



Filosofía para Médicos (Philosophy for Physicians)

BY MARIO BUNGE, GEDISA PUBLISHING HOUSE, BS. AS., 2012.

A PHILOSOPHER IN THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

During the intervening years of professional practice, a physician starts to inquire about the fundamentals and meaning of what he does. Of the criteria of truth, and the validity of his knowledge. Unfortunately, throughout the many years of training, we have not been provided with the necessary tools to answer those questions. We stick our head out of the disciplinary confinement and search in other territories for that whose location has never been disclosed to us.

Professor Mario Bunge needs no introduction. He is a world-renowned scholar, with academic recognition from the most prestigious institutions; his systematic works have granted him a place as one of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century. For some years, his restless intellectual curiosity moved him to inquire into how physicians think and behave. He thoroughly and methodically reviewed the literature and reflected upon diagnosis, classification, and medical treatment. Later on, he submitted his first conclusions to the opinion of world-renowned colleagues. He worked hard to produce a piece of work written in easily-understood language, and not a treatise for specialists. His book includes historical and current data, reviews everyday issues and applies the power of his rational and logical mind on them. He constantly takes into account the social aspects of health and illness and considers the patient as a complex subject under different levels of analysis articulated in a systematic perspective. As we are accustomed, Bunge's opinions are strong. He acts with no hesitation against inequality in access to health care, against pseudosciences, and against the cultural fraud of organized quackery and esoterism.

“Given the complexity of human beings and their social environment, physicians must avoid sectorial thinking, which tends to ‘anchor’ on the first impressions, information and guesswork, dividing and isolating components that are in fact linked to each other”

In his words, physicians philosophize every day, albeit their unawareness of this fact. But he warns us: *“Medicine should be protected from criminal policies and morbid philosophies.”*

These are some of the questions asked and answered to physicians in his next book, by one of the most renowned philosophers worldwide: Are diseases entities or processes? Why are there so many misdiagnoses? What is the difference between molecular and traditional pharmacology? What does drug design comprise? What is the difference between a randomized and a non-randomized trial? Is medicine based on test elements ('evidence' in Spanglish) really original? Is it reasonable to talk about probabilities in a field in which there are no chances or probabilistic theories? How do you tell the difference between a cause and an association? Is the placebo effect imaginary? How can we overcome the current impasse in the development of psychiatric drugs? Is continued good health achievable? How can health care be provided effectively and with justice? What is the explanation for the survival of primitive and traditional medicines in modern society? Why are Oriental traditional medicines ineffective? And, what can we do with those philosophies that do not deal with reality or its study?

For a physician, reading this book is a true intellectual experience. It is an exciting way to find ourselves with our daily tasks from an enlightening perspective. I hope Professor Bunge's work sparks interest, controversy, and enthusiasm. To remain indifferent and dispassionate, we do not need to go to a bookstore.

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*Excerpts and discussions on the book *Filosofía para médicos* [Philosophy for Physicians], by Mario Bunge, at: <http://www.facebook.com/MarioBungeFilosofiaParaMedicos?ref=hl>