[14]

How is one to go about finding an educator today? A liberator, as Nietzsche says, under conditions that could not be more blatantly named: Lockdown?

Nietzsche finds his own educator, as he tells us, imitating and instantiating Augustine's *locus classicus* in the process, in a second-hand book shop. How shall this—will this?—work in a digital environment? The better question overall, the one that concerns those practical directional arrows that as Nietzsche suggests already passes for a proper education at in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a point that extends the length of the long nineteenth century into the

[12] Sander Gliboff, *H.G. Bronn, Ernst Haeckel, and the Origins of German Darwinism: A Study in Translation and Transformation*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 2008, p. 4.

[13] See Tracy B. Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press 2000, p. xx and p. xxx fn. 20.

[14] Karl Jaspers, *The Idea of the University*, transl. H. A. T. Reiche and H. F. Vanderschmidt, Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1959. [Henceforth cited as *KJI*]

second decade of the twenty-first century, that is the question of the practical value of an education, toward what end, to whose profit, the economic question: what becomes of the second-hand bookshop in the absence of the university which feeds the contents of second-hand bookshops with the discarded books of a lifetime of collection, review editions, and so on. Decluttering mavens already dictate that one dispose of books and younger scholars insist, incorrectly as it happens, that everything is online.

Asynchronous content, educational time spent—if one believes it is (and this faith or trust is key)—without the simultaneous presence of student and instructor is contrasted with synchronous content, time spent, again: in the best of good faith assumptions, in the simultaneous virtual presence of both instructor and students. Yet where a student might be one face among a hundred or more in a large lecture hall and still have direct experience of and direct contact with an instructor, a virtual screen of more than four, arguably, or eight (or twelve, optimistically imagined) is already too many to ensure the same contact. The problem is the technology and here the assumption is that one can figure out a technological hack to that, divide the class into sections, spend less time with the students in each case (so as not to overtax instruction) but ensure more contact. Yet, as anyone who began university learning as a student of the natural sciences will know, like most such hacks, the remedies proposed are nothing new and was already a practice using teaching assistants who had also attended the lecture alongside the students and might, in a break-out section, tutor students and answer questions, one on one, so too follow up contact with a professor (otherwise called office hours), and so on.

Reflections upon Jaspers' *The Idea of the University* can seem more challenging after social upset, particularly in the wake of war or civil disruption. This was true of John Henry Newman, who, as Alasdair MacIntyre reminisces, writes in a time of secular crisis and challenge. This circumstance applies to Nietzsche as well, writing after his own experiences in the Franco-Prussian War but the presence of pistols as brandished by the students in his lectures along with the political allusions to student fraternal organizations reflects this as well (*ZB* 748), quite where he argues in his notes that such student organizations must correct the university (*ZB* 749).

Today, the idea of the university is again a problem. Thus, modalities and features of instruction via correspondence or distance learning, which for some time has included television, which had once been sharply distinguished from the educational prestige of traditional university learning, along with the distinctions to be made between the various universities themselves are now not merely called into question but eviscerated, upended, reversed, just like that. Just as quickly as lockdown worked on demand, or better said: on command, to the surprise of the two best known critical French philosophers in the public eye today, Bernard Henri-Lévy and the still more sophisticated, Bruno Latour, who asks a pointed question, a real question and thus more complicated than anything indicated above, with respect to the current pandemic, as Rachel Donadio paraphrases here:

> What could have led to such a unanimity of decisions among the intellectual, economic, and political elites? This existential situation poses a societal enigma as much as a medical one.[15]

If Latour and Henri-Lévy waited to say anything at all until a certain amount of dust had settled, the better presumably to take one's bearings, Giorgio Agamben did not, as one says, miss a beat with his "Requiem for the Students."[16]

This kind of tactic, this poignant musical direction or marking belongs to the more esoteric expressions of Nietzsche's old philosopher in his five lectures, heard to be sure at the start of the fifth lecture: "False beat!" to use Michael Grenke's translation,[17] which barely conveys Nietzsche's *falscher Takt!* (*ZB* 734) without reference to a metronome or the beating of a drum (the reference to a drum [*Trommelschlag*] is Nietzsche's own),[18] something of use in reading Homer and still more useful in reading Pindar or Archilochus. To cite Nietzsche's philosopher cum

[15] Rachel Donadio, "France: After Lockdown, the Street," *New York Review of Books* (July 23, 2020).

[16] Giorgio Agamben, "Requiem for the Students" in *Where Are We Now? The Epidemic as Politics*, transl. Valeria Dani, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield 2020, pp. 72-4.

[17] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, transl. Michael W. Grenke, South Bend, IN: St. Augustines Press 2004, p. 101. In what follows I cite this translation owing to its accessibility.

