

JOSÉ R. ECHEVERRÍA

RESEARCH PROJECTS PRESENTED TO THE JOHN SIMON GUGGENHEIM MEMORIAL
FOUNDATION BY JOSÉ R. ECHEVERRÍA

I. As professor of Philosophy, I have long been interested in the problems of university education, and particularly in those related to the methodology, curricula and organization of general studies. In 1941, I published a short essay entitled "The road towards Philosophy in University Education". In 1964 the Pan American Union asked me to write a book, published in 1965 by the same institution, on "The Teaching of Philosophy in the Hispano-American Universities". The fact of having taught in the Faculty of General Studies of the University of Puerto Rico from 1955 to 1960, of having been appointed Dean of the same Faculty in September 1964 and of having held this position until December 31, 1969, during a period of complete re-evaluation of the whole University, was responsible for my having had occasion to work out some ideas that could be considered a relatively new approach to the problems of general education.

In my opinion, what is essential in general studies is not their remedial effect when secondary education is defective; nor is it the possibility of introducing the students to specialized studies. Their fundamental purpose, as teaching and research activities, is to reach an integrated conception of the world, society, history and culture. Seen in this light, the specific methods and limits of the various sciences and disciplines can be inter-related and understood in terms of their place in the whole. If the student could acquire such a conception - *scien in vita*, as Descartes would have said -, he would be able to judge more accurately, on the basis of the science, discipline, problem or activity in which he was most interested, the particular field to which he is best suited.

If sponsored by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, I would write a book on the concept of general studies, their philosophy, their significance in our age for under-developed countries, their place in the university programmes of specialized studies, the system of their courses, etc. I would place particular emphasis on the links and associations that can be established between certain sciences and disciplines that should be taught under the general studies programmes: Biological sciences, Physical sciences, Social sciences, Language - Logic - Aesthetics and Humanities (or Great Works). I should like here to go into this aspect of my project in some detail, as I consider it to be the most significant part.

I believe the starting point of the general studies programme should be the human ecosystem. One could begin with a very common activity in our daily lives, so that any student could feel familiar with the problems involved. Let us take, for instance, our nutrition, which refers us immediately to our biological and social environment. This, of course, is only one example of an approach that could be varied. The most important factor is that the study of each course ought to be related through certain subjects or problems to what is being studied in the others. Biology and Physics should be considered as individual parts of our ecosystem, separated only by the specific methods and concepts of the biologist and the physicist. In this system we find living beings, some of which are other men and some of which though different, are nonetheless related to us in so far as they provide our food, or work for us, or have some favorable or unfavorable

Influence upon our living conditions, upon our specific environment as a whole. From this point of view, the biological world appears as an articulated system of which we are a part but in which we are at the same time agents of change. Our relationship with this world is established through our perceptions, spontaneous or conditioned reflexes or voluntary actions, all of which are selective means towards the constitution of Biology as a science. The primary source of energy of this system, the light of the sun, is channelled through the photosynthetic process of living plants. Thus, some physical concepts such as energy, light, the astronomical system, etc., allow to establish a necessary correlation between Biology and Physics. The specific methods and concepts of Physics should therefore be compared with those of Biology. From microbiology and macrophysics, the course should go into Molecular Biology and Microphysics so as to study the structure of matter in general and the distinctive characteristics of organic and inorganic matter. A generalized theory of evolution, that would include the astronomic as well as the organic processes, should serve as a conclusion to the study of these interrelated sciences.

If we start with the human ecosystem in the way proposed here, we can easily see the connection between the natural and the social sciences. In this system, in fact, an outstanding role is played by our relations with other men and, therefore, by the problems of Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Law and Political Science. Our feeding, for instance, is a biological as well as an economic action: it is consumption; and all consumption involves certain distribution system of goods and services. In turn, this system is related to certain production processes, that is to say, to a social organization. The social system, its division into classes, groups, families, and the consequent distribution of social work and leisure time, is related conversely, through the economic structure and the development of technology, to the biophysical environment. The social-economic regime is based on common uses, contracts and property rights, or else establishes them. Thus we come to the notion of Law. The concept of the normative proposition and of the sanctions it imposes upon transgressors, brings our study to the concept of the State which represents, in the national system of law, as Hans Kelsen has said, the monopoly of legitimate violence. We can now consider the political concept of the State and the subjects and problems of Political Science.

