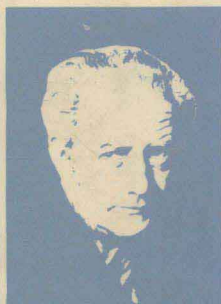


The Right to be Intelligent

Luis Alberto Machado



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THE RIGHT TO BE INTELLIGENT

by

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INTELLIGENCE is a hereditary gift: so humanity has believed throughout time.

But no one has been able to present a single scientific proof which demonstrates that belief.

If someone, sometime, were to come forth and present it, this book would lose its whole value.

WHEN a premise is accepted as true, all of the conclusions which derive from it must also be admitted.

If the theory is welcomed that intellectual differences among men have a genetic cause, it must be carried through to its ultimate consequences.

We solemnly affirm that all men are substantially equal.

In Constitutions, Fundamental Charters, and Declarations of Human Rights, equality among men is upheld, but at the same time, our point of departure is the basic notion that, in something as fundamental to the development of man as intelligence, we are by birth radically different.

One of the postulates of all ideological currents is the fight against inequality.

But if intelligence is found to be previously determined by factors of a natural order, there is no sense in speaking of equality among men.

Every fight for equality is irremissibly condemned to failure.

We are not equal and would never become equal.

If intelligence is unequal, as a long range consequence all else becomes unequal.

If each man's intelligence is by reasons of nature different, to affirm equality among them, even as a goal to be achieved, is to proclaim that which is not believed, or, if believed, is unattainable by its lack of the basic premises which would make it possible.

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The inequalities of nature could not be corrected by laws or proclamations.

It would be impossible for even the best intentions to prevail over the designs of nature.

Those who have in all ages tried to impose on the world the government of the best for the best, would have been right to do so.

Oligarchy would be the ideal system.

The one that would impose itself definitively, by means of its correspondence to one of the actual exigencies of genetic coding.

If human beings' inclinations are fixed from the very moment of conception in the maternal womb, what ground is there left to freedom?

Can a man be free whose vocation is previously determined?

If intelligence is a work of nature, can we really be masters of our own destiny?

If intelligence were innate, no man would be free.

If men were not equal, democracy as a system of government would lack a reason for being.

It would be a system which at length would have to succumb.

If by nature men are not equal, there is no logic in their having equal votes.

If equality is impossible, then democracy is impossible.

If intelligence is a hereditary gift, the democratic ideal is no more than a very beautiful dream, with no other final destiny than that of history's archive.

And a system based on that ideal, as any other, would be beneficial only to a group of privileged men.

Democracy without equality is a farce.

A new form of dictatorship.

"WE ARE ALL EQUAL" does not mean that we have the same organisms or that the other conditioners of freedom are equal.

But it does mean that we all have the same potentialities, which throughout life, are incarnated in different ways according to each person's existence.

If all men are men, their potentialities must be the same.

If it were not so, it could not be affirmed that equality exists in what is essential to men, because these potentialities form part of the essence.

Neither could the flag of our inalienable right to happiness be raised.

If we are not equal, some would have the right to be happier than others; to demand that right; and to do everything possible to make social life conform to the requisites of the satisfaction of that right.

A good part of the citadel of history has been constructed with walls which have had for mortar the sweat of that belief.

Always, efforts have been made to justify every type of social discrimination with scientific or theological reasons: nature, not men, is the cause of the inequalities that justify the submission of some men to others.

Empires have been founded on the belief that there are peoples in conditions of natural inferiority.

IN THE biological sciences it becomes more and more evident that there are no superior men.

Those who have concluded that races are not equal, start from the premise that their own race occupies a position of preeminence.

A scientific proof which demonstrates that one race is genetically more perfect than another has never been able to be adduced.

Step by step, biology has razed the elements which have been claimed as the basis for every type of racism.

Time and again racism has been condemned by science.

Yet time and again it comes back to raise its head.

In every man who believes himself superior to his fellows by nature, there exists a potential racist.

The belief that intelligence is determined by genetic reasons also contains a certain dose of racism.

If men's intelligence is already fixed from the moment of birth, can it be affirmed that there are no superior races?

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If, for genetic reasons, there are men of superior intelligence, there must also be races of superior intelligence.

If this is true, then there is nothing censurable in seeking to assure the pre-eminence of one race over the others.

After all, that pre-eminence would correspond to a design by nature, that would eventually have to be carried out. It would be more than reasonable to accelerate the thorough execution of that design.