[18] Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Theory of Quantitifying Rhythm," transl. William Harris, *New Nietzsche Studies* 10/1 and 2 (Spring/Summer 2016), 63-71, here p. 68.

philologist, in what would be the last of the lectures what is at issue "is whether the German university is a German educational institution" (*ZB* 749). He writes:

> Now think once again of a return of your sense for music, your ears resolved, and at the peak of the orchestra a worthy keeper of the beat (*Taktschläger*) in measured activity: the comedy of that figure is now no longer there for you, you hear—but the spirit of boredom appears to you out transmitted from the respectable beat keeper to his fellows. You see only flaccidity, softness, you hear only the rhythmically inexact, the vulgarly melodic and the trivially sensed. The orchestra becomes for you an indifferent, irksome, or virtually disgusting mass. [*ZB* 751]

Thinking that one is talking of education, the reference to the keeping of time—this is a reference to Nietzsche's ictus and his discovery of Greek prosody can be surprising. Yet the *locus classicus* could not be more conventional. Thus, the torches Nietzsche invokes recall one of the oldest philosophic *loci* of detaining an interlocutor for the sake of conversation—Polemarchus detaining Socrates, to keep him from his rendezvous at the start of Plato's *Republic*, with torches promised at the end, in Plato's case, a race on horseback held at night which is just where we have it in Nietzsche's dialogue. In both cases, the young men hold the old man captive for the sake of conversation on no other topic than how to become educated, not unlike the concerns of Glaucon and Adeimantus updated for Nietzsche's day and perhaps for our own, not as slaves or servants, or indeed automata but as sovereign over one's own free personality, resplendent as it were in one's own powers (*ZB* 729).

Readings of Nietzsche's *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions* tend to focus on the gnomic word of an old man, philosopher or not, but it is also important to highlight as this bears on Nietzsche's own research focus, the extraordinary language of the end of the fifth lecture, complete with a reference to "academic freedom" (*ZB* 749) and the indispensability of *Gehorsam* (obedience), a German word that presupposes hearing (*ZB* 749) and no less a dutiful musical audience. Since this is a reading of Nietzsche, the emphasis on beginning and tact is all about passage into philosophy and learning, antiquity and music. Hence, Nietzsche can urge:

> But now hear and see—you will never be able to hear enough! If you again regard the noble rage or inner lamentation of the orchestra, if you sense the sprung tension in every muscle and rhythmic necessity in every gesture, you will feel what pre-established harmony exists between the leader and the led, how it is in the order of rank of spirits [*Ordnung der Geister*] that everything strives towards building up such an organization. [*ZB* 751-2]

If one has spent some time reading Nietzsche on Greek rhythm, one might argue that this sentiment acquires an entirely different sensibility with regard to understanding Nietzsche's use of *quantitierend* as his signal discovery concerning the sound of ancient Greek as such.[19] This interpretation is opposed to foregrounding, as most accounts do, the oddity of the old man's comportment or the prominence of various members of Nietzsche's audience. An understanding of tact requires polished and polite education in music and no less in performance practice. The additional detail, namely that Nietzsche was theorist of nothing less than time in Greek meter and no less a master of keeping time at the piano and along with it all the differences such tact nuances can make, is a reminder regarding what education in classical philology should comprise and, arguably culture in general. Heraclitus points out that most humans tend to remain persuaded in an unchanged manner of their views, both before as indeed after listening to the *logos*:

> Of the Logos which is as I describe it men always prove to be uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when once [*sic*] they have heard it.[20]

This is Heraclitus' response in Nietzsche's characterization of it:

> Becoming is what I attest, he cried, and no one has so raptly regarded this eternal wave beat [*Wellenschlag*] and rhythm of things.[21]

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[19] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Zur Theorie der quantitirenden Rhythmik" in *Vorlesungsaufzeichnungen (SS 1870–SS 1871), Nietzsche Werke Kritische Gesammtausgabe, Zweite Abteilung, Dritter Band*, eds. Fritz Bornmann and Mario Carpitella, Berlin, DE: Walter de Gruyter 1993, pp. 263-280.

[20] Heraclitus, "Fragment 1," in *The Presocratic Philosophers*, eds. G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 1979, p. 187.

[21] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen," in *Friedrich Nietzsche: Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe, Vol. 1*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, Berlin, DE: de Gruyter 1980, pp. 799-872, here p. 822 [Henceforth cited as *ZG*]

As Nietzsche explains, it is hard to imagine it will be different when it comes to understanding the old man's repeated cry: *Falscher Takt!*

Jaspers and MacIntyre: All Great Philosophers are Educators

One might argue that Jaspers composes his 1936 study of Nietzsche in order to counter a questionable tradition of reading Nietzsche in the then-ascendant context of National Socialism.[22] This means that while Heidegger has been accused of seeking to lead Adolf Hitler, as it were, *den Führer zu führen*, quite as the late Tracy Strong cites Graeme Nicholson's account,[23] Jaspers continued a professorial tradition going back to Wilhelm von Humboldt's original idea of the university. For example, Thomas Karlsohn emphasizes the Humboldtian solitude and freedom just as Nietzsche had stressed this along with a clarification of the academic freedom on both the professor's and the student's side that is central to Jaspers reading: "*Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*, the freedom to teach and the freedom to study."[24] This stance is also to be found in Nietzsche's spirit of questioning the future of educational institutions, writing as Jaspers does to educate political movements, including National Socialism (but also, as this is Jaspers: comprehension of history and epistemology, including psychology, death and heroism, and no less religion).

