

Gérard Granel

A CALL TO THOSE WHO HAVE TO DO WITH THE UNIVERSITY

WITH A VIEW TO PREPARING AN OTHER ONE

This call, to the extent that *someone* issues it, does not come from just anywhere but from the muddled crossroads of the philosophical tradition and the Heideggerian legacy—the latter being, itself, crossed (strengthened and suspended) by something like a Nietzsche-Marx axis.

It is obviously not a question of making those to whom this call is issued swallow, or avow, such a provenance and material. But the questions of which I hope to be capable on this path, if they have historical and thematic importance, must doubtless crisscross with those to which other discourses, on other paths, have led in our time. I know very well that such crisscrossing is the scene of all differences and of some differends, and I know too that this multiple non-coinciding affects first of all the so-called sphere of “*principia*.” For all that, I see no obstacle to the call’s being issued or heard. Theoretical clarification will come along the way—not so much *a* theoretical clarification (from the depths of which would flash the fallacious mark of a unity of meaning and of truth in itself) as theoretical clarifications, themselves so many moments of the work on differences. These can in fact be recognized well enough, under a practical pact, to find a “certain” unity that permits understanding and work.

I risk here, precisely, the concrete definition of work that will only have meaning if it is done in the plural, in the form of preparing an *other* university. Truly, having nothing about it of a radical beginning, this beginning asks to be re-begun in the responses that, as a call, it hopes to receive. The presiding decision aims at social effects—to the undertaking of one or several types of works and productions—and expects only that a certain clarification of its meaning will emerge from such effects’ coming about.

Definition of the project in relation to the political present

The political present makes the project necessary but does not already provide a single one of its lineaments. These come instead from a future that, as such, cannot be recognized but can still be wanted or desired, readied and stirred up by multiple knowledges.

A previous essay—an occasional, that is, an embattled one—recalled the general outline of the politics of capital regarding the university, which hasn’t changed in the meantime (cf.

Granel, “Dénonciation”). It’s a question of suppressing in the university whatever, first, since its origin, has been its proper daring and destiny, even though no document—no bull, edict, or law—has ever provided such an articulation and, second, constitutes a sort of poético-politico-philosophical twister in which the historical existence of peoples works toward knowledge of itself: speaks itself, thinks itself, wills itself. But if we’re elaborating a knowledge, it’s not a science, not the several sciences, but the projection of public existence on its most extreme possibilities.

It’s true that in the university there has never been a place for such a knowledge and for the risk proper to it, no discipline or teaching of which it has been the object. The university has never even been the proper place for it, or the only place for it: also, and more often, it has been in wars, mores, strikes, and ultimately the streets that Europe has never stopped destroying and building, destroying again and rebuilding otherwise, all the elements of its subsisting reality, throwing them into the crucible of a decision of being [*une décision d’être*] that left it no respite. But the university was, among the products of this fever, precisely the one that Europe invented in order to harvest, so to speak, formality itself, aroma, idea. An idea yet unformulated, therefore, and still unformulated when I call it a sort of poético-politico-philosophical twister, since “poetry” would still have to be understood here as a people’s foundation in a language, “politics” would still have to designate that obscure and united direction of public will-to-be that essentially precedes any institution, and “philosophy” would still have to mean the same thing as the other two but in a reflexive mode or a more or less formal expression. However, *upon* this idea, not within it, rests the university, which was always, in its great moments, something more and other than a conservatory and laboratory of the arts and sciences: it has always been a public scandal, a general hope, and a matrix for the forms of a world to come.

This is exactly what capital wants nothing to do with anymore; the current meaning and condition of survival of capital are to stop all possible history and to evade any world question through the “evidentness” of the totality of rationally manageable objects. By contrast, then, our first objective with regard to that *other* university that I want to foresee will be to bring to its self-awareness the task of opening up in it, or reopening, the possibility of common existence in the form of a world to come.