The concept of human ecology permits the coordination not only of the different social sciences with each other, but of these sciences as a whole with the natural sciences. Such different phenomena as the domestication of animals, the expansion of gases, atomic desintegration, and the social, political and economic constitution appear in a coherent continuum. The student should be able to see all these sciences and subjects as related to the collective object-subject that is his own society, with its historical roots, and its projections and options for the future.

We are now able to advance another step: our knowledge of biological, physical and social facts is such because of our capacity for speech, i.e. for making propositions which refer to them and organize them. The natural and social sciences are endowed with language, in its ordinary form, as well as in its logical and mathematical expressions. A study of mathematical language should be the conclusion, at least for the most gifted students, of the language courses.

The fact that man not only speaks about himself and about things, but also about their own language, the fact that linguistics exists as a science, proves that we are conscious of ourselves, that we are reflective. Being reflective means that we know ourselves, enough at least for it to pose a problem for us. The course of Humanities should begin with the question of man's nature. It should show that this question contains its own answer: man is to himself a problem because he is conscious of his own existence. Because of this consciousness man can judge himself, approve or disapprove of his actions or his life and decide to change them. Freedom is a necessary consequence of man's consciousness of himself, which means that man does not have a fixed nature; or in other words, that he has no other nature than his consciousness of himself and his freedom to change, even to change his own nature.

Nevertheless, the reflective consciousness can be acute and expressed in free decisions, but it can also be alienated. In this perspective, some great books should be studied as affirmations of man's reflective consciousness and consequent freedom to dominate the alienating situations and processes and to set himself a meaningful goal. A book is great not only because of its aesthetic value, but also because of the metaphysical and ethical problems it raises.

According to this plan, a strong thread unites the several courses that should be taught in a general studies programme, constituting different aspects of a significant whole, of a single course that could be called Man and the World. This organic whole is understood through its individual parts; conversely, each course is seen as being a part of the whole.

The integrative purpose of the general studies can thus be realized. At the same time, however, their secondary purposes are realized too. Through the system of sciences and disciplines that is shown and discovered, a net of associations is established that covers and completes what has not been studied previously; the inarticulate character of secondary education could now be overcome; oblivion is avoided, because it attacks by preference the poor isolated fact or datum. At the same time, this holistic concept can "introduce" the student to the specialized studies and help him choose his field of interest in a meaningful way and with full sense of responsibility.

General studies have a didactic function, but this must be associated with research, research in the general or interdisciplinary problems. A Center of General Research and Education should be established as the core of the university. It should operate as a place where a biologist, an economist, a linguist, a historian and many others might communicate their experiences and knowledge and project together new research programmes so as to consider problems that do not fit into the limits of the existing disciplines.

Biologists have taught us that man's successful evolution derives from his being a "general animal" or at least an animal that is not as specialized as others; from the fact that his hand, for example, is suited to making and using weapons, to hunting, fishing, cutting, smashing, tearing, lifting and making significant gestures. General studies aim to preserve this superiority

in human minds and to prevent young people from becoming specialized animals, that would be unable to adapt themselves to the changing conditions of our time because they had only been prepared for a single task or work.

II. The second research project I submit to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation is related to the previous one and completes it in one of its aspects. I would write a book containing nine philosophical and literary essays. I consider this book to be the outcome of many years of study and to be valuable in itself. At the same time, I believe it could be useful for the teachers of a course in Humanities such as the one described above.

In the Introduction, the anthropological-philosophical^{91/} problem of man's nature would be raised. It would explain that the ensuing essays constitute approaches to this problem, differing from each other because of the historical situations in which the books were written and the author lived, but similar in their ultimate significance.

1. The Myth of the Fall in Genesis II - III. I wrote a short essay on this subject in 1960 entitled Eritis sicut dii. It was published in the Review Argumente of Puerto Rico, but of course would now require revising and enlarging.

2. An essay on the Letter of Epicurus to Meneceus. I have compiled a great deal of information on this Letter which is one of the texts I use most frequently in my classes.

3. A critical essay on The Divine Comedy of Dante. This would reproduce, with some modifications, the one I wrote and published in 1965, with the addition of a historical introduction.

4. The Quijote as an Image of Human Life. This would be a new version of the short book I published under this title in 1965, and would incorporate some ideas that were expressed on this subject in an essay published by the Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale in 1967, N° 4 ("Le roman miroir").

