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# UNIVERSIDAD, ARTES LIBERALES Y TRADICIÓN EDUCATIVA ANGLOSAJONA

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Este escrito apunta a mostrar el camino histórico seguido por el *conocimiento liberal* y por la *Universidad* en la tradición educativa anglosajona. En este contexto de ideas, el campo de estudio ha sido limitado a los siguientes temas: primero, precisar, en términos generales, qué es la *educación liberal* y qué elementos componen su syllabus; segundo, describir las características esenciales que definen esta tradición educativa en el mundo anglosajón, principalmente en Inglaterra y en los Estados Unidos; y tercero, mostrar en qué consiste la superioridad cualitativa de este tipo de educación.

*Palabras clave: Educación liberal, universidad, tradición educativa anglosajona.*



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## UNIVERSITY, LIBERAL ARTS AND THE ANGLO-SAXON EDUCATIONAL TRADITION

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This article aims to show the historical path of *liberal knowledge* and *University* in the Anglo-Saxon educational tradition. In this context of ideas, the study field has been limited to the following topics: first, pointing out, in general terms, what *liberal education* is and what elements compose its syllabus; second, describing the essential features that define this educational tradition in the Anglo-Saxon world, mainly in England and the United States; and third, showing that in which the qualitative superiority of this type of education consists.

*Keywords: Liberal education, University, Anglo-Saxon educational tradition.*

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## Introduction

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE SUBJECT DISCUSSED IN THIS WORK is to approach two interrelated matters –to wit: *liberal studies* and *University*–, since one element awoke and was naturally assumed by the other historically; *i.e.*: what was called *liberal studies* or *liberal arts* were the propaedeutical instruments that persisted in time and were brought into the Universities during the 12th and 13th centuries, where they continued to exist throughout history as a part of a study syllabus. It is worth adding that this educative means had, in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, a historical continuity that lasts to this day.

Based on these ideas, the study field has been framed within the following points: first, to show in general terms what *liberal education* is and what elements constitute its educational proposal; second, to describe the essential features that characterize this educational tradition in the Anglo-Saxon world, mainly in England and the United States; and third, to show that in which the qualitative superiority of this type of human education consists.

Besides, it is worth observing that this educational paradigm represents a genuine and valid possibility to conceive and theoretically support the specific educational practice, since this pedagogic tradition has centuries of experience and considers humans as a whole, that is, it does not reduce human development to only one human dimension while impairing others. This is shown in the internal connection that appears between the idea of human being from which it starts, the study syllabus proposed for its formation and the consequent model of human being which it intends to reach. All these matters are faced from a philosophical perspective, since from a merely scientific approach they manifest as something unresolved.

## 1. What is liberal education?

It can be affirmed that liberal studies constituted Western education. The presence of this type of education started in Ancient Greco-Roman times, and was assumed by Christianity and later by Renaissance and Neoclassical humanism<sup>1</sup>. This study syllabus is the one that England transmitted to America, and that gave life to its education until the 19th century and mid 20th century.

Liberal Education, as an educational phenomenon, is an element that still prevails in the Anglo-Saxon world uninterruptedly. This means, for that culture, the acting and living presence of an *educational tradition* that hails from the teaching of the *liberal arts* and that has permanently configured a particular and characteristic type of human education.

In this context of ideas the first thing worth clarifying is the word *liberal*, due to the negative connotations, mainly ideological, that it entails nowadays. This word in the Anglo-Saxon educative context has no relation whatsoever to *political liberalism*, or to *liberation theology*, or to *sexual liberation*, or to *female liberation* or any other idea that implies liberating or untying from somebody or something.

The sense in which the notion of *liberal arts* is here used is the literal translation from the Latin, in which *ars*, on the one hand, means craftwork, job or ability, and *liber*, on the other, means *free man*, that is: an individual that is free and independent from both the political point of view, since he is the subject of rights framed in a determined community, and the economical point of view, by having the necessary resources for life and therefore the essential free time to develop such studies.

In this original sense, the *liberal arts* entail the type of education that finds its grounds, on the one hand, in the value that its cultivation has in itself and not by an external aim, and, on the other, in the forming of intelligence, character, aesthetic taste and the abilities necessary to be the citizen of a community<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, *liberal education* is a certain type of learned education, that is: an education *in the arts* and *through arts*. Liberal education is the education in culture, the end product of the education of a cultured human being<sup>3</sup>.