To this extent, revisiting Jaspers' concern with the university qua its underlying idea may be useful in understanding this institution currently caught in the chassis (I need the Irishism and I will return to it) of a global pandemic and economic and cultural reset. In the same way, and in the context of another crisis, Heidegger takes up the question in his *Rektoratsrede*, where he rethinks university service and Jaspers makes the effort to write to Heidegger in May of 1933, one decade after the 1923 publication of Jaspers' T*he Idea of the University*.

Although seeming to reprise the title of Cardinal John Henry Newman's 1852, *The Idea of the University*, Jaspers does not focus on Newman, not least owing to the differences in understanding the culture of the university as such. For example, Ian Kerr argues that liberal education for Newman is not linked to acquiring knowledge about the canon of great books, "but rather learning how to think."[25] This forms a contrast with Alasdair MacIntyre's 2009 explicit discussion of Newman, by way of answering the hostile charges of Newman's critics in MacIntyre's "The Very Idea of the University" and thereby may help one to revisit a question which has arguably never been as much debated—or, indeed, for reasons of cultural and other equivocation, has been much neglected.[26] In addition to Nietzsche's own reflections on the same educational institution, I will also turn to pop culture for gathering insight as I have done in earlier discussions of education, less owing to the fantasy ideal of a school for witches than owing to language as spoken—in French, I thematize the academic discipline of sociolinguistics and the academic difference between analytic and continental university philosophy for the same reason and, in German, I read Ivan Illich on the acroamatic, via modern filmic and theatrical performance practice.

For MacIntyre, theistic issues are the deciding issue when it comes to secular institutions which yet turn on a failure to comprehend those same issues—what is presupposed and what is at stake—observing that Newman's critics are affronted by what seems to them to be an impossible juxtaposition, cognizant as they are of what seems to them to be a contradiction. As MacIntyre observes:

> Newman was well aware that belief that God exists is contestable and that there are no knockdown arguments, equally compelling to every intelligent person, for the existence of God. [*NIU* 349]

[22] Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophical Activity*, transl. Charles F. Wallraff and Frederick J. Schmitz, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. [Henceforth cited as *KJN*]

[23] Tracy B. Strong, "Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt. Why Become a Party Member?" in *Heidegger und das Politische. Heidegger Jahrbuch 13*, eds. Michael Medzech and Holger Zaborowski, Baden Baden, DE: Verlag Karl Alber 2022, pp. 93-117, here p. 94.

[24] Thomas Karlsohn, "The Idea of the University and the Process of Secularisation," *Parse* 6 (Autumn 2017), 176-190, here p. 183.

[25] Ian Ker, "Newman's Idea of a University: A Guide for the Contemporary University?" in *The Idea of a University*, eds. David Smith and Anne Karin Langslow, London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers 1999, pp. 11-29, here p. 22.

[26] Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Very Idea of a University: Aristotle, Newman, and Us," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 57/4 (December 2009), 347-362. [Henceforth cited as *NIU*]

Specializing in such argumentation of incommensurable kinds, MacIntyre goes on to unpack the problem at issue with deliberate care (his arguments, razor sharp as this one is, are so quick that they can leave innocent thinkers arguing with a vapor):

> it is characteristic of contemporary unbelievers to believe that, only if they were offered some knockdown argument whereby belief in God would be incontestable, would they be rationally entitled to believe that God exists. To which the theist has to respond that any being whose existence was thus justified would not be God...It is not that there are not arguments sufficient to justify the theist's assertion of the existence of God, but that the soundness of those arguments will always be open to contestation, just because of the nature of God and of His relation to His creation. [*NIU* 349-50]

The issue is subtle, it is part of the reason Heidegger spends some time on the whatness of being for his own part and it is, to be sure a Scotist point, namely that Avicenna and Averroes both hold the position that no science, qua science, "'proves the existence of its subject' is true."[27] But when it comes to the university, MacIntyre underlines that

> it would have been Newman's view that the fragmentation of our curriculum is a condition that needs to be remedied and that only an acknowledgment of theology as the key unifying discipline can adequately remedy it. [*NIU* 349]

It is key to MacIntyre's argument, updated for the current, present-day era, that not only could no discipline today

> be accorded the place that theology has in Newman's scheme but also because the claim that the knowledge of God is at once contestable and yet genuine and indispensable secular knowledge is at odds with the present day secular university's understanding of the secular. [*NIU* 350]

Similarly, Nietzsche defines his then-present-day educational institutions as those institutions up to and including the university. Nietzsche had no choice but to include both Gymnasium and the university, given that while in Basel, he was required to teach both Gymnasium and university students. This was not a matter of extra work, though it surely was that, but bore on the fact that the Greek and Latin classics he taught were as key to the definition of the university as they were to the Gymnasium, and only students prepared by studies at the Gymnasium could qualify for entry to the university. It is thus unfortunate that popular translations of Nietzsche's book *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, such as the one by Michael Grenke but also, if somewhat ameliorated, in the version by Damion Searls, tend to fail to thematize institutional differences (as these distinct pedagogic contexts would differ in the Basel as in the Thuringia of Nietzsche's day and today) but instead focus variously on literary context and a fairly generic as opposed to a distinctively Nietzschean notion of culture.

In the same measure, MacIntyre emphasizes that the idea of a university, in effect, disintegrates without theology, without deity, Nietzsche claims that everything in a German university of his day falls apart without Classical Greek, and this process was already underway in his day.

