Saying what we mean & meaning what we say:
Multi-versity and *Uni-versity* – What difference does it make?

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Abstract: Over the course of this consideration, I explore the philosophical commitments that result in the idea of a 'university' as well as the implicit philosophical commitments that result in the idea of a 'multiversity'. That is to say, I consider how conceptions about the nature of the universe and the human person influence conceptions about the nature, purpose, and ultimately, the justification of the distinctively *uni*-versity and *multi*-versity.

I hope to accomplish three tasks by this consideration's end: (1) Provide an adequate historical sketch of the development of the higher education institutions in the West, universities and multiversities alike. (2) Draw attention to the philosophical and organizational commitments inherent and unique to each project (university and multiversity) and thereby begin the process of gaining a greater precision and thoughtfulness when speaking of each project. (3) Establish that a revival of a basic philosophical grammar centered on the human person is necessary in order to establish a rational, defensible, and sustainable foundation and justification for the projects of the university and of higher education.

Keywords: University, Secularization, Metaphysics, Knowledge, Multiversity

Resumen: A lo largo de esta consideración, se exploran los compromisos filosóficos que resultan en la idea de la 'universidad', así como los compromisos filosóficos implícitos en la idea de la 'multiversidad'. Esto es, considero como las concepciones acerca de la naturaleza del universo y la persona humana influyen en las concepciones acerca de la naturaleza, el objetivo, y fundamentalmente, la justificación de las distintivas *uni*-versidad y *multi*-versidad.

Espero cumplir tres tareas: (1) Proveer un bosquejo histórico adecuado sobre el desarrollo de las instituciones de educación superior en las universidades y multiversidades occidentales. (2) Llamar la atención sobre los compromisos filosóficos y organizacionales que son inherentes y únicos para cada tipo de proyecto (universidad o multiversidad), y comenzar a obtener una mayor precisión y clarividencia al hablar de cada proyecto. (3) Establecer que el resurgimiento de una gramática filosófica básica centrada en la persona humana es necesaria para establecer una fundación y justificación de los proyectos de la universidad y la educación superior, que sean racionales, defendibles y sustentables.

Palabras clave: universidad, secularización, metafísica, conocimiento, multiversidad

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Perhaps it is commonplace for anyone, including myself, who has in some way been affected by the social realities of contemporary 'higher education' (be it as a student, a tuition-paying parent, an academic administrator, a professor, a tax paying citizen, etc.), to easily exchange the word 'university' with the phrase 'higher education.' I readily admit I am the first to make such a quick, easy, and highly understandable exchange. Though this interchangeability may seem harmless in conversation among citizens, administrators, and academics alike, I contend that such an interchange presents a notable reduction of the idea of a 'university'. What I am suggesting is that I, along with others, too easily and mistakenly overlook the immense philosophical foundations and implications of the word and in fact the very idea of a 'university' when the meaning of the phrase 'higher education' is conflated to the extent that it is understood to share the same exact meaning as 'university'.

Over the course of this consideration, I would like to explore the philosophical commitments that result in the idea of a 'university' as well as the implicit philosophical commitments that result in the idea of a 'multiversity'. That is to say, I would like to consider how conceptions about the nature of the universe and the human person influence conceptions about the nature, purpose, and ultimately, the justification of the distinctively *uni*-versity and *multi*-versity. I hope to draw a contrast between what I will understand to be a more authentic rendering of what a university might look like and how it might operate with some contemporary forms of 'higher education' institutions. These 'higher education' institutions, more accurately identified as 'multiversities', though claiming the label of a 'university', will be challenged to justify their self-identification as a university based on the grounds of their underlying philosophical commitments that result in organizational forms that challenge, if not prohibit, the project of a distinctively *uni*-versity.

It is not my goal to present an overly pessimistic account of modern higher education – particularly with respect to its inability to philosophically justify its form as a *multi*-versity. Rather, my concern lies with drawing a renewed attention to the immense philosophical consequences of identifying an institution as a *'uni*-versity' rather than simply a 'higher education' institution or 'multiversity'.