If I consider the university under a more usual and obvious rubric, I find there a duality of principle that leaps to the eye but of which the meaning and relations have yet to be produced. This duality is traditional and—all the same, as surprising as it is in itself—hasn’t surprised anyone for more than a century.¹ In the first place, the university was conceived and constructed under the idea of a free development of the whole of knowledge (literary and historical knowledge; legal, political, and economic knowledge; “scientific” knowledge properly speaking, that is, mathematics and the natural sciences; finally, philosophical knowledge and the human sciences). But in the second place, the university was organized

¹ Excepting Heidegger, the last to be surprised was effectively Nietzsche in *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions* (1872). Also, see my “Préliminaires pour autre chose.”

and directed as the place where an elite's "certified abilities" are prepared and validated, its aptitude for filling a certain number of posts or professions—the managerial posts and the liberal professions, to the exclusion of all others. The one principle and the other have, of course, had historical communications between them, and it's from an identical movement that, from the 11th to the 18th and to the 19th century, the bourgeoisie lifted the arts and sciences to the level of modern rationality and that it reserved for itself the new professions that comprised the properly architectonic ("rational and free") share to which they owed, and still owe, their elevation over simple practices of implementation and handling. In and for themselves, however, the free development of knowledges and the preparation for exercising liberal professions are two totally different principles, confusion of which is entirely to the detriment of the former.²

Thus, the second task to which I point is to conceive of a university that would provide preparation for no social role. But here it's not simply a question of an attitude to take, a simple opting for disinterestedness, etc. Because it's not a question, in the first place, as a moral point of view of this kind naïvely supposes it, of turning our backs on jobs in order to shutter ourselves in pure sciences—as though these exist purely and simply, and always in the same form, independent of the fact that they buttress the bourgeois division of social labor. Without this division, the existence and very meaning of the sciences waver, and there lies the first danger to be, not conjured away, but aggravated through the obstinate consideration of principia.

If this is so, the reason for it is doubtless that established knowledges would not have opened—across the various means of ordering the different fields of reality that they furnish by the mediation of their formal objects—the possibility of a social appropriation of the "free" part of the work to which man subjects nature, if in itself every knowledge did not tend to produce security in conjuring its birth, to heal a practical finitude in developing an ideal mastery, and, in short, to separate in itself the reality of a liberty and the obscure possibility to which it owes *being*, and this because the possibility, in its most extreme, always enfolds the risk of impossibility pure and simple.

It is not obvious that the sciences *are*. The question to investigate for each one of them, or for each group of them, is to know *if* it is and, if so, *how* it is. The subsisting reality of a number of them certainly risks, regardless of its antiquity or novelty in the reality of culture, disappearing purely and simply in the undertaking. Certain of them, on the contrary, that don't yet have existence ask to be given it. All of them, in any event, will follow a course

² On the consequences of the historical mixing of bourgeois liberalism and knowledges' becoming, we would naturally need an archeological inquiry. One sees, here or there, elements of that inquiry appearing after a good long while. But an archeology is only ever worth what the philosophical imagination that more or less explicitly presides over it is worth. All the while celebrating the accumulation of material, one must nonetheless be disquieted to see work on *archai* (principia) undertaken for its own sake, which is not to say undertaken ahistorically but according to a history that opens only onto thinking, according to the *Seinsgeschichte* [history of being].

[Trans.—I take Granel's point in this note to be that work on principia, which his essay argues for, should not be undertaken solely on phenomenological terms but should also be, as the opening paragraph indicates, "crossed (strengthened and suspended) by something like a Nietzsche-Marx axis."]

essentially different from what has (really and, even more so, imaginarily) been called up to now “scientific development,” insofar as from now on it will encompass its history and practice as well as its relation to its foundations, including what is, in the terms of the science in question, unmasterable in that relation.

The objection of “philosophism”

Even a slightly cautious reader—and those whom I address are extremely cautious readers—will already have heard the petrifying song of the siren Philosophy resonating in this call to take all the risks of principiel inquiry. To such readers I offer two responses quickly and a third at more length (to seduce them another way).