*“Culture” (cultura) means primarily agriculture: the cultivation of the soil and its products, taking care of the soil, improving the soil in accordance with its nature. “Culture” means derivatively and today chiefly the culti-*

<sup>1</sup> JAEGER, Werner, *Paideia*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Ciudad de México, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> LIND, Michael, “Why the Liberal Arts Still Matter”, *Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 30, Nº 4, 2006, pp. 52-58, pp. 52-53.

<sup>3</sup> STRAUSS, Leo, “What is Liberal Education?”, *Academic Questions*, 17, 2003, pp. 31-36, p. 32.

*vation of the mind, the taking care and improving of the native faculties of the mind in accordance with the nature of the mind. Just as the soil needs cultivators of the soil, the mind needs teachers. But teachers are not as easy to come by as farmers*<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, culture is the most proper way to form an *educated human being*. L. Strauss states “that the possible means to have access to culture are teachers and the reading of great books that the greatest minds have left”. But these great minds or teachers –adds the professor from Chicago– are not likely to be found. We are not likely to meet any of them in a classroom or anywhere. It is a piece of good luck if there is a single one alive in one’s time. In order to have access to this type of teachers, to the greatest minds, the safest way is only through the great books which these greatest minds have left behind. *Liberal education* will then consist in studying with the proper care the great books which the greatest minds have left behind<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that *liberal education* is not an *indoctrination* of the person, that is: it is not an education of the ideology or for the ideology. On the contrary, *liberal education* is that type of education that can be acquired in languages and in classic languages: specifically in *Greek* and *Latin*<sup>6</sup>.

The tradition of liberal studies in Europe and the United States is a synthesis of several elements. The United States is where the greater divergence of options can be found. In this way, for some people *liberal education* means a *general education*, in the sense of the opposite to specialized studies, but not something opposed to specialization. Others consider that this education refers to the studies in the *arts* and *humanities*. Finally, there are some who adhere to the study of the *classics* or the common reading of *great books*<sup>7</sup>.

Besides, this educational tradition includes other nuclear elements in its syllabus such as: *rhetoric*, *logic*, and the study of the *classical languages* in which Western Civilization was refined (Latin, Greek and, in the case of Holy Scriptures, Hebrew)<sup>8</sup>.

Among general knowledge, philosophy, literature and poetry, art, music and sports<sup>9</sup> can be mentioned. The study of the disciplines that initiate intellectual education was synthesized in the seven liberal arts developed through what were called the *trivium* (*grammar*,

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>6</sup> In this type of education not only the written texts themselves but also their reading and interpretation have a crucial relevance, since –as H.-G. Gadamer states– “the person who wants to understand a text must be willing to be told something by it”. GADAMER, Hans-Georg, *Antología*, Sígueme, Salamanca, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> LIND, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>8</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 54.

*dialectic or logic, and rhetoric*) and the *quadrivium* (*arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy*).

In the same way, the study of *classical languages* was always supported for different reasons. Among the most important ones, the first to be mentioned is that they are the languages in which Western civilization was founded, as Greek and Latin were the languages in which Western intelligence and culture were molded; second, the value of the study of those languages provided students with rooted mental habits and a deep knowledge of literature and classic philosophy. Besides, in these languages an important practical and strategic knowledge of government can be found, upon which English and North Americans have applied their intelligence for the maintenance and increase of their people and cultures. This is shown, for instance, in the writings of W. Churchill<sup>10</sup> and of T. Jefferson<sup>11</sup> respectively.

## 2. Liberal education in the Anglo-Saxon educational tradition

In the name of this educational tradition John Stuart Mill stated, in his inaugural address as Rector of the University of St. Andrews in 1867, that universities should not be places of professional education: "Their object is not to make skilful lawyers, or physicians, or engineers, but capable and cultivated human beings"<sup>12</sup>. J. S. Mill is a faithful representative of such a tradition, that prefers a *liberal education* like the one to which E. Copleston referred in his 1810 defense of the *status quo* of Oxford University.

*Liberal education* as an educative path has also an important precursor in the figure of J. H. Cardinal Newman. He thought the education of the *gentleman* to be based on Classic Greco-Roman and Christian thought and on the humanist tradition of Oxford University<sup>13</sup>. But also many others have reflected on such educational ideals, which aroused different and varied versions at the same time.