I hope to accomplish three tasks by this considerations end: (1) Provide an adequate historical sketch of the development of the higher education institutions in the West, universities and multiversities alike. (2) Draw attention to the philosophical and organizational commitments inherent and unique to each project (university and multiversity) and thereby begin the process of

gaining a greater precision and thoughtfulness when speaking of each project. (3) Establish that a revival of a basic philosophical grammar centered on the human person is necessary in order to establish a rational, defensible, and sustainable foundation and justification for the projects of the university and of higher education.

To this end, this consideration will not call for a nostalgic return to an overly-romanticized past, nor will this consideration accept the status quo of contemporary higher education as unalterable. Rather, this examination will consider the meritorious and correctable precedents of the past and present so as to begin to re-invigorate an enthusiastic perspective upon the feasibility of establishing a rational, defensible, and sustainable philosophical justification upon which the future of the human project of universities and higher education might be founded.

The Difficult Project of the University: An Account

From its earliest institutionalized forms in Medieval Europe to its increasingly complex contemporary manifestations, higher education institutions, universities included, have historically held the difficult dual responsibility of (1) maintaining fidelity to the discovery, proliferation, and integration of knowledge through teaching and learning and (2) providing a socially discernable and perhaps economically measurable benefit to the broader human community. Faced with this unique responsibility of negotiating its foundation in deliberately sustained reflection with any social institution's responsibility of serving as a resource for social and economic sustenance, higher education institutions have struggled throughout their history to consistently maintain an equal fidelity to their professed purposes.

One does not need to look any further than early Oxford's proficiency in curricular integration through teaching and learning, but isolationist tendency alongside sociologist Gaye Tuchman's (2009) self-described "Wannabe U" institutions – 20th and 21st century research universities that illustrate an aggressive market of corporatized and fragmented universities whose primary aim seeks federal grants and funding at the expense and relegation of the traditional activities of teaching and learning. These are tensions that have certainly played out over the history of higher education, but in the contemporary setting of an increasingly globalized market, higher education in the West finds itself in a particularly decisive moment with respect to institutional justification and responsibility. As Dennis Shirley and Andy Hargreaves (2012) insightfully note, "the movement of people and ideas around the world is greater than ever before" and "It's not just the world that is changing education now…education is starting to change the world" (p. 1).

Crucial to this historical account is a sketch of the most influential cultural and social process of Modernity – secularization.

Charles Taylor suggests 'Our past is sedimented in our present, and we are doomed to misidentify ourselves as long as we can't do justice to where we come from' (Taylor, p. 29). It is with this conviction that any accurate account of the contemporary higher education is dependent upon an accurate rendering of the complex historical narrative of Western higher education. It is especially crucial in this historical process, however, to acknowledge the story of religion and higher education in Western culture as being grounded in the religious sensibilities and convictions of the West's (most particularly America's) original settlers.

The infant stages of the process of Western secularization began as religious diversity increased throughout the middle to late 18th century. A growing plurality in conceptions of the role of religious thought with respect to the role of higher education resulted in the generalizing of distinctively religious thought – as liberal Protestantism's desire to create a distinctively liberal Protestant America was influenced by its own egalitarian standards to gradually accept this plurality as compatible with its identity. Crucially, couched within this liberal Protestant vision was an ideal of nearly unbridled openness and accommodation by the university of a primacy for secular rationality, rather than deliberate integration of knowledge by way of theological synthesis.

The increasing urbanization of the American landscape in the 19th century gave way to new questions being asked of the purpose and role of higher education. The influence of the German-influenced university model such as found in establishment of Johns Hopkins began to challenge traditional religion's influence in society and higher education. A growing concentration upon the state's role in the allocation of funding for the maintenance of higher education institutions placed a greater expectation of the university to serve growing industrial, urban, and social needs of society – thereby forfeiting the desired neutrality of a university setting. During this most formative period of the shaping of a distinctively secular Western higher education by way of the growing normativity of a secular and instrumental rationality, established Christian institutions were faced with a challenge in maintaining a distinctive Christian identity while also remaining competitive according to American higher education's increasingly and uniquely pragmatic and utilitarian standards and services Marsden, 1996)

As such, questions determining and regarding the nature of authentic knowledge changed. A shift occurred to knowledge being strictly empirical and utilitarian. Authentic knowledge would only be brought about from a purely scientific methodology. Consequently, academic standards that once

focused on the theological sciences gave way to secular ethics and morality by way of an increased focus upon cultural values such as egalitarianism, pluralism, and academic values such as secular reason.