I respond first that what I have already said concerns philosophy—each and every philosophy—by the same token as it concerns any other knowledge and that I could only have said what precedes because philosophy has taken the questioning of its reality farther than any other discipline, by bringing that questioning back to the text of its history and the presuppositions of its practice, precisely with a view to making apparent *what it does not master in its principium*. Some, at least, differently and partially, have undertaken this work, of which the convergence remains to be produced but of which the global effect has already been irreversibly produced: to render all “philosophism” philosophically obsolete. If then what is wanted from the shaking of all disciplines, their disappearance, reforging, emergence *ex ovo*, is something very like “the philosophical,” it will not have been imported already from philosophy or from a philosophy but will arise, if I may put it so, from the adventures of the content [*contenu*] itself. And that will remain true even if it appears (as I believe it will appear) that having practiced and submitted to the catastrophe of philosophy can sometimes be useful to precipitate other catastrophes.

The second response is that we can no longer be satisfied with vegetating, each of us in his or her own area, in cultural discontent. By cultural discontent I mean all those abundant wishes for disciplinary transformation and opening that awaken in those who, under the influence of “exterior” events (of which the protests of 1968 remain the prime example), steward it and that continue to maintain, “from the exterior” it seems, the profound indifference of generations of the taught regarding what we teach them. One would be wrong to believe, in fact, that the renewed submission of today’s students to the form and basis of university culture attests to lessened indifference, to less of the absolute split I am talking about. First, because that submission is largely *played*, and examined carefully it takes forms that have nothing to do anymore with the old, naïve acquiescence to cultural realities. Today’s submission is not the reversal of refusal; based in disgust, it is the product of historical discouragement and manifests itself in attitudes that range from suicide to cynicism. Second, because it coexists with the perpetuation, more and more minor because more and more desperate, of an imaginary, even entirely paranoid, hardening of classic political discourse (whereas the revolutionary in action becomes the manager and even the legionnaire of all that he is supposed to combat). This would be nothing, if this verbal hardening of the soft didn’t

engender in turn a real hardening of the hard (a rage to explode everything for lack of being able to change anything), the effect of which is to produce in reality the unreal (fascinating and odious) character of all *actual and real* opposition to the real-actual. Circle, vertigo, despair. The silence of history replaced by the ambient noise of televisions.

The university, for its part, will not break that silence, will not calm that rage, will end neither treason, nor evasion, nor submission if it takes the lure of corporate remedies of the modernist type, whether it's a question of "pedagogical care" or the timid daring of interdisciplinarity, to say nothing of the pious intentions and the shabby performances of "cultural programming." Even less, of course, if the university conceives of its task as the adjustment of curricula to the industry's production needs.

What path will we take, then? The one just indicated: the path of school as *scholè*, i.e., in the sense of that *leisure* wherein the question of principia alone is debated, posed as itself having a yet higher question as its principle, that of the possibility of existence, whether individually or communally. For my part, I will say shortly what imaginable consequences such a decision would lead to in knowing *how* to build the university, with whom, for whom, on what materials and in what forms. For now I only want to say that the risk of seeing philosophy's flowers springing up along the path I propose seems a very slight danger compared to the price we pay and will continue to pay for the current situation.

But the third response stands alone: truth frees. Our disciplines, our knowledges, even our most assured sciences confine, or permit us to confine, because they are not exposed to the danger of their truth. By which I mean, again, the work of reducing any doctrinal body toward the zone of principial questions, and by principia I mean not only those domestic ones that a discipline can acquit itself of (if need be, by entering a crisis of foundations from which it can emerge at the heart of its own language) but also those intractable ones interior to disciplinary theoretical treatment that take into account history and practice and that under this double heading open onto exterior banality. It's certain that this path leads first, and in a certain fashion always, to weighing a threat and to destroying one or several languages, one or several groups of questions and results, one or several doctrinal bodies, considered in their simple reality; but this path, and it alone, also leads to giving a future to the possibility to which these knowledges have owed their very reality till now.