> For take away only the Greek, together with philosophy and art: on what ladder do you still wish to ascend toward education.[28]

Those in Anglophone cultures understand some of these distinctions but the notion of a classical education has had for years in the Anglophone world (at least since the first world war), less and less to do with the deployment of Latin and Greek. It is important, institutionally, culturally speaking that this loose association was not the case in Switzerland or Germany or Austria and this remained so and for this reason providing the classical education that made scientists such as Albert Einstein or Werner Heisenberg or Erwin Schrödinger possible, all of whom visited classical Gymnasia. It is also why Paul Feyerabend at the end of his life wrote with dedication a book on the Presocratics that only appeared posthumously, as did Schrödinger for his own part, and so on.

Consistently in his reflections on classicists—*We Philologists*, for example, but also in the various essays comprising his *Untimely Meditations*, and no less in *The Gay Science*, a descriptive name Nietzsche also applied for his own discipline of classical philology, but even in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *Twilight of the Idols*, in other words throughout his entire

[27] Duns Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, transl. Allan Wolter, O. F. M., New York, NY: Nelson 1963, p. 10.

[28] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, transl. Michael W. Grenke, Chicago, IL: St. Augustine's Press 2004, p. 110. [Henceforth cited as *FEI*]

writerly life, well after retiring from his professorship, Nietzsche reflects on the nature of education, of the scholar as well as of the educational institution as such, up to and including the university (hence the need to pay attention to the distinction between *Realschule*, *Bürgerschule*, and the Gymnasium), which is enacted via the claim of being able to distinguish good and bad philosophers, and, thus, the need to separate those who can think from scholarly sheep. There is an argument here on the side of rarity, exclusivity, as the institution, dedicated to itself as it is as Jaspers argues, deems those scholars it hires (tenures, promotes, publishes) by default as excellent or good.

Nietzsche traces the problem to the conversion of *Bildungsanstalten* (Institutions of Culture) from the university classically conceived, into more practical or applied "Institutions for the Necessities of Life" (*FEI* 85). One eliminates things deemed useless, and this will include, as Nietzsche suggests, both philosophy and art along with the breadth of classics as such, to be replaced by ever-narrower sub-specializations. There is an entire discussion here, but the problem of employing philosophers who are actually not philosophers is an old theme: Plato talks about it in his *Republic*, and Nietzsche, in his lectures on *The Preplatonic Philosophers*, dedicates a lecture to the difficulty of identifying who it is who should be called wise (σοφός). The classical problem of philosophy is that many who present themselves as being philosophers are in truth not philosophers. The remedy Nietzsche proposes to eliminate the incompetent philosophers who somehow manage to find themselves nonetheless employed will hardly win applause. Simply stop paying them, so Nietzsche suggests, and, automatically, you will have fewer claimants to the title.

The test for the real philosopher—a test that also lurks behind Max Weber's book *Science as Vocation*—Nietzsche filches from his favorite Syrian-Greek author, Lucian, specifically from the short dialogue "Philosophies for Sale," which Nietzsche glosses (one needs to know this as he does not advert to the text he follows), point by point:

> Let the philosophers grow untended, deny them all prospect of place and position within the bourgeois professions, cease to entice them with salaries, more, persecute them, show them disfavor—you will behold miracles!…Suddenly it will be empty, everyone will have flown the nest: for it is easy to get rid of bad philosophers, one has only to cease rewarding them. [*SE* 422]

Jaspers himself makes a related observation regarding the venality of university research by contrast with independent scholarship,

> those professionally concerned with it are not really interested in it at all but are merely interested in money and personal power. [*KJI* 73]

Even before his Nietzsche book, Jaspers had already been for a long time a sympathetic reader of Nietzsche regarding values and worldviews. Reminding the reader toward the end of his Nietzsche book that "All great philosophers are our educators" (*KJN* 452), Jaspers does not lose sight of the sense of his own system which he expresses forthrightly:

> To achieve self-education by thinking Nietzsche's thoughts with him is therefore only possible by means of the integrative thinking that we bring with us to the task. [*KJN* 455]

Jaspers also emphasizes that "True scholars, even in the heat of controversy, remain firmly united with one another" (*KJI* 62-3). Such truth-seeking scholarship is exemplified by scholarly independence, and a lack of economic incentive—this is a challenge when it comes to thinking STEM in the context of a productivity-driven educational system:

> For the university must not be confused with the sort of school where intellectual spontaneity is rigidly channeled along curricular and pedagogical lines. [*KJI* 63]

Jaspers continues:

> To be permeated by the idea of the university is part of a way of life. It is the will to search and seek without limitations, to allow reason to develop unrestrictedly, to have an open mind, to leave nothing unquestioned, to maintain truth unconditionally, yet recognizing the danger of *sapere aude* (dare to know). [*KJI* 68]

The problems are what Nietzsche characterized under the rubric of decadence and, as Jaspers argues, the tendency to favor mediocrity by way of yielding to deference to established intellectual schemes. Overall, Jaspers observes that "the very translation of thought into teachable form tends to impoverish its intellectual vitality" (*KJI* 70). Part of the problem is, as Jaspers, a lifelong professor (teaching for years in Heidelberg and then, after the war, doing so in Basel), could not but notice, that "administrative organizations are notoriously intent upon perpetuating themselves" (*KJI* 71).