It is at this juncture that one is able to begin to identify the historical progression of secularization and the influence it carried with respect to conceptions of the role of the academy. That is, the growing pluralism of religious belief after the colonial period was necessarily accepted as compatible with the liberal Protestant vision of a Protestant America because of its egalitarian grounding. Yet, within this growing religious pluralism, a Christian identity – subject to a growing primacy of instrumental and secular reason in academia, began to become indistinct from research concentrations in industrial efficiency and scientific precision. As such, universities were philosophically justified in the conviction that universities ought to serve as 'service stations' to the immediate public, that is, industrial and economic, good. Universities were no longer justified, nor could they in the liberal Protestant vision, primarily through the need for a neutral space so as to authentically pursue an integrative vision of the whole of human knowledge. As these developments of technical expertise for a capitalistic society gained momentum in higher education and the culture at large, the 20th century experienced a radical re-placement of the ideal of the integration of knowledge.

More recently, the 1940 statement on academic freedom by the AAUP standardized favor upon a secular standardization of a university's self-governance in the spirit of the German ideals of *Lehrfreiheit* (referring to freedom for university professors) and *Wissenschaft* (a dedication to the moral ideal of a strictly scientific search for truth). This suggested a strict dichotomy between being an authentic progressive American university with having an integrative justification of a university's institutional purpose. George Marsden notes, "Once the wider applications of modern *Lehrfreiheit* [and Wissenschaft] were accepted, however, they were proclaimed by their Protestant advocates as essential to any institution calling itself a university" (Marsden, p. 297).

This adoption of a primarily secular and scientific rationality resulted in the gradual establishment of various secular academic norms. First, the activities of the university became subject to narrow professionalization and specialization. Following, the now theologically unrestrained specialization produced a fragmentation of knowledge that led professionalized researchers to set their own standards of scholarship, measurement, and methodology in the spirit of the modern notion of academic freedom. In all, the traditional integrative emphasis of education in Europe and in early Protestant America had been methodologically purged and was replaced by the

secular principles of academic freedom, self-governance, and autonomy as stipulated in the AAUP's 1940 statement. Conclusively, religion – no less an integrative theistic ideal, was no longer considered to provide a platform for meaning in, let alone a justification for, the academy. The theologically unrestrained specialization and standardization of particular secular rational standards resulted in the fragmentation of conceptions of knowledge – thereby relegating any theological and/or philosophical voices to narrow and introverted disciplinary communities.

This account of secularization allows a greater appreciation for the frustrations expressed by higher education historian, John Thelin Broadly, Western higher education institutions have struggled to come to a consensus regarding their philosophical justification over the past four centuries. The influence of the German research university model played a significant role in shaping this narrative because of its emphasis upon the autonomy of the disciplines' self-standardization. Thelin specifically laments Western higher education's inability to articulate is philosophical justification and purpose. He suggests that tensions as to the purpose of higher education are rooted in conflicts between the institution's self-image and reality. He proposes that this dilemma of identity and purpose "warrants little sympathy when colleges and universities are unclear and inarticulate about their primary purposes" (Thelin, 2004, p. 362). Moreover, "If the higher education community cannot make sense of itself and explain itself to external audiences, who can?" (Thelin, 2004, p. 362) and that "the ambiguity and uncertainty displayed in recent years with respect to social roles indicates a drift in mission and character" and moreover, that the problems [American] higher education has faced from the 17th century to the present "are more those of *confused purpose* than lack of resources" (Thelin, 2004, p. xiii). As an initial and necessary method of remedying higher education's current vagaries, he encourages higher education theorists to consider a renewed re-engagement and re-appropriation of the *"fundamental matters of institutional purpose"* (Thelin, 2004, p. 362).

I suggest that the 'fundamental matters of institutional purpose' – that is, what the institution is charged with pursuing by virtue of its very existence, necessarily forces one to ask the question of why universities, multiversities, or any institutional form otherwise placed under the umbrella term of 'higher education', might even exist at all. Moreover, I suggest that when one is willing to admit the idea of university or multiversity as valid and accurate, there exist immense philosophical consequences with respect to conceptions of the universe and of the human person that must follow such a profession.