In that way, R. White states that there were disagreements in the consideration of the degree to which the *liberal ideal* could or needed to be justified by reference to some external aim<sup>14</sup>. Nevertheless, whichever these differences are, everyone defends the priority

<sup>10</sup> KEEGAN, John, *Winston Churchill*, Penguin Group, New York City NY, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> JOHNSON, Paul, *A History of the American People*, Harper Perennial, New York City NY, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> MILL, John Stuart, "Inaugural Lecture at the University of St. Andrews", in CAVENAGH, Francis Alexander (ED.), *James and John Stuart Mill on Education*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1931.

<sup>13</sup> NEWMAN, John Henry, *University Sketches*, St. Paul Publications, New York City NY, 1964 and *The Idea of a University*, Yale University Press, New Haven CT, 1996; CORCORAN, Timothy, *Newman's Theory of Liberal Education*, University of Dublin, Dublin, 1930.

<sup>14</sup> WHITE, Ralph, "The Anatomy of a Victorian Debate", *British Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. XXXIV, Nº 1, 1986, pp. 38-65.

that is given to the development of reason and to the studies that promote the capacity of knowing, understanding and searching for the truth<sup>15</sup>.

Such educational ideas, coming from Europe, therefore, from England, influenced the English colonies and, therefore, the United States. They were strongly valid up to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, moment from which *liberal studies* begin to undergo severe transformations.

It is worth mentioning that when the United States was born, most of the Founding Fathers who participated in the Revolutionary War for the independence of that country<sup>16</sup> graduated from Colleges that had a common study syllabus and whose essential root was the teaching of Greek and Latin. An eloquent example is Harvard, founded in 1750 as a biblical school that required that each of its members was able to read Cicero, Virgil and Ovid, among other classical authors, in their original languages, and, besides, to write in Latin prose, as well as demonstrate certain abilities for poetry in such language. Aside from that, students were required to have some basic rudiments of Greek, so as to read the New Testament and Isocrates, among other authors. In this sense, T. Jefferson stated that students before being admitted in *College* should learn: Greek, Latin, geography and the different branches of mathematics.

### 3. Crisis in liberal studies

The crisis in *liberal arts* in the Anglo-Saxon world started toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continued up to mid 90s, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>17</sup>. In that direction, the component elements of this study syllabus were systematically questioned, mainly by utilitarian arguments<sup>18</sup>, by the scientific height scientism that led North American universities to adopt the German model of research university, and finally by industrialization, that led to highlight specialized professional education. Nevertheless, this humanistic knowledge is still alive and valid, as is testified by many and varied Universities and Colleges of the United States<sup>19</sup> and by the publication of recent bilingual editions of classic Greek and Latin authors.

<sup>15</sup> PRING, Richard, "The Aim of Education: Liberal or Vocational?", in *Philosophy of Education*, Continuum, London-New York City NY, 2004, pp. 42-60.

<sup>16</sup> JOHNSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-180.

<sup>17</sup> Liberal Studies in England and the USA are still valid, albeit without the same freshness and amount. But there are several universities and colleges that still cultivate these studies and human education. A strong evidence of such is seen by current bilingual editions of Greek and Latin classics published by Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard universities among others. This fact shows that there are many people who obtain this bibliographic material to read and study.

<sup>18</sup> LIND, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>19</sup> For instance: *St. John's College* (Annapolis CA), *Santa Fe NM*, *Thomas Aquinas College* (Santa Paula CA), *Rose Hill College* (Aiken SC), among many others.

Among the modifications suffered by this *liberal studies* syllabus in order to adapt in time, the study of *great books* arose. That is: the *canon* or the *set of classic works*, of works of art, which compose the programs of humanistic studies of North American universities. There, arts, literature, philosophy and theology are synthesized. Works that have overcome the *test of time* and therefore become classics –that is: suitable for classes– and, hence, established as *works of art* for this teaching tradition and human education<sup>20</sup>.

In the 90s that *canon of liberal studies* suffered, without doubt, one of its strongest and deepest attacks by *multiculturalism*. I. Enkvist has shown this clearly in her last work about *Latin American Icons*, in the chapter dedicated to Rigoberta Menchú<sup>21</sup>. The author holds that everything started with a demonstration of students in Stanford University, California. The demonstrators did not want to study *dead white men* –the authors integrating the *canon*–, but rather demanded the presence of more ethnic people, women and homosexuals in the literature lists. The national press was fascinated by that event, and it had repercussions on the whole country, but the matter was therefore about the university adapting to them and changing its description of the world. The methods of struggle used by students were several and included the occupation of the principal's office as well. There was fear at the university and the requirement of one course of Western Culture was abolished in favor of a *plural* syllabus, one with *values*.