5. The dialogue of Descartes with the "Malin génie". This essay would be written between 1971 and 1972. The Metaphysical Meditations is one of the books I study most frequently in my seminars and classes.

6. Goethe's Faust: this essay would be a revised and enlarged version of the one I published in 1967 in Diálogos, N° 7.

7. Marx and our time. This essay would be written in 1972. The essay I published in the N° 2 of Puerto in 1968 could serve as an Introduction.

8. The Subject of Death in Freud's Thought. I am currently working on this essay.

9. A theory of America. This is based on the symbolic meaning of concepts such as Right and Left, High (North) and Low (South). It would be thought out and written in 1972, but would be based in part on my paper read to the XIII International Congress of Philosophy held in Mexico, D.F., in 1963.

JOSE R. ECHEVERRIA

The research projects submitted here would require at least one year of study in different libraries and universities. A certain amount of time would have to be spent in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

If the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation accepted to honour me with one of its grants, I should like it to run from January 1st to December 31st, 1972.

Although the proposed books would be written in Spanish, I would be interested in the possibility of their being translated into English if some publisher wished to do so.

JOSE R. ECHEVERRIA

CURRICULUM VITAE DE JOSE R. ECHOVERRIA

1. Nacido en Santiago de Chile el 3 de noviembre de 1913.

2. ESTUDIOS:

Estudios de segunda enseñanza en Chile, Francia e Inglaterra; terminados en 1931 en el Instituto Nacional de Santiago de Chile.

Estudios de Derecho en la Universidad de Chile de 1932 a 1936.

3. GRADOS:

Profesor Extraordinario de Filosofía del Derecho de la Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales de la Universidad de Chile, otorgado el 26 de mayo de 1954, tras el examen de rigor.

Doctorado en Letras (de Estado) de la Facultad de Letras y Ciencias Humanas de la Universidad de París, otorgado el 29 de junio de 1955 con la mención muy honorable (magna cum laude). Los estudios para este Doctorado fueron llevados a cabo gracias a una beca del gobierno francés, obtenida por concurso, para seguir estudios en Francia de 1953 a 1955.

4. PUBLICACIONES:

Los dos tesis presentadas para optar al Doctorado ya mencionado fueron publicadas en 1957 y 1963, respectivamente, por la Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, de París, bajo los auspicios del Centro National de la Recherche Scientifique.

La primera tesis lleva por título Reflexions métaphysiques sur la mort et le problème du sujet; la segunda es una edición crítica de la obra inédita de Hume de Biran, De l'aperception immédiate (Manuscrit de Berlin, 1807), Introducción, presentación del texto, notas e índices de José R. Echeverría.

En 1965 la Unión Panamericana edita su libro La enseñanza de la filosofía en la universidad hispanoamericana, elaborado por encargo de la referida institución.

Es autor, además, del libro titulado El Quijote como figura de la vida humana, Ediciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1965.

Tiene pendiente el término de un libro titulado Vivencia de la muerte y acción histórica que la Editorial Universitaria de Santiago se interesa por publicar.

Ha escrito numerosos ensayos publicados en diversas revistas y en las actas de los Congresos Internacionales en los que ha participado. Entre estos ensayos cabe destacar:

- a. "Norma Jurídica y Derecho Subjetivo"
Revista Jurídica de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1956.
- b. "Reflexiones sobre la Cultura"
Revista de Filosofía de la Universidad de Chile, 1957.
- c. "Eritis sicut dii"
Revista Asonante, 1961, premiado en el concurso de ensayos del Ateneo Puertorriqueño del año 1960.
- d. "El acceso hacia la filosofía en la educación secundaria"
Primer Symposium Iberoamericano de Filosofía, Guatemala, Ed. del Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1961.
- e. "Reflexiones sobre la Historia"
Humanitas, Anuario de la Universidad Nuevo León - Monterrey, México, 1961.
- f. "Naturaleza, historia y vida personal"
Actas del XI Congreso Internacional de Filosofía (Venecia), y Revista de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, vol. IV, n° 3, 1962.
- g. "Con Juan de Mairena veinte años después"
Revista La Torre, número especial dedicado a Antonio Machado, 1963.
- h. "Elementos para una Teoría de América"
Actas del XIII Congreso Internacional de Filosofía celebrado en México, D. F., 1963.
- i. "La Divina Comedia y sus múltiples sentidos"
Volumen de homenaje a Dante, publicado por el Departamento de Extensión Universitaria de la Universidad de Chile, 1965.
- j. "Tiempo y arte", Revista Diálogos del Depto. de Filosofía de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Núm. 1, 1965.
- k. "¿Le tenemos miedo a Albee?"
Anales de la Universidad de Chile, N° 131, 1964.
- l. "Muerte y salvación en el Fausto de Goethe"
Revista Diálogos, N° 7, 1967.
- m. "La roman miroir a propos d'un livre récent sur le Don Quichotte",
Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale, N° 4, 1967.