Thus Jaspers explains:

> Ostensibly, the university's vested freedom to select its own new members favors the choice of the best. In practice, however, this system tends to favor the second best...people who are on the same intellectual level as oneself. [*KJI* 71]

Ultimately, the idea of the university is nothing but an idea. A similar objection against the nature of anything to do with institutionalized spirit is also found in Ivan Illich's Bremen Peace-Prize lecture, "The Cultivation of Conspiracy."[29] And Jaspers muses that the spirit of the university

> glimmers in the ashes of institution, flaring up from time to time in individuals or groups. [*KJI* 75]

On J. K. Rowling's Snape as Exemplary Teacher

The present reading inspired by Nietzsche's reflections on "our educational institutions" and Jaspers' ideas on the university already frayed following a first and again, a second world war, echoes again today in a world in chassis, here again, to use a Joycean term in a sense Joyce could not have imagined. By chassis, I am not speaking of the ongoing drive under the pretext of a Corona virus Pandemic to put education online and to have teachers teach à la Socrates in his first speech on Eros in the *Phaedrus*—masked to cover his expression and so, as Platonists have explained the gesture, that he might lie more easily. As Nietzsche says: "a human being must learn very much in order to lie" (*FEI* 81). Indeed, it may be redundant to talk of masks, as in an important aspect the modern digitized world is already filtered, transformed by its tools, and centrally guided habits, predilections, and tastes. This is a world led and ruled by the creators of social media, enacting their visions by way of the cell phone, the tablet, the computer. Human beings, globally, are online, attached by habit and inclination, captivated by the newly-found everlasting friend, that is, the smart phone that one keeps close-by at all times, tethered as one is by tracking apps, 24/7. Arguably, perhaps this will further increase until all education is completely leveled.

I have been expounding for a while in my essays on education not on the figurative figure of Socrates who wrote nothing, a factual silence well suited to whatever Plato would care to make of him, but instead on the popular fictional figure of Severus Snape, named, as it would seem, for Saint Sulpicius Severus, a miracle-writer who could call back the dead to prove a legal point.[30]

Composed by J. K. Rowling and portrayed on screen by Alan Rickman, Professor Snape represents the antithesis as it would seem of today's recommendations for professors, so-called best practices—according to whom, as assessed by whom, for the sake of whom?—criteria underlined by learning centers increasingly championing a mode of education maligned for years, namely today's equivalent of fee-based, and often unregulated (this is one of the advantages of being unaccredited) correspondence learning, distance-learning, online learning.[31]

There is a world of cultural difference in the translation process that eliminates the word "philosopher" from the title of Rowling's book as it appears for an American English readership and replaces it with "sorcerer." The focus on the philosopher's stone accords with the tradition of alchemy in its ancient constellation and still does so, quite as Immanuel Kant wrote on fire (1755) and Isaac Newton was an alchemist.[32] Thus, Patrick Heelan identifies religion and alchemy as being, as Nietzsche spoke of them, part of the necessary "preludes" to the development of modern science. In a priestly fashion but no less as philosopher of science and as a physicist, Heelan speaks of three antecedents in the development of science; he explains the mechanical and organismic models of explanation, then he writes:

> The third important ingredient of the scientific revolution was the Hermetic tradition stemming in part from the Neoplatonic literary revival of the

[29] Ivan Illich, "The Cultivation of Conspiracy," in *The Challenges of Ivan Illich: A Collective Reflection*, eds. Lee Hoinacki and Carl Mitcham, Ney York, NY: State University of New York Press 2002, pp. 233-42.

[30] Karl P. Harrington, "The Place of Sulpicius Severus in Miracle-Literature," *The Classical Journal* 15/8 (May 1920), 465-474.

[31] J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2000. [Henceforth cited as *HP*]

[32] William R. Newman, *Newton, the Alchemist: Science, Enigma, and the Quest for Nature's "Secret Fire,"* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. Newman names Newton an "alchemist's alchemist" in his gloss on his own book. A detailed review of Newman's book is written by Cornelis J. Shilt, "A True Adept: Newton, the Alchemist," *Ambix* 67/4 (November 2020), 400-407.

> fifteenth century Renaissance with its interest in numerology, and in part from even older Christian and non-Christian Gnostic sources in antiquity, particularly in Egypt and the Middle East. Greatly dependent on this tradition were alchemy, astrology, and the science of mnemonics or memory. All of these sciences touched religion at one extreme and magic at the other. Their practitioners conceived themselves as operating in some way as agents of divine or preternatural powers in nature, either constraining such powers to serve private purposes (magic) or working in holy complicity with such powers for the greater glory of God.[33]

Snape tempts his students as he presents his initial teacherly promise to them: "I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death" (*HP* 137). But he also asks them, in a challenge set to Harry Potter, concerning the addition of "powdered root of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood" (*HP* 137). Wormwood has inspired generations of poets, including C. S. Lewis and has powerful benefits to this day but it is asphodel that is interesting: a flower, as Homer claims, that grows in the underworld, the Elysian fields. Echoed throughout the poetic resonances of the English language, asphodel is a portent of death, a relative of the narcissus and the daffodil. This has little connection with Jaspers except to the extent that he was a doctor himself and would have known, like Snape, something of such potions and their uses.

