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MILITIA ACADEMICA

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When students and scholars are called upon today for public service, they are summoned as private persons; but they are not merely individuals, they are members of a collective body, a militia academica which is threatened by these claims from outside. If we are faithful to the idea of a fighting army, which fascinated University men in the beginning, and if we can properly conceive this intellectual fight of the body politic called 'University', we shall find our real task lying before us. It is true this idea of a fighting army has vanished now; but this cannot refute our interpretation. Men have been saying for two thousand years that Christianity and faith have proved a failure, yet they are continually reviving again. Perhaps the same will be true of the warfare of the students, for there is not so much progress in the human race as a permanent opportunity for regeneration and the opportunity for regeneration is here or nowhere, now if ever. Why not begin now? It will be ^{no} more than a beginning. But it never has been more, and never will be.

The body politic of the University has one definite function in the community, to remain a stranger within its environment. The belief that human nature is a result of its environment is a terrible heresy because the very nature of man is to be in opposition to his environment. Few human institutions demonstrate this truth more clearly than the Universities, for it is the primary social function of any University to blaze the trail for the introduction of new ideas into the nation. Any nation tends toward self-adoration and mere repetition of its fundamental doctrines. The Universities keep the door open for fundamental changes. A striking example of this fact may be seen today. The nation itself is everywhere being discovered by students; nationalism all over the world is an academic movement. By stating this fact I do not mean to recommend it. All I wish to say is that if carefully traced back, the nationalistic movement seems to have an academic origin. What we call movements in the modern world are the exploration of gold mines which have been discovered through intellectual research.

Thus students are the Ver Sacrum of a nation. They go forth to seek new homes, to found new colonies, to settle in new regions of the mind, to conquer new countries and ports, new districts

and provinces -- that is why the very youth of the student body is one of the principal features of the University. At this level of scholarship, youth is not thought of as a blank piece of paper on which dons, professors, and other monsters, relics of the nation's prehistoric period, are allowed to engrave their hieroglyphics. This may, and indeed must be, the case in elementary schools and branches of the educational system concerned with technical training. But the case is not the same in the University; there youth does not mean merely a state of not being old, it means also being the true Ver Sacrum, it means a setting sail for a new world under the mandate of the old.

This mandate, thrust upon youth, produces a conflict between the fathers who still call themselves "the nation" and the free will of ^{the} sons who aim at becoming new links in the chain of the nation's ancestry. This tension is very strong. Often it may seem unnatural to the sons that they should bear this mandate, and unnatural to the parents that they should be so puzzled to guess where youth will deign to settle. But it is only at the point where you feel this tension that you grasp something of the social adventure of Universities and of High Schools, for High means in the language of the law "sovereign". The sovereign right of youth to discover new dominions of the mind is the dynamite behind the stone walls of classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. Thus youth has always been endowed with a mission to bring home a new topography, some new lines on the maps of the world. This mission has not changed and cannot change as long as civilized nations looked forward ^{to} a life of the spirit. What has changed is the special direction that our intellectual expeditions and adventures may have to follow in the future.

The conditions which permit men to undertake the daring risks of life in the community are not the same as they were before the war, and that is the reason why these conditions should be studied. We see the masses rising up in suspicion against every aristocratic prerogative, against every intellectual privilege -- especially leisure and holidays, against all values which depend upon the daily practice of mature reflection, philosophizing, wise cogitation and solitude. We see hostility arising on every side against men who do not wish to live with the contemporaneous public in space but who seek to be listeners in time, in times that are gone and times to come, and we must re-

member that such isolation from the contemporaneous public need not spring from romantic weakness, but from desire to live in the only reality, in the eternal. The romanticist gives an unfair preference to the times that are gone. True thought embraces the past, the future, and the timeless.

Academic life has become a goal of the envious, an object of suspicion to the masses, and a cheap argument in the repertory of class-war politicians. This change in conditions leads us to question the rules of the spiritual life. These rules are severe. Change from outside cannot greatly alter the principles of the true life. But academic existence has its transient features. In fear and cowardice we are apt to make too many concessions today simply because too little is known about those features of a University which are transient and those which are permanent. University staffs all over the world are obediently adapting their behavior to superficial social demands. Obviously such compliance has nothing to do with the real duty of the body politic of the sovereign High School.

In the long run such mimicry by a University of social forces outside its bounds may not be of great importance, but all the more important is the secret link which at a profounder level must exist between the activities of the academy and the life of the people. Boethius would have called this link a spiritual marriage. Love, as we know from Mr. Grandgent, is a word best not used at Harvard; but words do not matter if the reality signified is clearly in our minds.