- n. "Problemas del desarrollo dialéctico de la historia según Marx" Revista Puerto, N° 2, enero-febrero-marzo 1968, Universidad de Puerto Rico.
- o. "La propia conducta como prevalgación y derogación de la norma jurídica" Revista de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Vol. XIV, N° 3, sept. 1970.
- p. "Una universidad para nuestro tiempo"; rasgos y prospectos de la "rebeldía estudiantil", Revista Puerto, Nos. 3-4-5, junio 1968 - diciembre 1969, Universidad de Puerto Rico.
- q. Tuvo a su cargo el discurso en los ejercicios de graduación de la Universidad de Puerto Rico en 1968. Este discurso titulado "Protección infantil y universidad", junto con las palabras de presentación del Rector del Recinto, fue publicado en un folleto por la Universidad de Puerto Rico en 1968.

5. CARRERA ACADÉMICA Y COMO EXPERTO EN EDUCACIÓN:

Profesor de Filosofía del Derecho de la Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales de la Universidad de Chile en los años académicos 1952 y 1953.

Conferenciante en el Departamento de Humanidades de la Facultad de Estudios Generales de la Universidad de Puerto Rico en los años académicos 1955-56; 1956-57; 1957-58.

Catedrático Asociado de la misma Facultad en 1958-59 y 1959-60.

En 1960 se incorpora al Departamento de Filosofía de la Facultad de Humanidades de la Universidad de Puerto Rico. Ha dirigido interinamente este Departamento durante los años académicos 1958-59 y 1963-63; ha sido Director Asociado del mismo en el año académico 1963-64.

En 1963 obtiene el rango de Catedrático (Full Professor) de la Universidad de Puerto Rico.

Desde agosto de 1964 hasta enero de 1966 desempeña el cargo de Profesor-Investigador en el Centro de Estudios Humanísticos de la Facultad de Ciencias Físicas y Matemáticas de la Universidad de Chile. En el mismo período ofreció cursos y seminarios en la Facultad de Filosofía y Educación y en la Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales de la misma Universidad.

Desde septiembre de 1966 hasta el 31 de diciembre de 1969 desempeña el cargo de Decano de la Facultad de Estudios Generales de la Universidad de Puerto Rico (Recinto de Río Piedras). En este período, se lleva a cabo una re-evaluación completa de dicha Facultad y se discuten las

partes para una nueva filosofía educativa.

Del 16 al 30 de octubre de 1967 actúa como consultor en el Primer Congreso Nacional de Alto Nivel sobre Educación celebrado en La Paz, Bolivia, y forma parte de la comisión redactora del informe sobre Universidades. La ponencia que presentó en este Congreso aparece publicada en el libro titulado "Realidades y perspectivas de la educación boliviana" La Paz, 1968.

En la segunda quincena de febrero de 1968, fue invitado a Venezuela como consultor por la Comisión Organizadora de la Universidad de Caracas.

Invitado por el Consejo de la Universidad Peruana, participó en el Seminario de Estudios Generales, realizado en Lima entre los días 9 y 13 de noviembre de 1970. Presentó una ponencia sobre "Organización didáctica de los estudios generales".

En la actualidad, disfruta de una licencia sabática de la Universidad de Puerto Rico y tiene a su cargo la función de un Instituto de Filosofía en la Universidad Católica de Chile.

Ha recibido una invitación de The Comparative and International Education Society para participar en un seminario sobre "Education in Eastern Europe and Siberia" que deberá celebrarse del 6 al 27 de marzo de 1971 en Budapest, Bucarest, Moscú y Varsovia.

Proyecta publicar en los próximos años un libro sobre la posible integración de los estudios generales a base de tomar como punto de partida el socio-sistema humano y como culminación el despliegue histórico de la conciencia reflexiva del hombre, tal como se manifiesta en algunas de sus mayores obras culturales.

Santiago de Chile, a 30 de noviembre de 1970.