At issue here is Rickman's performance practice. Playing evil, personified as a rigorous and even harsh teacher, Rickman managed this, as a double agent, left to deal with contempt for being exactly what he was not, even though Rickman himself knew as only the author knew, where the story might be going before it was written, before it was filmed. Thus, Rickman played the ambiguity of the role, tilting it in the lens of the viewers' prejudices.[34] Rowling's text exemplifies the person of the professor in the character of Snape:

> He spoke in barely more than a whisper, but they caught every word—like Professor McGonagall, Snape had the gift of keeping a class silent without effort. [*HP* 136-7]

This auratic person of the professor is also emphasized by Jaspers and it is the key too to the figure of the old philosopher who is the interlocutor for the two student marksmen, coming to practice pistol-shooting up in the hills above the Rhine in Nietzsche's *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*. Arguing against empty dialectic, as against arguing the (Hegelian) case that black is white (Nietzsche does not here name the thinker against whom he directs invective), Nietzsche foregrounds both the need to listen (to audibly hear philosophy as noted above) and the discipline of attending, ergo the esoteric and adept's character proper to acquiring such an education:

> Do today for once as the young Pythagoreans did: they had to keep silent for five years as servants of a true or genuine [*einer rechten*] philosophy. [*ZB* 663]

Today, the streamlining of universities in the wake of the 2020 Coronavirus event that shut down the world, schools and universities in the first place, functions because schools are perceived in a way similar to polytechnic educational institutions and thus it is maintained that school should be good for something. In the same train of thought, following the Arthur C. Clark school of technological thought, Rowling's fictional school for wizards fits right into a cliché as the majority of scholars argue, namely: that of technology in the guise of magic, seen from an unenlightened point of view. But belief in the magic of technology is an insiders' belief, one has to know the technology in question in order to be impressed by it. Primal people are usually more intrigued by the guns and bad breath of the European invader than they are persuaded of supposedly supernatural powers owing to technological accoutrements.

With regard to the university, Jaspers' concern accords with today's concern with marketability, existentially speaking, "The student comes to the university in order to study the arts and sciences and to prepare himself for a profession" (*KJI* 39). Jaspers' discussion of the university is accordingly a contemporary one and it includes the disappointments that go with the ideal of this idea of the university:

> One's expectations are only seldom fulfilled at university. The first rush of enthusiasm does not last. [*KJI* 39]

Indeed, quite as if describing the whirlwind that

[33] Patrick A. Heelan, "Foreword," in *Ignatius de Loyola: A Philosophical Hermeneutic of Imagining Through the Collected Works of Ignatius de Loyola with A Translation of these Works*, ed. and transl. Antonio T. de Nicolas, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 1986, pp. ix-xiv, here p. xi.

[34] There is a parallel with Goethe's *Faust*, fairly, in the person of Mephistopheles (and there in performance, on stage as on screen, it is the actor who makes all the difference; for example I think of Gustaf Gründgens); also, it will help to recall that evil nearly always has a good conscience.

carried Harry Potter off to Hogwarts, and the earnest preparations, the getting of a wand and—how Hegelian can this be?—an owl, Jaspers seems to describe the almost immediate disappointment Harry experiences in the course of his first encounter with Professor Snape, dutifully, righteously writing everything down, only to find himself presented with questions he is unable to answer (namely, the mixture of an infusion of wormwood with powdered asphodel). At best, and this happens indeed to describe the evolution, devolution, of Harry Potter as student:

> He becomes lazy in his work, wants to grasp the idea, unity, profundity, directly without any disagreeable effort which to his way of thinking grasps only trivia. He thinks that by reading a few good books he is doing scholarly work. [*KJI* 40]

Note that the last point mentioned is a fair analysis of Hermoine's achievements as a scholar—at least as she is presented—and

> He finally perverts true effort to the point where he seeks an edifying frame of mind, rather than scholarship, and mistakes the classroom for the pulpit. [*KJI* 40]

Snape as exemplar is there to remind the reader that there is still a level of rigor, of study, of learning, of discipline, quite apart from magical thinking, such as Snape's prohibition of both "foolish wand waving" and "silly incantations" (*HP* 137). Snape, being an expert in both, means to remind his charges of the value of evidence-based magic, as it were, potions that work with or without one's faith in the matter.

Jaspers clearly states, "The university is not a high school but a higher institution of learning," and he emphasizes that "The young person must learn how to ask questions" (*KJI* 45). Jaspers explains:

> Education at a university is Socratic by its very nature. It is not the whole of one's education nor is it like the instruction one receives in high school. University students are adults, not children. They are mature, have full responsibility for themselves. Professors do not give them assignments or personal guidance. Freedom, the all-important factor, is irreconcilable with even so impressive a training as that which has been traditionally identified with the monastic orders and military academies. This type of submission to rigid training and leadership keeps the individual from experiencing a genuine will to know. It blocks the development of human independence that admits no other source or tie than God Himself. [*KJI* 52]