If intelligence has a genetic origin, the logical consequence is a humanity harmed by the reproduction of its less intelligent members.

With the multiplication of the better endowed, we could achieve a better humanity.

We ought to prepare ourselves now to combat a type of racism more dangerous than any previous one; a “social racism” which holds that social differences are of genetic origin.

In numerous statistics, the children of professional people show a higher degree of intelligence than the children of workers.

Can the reason for this difference be genetic?

If so, should not the conclusion be that social differences have a biological origin, transmissible by heredity?

According to the enslavers of all ages, it is nature that imposes all systems of slavery.

Slaves are inferior beings.

One has only to act accordingly.

Inferior ... in what?

Not in brute strength.

Not in physical resistance.

Inferior ... in what?

In Plato’s version of a text of Homer, “Zeus removed half of the mind of the slaves.”*

Many centuries have passed, but this text is still in force today.

Perhaps the most dangerous prejudice of all holds that intelligence is transmitted genetically.

“Innatism” is exceedingly difficult to eradicate from the mind of a man or a nation.

*Laws, vi; *Odyssey*, vii. 322-3

Today, as in the past, dynasties and injustices are "legitimated" through heredity.

If some men were destined by nature to command and others to obey, we would have to conform to a permanent slavery in a variety of forms.

This would not only be convenient but just.

If nature itself establishes injustice beforehand, men could not be branded unjust.

Social differences would be explained as well as justified in our genetic codes.

If intelligence is previously fixed in chromosomes, any fight for the establishment of social justice is ultimately useless.

If differences of that order are hereditary, then injustice is inevitable.

If nature itself discriminates in fundamental aspects of human activity, such as intelligence, and not merely in aspects which are absolutely accidental, such as skin color, then it is impossible to avoid discrimination by men also.

For men not to discriminate against men, it is necessary that nature should not first have discriminated with regard to their possibilities of development.

The powerful man would be so, thanks to nature's own dictate.

And so also, the weak man.

In the face of such a situation nothing could be done short of resigning oneself to it without a fight.

Or else a fight, and then frustration.

There would be "natural injustice" instead of social injustice.

For injustice to be combatted it has to be in men, not in nature.

If nature were reactionary, the battle for the progress of underdeveloped persons and nations would be irremissibly lost before its start.

But it is not.

It is worth the fight.

BIOLOGICALLY, man has remained the same for more than forty thousand years.

6 *The Right to be Intelligent*

No part of the human body had undergone, for hundreds of centuries, any modification that might even remotely explain the progress of humanity.

The human brain has not varied since the Upper Paleolithic Age.

With the same brain, the number and quality of creative men have been increasing constantly.

Who produces them? ... chromosomes ... or education?

Man's development has always been constant.

Growing.

Genetic factors have not produced it.

Man's brain is the same.

Man's life is radically different.

The reason for the change is not biological.

Education is the key.

What has changed and in turn caused change, is not the brain, it is education.

The brain and the body of man remain the same but man continues to evolve.

At the beginning of evolution all changes were biological.

But with the passage of time the proportion of those changes was to become progressively smaller.

While biological evolution maintains a more or less constant speed, the velocity of man's evolution becomes ever higher.

Now, evolution is not the work of nature, it is man's.

The present evolution of man is one that he learns.

At birth, the minds of children of forty thousand years ago were the same as the minds of today's children.

Their differences reside in what they manage to learn.

The mind of the cave man was already equipped to achieve the advances of the twentieth century.

And he would have achieved them, had he had an earlier generation to teach him.

It seems plausible to think that every child born to an advanced society of today carries with him through biological inheritance a sort of "cultural predisposition," the fruit evolved from the by-gone centuries in history. It would seem that every child born in the twentieth century is born a child of that century.

However, if a new-born from London were to be removed to one of the aboriginal tribes of Australia, to be raised and have his life unfold there, that child would grow up a primitive.

The normally healthy child of a Bushman who is incorporated into an atmosphere of western culture at birth, will prove capable of growing up as just another of its members.

In the few hours of a plane trip, he leaps over ten or twenty thousand years.

He becomes a twentieth century man on arrival in the twentieth century.

No one is born civilized or primitive.

The child of a civilized man and woman will never be a civilized being, if he does not acquire the necessary learning.

The child of a primitive man and woman will become civilized, if he is educated to be so.

The difference between a primitive man and a civilized one is not biological; it is educational.