Science, History, and Philosophy are not free in their way into the unknown. They depend upon serious needs of the community. It is not that which I do not know that I shall explore in the University. What I do not know I have to learn in school. As an academic soldier I march in an army which knows no "I" in Knowledge. In the adventure of the University the subject is the trembling whole Mankind in its struggle for life and its desire for protection. The modern crisis of the Universities, like every crisis in their past, arises if this subject is no longer felt to be really present in the soul of the army. The financial burden of the Universities has been tolerated for a thousand years by European nations not because they thought of happiness (only slaves think of happiness), or of the pleasures of learning, but for a very vital reason, their fear of Hell. Without the dis-

covery of new shores and coasts any community disintegrates, losing its capacity to keep the peace. University people are allowed to live their relatively leisurely and peaceful life of meditation if the nation feels that this spiritual home serves as an anticipation of a home with roof and walls which will protect its people against chaos, destruction, and disease. The University anticipates a situation of the future; that is its permanent function. This function is equally distant from the merely practical view which perverts the University into a factory to turn out certain goods, as from the other view which regards it as an end in itself and stamps it with the motto "L'art pour l'art".

But what is meant by "spiritual anticipation of a home"? Let us look backward to the two main achievements of the sovereign High School in the past. Two chapters of the Universities can be read in History. If, perhaps, we must now open the third, it is not likely that a mere rewriting of the two preceding chapters suffices.

Universities have existed since the Middle Ages when the Pauline tradition of a "Doctorate of the Gentiles" became an incentive for a new army of the mind. The doctors of scholasticism wrote the first chapter of our Universities. They wrote it on God and reduced World and Men to pure accidents of God. The humanists and academicians wrote the second. Their philosophers, vigorous still, wrote books on the nature of things, subduing God and Mankind to this onesided concept of things. However, God and Nature became purified. For eight hundred years the Universities have been writing into the inherent narrowness of national tradition two definite enlargements which have enlightened the nations. During their theological period they understood and gave expression to their idea of God, a function which still survives. It survives not only in the departments of theology. There is much more theology than is recognized today in the Arts, the Sciences, or the Law. Private property, the rights of man, world history, philosophy, all rely upon the concepts (which scholasticism developed) of the Christian soul, the spirit, the created world. The first doctorate of our Universities meant a conquest of devils and demons. It meant the purification of Heaven which was looked upon by an uninstructed tribe as a Hell of rival gods, magic stars, blood-thirsty idols, and overwhelming powers. The unity of God had to be established first, before

the unity of the world or the unity of men could be really understood. The different Olympuses and Walhallas of the pagan tribes were conquered by the scholastic doctorate in the period of Abelard and Bonaventura. There are wonderful details in the story of the medieval University. They illustrate the glory of this victory of the unity and orthodoxy of the Universities against the superstition of the scattered and chaotic clans of the western world.

All differences of birth, of nature, of ancestry were silenced in the common revelation and admiration of one truth; and the college of the Middle Ages as preserved in manifold forms in the Anglo-Saxon countries is the most adequate expression of this anticipation of a time when all the nations of this earth will worship one God. The University anticipates a common spiritual home for all peoples. The scholastic colleges with their common service to students from the farthest countries precede a humanity serving and venerating one God and one God only. When one aspect of Chaos seemed nearly to have been conquered - for Chaos is never conquered completely - when Gods had been refuted by the Lord, when unity had overruled pluralism, when concord had overruled all discordant notions of the creed, when this theological function of the University was in successful operation, another Chaos still nearer to us revealed itself. Hell changed its aspect.

War between the different Gods or creeds was supplanted by war in the exterior world, by Chaos in nature, and the theologian, the peacemaker among the discordances of God had to be superseded by the philosopher. The philosopher reformed the University by exploring the "laws of nature". From Abelard to Nicolaus Cusanus stretches one period, with Melanchthon's "Greek Grammar" and Descartes' "Discourse de la Methode" begins a second. It is not the attitude of man towards God which leads us on this path; it is the attitude of man towards the world which has governed the new forms of University life ever since the start of this second period. The Ph.D., the doctor of philosophy, was created by the new learning. This doctorate was something new.

The clearest expression of this new attitude is found in the laboratory. In the chapel service in any medieval college (or in any modern college) men of all nations serve God in one language. They form a chorus. The laboratory treats men not as a chorus, but as one man. It identifies all men insofar as they

observe natural phenomena. In the laboratory of a modern University a single formula is sought with which to express the ground for all personal experiences. The philosopher, the "observer" of Einstein, the "Robinson" of the economists, the "Emile" of Rousseau, the "erkennende Subjekt" of Kant, is always a fiction or, to put it more correctly, a genuine attempt to identify all humanity by formulae, numbers, or merely logical arguments characteristic of the attitude of the student of nature. On the one hand there is the world, the object, and on the other, one single subject, man conceived as one brain, one observer, one reasoning being.