At this juncture Jaspers turns to the relationship between student and professor and the dynamic of the lecture hall. Noting the stock objection to lectures as dead weight, better conveyed in a book (or indeed via a recorded version of the same), Jaspers rearticulates Nietzsche's old philosopher's emphasis on hearing, underlining, without irony, that

> The memory of outstanding scholars lecturing accompanies one throughout life. [*KJI* 57]

Indeed, such an exemplar would have inspired Nietzsche and Heidegger and surely, given her construction of a fictive school, Rowling herself, exemplars remembered, down to the last word in passing, in a hallway, or lecture. As Jaspers writes:

> Through his tone, his gestures, the real presence of his thinking the lecturer can unconsciously convey the "feel" of the subject. No doubt this can only be conveyed by the spoken word and only in a lecture—not in conversation or discussion. The lecture situation evokes something from the teacher which would remain hidden without it. There is nothing artificial about his thinking, his seriousness, his questioning, his perplexity. He allows us to take part in his innermost intellectual being. [*KJI* 57]

Jaspers observes that this quality is lost the minute it becomes contrived, this is almost unavoidable, certainly when it is recorded, for it is the moment when the spoken teaching itself becomes inscribed, repeatable, as dead as any written letter.

MacIntyre and "The Very Idea of a University"

I have left the discussion of MacIntyre and Newman until this final section of this essay not only owing to the need to discuss Nietzsche and Jaspers beforehand and not only because there is more going on in Rickman's portrayal of Severus Snape than is typically elaborated, but also because Newman as such is disarmingly common coin, so much so that on more honorific occasions in university life than one might remember, it is Newman who is being dusted off and is being presented by deans and presidents and sundry professors of education.

One would seem to know everything there is to know about Newman's essay and that means, as it is the case for many well-known works, consider for instance my earlier allusion to Socrates covering his face in Plato's *Phaedrus*, one can pretend to not knowing it.

MacIntyre begins by reminding the reader that there is also no shortage of attacks. He is as precise as any schoolmaster is when teaching one to make distinctions: as had been said, the problem, he tells the reader, is not that Newman is just false but rather that he is irrelevant (*NIU* 347). He elaborates:

> To criticise contemporary universities from Newman's standpoint would be, on their view, like blaming a jet engine for not having the excellences of a windmill. [*NIU* 347]

MacIntyre proceeds as a good Thomist would—I say Thomist advisedly as, in spite of the title of his own essay, more than one Aristotelian modality is involved—by detailing the problems advanced by Newman's adversaries by recounting Newman's own claims that

> we need to study not only a number of different disciplines—physics, physiology, history, literature, mathematics, psychology—but also how each of these bears on the others, what the relationships between them are. [*NIU* 348]

MacIntyre emphasizes that Newman argues against the narrowness that is often essential for focused research. But it is theology, qua queen of the sciences that makes MacIntyre's account worth attending to with some care. It is the queenship that is key here:

> Without a recognition of theology as the key discipline, the university curriculum, so Newman argued, will disintegrate into a fragmented multiplicity of disciplines, each self-defining, each claiming autonomy in its own sphere. [*NIU* 349]

MacIntyre distinguishes the nature of proofs for the existence of God and the relation of the same to the nature of God, but it is the claims regarding the economy that seem most crucial. Philosophy, traditionally held to be baking no bread, as my teacher Hans-Georg Gadamer liked to paraphrase a tradition of reflection on the same non-breadwinning study, and yet for Newman, the whole of the university might be similarly reprimanded. Realistically seen, as MacIntyre summarizes these arguments:

> Universities today would not survive, let alone flourish, if they were not able credibly to promise to their students a gateway to superior career possibilities and to donors and governments both a supply of appropriately skilled manpower and research that contributes to economic growth. Universities, that is to say, promise to be cost-effective enterprises. [*NIU* 350]

MacIntyre moves in the second part of his essay to a discussion of what might be described as an articulation of the presuppositions of the practical syllogism as a guide to decision making, what a friend of MacIntyre's as well as of the present author, Patrick Heelan, S. J., (1926-2015), would have called the "rules for the discernment of spirits."

In an introduction composed for Antonio de Nicolas' translation of the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*, Heelan explains what philosophically is at stake is a phenomenology of internal consciousness, a hermeneutic of religious or spiritual affect:

> It is rather a manner of experiencing and then discerning, that is, evaluating, the spiritual affects of (what Ignatius called) "consolation" and "desolation," first in the course of such imaginative exercises, then in contemplating the world around that God made, and finally at the heart of daily human living.[35]

The narrow expert is not useful, not on the terms of the practical syllogism on grounds of the experts' narrowness and this narrowness means that their claims, diagnoses, recommendations are in need of correction and that requires a discernment of its own kind. MacIntyre writes thus:

> Sometimes we need to correct what economists tell us by appealing to the historians, and sometimes of course vice versa. Sometimes we need to correct what neurophysiologists tell us by appealing to psychologists, and sometimes vice versa, and sometimes we may need as well or instead to go to novelists or dramatists. [*NIU* 353]

It is for the sake of such an overarching discernment that, in MacIntyre's words:

> We all of us therefore need to be schooled in a number of disciplines, just because each has its own methods, insights and standards. To be educated is, on this view, not only to know how to bring each discipline to bear in appropriate ways, but also how to respond to the unjustified claims made in the name of each. And for this we need not the contracted mind of the specialist, but a different sort of mind. [*NIU* 353]