What damage would there be, for example, for spelling and grammar, literature (comparative or not), any existing form of stylistics and rhetoric, poetics, linguistics, and the psychology and philosophy of language to disappear, in a regulated manner and under the progression of a "scientific" questioning? What is there to fear if each of them, no longer juxtaposing its certitudes and worries within itself, and juxtaposing itself to the others in a mix of uncertain borrowings and corporatist resistances, was to open up to a sort of reabsorption of its objects and concepts in the slowly constructed knowledge [*connaissance*] of the historical conditions of their production and the intrinsic limits of their meaning [*signification*]? If this movement of the regression of the sciences toward their real presuppositions and ideals—which I propose here as the means of liberating the possibility of knowledge that they conceal—is led according to the principle of practice, then far from causing any damage, it will at least make a happy person of the subject of this practice. The

subject—I mean, the one really speaking and writing, really reading and translating, whether it be a scholar-subject or a culture-subject at any other level and in any other form of the practice of languages and texts—is in fact the one that the different disciplines named, while necessarily drawing strength from his or her experience to a certain point, never stop “forgetting” in the fine nuances and silent pathways of that same experience, where principia effectively reign, including in their obscure foundation, that is, in the full reality of daily practice. For that subject, for the real subject of work, access to knowledge and the acquisition of a discipline have always doubled themselves in a sort of abduction or gap [*une sorte de rapt ou de manque*], consubstantial with the entry-into-culture, in such a way that idealism and submission have been till now not temptations nor even secondary effects of Western knowledges, in themselves contingent, but their very element and condition.

Lack of radicality is in fact not only a lacking with regard to philosophical exigency; it is also, and first, a lacking with regard to the practical historical subject, whose ignorance and desire to learn we at once steal. The third task to which I call here consists thus in a “regression of the sciences” in the sense mentioned above, but which would find its base of operations in the real subjects of work, and in particular in the work of apprenticeship. “Base of operations” means the limit of its power, the measure of its authority, the matrix of its forms of development. In other terms, the old transcendental task, that is, ideally conceived, to define then to traverse and resolve “the crisis of the European sciences” in leading each of them back to its founding and any founding to the transcendental subject. That illusory task can and must cede to a social labor that begins with real subjects and returns to them.

What that might look like

The project has only been sketched till now in its ultimate motivations and formal justifications. Imagining it in its concrete aspects is no less necessary but much more risky, especially if we do not forget that what concerns the university, even an “other” one, concerns an institution and depends as a result on the whole political reality. I will thus from here on advance only free fictions that will not pretend to determine what will be, but in the typic of which the *meaning* of the enterprise will perhaps be able to reveal itself.

First, it’s necessary to distinguish absolutely the critical center of which I have spoken, which must obey nothing and be useful for nothing, and the group of schools or institutes where different knowledges will need for a long time to continue developing themselves and to be taught in their current or similar forms, as they will also continue to articulate themselves on social needs and in particular on the needs of production, such as they are in present reality. This distinction is in fact necessary, first in itself because the work of elaborating a regression of the sciences is by itself a second (certainly not secondary) work that, in a certain fashion, supposes what it destroys, that is, at once historical continuity (and where else would the real ruptures of this continuity be practiced?) and metaphysical form (which is not the product of an “inadvertency” in the development of the sciences but the element in which they come to begin and grow, only, while protecting themselves from the

obscurity of their origin). A necessary distinction, furthermore, because no political power, even and especially if one supposes it engaged in the task of causing the state to degenerate, can practice a scorched earth strategy but must proceed to real and as a result limited, impure, transitory, “non-true” transformations.