Multiverse vs. Universe, Multiversity vs. University

I will use two seminal Western thinkers to ground this part of my consideration. The thought of Clark Kerr in his *Uses of the University* will be used to elucidate the philosophical ideal, historical narrative, and the practical and philosophical implications of the modern higher education's paradigm of the 'multiversity'. The thought of Alasdair MacIntyre will be used to elucidate the philosophical ideal, historical narrative, and the practical and philosophical implications of the traditional 'university'. Special emphasis will be placed upon the implications of the prefixes of each ideal – '*multi*' and '*uni*'.

The multiversity has come a long way since the days of Newman's *Idea of a University* and even Flexner's *Idea of a Modern University*. It is "not Oxford nor is it Berlin; it is a new type of institution in the world" (Kerr, 1963, p. 1). Nevertheless, according to Kerr, the multiversity is a unique product of this intellectual heritage. He suggests that the multiversity was and is not a particular philosophical choice, but rather, "has its reality rooted in the logic of history" and "is an imperative rather than a reasoned choice among elegant alternatives" (Kerr, 1963, p. 5). Considering this diverse historical narrative and the multiple philosophical influences that posited the foundation and justification of a university throughout time, the multiversity is an institution with competing purposes and justifications. Crucially, then, the *multi*-versity is a setting in which "coexistence is more likely than unity" and thereby is a project that has "no single 'end' to be discovered" and therefore, "has less of a sense of purpose" (Kerr, 1963, p. 27-30).

The multiversity's diverse and competing purposes and justifications impact all of its constituencies. Influenced by a uniquely Western practice of sharing intimate ties with both the state and federal government, the call for accountability for a product worthy of public consumption is often the primary motor by which higher education institutions prioritize its practices and requisite allocation of resources. Driven by an "almost slavishly" service to society, the contemporary multiversity focuses heavily upon the acquisition of a vast range of federal grants to fund disciplinary research that serves the "protection and enhancement of the prestige of the name [of the particular multiversity]", which is "central to the multiversity" (Kerr, 1963, p. 14-15). This practice has resulted in the expansion of the institution and the forfeiture of its self-control. As Kerr (1963) notes, "the location of power has generally moved to outside the original community of masters and students" and therefore "the role of the administration becomes more central in integrating [more formalized and separated functions]" (p. 20-21).

Considering these priorities, the professor's life in the multiversity is nearly antithetical to that of the Oxbridge model in as much as it is necessary to the professor's position to take part in "a rat race of business and activity, managing contracts and projects…sitting on committees for government agencies, and engaging in other distractions *necessary* to keep the whole frenetic business from collapse" (Tuve, 1959, p. 49). To this end, teaching "is less central" and this has "given rise to the 'nonteacher' – the higher a man's standing, the less he has to do with students" (Kerr, 1963, p. 32). The professor's increased specialization in narrowly defined disciplinary research has resulted in the fragmentation of the academic ethos of the contemporary multiversity. The professor's "love of specialization has become the student's hate of fragmentation" (Kerr, 1963, p. 11). This has resulted in the multiversity being a "confusing place for the student", who is offered a "vast range of choices, enough literally to stagger the mind" (Kerr, 1963, p. 31-32). Resulting, considering such competing functions, loyalties, and interests between students, faculty, administration, and governmental and public interests, it is "extremely difficult to tell what a good job is, since it is so extraordinarily difficult to evaluate the quality of [higher education's] product" (Vladek, 1978, p. 39).

Bearing in mind the ambiguity in assessing the 'quality of the product' with respect to the benefits of the multiversity, what is its justification? For Kerr (1963), history and consistency with the surrounding society serve as the primary and more obvious forms of justification. Yet, he suggests its justification runs deeper:

> [the multiversity] has few peers in the preservation and dissemination and examination of the eternal truths; no living peers in the search for new knowledge; and no peers in all history among all institutions of higher learning in serving so many of the segments of an advancing civilization (Kerr, 1963, 33-34).