Since then, race, gender and class were essential in the selection of textbooks and, therefore, in the syllabus. Everything concluded in the politicization of the syllabus in all the Universities of the USA<sup>22</sup>.

It is here where the book of Nobel prize laureate Rigoberta Menchú, titled *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia* (*My name is Rigoberta Menchú and This is How My Consciousness Was Raised*) and published in 1983, becomes of relevance. This book had a basic role in the debate, since it offered exactly what the activists of Stanford and the North American left wing were looking for: a *victim*. Since R. Menchú is a person of non-Western ethnicity, she is presented as a victim of racism; as a woman, a victim of sexism; as a South American, a victim of Europe and the United States; as a Guatemalan aborigine, a victim of indigenism. She could not be victim of more! It was exactly what was needed at that moment. In that way, Rigoberta Menchú was *canonized*, that is: intro-

<sup>20</sup> SCRUTON, Roger, *Culture Counts. Faith and Feeling in a World Besieged*, Encounter Books, New York City NY, 2007, pp. 1-2.

<sup>21</sup> ENKVIST, Inger, *Íconos latinoamericanos. 9 mitos del populismo del siglo XX*, Ciudadela, Madrid, 2008, p. 199.

<sup>22</sup> The bibliography on this matter is quite abundant, among which *cfr.* D'SOUZA, Dinesh, *Illiberal Education. The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*, Vintage Books, New York City NY, 1992; GUGELBERGER, Georg M. (ED.), *The Real Thing. Testimonial Discourse and Latin America*, Duke University, Durham NC-London, 1996; CAREY-WEBB, Allen & BENZ, Stephen C. (EDS.), *Teaching and Testimony. Rigoberta Menchú and the North American Classroom*, State University of New York Press, New York City NY, 1996; STOLL, David, *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*, Westview, Boulder CO, 1999; KIMBALL, Roger, *Tenured Radicals. How Politics has Corrupted our Higher Education*, Ivan R. Dee, Chicago IL, 2008.

duced in the *new canon* of Stanford. Actually, she was used by the activists because she was the perfect projection of their political ideas on a South American background<sup>23</sup>.

D. D'Souza, one of the North American intellectual critics of the whole situation, described in his book *Illiberal Education* highlights showing that the students did not demand their university to look for cultural specialists on the Third World, but rather that their regular teachers study those new books and then teach them. The students did not really want to learn the history of China or Hindu mythology, or read works of art from other cultures; they wanted to read about themselves as members of a multiracial society, and they said it openly<sup>24</sup>.

This Stanford movement included students and teachers who were supporters of the left-wing, feminism and North American homosexuality. These minorities, now sheltered in North American universities, demanded more teaching based on social and political conscience rather than on knowledge, and raised *Rigoberta Menchú* and *her books* as a testimony of their ideals. These academic activists belong to the string of cultural studies and are inspired, without explanation, by the pedagogy of liberation of neo-Marxist approach of P. Freire<sup>25</sup> and by the *culture of repudiation* promoted and ideologically supported by P. M. Foucault, J. Derrida, among others<sup>26</sup>.

The issue does not end there. Some years later, North American anthropologist D. Stoll published a book titled *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of all Poor Guatemalans*. The work is a field report done by the author in Menchú's Guatemala itself. The problem arises when the information obtained by the North American anthropologist contradicts the statements of the Nobel Prize winner aborigine's book. Everything indicates that Menchú adapted her story to the ideological pattern of the Guatemalan Army of the Poor –a fact that would have been irrelevant if Menchú's book had not been canonized as a model of the *testimony* genre of investigation in Cultural Anthropology and, besides, if it had not been spread out and used in North American education to such a degree. That is the root of its relevance, since its being under question is more severe for North American higher education than for Guatemala.

This event had repercussions in the main North American and European newspapers through an interview written by L. Rohter on Stoll's book<sup>27</sup>. When the interview appeared,

<sup>23</sup> ENKVIST, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

<sup>24</sup> D'SOUZA, *op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> ENKVIST, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-204. The books that help to understand multiculturalism in the United States clearly are MENCHÚ, Rigoberta, *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia* (1983) and, for multicultural education, CAREY-WEBB & BENZ (EDS.), *Teaching and Testimony*. The latter book contains testimonies by North American professors on the use of Menchú's book in class.