But whoever says “distinction” does not say “separation,” certainly not instituted separation. The critical center (where *critical*, it must be recalled, is or becomes again the adjectival form of *crisis*) will itself be something to extract by political means (albeit unknown, precisely, in their “political” meaning) from the classic political powers (capitalist and/or socialist-communist) that want nothing to do with it. Secondly, this center—which will not accept being distinguished from the scholarly, university, and old (but still present) cultural institutions that all, for reasons cited above, have only a measured and temporary validity—also will accept being substantially or institutionally separated only to the extent that it will refuse to play the role of an ideological, scientific, and central cultural power, unifying all other institutions under its supervision, at least insofar as others refuse it this role. By contrast, this critical center will not cease claiming and exercising (wholly or in part, according to power relations) a right to plunder all low-lying plains in the vicinity—a right, to put it judiciously, to enter all institutions, to access all information, and to contest and redouble the activities (in form and content) of any public or private establishment of teaching or culture. Its emissaries can be imagined here as a sort of tribune, in the original Roman sense, “taboo” in that wherever they go and whatever they ask for, they can do so without having to obtain the authorization of the powers that be, the owners of the cultural locations in question, or whatever state agency; they can undertake to do so, in whatever form they like, directly with the subjects of the activity practiced there, whether students in schools or institutes, trainees, moderators, artists, lab assistants, researchers, teachers, of any stripe or feather, without the least surveillance at the time or justification to be supplied later.

The only privilege that, no doubt, it will be necessary to obtain by force of popular will in favor of this kernel of the future university—since it will be the very material of its activities—will be the effective means of publishing any text, old or new, in whatever language and translated from whatever language, no rights reserved, that is, exempt from the rights that currently regulate publishing, beginning with copyright and intellectual property rights [*droits d’auteurs*].

In this way, the internal mission of this tribunal school, this critical peat, will obviously no longer consist in conferring titles or assembling degrees but only in nourishing public debate and in producing the texts thereof, a thousand and one texts for the use of all and none. Aside from the spoken word, consequently, it will be necessary to see to it that a flood is let loose of mass-produced books as free as public radio, redoubled by a flood of recordings, video equipment, films, tracts, journals, reviews, performances and anti-performances, every form and product of art and post-art, on the sole condition they serve the end for which the university was instituted. Having contributed to this flood, and thus having one’s name there, will be the only credential from the time passed in such “studies,” to the exclusion of any bachelor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree. No doubt, the credential will not be worthless, since, if things go as joyously and as seriously as one hopes, you will indeed gain some glory from

taking part in Operation Ship of Fools.

But “you” who? Who will admit taking part, specifically, and in what role in this group of persons who, so to speak, have stopped being citizens and who behave like beasts or gods? An open question to which one only knows what answer not to bring: it’s not an institutional question of which current or near-term political power would hold the answer, if only because it is itself put into question in reality and in concept by the first of the tasks imposed on the other university under discussion here. The true question is therefore not yet to imagine an institution, and above all not an “original” one (in the sense simply of new and unusual) in existing public life’s real space and horizon of meaning; the true question is to begin leaving that space and horizon, to begin destroying that reality and meaning, while constructing, starting now, without any statute and at any risk, an alternative to the scientific and cultural part of this public life. An alternative that consists in working, on the one hand, toward the comprehension of the crisis of the university, of school in general, and finally of all that, in knowledges as in culture, is tied to the state (that is, just about everything). It consists equally in divulging this comprehension, rendering manifest as widely as possible the evolution of contemporary societies toward the monster that is already working them from within: liberal fascism. It consists, last, in bringing to light starting now forms of work and cultural and scientific products entirely opposed to those that continue to prevail in the development of current reality, in such a way as to create for that reality *a threat in the symbolic* and a hope and desire for its enemies.

I say a threat in the symbolic and not a symbolic threat (that is, one that would have no reality whatsoever), for the symbolic is not to be placed in whatever symbolic reality but in the real-real. What’s more, it is not only one subsisting part among others of the real-real but a total-part that recoups all the others. Behold the Word and the sex.³ But in truth, regarding the transitive relations of the real and symbolic, there is more and better than what I have just said, which has always been true, to respond today to those who would accuse me of ultimately premeditating nothing more than a cultural revolution (to the detriment of a real revolution). Something irreversible and entirely new resulted from the appearance, the development, and above all the period of the completion of capital and modernity: culture is henceforth the immediate element of history. From there one wants to say something more even than what Marx already remarked—that capital strips, so to speak, social relations, thus producing an effect of cynicism that calls at once for theoretical dis-covering and ideological re-covering—and something more than Heidegger, for his part, predicted for the essence of technology and modern metaphysics, to wit, that at the same time as that essence brings disorientation and confusion to a pinnacle, it makes the task of orienting oneself and clarifying for oneself what being is more urgent every day. What is produced “more” today in relation to the twin effects of capital and modernity is that both have entered the period of their completion. What they have always born, they must now vomit, avowing and expressing