MacIntyre continues by quoting Newman on the

[35] Patrick Aidan Heelan, "Foreword," in *Ignatius de Loyola, Powers of Imagining: A Philosophical Hermeneutic of Imagining Through the Collected Works of Ignatius de Loyola, with a Translation of These Works*, Antonio T. de Nicolas, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 1986, pp. ix-xiv, here p. x.

perfection of the mind to this same end, pointing out

> that "true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things [at once] as one whole, of referring them severally to their [true] place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence." [*NIU* 353][36]

The universities thus need to be reformed in order to be what they claim to be as universities, both in terms of the education offered to students and the requirements presupposed for the educators themselves—note that the great books schemas at certain institutions, teaching professors along with students is not as such an answer here, as MacIntyre suggests that:

> We should notice too that the teaching of this kind of curriculum will require a corresponding kind of education for teachers, since we shall need teachers of literature who are well informed about biochemistry and teachers of physics who are able to think historically, all of them being at home with the relevant mathematics. [*NIU* 354]

It needs to be taken into account that what MacIntyre is describing here is an education that is actually what the university proposes to offer at the present time, but indeed does not deliver it or to quote him in not quite the context he himself intended, does so "only incidentally and accidentally" (*NIU* 354).

In the third section of his essay MacIntyre proceeds by asking the question of human nature, precisely the question to which is often paid lip service in the title of introductory philosophy courses (for example, Fordham University, where I teach, requires a course in Philosophy of Human Nature):

> We are, according to physics, composed of particles interacting with each other and with our environment. Chemistry tells us that we are sites of a variety of reactions; biology, as Newman was shortly to learn from Darwin, that we are in key part what we are because of the evolution of species. Sociology and economics characterise the structure of our roles and relationships; history informs us that we are what our past has made us and what we have made of our past. And theology views all these same features from a very different perspective. The crucial questions are: In what then does the unity of a human being consist? And what is it about human beings that enables them to ask this question about themselves? [*NIU* 354-5]

I draw attention to the fact that MacIntyre presupposes an ongoing process in knowledge and mutuality in the disciplines informing one another. It is exactly this mutual correspondence together with a reflection on how these pursuits of inquiry relate to one another that, as MacIntyre reflects, entails that these remain "questions that go unasked in the contemporary curriculum" (*NIU* 355).

As noted at the outset, it is theology, and indeed, it is God, that is essential to MacIntyre's account of Newman's reflection on the (ideal) university:

> Take away theology and the curriculum will be fragmented into a series of specialised disciplines, leaving at best the possibility of some kind of factitious unity imposed by social agreement. [*NIU* 357]

Above I mentioned discernment and noted that this was not MacIntyre's own terminology which he adopts quite in keeping with a discussion of the university and Newman, from Aristotle and Aquinas, that is, *phronesis* and prudential (*NIU* 359). In a word: judgment is what is at stake. It is here that MacIntyre offers a series of variations on possible responses to the practical question "What are you doing?" all of which may for a practiced hand be answered in one way or another by way of an application of the practical syllogism, MacIntyre is obviously so practiced and has composed a range of books about this, including treatments of question-variants, from the banausic to the personal, reflective and psychoanalytic all the way to the level, if one wished to take it there, of the global pandemic and climate change. In the fifth section MacIntyre offers a considered reflection on the painful *bon mot*, alluding to George Orwell's,

> As I write, highly civilized human beings are flying overhead, trying to kill me.[37]

For MacIntyre, what is key here is not the reference to a specific hypothetical murderer, as that always seems an easier thing to discount, but much rather the precisely anonymous and global reference:

> That claim is that a surprising number of the major disorders of the latter part of the twentieth century

[36] John Henry Cardinal Newman, "Discourse VI: Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Learning," in *The Idea of A University Defined and Illustrated: In Nine Discourses Delivered to the Catholics of Dublin*, London, UK: Pickering and Co. 1881, pp. 124-150, here pp. 136-7.

[37] George Orwell, *The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius*, London, UK: Penguin Books 1982, p. 35.

> and of the first decade of the twenty-first century have been brought about by some of the most distinguished graduates of some of the most distinguished universities in the world and this as the result of an inadequate general education, at both graduate and especially undergraduate levels, that has made it possible for those graduates to act decisively and deliberately without knowing what they were doing. [*NIU* 361]

It is non-presence, think of drone warfare, that makes killing at distance possible in a sense undreamt of in earlier eras. As humans we do not typically know in the literal sense what we are doing when we act. But MacIntyre's not knowing is not identical with what Nietzsche claims as he prefaces his *Beyond Good and Evil*, "we are unknown to ourselves, we knowers!" much rather it is a failure, viewed in Aristotle's perspective, of learning or education.

MacIntyre's sleight of hand comes in with respect to economics—at least as I read it as being an interpretive matter of generosity, mindful as I am both of his earlier work and the complexity of the constellation—citing the fiscal crisis of 1997, he closes by naming "Newman's Aristotelian contemporary, Karl Marx" (*NIU* 362).[38]

[38] Acknowledgement: The author is very grateful to Helmut Wautischer for his learned and critical editing.