<sup>26</sup> SCRUTON, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-85.

<sup>27</sup> ROHTER, Larry, "Tarnished Laureate: A special report. Nobel Winner Finds Her Story Challenged", *The New York Times*, Thursday December 15, 1998.



the first reaction was to accuse Stoll of racism; the second was to deny the responsibility on the text of the first book, stating that everything was E. Burgos's misunderstanding. Burgos is the person who had written down Menchú's oral testimony. However, Burgos had saved the tapes where Menchú clearly states and confirms everything that was written<sup>28</sup>.

Stoll knew that his book was going to be controversial in the North American academic field, and many people tried to dissuade him from publishing it. However, Stoll's answer on this matter was conclusive: "truth has a value in itself and it is the researchers' duty to look for it and show it"<sup>29</sup>.

After the publication of his book, the North American anthropologist was attacked in several ways. However, its importance could not be overlooked, since from Rigoberta Menchú's case a question arose on the level of *veracity* and *severity* in humanities and social sciences. If researchers do not want to take into account information that is not convenient for them, and instead of supported information they introduce a theorization not backed up by observation of reality, scientific knowledge is then not possible.

In addition, *liberal studies* themselves have suffered strong attacks, as previously shown. One by one the elements of the syllabus have been replaced. The main arguments that were wielded were utilitarian. Thus, the classical languages were replaced by the study of modern languages; the study of oratory disappeared because it was considered unscientific; general education was replaced by vocational education or technical training for a job. The traditional humanistic studies have been gradually undermined and replaced by the social sciences; and the *arts* have had the same luck, being eliminated in order to favor creativity.

#### 4. In what does this type of education in the arts consist?

In his introductory speech at St. Andrews John Stuart Mill holds that liberal education is

*"the education of all who are not obliged by their circumstances to discontinue their scholastic studies at a very early age," [...]. That speech contains a number of observations which will require our consideration and reconsideration. Mill traces the "superiority" of classical literature "for purposes of education" to the fact that that literature transmits to us "the wisdom of life": "In cultivating, therefore, the ancient languages as our best literary education, we are all the while laying an admirable foundation for ethical and philosophical culture". Even more admirable than "the substance" is "the form" of treatment: "It must be remembered that they had more time*

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<sup>28</sup> ENKVIST, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-209.

<sup>29</sup> STOLL, *op. cit.*

*and that they wrote chiefly for a select class possessed of leisure”, whereas we “write in a hurry for people who read in a hurry.” The classics used “the right words in the right places”, or, which means the same thing, they were not “prolix”<sup>30</sup>.*

*Liberal education* is the path that makes a cultivated human being, not only intellectually but also ethically and religiously, that is: a *man* or a *lord*, or what the Anglo-Saxon educational world calls a *gentleman*. Strauss states that:

*One becomes a gentleman [...] by liberal education. [...] the gentlemen are ‘the earnest ones’. They are earnest because they are concerned with the most weighty matters, the only issues that deserve to be taken seriously by themselves, the good order of the soul and the city. The education of the potential gentlemen is the playful anticipation of the life of gentlemen. It consists above all in the development of character and of taste. The fountains of that education are the poets. It is hardly necessary to say that the gentleman is in need of skills. [...] reading, writing, counting, reckoning, wrestling [...], he must possess the skills of administering well and nobly the affairs of his household and the affairs of his city by deed and by speech. He acquires that skill by his familiar intercourse with older or more experienced statesmen, preferably with elder statesmen, by receiving instruction from paid teachers in the art of speaking, by reading histories and books of travel, by meditating on the works of the poets and of course, by taking part in political life. All this requires leisure on the part of the youths as well as on the part of their elders<sup>31</sup>.*

The superiority of this education can not only be observed by the validity it has had over the centuries, but also and mainly by its effectiveness, *i.e.* by its results, which can be translated as the quality of the men that it has educated and the quality of the cultural products whose creation it has made possible.

As regards the model of man, Roger Scruton states in his recent book titled *Culture Counts* (2007) that this type of education is the one that allowed England at a moment in history to have men qualified enough to administer the biggest empire in the world, adding as well the significance of those men who founded the United States, all of them English colonists. Among the main 26 of the aforementioned *Founding Fathers* of the United States, 18 received this type of education and went on to found the country that is currently one of the most powerful on the planet.