The observations of twenty physicists supply data of an interchangeable, id est impersonal character. A heathen, a Christian, a Jew, a Buddhist, caⁿ/each perform the abstract function of observation. Actually, of course, a Buddhist or a heathen cannot do this without ceasing to be what he was before. Modern science is the unmistakable product of Christian revelation, though a bad scientist may not know how and by whom his "Nature" is revealed. However this may be, the chorus is supplanted by the process of identification of the explorers; wherever the modern scientific method has been carefully developed, it creates an intellectual identity among its followers. This lesson of the laboratory and its cooperative fellowship extends today into every field of human experience, the philosophising army treats God himself, the State, the human soul as it treats nature. Of course, then, there is but one way of University study. We may call it the philosopher's way because an external world and its phenomena form one half of this method and the contemplation of this world by men forms the other half. Atomising the objects of learning and identifying the subjects are the two tendencies of the scientific age. Any physicist or scientist in any part of the globe is welcomed by his brother scientists because of this identification. No less than the medieval college they have a common intellectual home, although it differs totally in character from that which the Middle Ages possessed. No common prayer rises to God from Mr. Smith and Mr. Pu Chang, but they have a common understanding of the nature of things and one and the same way of reasoning.

The darkness of our natural existence has been enlightened by this method. The intellectual home of the scientist has become the comfortable home of all humanity. Theory has led to plumbing.

Everyone driving his motor car or turning on his electric light shares/^{the}views which prevail in this new home of science. The intellectual home has been a worldwide success just as the theological home was - both methods have conquered.

But even in a modern University people are sometimes not on speaking terms with each other. Perhaps Hell and Chaos are not as far away as we think. We do not use the term Hell any longer. We have become too polite for the frank statement that humanity is now as near the abyss as ever. It may be true that stars and gods have now been purified to serve the Lord, it may be true that the world and nature are labelled and numbered as things which we can master and change and "make" as we choose, but what of a darkness much nearer to us, what of the chaotic fear outside my door, what of the abyss within society, within men and women, what of revolution?

God is far above us, nature is far around us. The Gothic cathedral climbs vertically, where as nature surrounds us, so to speak, horizontally as the surface of the earth does. The last dimension, the last way that we must go, opens into the vertical direction again, but this time down into ourselves, into our social earthiness/^{as}common folk. If we follow this way into the unconscious, into the roots, into the dark, we get little help from theology or philosophy. Their subjects, God and nature, are not like man. Society and our own folk, love and conventions are not matters of fact. The languages of mathematics were developed into many sciences of the "erkennendes Subjekt". The prayers and sighs of the believer were unfolded into theology. The ways of man are inaccessible by mathematics or theology. Society escapes in its history and in its future the method used before. For language serves a different purpose in all sorts of social groups. For every group the words of the language have the quality of mortar, weapons, taboos, magic commands. They are often demons and rarely the subjects of love and truth. The new aim of mankind, therefore, is to master in a new way its inner darkness, the obscurity inside society and inside the subdivisions of society. Class-war is only one symptom of the urgency of these perils. There are other conflicts which ought to amaze humanity even more. Take the family, take the inhabitants in any house in any town, take the colleagues of a faculty, take the judges of a law court - they too are in darkness. By age, by race, by faith, they stand for contrasts which if set free

become terrific, intolerable and irreconcilable! Division of labor in modern society has become so acute that interests diverge alarmingly within the same cooperative body. The Hell of today is the social Hell, and neither the spiritual home of the college nor the intellectual home of the laboratory can solve for us the psychological problems of a continually changing society.

The misunderstandings and conflicts of society are so manifold that we must try to recognize them without sentimentality and without the romantic desire for a preposterous harmonization. No new Middle Ages can heal the sick nations of today, for the demons of modern life are not great passions of the berserker, but fits of nervousness at the telephone. The social or moral home, the new hearth to be anticipated by scholars, must provide for the diversity of men, the variety of interests, the differences of character, of time and space, of race and creed, of youth and maturity. It must deal with the Babylonian confusion of tongues. Modern psychology, biology, history, sociology - the variety of their objects is already plain enough, the contrasts are felt as sharply as possible. But the diversity between objects is less important than the diversity between subjects. No identity between the observer of social life can be expected. Statistics, for instance, are valid for their author only, because he is the only man who can see through them. Every sociologist refutes every other as long as he tries to behave as if he were a scientist of nature. When he has found his true method he will cease to believe in persuasion by words, because he starts from the very fact that Babel cannot have known more languages than are spoken in modern society. His nexus with his colleagues is not formed by identity but by mutual supplementation, which is not a question of logic but of faith in each others contribution.