It is not nature that explains the cultural diversity among peoples.

The diversity of behavior and custom is the fruit of learning.

Not one of the habits, attitudes, conventions or modes of conduct characteristic of human groups, races or nations is due to heredity.

The great social transformations of history have not obeyed genetic transformations in the peoples that produced them.

The changes undergone by man are due to an attribute that is exclusively his — education.

THE DETERMINING reason for the difference between the stagnation of the animal species and man's progress is man's faculty for passing acquired knowledge from one generation to the next.

Cultural heritage distinguishes the human being and is the only causal explanation for the development of humanity.

Man owes his present situation to himself, not to nature.

The progress of man is the fruit of culture, not biology.

Culture is everything to man.

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Culture is what man learns.

And culture springs from culture.

In the beginning the change was biological; afterwards, essentially cultural; it will again be biological through the work of culture.

Because through culture the laws of life will change.

The educational process is the revolution of man against need.

It is the triumph of culture over biology.

Nature was all.

All will be culture.

Through the work of culture, nature and culture will be fused into a single reality.

In the beginning, all was thought.

Nature was a manifestation of thought.

In the end, all will be thought once again.

UNIVERSAL history is man's fight to control nature and subdue it.

Nature alone, without man, makes no sense.

It would not even exist.

Nature exists to be subjugated.

And surpassed.

Nothing stagnates.

Not in nature or history.

Nature is not a static principle; it is a potentiality, a possibility that completes itself through its own activity.

It is a permanent, self-developing being.

There is an immutable factor in that development — the need for development.

Whatever the degree of evolution, human nature will always have constant needs, the first of which is its own perfection.

There is an interior principle — the very principle of life — that impels man towards his own perfection.

For all, the end is the same.

In each one, the impulse is equal.

Man is a potentiality that perfects itself.

Existence is all that is given to him.

The rest is his to create.

Life itself is the only gift.

All else is acquired.

Man is offered limitless possibilities, that are materialized through learning and teaching.

These are open to life, fulfilled in life, in accordance with life.

LIFE is essentially dynamic.

Man is different from animals, because of what he can become not because of what he is.

He is not an animal, because he does not want to be an animal.

Man's will makes him man.

He is what he is, because of what he himself is.

And he will never be finished.

Until now, his potentialities have been utilized to a minimal degree that is impossible to determine.

Potentialities must exist which have yet to be even conjectured.

We do not know to what lengths human beings may go along the path of personal development.

Possible achievements surpass the limits of our own imagination.

Man is a being in development.

A being who perfects himself in time.

A being who is, in so far as he develops himself for being.

He is, in order to be more.

Life is becoming what we are.

EVEN in his most primitive state, man is endlessly superior to the most developed animal.

The most famous definition of man affirms that: "man is a rational animal."

Twenty-five centuries of history have repeated this sentence as an indisputable affirmation, used by the most divergent ideologies.

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Materialists and spiritualists are equally pleased.

They differ in their emphasis.

However, studies advancing through the universe of the human mind every day, are leading us to the conclusion that the philosopher's sentence is not true.

A horse is not a vegetable with greater autonomy.

A tree is not a piece of earth with life.

The very elements are radically transformed.

Man is not an animal to which rationality has been aggregated and which yet continues to be animal.

As a rational being he ceases to be animal.

In some way every one of his cells is "rationalized."

Rationality inundates, impregnates, absorbs and transforms all.

All in him is human.

In man, instincts are no longer instincts.

What is more, there are notable differences among scientists concerning the supposed number of instincts and no one has ever been able to demonstrate that man really has them.

In any case, there is no instinct that can be exercised prior to some sort of learning.

Instincts are also learned.

RATIONALITY is not simple intelligence; it is intelligence in a free being.

The intelligence of man never ceases to be a free intelligence.

Underneath it all, man's chief characteristic is not intelligence.

It is freedom.

This is the essential difference between man, and animal or machine.

If man were not free, he would be no more than either — with a higher degree of intelligence perhaps, but nothing else.

Freedom is exclusively of man.

It is his highest value.

It is the reality which makes him great.

His particular essence.

Man is freedom.
He is freedom, alive on the earth.
But no one is born free.
Freedom is also learned.
Man is a being *for* freedom, who makes himself free.
That he may be continually freer.
He is free since he is free to make himself.
Freedom consists in making oneself.

MAN'S first confrontation with determinism was a battle against the forces of nature external to his own existence.