<sup>30</sup> STRAUSS, Leo, “Liberal Education and Responsibility”, in *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL, 1995, pp. 9-25, p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

As regards the cultural results, the quality of English and North American literature in the world is clear evidence of it—quality that still today bears valuable fruits. This is confirmed by the testimony of many English writers whose works are read worldwide, such as C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, J. K. Rowling, among the most renowned ones. Such is also the thought of one of the great minds of our country, Father L. Castellani, who observes in an article titled “Literatura y Universidad” (“Literature and University”) the following:

*North American literature is vast. I do not know it completely—not even close—, but I know it is vast with some background flaws, maybe, that are the flaws of the entire nation. [...] North Americans have a great literature because they have universities, so they are an imperial nation, or at least an independent nation. [...] That is the secret. Being a great writer—or many other things—is not possible without a proper and very patient intellectual education that is not reached by journalism, or autodidaxis or vague and chaotic reading [...] the high intellectual life is not a luxury for a nation: it is a necessity. Having wise people comes before having machines, something that our parents knew and that not only Thomas Aquinas, Alfonso I, Rosmini and Newman saw, but also Henry VIII [...]. A nation without high intellectual life is beheaded, and a hen without head can run to many different directions and even cluck, but in the end it bleeds out and falls<sup>32</sup>.*

In the face of all these considerations, the following question arises: Can education as it is proposed today educate such type of men or lords? Or, in other words, can current education make it possible for great cultural works to appear? The answer is frankly no. The reason for this negative answer is that modern education has shattered the two paths crucial for access to a *liberal education* and consequently to a real human education, since today's educational thought has caused the systematic disavowal not only of the teachers' figure, but also of cultivated knowledge—i.e. culture in its highest expression—by systematically substituting it.

As L. Strauss holds, nowadays:

*...a new type of education or a new orientation of education has come to predominate. Just as liberal education in its original sense was supported by classical philosophy, so the new education derives its support, if not its being, from modern philosophy. [...] In this respect, the modern conception of philosophy is fundamentally democratic. The end of philosophy is now no longer what one may call disinterested contemplation of the eternal but the relief of man's estate. [...] Philosophy or science was no longer an end*

<sup>32</sup> CASTELLANI, Leonardo, “Literatura y Universidad”, *Dinámica Social*, Buenos Aires, 1953, p. 59.

*in itself but in the service of human power, of a power to be used for making human life longer, healthier, and more abundant*<sup>33</sup>.

Modern philosophy, which inspires modern education, is mainly an immanent thought to the service of immanent ends, and consequently useful for humans' earthly life. So, for modern thought, any kind of knowledge ought to find grounds in and for society, and not in itself as it was for ancient thought. The stress of this earthly perspective of education is what leads, in some way, to an almost exclusive concern with *current affairs*. Every historical perspective, every tradition fades away before the here and now, in which the novelty of life for surviving receives a new meaning, i.e.: education to acquire working skills, which is strong and pure *employability*.

## Conclusions

From what has been stated so far, we must conclude that *liberal studies* in the Western world, and particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world composed of England and the United States, synthesize within themselves a centuries-old educative tradition that is still valid, and that is within our grasp to be retaken and renewed with the knowledge and improvements that the educational sciences may contribute. It is not about going back to the pointer, physical punishment or the authoritarianism of the past, no. On the contrary, it is about trying to take advantage of all the richness stored in an educational tradition that has centuries of experience when it comes to educating a whole civilization, and that has shown to have enough strength to survive and to be present well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Liberal education* has the objective of educating the intelligence and the aesthetic and moral character of the human being, since before being a specialist in certain area of knowledge, they are first and foremost human beings. Evidence of the effectiveness of such an education is given by the quality of the men who were educated in that way and the specific results this educative model enables to arise in the fields of culture, art, music, etc.

Besides, it is worth mentioning that the world of universities may be nurtured and benefited again by the educative influence of this educational conception. This is evidenced by prestigious university professors –such as A. Bloom, R. Kimball, A. T. Kronman, R. Scruton, A. MacIntyre, R. McNerny, among many others– and the numerous programs in the valid liberal arts used in prestigious English and North American universities –such as Oxford, Cambridge, Yale, Harvard, Chicago, Notre Dame, among many others–. All these elements appear as an alternative and effective answer to the poverty of theory and results that current theorizations on education provide.\*

<sup>33</sup> STRAUSS, "*Liberal Education...*", *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

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