³ Trans.—This sentence, and much of the paragraph, appears to be an odd, obscure bit of Lacanianism. The biblical *Voyez* ‘Behold’ suggests the style of the Lacan of “Function and Field,” while *real-real* and *total-part* recall Lacan’s vocabulary in *Encore*.]

it.

We are no longer in a time when even the most fundamentalist and violent critical forms of modernity's auto-interrogation still came to terms with it in some fashion in the unthought of their very principle, or still fell back through their effects into the field of modern reality, or stopped purely and simply in an indeterminate opposition to modern reality, or finally exhausted these three forms of misfortune by turns. It's no longer the time even to endure modernity's historic [*historiale*] impossibility to form a world, until we scream, fall silent, or go mad. The time is come for total dissidence and effective changes. No subjects practicing any modern knowledge, whether they produce, propagate, or submit to it, can any longer conceal from themselves the schism that divides them when they enter the theoretical simulator in which the object and procedure of such a knowledge develop. They can no longer conceal it from themselves, not only because the transcendental veil has parted in shreds, behind which the (im)possible unity of formal knowledge and of real sojourn [*séjour*], but more seriously because every modern science has entered a process from which it can only now advance ("produce results") through capitalizing itself in the proper sense of seeming to be itself the horn of plenty or the miraculous source from which emanate what it produces and the very work that produces it. Such a situation is one that we cannot change from the interior: it's a situation that we can only pull back from or that must be stopped. From the outside.

Precisely to this "outside" is each of us today constrained, not only regarding modern knowledge but also modern morality, modern economy, modern philosophy, and finally modern politics. What was perhaps still a "program" for the Marx of the 11th thesis on Feuerbach—not only to interpret but to change things and thus from an elsewhere—has become today the banal, if still bitter, knowledge of experience [*expérience*].

Beginning with the experiment [*expérience*] called for here, which it will perhaps be necessary to fictionalize for a long time in the solitude of a rhetorical *we*, while waiting for a real *we* to set itself to recasting its fiction and above all to preparing the conditions for itself in the very heart of the present reality. No doubt, in effect, the elsewhere will only people itself relatively slowly, for it's quite a lot really to ask anyone who might be willing, in short, to at once

- renounce modern political discourse
- conceive instead as political the decision to dis-cover, to formulate and accomplish (pardon my grammar) singular-plural *Dasein*'s possibility of being, and to locate this knowledge in the principium of existence and of an other university
- organize the regression of the sciences as a positive means of liberating possibilities of knowledge and learning on which the sciences are constituted and closed up
- stop making the university function as a locale for acquiring know-how (in the plural), skills for social functions of domination or management, and
- take on instead the public risk of carrying questioning everywhere, not platonically but in practicing concrete analysis and the precise indictment of all practices in production, institutions, and culture.

This fifth point, as fantastic as it appears, is nonetheless the most serious of all and prevents one from misjudging the significance [*signifiance*] of the second point. If according to the second point *political* is understood as *existential*, it is nevertheless a question of a public action, and this is what the fifth specifies. In other words, not only do I not call here for leaving public space for philosophy but I call for turning knowledges upside down in their ideologico-institutional reality as a premise and lever for turning all current reality upside down. This is something else and more than continuing to produce individuals' texts, even if these produce effects of sliding, gap, or even rupture, up to their audiences' abilities. This is even something else and more than was, for example, the surrealist movement before its failure led it to fall back into individual personalities and their works. For a time, in effect, this movement aimed at nothing less than "life" itself (Dasein's potentiality-for-being-a-whole) in a *common* form. From litterature [*lits en rature*],⁴ a few young people took hold of literature to burst existence within it as a social scandal. They lacked, however, clear knowledge [*connaissance*] of what *public action* involves (not simply action in public). In addition, sur-reality, that is, the unfettering of the possible, broke itself on simple political reality, be it on the occasion of the Rif War or in an impossible confrontation with 1930s communism.