Now the moment has arrived to fight against the determinism within his own nature.

Man is not a slave of his genes.

New developments in biology will bring about the liberation of the human mind from one of the greatest obstacles to progress: biological determinism.

Man is not an instrument.

In any sense.

Man is not predetermined.

Not by nature; society; heredity; economy; education; history; nor by himself.

Man is not predetermined by anything.

Or anyone.

Not even by the will of God.

The greatest offense to man's liberty arises from the belief that God has fixed beforehand the possibilities of each man's development.

When man believes himself determined by any power outside of his own will — History, Destiny, Nature, God — his advance is impeded proportionately.

ON EARTH, man is the measure of all things.

Everything is directed toward the unfolding of his nature.

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To achieve the thorough development of all the possibilities offered by nature, man, in his relations with himself and others, must abide by a set of norms.

The ethical order is comprised of these norms which have been refined throughout time and are taught by one generation to another.

A law exists which cannot be avoided, if individual and collective welfare is to be pursued.

There are immutable principles: those indispensable to the integral development of humanity.

This unfolding of nature has permanent needs.

Man is capable of knowing them.

Man is the same everywhere and therefore arrives sooner or later at the same conclusions everywhere, concerning the principles necessary for his development.

The criteria regarding what man must concretely do or refrain from doing in his personal and social life, may differ according to the level of each particular culture, but the inevitable formula, "Do good and avoid evil," can be recognized in all of them.

How can one tell the difference?

The difference is rooted in the contribution made to the perfection of human nature or its absence.

In accordance with nature man has a goal to attain.

Anything that helps to attain it, is the "good" that ought to be done.

Anything that is not, is the "evil" to be avoided.

In life and history, we come to learn both of them.

Human nature is the fundamental pattern of human acts.

The regulating principles of conduct are found in it.

But nobody is born with those principles.

They do not spring from within us by spontaneous generation.

We discover them by means of intelligence.

Through the use of reason and from the age at which this is possible, man progresses in the achievement of understanding justice.

This understanding, as such, is not an innate reality in human beings.

The ability to acquire this knowledge is innate.

No man has imprinted in his minds the fundamentals of moral

order; he has the potentiality to arrive at them.

In this sense, learning is indispensable to the formation of conscience. Without some form of learning no one would have a conscience.

TODAY we cannot understand how slavery could exist as an acceptable institution until a hundred years ago.

It seems absurd.

But it was so.

Many pontificated in the name of Christianity at the same time as they accepted slavery, without becoming aware of the essential incompatibility of both concepts.

Nearly two thousand years were necessary to see the obvious.

Neither will it be understood tomorrow how people believed for centuries that the God of equality had made men radically unequal.

"Equal" means of the same class or condition.

So we are.

It also means alike as fellows.

We are also that.

But "equal" does not mean identical.

The fight against inequality is not postulated so that all men can be identical; it is postulated so that in their indispensable and desirable diversity, some men may not be inferior to others.

The only possible and desirable identity is that of opportunity.

We will continue to be distinct but developed, each one, on similar terms, according to each one's individual being.

Every person is a unique being whose exact physical and environmental conditions can never be repeated.

Each one possesses an exclusive and limitless complexity.

We will never be made robots, simply because we will never be identical.

Even leaves are not identical.

Much less, can men be exactly the same.

Men are distinct from one another.

But nature is not guilty of making some men inferior to others.

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The responsibility must be sought among men themselves, among those who educated them, in society ...

In any case, among human beings.

It is life, and not biology, that produces social differences among men.

A HUMAN being deprived of human contact at birth, could not exercise a single one of its human attributes.

Just to be a man, we need our fellows.

Beyond the first stages of his physical and psychological development, a man so deprived would remain outside of society exactly because of what was his to acquire from normal relations with other human beings.

It is essential for man to live with man.

He cannot even subsist outside of the learning permitted him by social life.

Nature has only given him certain capacities, possibilities to be actualized in society.

Social life itself is a possibility to be realized.

It is realized in a process that must be learned.

Man is not born anti-social, a-social or even social.

He is born with the potential for learning to be sociable, or in other words, with the capability of living in society.

He lives in society to be free.

Continually, freer.

The purpose of social life is to guarantee man's ability to act freely.

Society exists for freedom.

This is its reason for being.

Man is the beginning and end of society.

Individual good cannot be attained except through the common good.

One strives for the common good to assure the welfare of each person.

Man needs society.

But man does not exist for society.