And there we are. The social home asks students for a cooperative fellowship between irreconcilable opponents, because we are going to have a society of 'totality by diversity'. Universal truth about nature was accessible to one single philosophical mind who could stamp his ideas upon millions of obedient other minds.

But as soon as you transfer this philosophical domination to questions of society, family, race, government, education you

end in fascism. Mussolini could be called by l'Impero l'unico cervello d'Italia', the only brain of Italy. This is the clerical error and heresy of a scientific age, extending principles of natural science to social life. We are dictators over nature because we can unite and move against it like one man. But man becomes a slave as soon as society is treated like nature. Among men truth can be represented by anybody who has experienced truth and reality through disillusion and sacrifice. Nobody has or owns the truth. But anybody can share it. In sharing truth we can feel ourselves members of a collective group representing universal truth. In fact, a good university has always been a collective group of representatives. But today this fact, old as it is, has come into the limelight. It's for a ^{new} war organisation of learning. In this new organisation of truth, man, as scholar and thinker and teacher is valuable insofar as he represents a diversity of thought. This is by no means a plea for the arbitrary whims of cheap originality. He who can not forget himself, is no servant of truth. Our paradox states the simple fact that the thoughts of man must vary in order to represent when taken all together the thoughts of mankind.

Outside a University, this statement may seem truism. The laymen knows that neither water nor fire nor earth nor air is capable of representing the 'fullness' of nature separately. It is a commonplace that in nature fire destroying water, or water extinguishing fire, lion devouring lamb or lambs outlawing lions could not claim to represent the totality of creation. How different is the situation in the realm of thought. Each philosophical system has usurped ^{in turn} the throne of the 'fullness of time'; for the human mind seemed to be divine. But as a matter of fact man's thoughts are created like any thing else. They are creatures of time and circumstance. They are not creators but created. The fullness of time cannot be organised in one chair or one school of philosophy. Unfortunately within the University it is no commonplace that we share truth only as partners in a collective group representing different ideas; because philosophy has for centuries pretended to reach one encyclopaedic and universal truth valid for everybody.

Now this holds good against nature and insofar as man can himself be included among the forces and materials of nature. But though man on one side is a part of nature, the simile does not work for the full man in society. Here our antagonistic convictions,

opinions, and interests must be deciphered and reemphasized or man himself is dissolved into a bundle of nerves and natural atoms. The age of reason threatens man with mechanisation. Against this threat we have to embark on the last and perhaps hardest task of humanity; we shall have to represent truth, not by knowing the same universe but by each one representing his part. We must act as 'versi in unum', tending from the circumference towards a uniting centre. After all, this interpretation of 'Uni-versity' is founded on its latin etymology. 'Universitas' can mean as in the Middle Ages a corporation of professors and students. It can mean an encyclopaedia of arts and sciences and then be interpreted as the Universality of letters, Universitas litterarum. But the promise of the future lies in its meaning a convergence of opposits from many points toward one centre. Not 'Universality' but 'Uni-versism' would be, perhaps the nearest equivalent.

The third chapter cannot be successfully written if the results of the other two are wasted or forgotten. During the transformation into the new 'Uni-versism', it would be disastrous to forget the other ways of approach to truth, won by the university in its theological and philosophical phase. For they alone guarantee the lasting unity behind and around the new diversity. Otherwise, the specialist in sociology may plunge into idolatry with Society as his God. This Auguste Comte, the founder of sociology, did. A member of the occidental University cannot be so light-hearted. Society is no God to him. God above, Nature around us and the depth and hell in man remain distinctly separated. We are allowed to look deep into the abyss of our own passions because like mountaineers exploring a glacier crevasse and roped together in indissoluble unity, we are held securely by the rope of a common faith and a universal knowledge.

On one side, we feel the organisation of thought within the universities should be regenerated, because scholars are no longer kept in line by the authority of theology or by their awe of philosophy. On the other side the solidarity and identity acquired by chapel and laboratory are a permanent premise of the future. Without solidarity towards God in the worshipping chorus and without solidarity toward nature among the "Robinson-observers", society will become an idol. On the other hand, chapel and laboratory have not hindered war and revolution. They are

not wrong, but they do not suffice for our social troubles. It is our social function to live different lives together. The different creeds cannot pray together, young and old will not observe the same facts, but live together, and yet remain different, they must.