It is clear, therefore, that the primary justification and foundation of the multiversity is in its ability to be "adaptive to new opportunities…responsive to money…and useful" (Kerr, 1963, 34). Reckoning back to the worry of Thelin, however, this suggests that the primary justification of the multiversity does not come from within its internal constitution. Rather, pragmatic social concerns and the currents of history legitimize the existence and function of the multiversity. As Kerr noted, the multiversity is a product of history, but its lack of a particular telos, because of its dependence upon external (i.e. historical, social) justification prevents itself from internally establishing its most fundamental philosophical justification. This internal justification, not present in the multiversity, primarily lie in philosophical conceptions of what it is to be a human being (that is, a rational agent) in an intelligible world.

While the idea of the integration of its varying functions is understood to be non-essential to the multiversity's fundamental justification, integration is both the fundamental philosophical justification and telos to the ideal of a university. Proponents of this ideal include figures such as John Henry Newman and more contemporarily, Alasdair MacIntyre. These 'traditionalists' summarily believe that the ideal university "would have to presuppose an underlying unity to the universe and therefore an underlying unity to the enquiries of each discipline into the various aspects of the natural" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 17).

The consequences of this conviction inform the university's self-understanding and justification of its methods and practices. However, it is important to note that the ideal of a university is not suggested as something to be achieved in its fullness at a particular moment in time. Indeed, it has historically failed to live up to its lofty ideal by way of its aristocratic, oligarchical, and isolationistic tendencies.

The ideal of the university is less a product of economically-motivated concerns and/or a 'product of history', as Kerr notes of the multiversity, than it is a product of a philosophical conviction about what it is to be a rational human being, what it is to be an active rational agent within an intelligible world, and therefore, what ought to be valued and pursued for the sake of human flourishing. Take MacIntyre's exposition of Newman's conception of the university as necessarily deriving from a particularly integrated conception of the universe:

> The ends of education…can be correctly developed only with reference to the final end of human beings and the ordering of [disciplines] has to be [ordered] to that end. We are able to understand what the university should be, only if we understand what the universe is (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 95).

Therefore, the distinctively '*uni*'-versity's structures and practices of its institution are grounded in a conviction that there is a unity among all disciplines/knowledge because the universe is a single and integrated reality. The human person is understood to comprehend this single natural order through its rational faculties. Thus, Newman's opening statement to his *Idea of a University* becomes more tangible and intelligible, that: "The view taken of the University in these Discourses is the following - that it is a place of teaching universal knowledge" (Newman, 1984, xxxvii). That is, as MacIntyre (2007) states:

> Over and above the questions posed in each of [the] distinct disciplinary enquiries – the questions of the physicist or the biologist or the historian or the economist – there would be questions about what bearing each of them has on the others and how each contributes to

an overall understanding of the nature of things. Theology would be taught for both its own sake and as a key to that overall understanding (p. 17).

Unlike the fragmentation that is practiced within the autonomous disciplines of the multiversity, the university's disciplines and processes are structured in an integrative and synthetic manner through a pervasive theological and philosophical grammar.

The content, method, and progression of the university's activities of intimately personal teaching and learning between master and student are influenced by this integrative philosophy. MacIntyre (2007) states "It would therefore not be a mistake to regard the thirteenth and fourteenth-century university, at least at Paris and Oxford, as presupposing in its curriculum a conception of the unity of knowledge and understanding, of the relationships between the disciplines" (p. 94). As such, students first studied the disciplines included in the trivium and quadrivium, followed by studies in moral and political philosophy, and finally culminated in enquiries of metaphysics and theology. That is, the university's philosophy upholds that the end of education as designed to "direct [students] toward the achievement of their final end as human beings, toward the achievement of a perfected understanding" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 94).

However, it is necessary not to over-romanticize this ideal of the university apart from its actual history. In its actual practices, the university's end of education has tended toward more practical and utilitarian ends. MacIntyre himself notes the practical tendencies even with such an idyllic philosophy: "For most of the students…the point and purpose of their studies was- as it has been with students ever since- to acquire whatever qualification was needed…to proceed successfully to the next stage in their chosen future career" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 94).