We want to avoid a similar fate, even if it is certain that our action, too, can only be for a long time an "action in public." At the least, our action will never lose sight of political reality as its object and target, from which it withdraws only in a special sense: in the sense that the eagle only rises in order to look down and dive. In all the principiel work that we want to get underway it's in effect a question of putting politicians (and that includes unionizers) at every instant up against the wall, in that way playing our part in the catastrophe of the political and preparing what will follow it.

This is no small undertaking. Who, then, will leave a position of security in order to join us, knowing, what's more, that it's an invitation to instability? One does not know what playing a part, in a more or less long and organic fashion, in the projected university will be. But we do know what it will not be: not a function of the state, not a career, not even a guarantee of employment. Perhaps it will only be a sort of brief and inorganic phase, or series of phases, in the "institution." Entering into a cautious determination of institutional details would not make sense here. I would only produce the negative image of current reality, or what is most damaging according to the fiction's necessity.

What one can imagine must therefore remain something vague or indeterminate, from today's perspective. But we must still, and on the contrary, give it a precise turn from the point of view of the *idea*, which seems necessarily to involve the following two elements:

⁴ [Trans.—The slightly different phrase *lits et ratures* is visually and phonetically reminiscent of *littérature*, was featured on the cover of the 20 surrealist review *Littérature*, and means *beds and erasures* (see Balakian). Granel's curious phrase resonates, too, with several other word-plays on *literature* by surrealists or those associated with them: André Breton's palindrome *erutarétil*, Raymond Queneau's portmanteau *littératurer* ('literature' + 'erasure') (430), and Jacques Lacan's neologism *lituraterre* (from, among other things, the Latin *littera* 'erasure' [11]). Lacan connects the surrealists' word play to the way James Joyce "slides from *letter* to *litter*" (11).]

Personal insecurity. It would be in vain to imagine combating the “society of safety,” the ultimate form toward which the old world is wending its way, without taking on all the weight and risk of its effective contrary. Dissidence regarding heavy forms of state oppression and evasion of the insidious forms of social normalization, which are still today relatively “new,” are not destined to be reabsorbed in a future as “policed” as it is “free,” which the leading capitalists and revolutionaries continue to imagine identically. They will not be quickly fossilized witnesses to the barbarous times we traverse; on the contrary, they announce behaviors and above all situations in which refusal and hope set up camp together, long-term, safe-guarded by instability. This is so not only for the time of preparation, in which we have hardly engaged, but must instead be imagined as the rule of critical existence in the very heart of the political future that it’s precisely a question of preparing. Supposing in effect that this future really arrives, insecurity will no doubt change its sign: less immediately deadly, and by the same token less sublime, it could become a positive mode of being. But it will never turn into security (of employment, function, or status), as if it was a question of a future critical magistracy succeeding today’s professors.

Polemicality. Struggle does not exist in today’s university. People in it “exchange” ideas that even when opposed are supposed to belong to a single horizon of “scientific seriousness” or, in any case, to that ether of cultural peace in which “distinguished minds” mingle. The question does not concern the out-modedness and ridiculousness of this universally respected convention; the question is that, on the one hand, it permits the functioning of those agencies by which the state assures itself of the mind’s obedience—councils and committees of every stripe—and that, on the other hand, there is never any confrontation on principia, no war of languages, no historic [*historial*] divorce.

Against this, I do not propose developing ideas in closed chambers but on the ground: moving about, going from one end of the country to the other, entering classrooms, bringing contradiction and defiance. Not with a rudeness of manner or word but in order to establish a *polemicality* reminiscent of the ancient combat among “schools.” Publicly disputing the public audience, launching lampoons, undoing bastions, invading cities. Winning, losing, leaving, returning. For the time is come either for the “rational” police’s great silence or for the great ambulation of the spirit of dissidence.

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Translated by Douglas Steward

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