If the University finds no symbols, or fails to supply a "novum organum" for this compulsory state of living together - this bios symbioticos, this gathering of adversaries, of men as different as water and fire, as Hell and Heaven - then the nations will die! They will die from class-war, from social arteriosclerosis, from the uprisings of sons against their fathers, from the misunderstandings between politicians, from the struggles between different faculties.

Division of labor has become the most dangerous question of society. It is a question of life and death and the University itself has become a center of the disease of specialization. It is possible for the ways of research to dissipate the mind of the student instead of concentrating it. Sound reactions against this evil are manifold. One is the grouping of opposites into a sort of common life; settlements, summer schools, camps show how widespread is the feeling that there our Rhodos lies. The social home of the University must aim at anticipating a world in which water and fire, the lion and the lamb, can live together, each without falsifying his own nature (the lion cannot and shall not become a lamb) without pretending to speak one language or to see the same things. Different interests are to be represented and the differences themselves must be lived in the light of symbolic expression which gives dignity to the particular group vis-a-vis of the other groups in society. It is interesting that congresses of the same profession are curiously out-of-date. The special field loses its character of a microcosmos or encyclopaedia. It becomes more of a tone in a melody, a contribution versus one center, uni-versus. To join those who cannot be joined, who are different, that would be our paradoxical anticipation of a new society and a new conquest over darkness.

We are not driven into the third chapter by snobbish curiosity, but by inevitable necessity, and we understand better therefore the necessity which drove our scholastic and humanistic ancestors to their achievements in time past. God, Nature, Man are forms of our own existence. Therefore, God, Nature, and Man can never

become interchangeable. The arrogance of theologians over nature ended in the revolt of philosophy. The cosmology of science trying to make men interchangeable stirs up the revolt of man who feels that he is neither God nor nature. Theology biased nature, philosophy biased the human soul. Man has no nature, but a soul. During scholasticism of the Middle Ages it was Hell conquered by Heaven to find men offering thanksgiving to God Almighty in the language of the Church, and so it is today, and will be, world without end. In modern times it was chaos conquered by cosmos to find men observing nature just as one single man observes one single thing. Today the names for Hell or chaos are death, decay, and weakness; to be vital, to be alive and strong, is the prayer of the industrialized masses. In the days to come, mankind, left in chaos by theology, devaluated into atoms of the Univers by science seeks to be restarted by the discoveries in the depth of soul and society. It will be life and vitality to find men, who are hostile by nature and creed, living together by virtue of their souls. And again, the militia academica will have fought the good fight if it precedes the evolution by the forms of its interdepartmental cooperation. Originally Universitas as a body politic reflected Corpus Christi. Marching against the hell of medieval fends, the faculties of thought followed Beatrice, and took theology as their queen.

Universitas litterarum reflected the admirable organisation of the real species in nature against the chaos of a lawless, inconceivable, and, as it had seemed, bewitched world. To clear the path through the forest of superstition philosophy was made the common basis and the stating point.

Philosophy and theology are no ruler no longer. They exist. But they have lost their army. They are not master and queen. Who starts with philosophy in order to solve a special problem in chemistry?

Yet there is a great scientific revival going on, for example in the exchange of methods between science and history since Darwin. The division between body and mind, between inorganic and an-organic matter, between matter and soul break down before the modern concepts of biology and sociology. Nature has aquired a history and has thereby lost its impenetrability for us, Darwin has made it human, while we, with a more detached analysis of morals, base ourselves upon our own physical and biological

endowment. These are symptoms of a new beginning. The meaning of the name University is shifting once more. Our interest in an underlying philosophical truth becomes less acute.

Instead every vital impetus to thought becomes interesting and valuable. We conceive that in order to achieve anything we must start with our dreams and passions, and that in science we must set out on the voyage of real discovery by beginning with fallacies and mistakes. Passion becomes the desideratum. Thought, ideas, knowledge rise from prejudices, desires, fears. In order to have a working hypothesis for cooperation we may think of truth as a common center towards which the special sciences move from the regions of dark energies working at the circumference.

The antagonistic roots of science lay in the antagonistic forces of creation. Creation itself is represented in its diversity by the diversity of the thinkers. The union between the thinkers is postponed. It does not exist at the beginning of their thought. The diversity must be healed later by actual Cooperation towards truth, 'versa in unum'. This cooperation must be carried out by the body of the University. It works for society and within society but independently of the other interests of society.

It could be called a true 'oppositio convergentiam'.

Mankind is haunted by the fear of senile scepticism and decay; it seeks therefore to eat of the tree of life; and the university, by its tension between confusion and truth, may some day bring to the nations the fruit of eternal vitality.