It is here that the university model experiences its most basic tension. That is, the university founds its justification in a philosophical presupposition that the human person, by its nature, desires and has the capacities to know. This in itself is not dependent upon a justification by way of the demands of the wider social setting or the necessary processes of history. Yet, as history suggests, the traditional university itself has struggled to maintain a consistency and fidelity to that self-understanding and self-justification – particularly with respect to its negotiation of its practical relationship to the wider social setting.

Yet even amongst these obvious tensions, large philosophical questions loom concerning the inability to construct an authentic university. The introversion of the disciplines from one another and from traditional integrative ideals has resulted in a monumental and arguably anti-intellectual culture within higher education institutions. That is to say, the professionalization and self-

governance of the disciplines has come to understand the proper place of integrative theistic/integrative thought as not only incompatible with serving as a philosophical justification to institutional purpose – but it has also relegated its studies to the periphery of the idea of intellectual and academic culture. Therefore, integrative theistic thought has been in many cases become anathema in scholarly research and likewise, has been expelled from public universities' research and curricular priorities. Indeed, from the time of the colonial religious-cultural vision to the 21st century, the integrative role of theology within an academic community had been 're-placed'. As Alasdair MacIntyre states of contemporary 'multiversities',

> For by eliminating mention of God [altogether], or by restricting reference to God to departments of theology…is not just a matter of the subtraction of God from the range of objects studied, but also and quite as much the absence of any integrated and overall view of things (MacIntyre, God Philosophy Universities, p. 17).

One has good reason to dismay after reading the previous competing historical and philosophical accounts of the justification and purpose of Western higher education institutions. Both models have philosophical and historical shortcomings – whether it is in the multiversity's lack of internal philosophical justification or the university's overly pragmatic historical tendencies that prove inconsistent with its philosophical justification. Indeed, both have in some ways isolated and disenfranchised themselves from their broader human communities – in the multiversity's 'grantsmanship' and in the university's historically oligarchical tendencies. Kerr soberly suggests, "these [historically] competing visions of true purpose…cause much of the malaise in the university today" (Kerr, 1963, p. 7).

Yet, the next section of this consideration seeks to set out upon a modest reconciliation of particular aspects of these two models rooted in a spirit of optimism and enthusiasm with respect to the inherent promise provided through the human person's natural desire 'to know'. The future may seem bleak with respect to establishing a strong educational philosophy for higher education, particularly with respect to the project of the distinctively *uni*-versity, but there has been, is currently, and will be private and public goods that are uniquely provided through the institutions of higher education. It may be found in the multiversity's worldwide advancement of health care and standards of living and in the university's deep philosophical conviction that "the aim of a university education is not to fit students for this or that particular profession or career" but "to transform their minds, so that the student…has the capacity for bringing insights and arguments from a variety of disciplines to bear on particular complex issues" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 147).

To this end, I suggest that a more intentional consideration with the fundamental philosophical questions unique to the human experience must be re-engaged in order to establish a rational, defensible, and sustainable foundation for higher education institutions. In short, modern higher education must be willing to draw from philosophical traditions that provide compelling accounts of what it is to be a human being, of what it is to live and act in the natural world, and what should be pursued for the sake of human flourishing.

What Now: Ressourcement & Aggiornamento

The Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) is often framed by two words, *'Ressourcement'* and *'Aggiornamento'*. These words mean a 'return to earlier sources' (Ressourcement) and a 'bringing up to date' (Aggiornamento). It is in this spirit that I find myself moved to address the challenges and opportunities in modern higher education. This simultaneous return to earlier sources and bringing up to date seems to provide both continuity with philosophical traditions that address the perennial human questions and seems to provide an opening for a necessary responsiveness to contemporary issues in higher education.

Clark Kerr (1963) suggests, "A community should have a soul, a single animating principle" (p. 15). Largely in agreement with MacIntyre, it is suggested that the uniquely human project of higher education must be justified and animated by a robust philosophical doctrine of those undertaking its task – namely, human beings. That is to say, the enterprise of higher education must be rooted in a particular conviction of what it is to be a rational human being, what is to be a rational and creative agent in the world, and therefore, what ought to be valued and pursued. This 'humanizing' principle can serve as a rational, defensible, and most importantly, sustainable justification of higher education institutions. By grounding all pursuits in a non-transient principle of human rationality and the intelligibility of the natural order, higher education institutions are afforded a standard by which to understand the role and concerns of research, teaching, and learning.

Under this humanizing philosophical principle, the competing aims of the modern multiversity's research are more quickly reconciled with the traditional university's practice of humanistic teaching and learning. That is to say, it is through the appropriation and application of particular conceptions of what it is to be a rational human being within a the rational world that can inform the intense research efforts of the more complex contemporary institutions of higher education than of centuries past. Progress in integrating the processes of contemporary higher

education may begin by more intentionally utilizing the philosophical commitments perhaps more readily found in thirteenth century University of Paris with the curricular and research commitments of the contemporary higher education institution.

This being the case, the notion of the 'multiversity' is challenged in as much as its justification lies in the "logic of history" and not primarily in an account of what it is to be a human being. The sustainability of the justification of the multiversity on the grounds of history and temporal social fashions proves to be questionable if one does not more fundamentally account for *why* and *to what end* (telos) certain social demands are considered significant. Thelin (2004) notes that there seems to be a paradox of hunger amid abundance at the modern multiversity – and that this hunger occurs because multiversities "have wandered into a state of continual expansion characterized by an overextension of functions without clarity of purposes" (p. 361). There seems to be great promise in the simple humanistic capabilities of research in economics, microbiology, and chemistry so long as each discipline is informed by a particular philosophical conviction of what it is to be a fully human person and fully human community operating within an intelligible created order.

Thelin (2004) notes that the historical myopia of Western higher education is grounded in "the belief by presidents and boards that, if only they had more money, then their institutions would be great" (p. xiii). What ought to be clear by way of philosophical reflection and historical precedent, is that mere financial means cannot give rise to a rational, defensible, and sustainable philosophical foundation and justification for higher education institutions, multiversities, or any other form of 'higher education'. It is only through the establishment of a "philosophy of higher education intentionally thought out in detail and integrated in some overall design" (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997, p. 307) that has the scope by which these institutions can begin to understand and formulate practices that are commensurate with their philosophical justification.

Saying What We Mean & Meaning What We Say

I began this consideration by noting how easily I myself replaced the word 'university' with 'higher education'. I also noted how many modern higher education institutions, more closely resembling multiversities in their organization and processes, still decide to label themselves as universities. It is my hope that by this point, it is clearer that the language used to describe the organization and processes of contemporary higher education institutions have immense philosophical consequences.

The words used to describe higher education institutions have meaning that extends beyond history and vernacular. That is, to label an institution as a university is to commit oneself to several philosophical precepts concerning the human person, knowledge, and the natural world. Namely, that the human person, like the whole of knowledge and the natural world, is of an integrated and rational nature because of the singular source from which it proceeds. Likewise, to label an institution as a multiversity is to commit oneself to several philosophical precepts concerning the human person, knowledge, and the natural world. Namely, that the human person, like the whole of knowledge and the natural world, is of a disintegrated and irrational nature because of its lack of proceeding from a singular source.

If indeed the West is ready to accept multiversities as the new standard of higher education, it must ask itself if it is ready to accept those necessary philosophical consequences that arise after such a profession. If the West is ready to reconsider the authenticity of its universities as *uni*-versities, it must ask itself if it is ready to draw on those philosophical traditions that address the perennial human questions and issues necessary to establishing a justification of its institution that extends beyond Kerr's 'process of history'. We must say what we mean and mean what we say for the sake of the clarity of our conversations with one another.

It is with this in mind that I believe that by way of re-engaging the human person as fundamentally a philosopher – as one who by virtue of his or her nature is moved to ask the perennial human questions and seek those question's true answers, that higher education and the idea of the *uni*-versity might find a renewed purpose and justification. It is these questions of ultimate meaning – of goodness, truth, and beauty, that might found the establishment of a philosophical justification of an institution that is only possible because of the human person's natural proclivity to ask such question. It is this institution that houses, reflects, and pursues answers to those distinctively human questions. This is the distinctively *uni-versity*. Yes, it is through this ideal that we take seriously the words of MacIntyre, that "human beings, not just 'philosophers', as themselves engaged in trying to give an account of themselves, as trying to understand what it is that they are doing in trying to achieve understanding, a kind of understanding that will enable us to distinguish what it is worth caring about a very great deal" (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 177-178).

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