

MENDIVE

REVISTA DE EDUCACIÓN

Translated from the original in Spanish



A tribute to one of the most illustrious pedagogues: Justo Alberto Chávez Rodríguez

Un homenaje a uno de los más ilustres pedagogos: Justo Alberto Chávez Rodríguez

Uma homenagem a um dos pedagogos mais ilustres: Justo Alberto Chávez Rodríguez

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"Every good educator possesses science, in its multiple manifestations, both the one he intends to teach, as well as the appropriate pedagogical theory, as well as the techniques and strategies for teaching, but he has to be distinguished, first of all, by the Art of teaching".

Justo A. Chávez Rodríguez

Justo Alberto Chávez

Rodríguez was born on November 21, 1937 in the Guanajay municipality, in the current province of Artemisa and died in Havana, Cuba, in November 2020. He graduated from History in 1966 and had the privilege of having as teachers' excellent figures, such as Doctors: Estrella Rey Betancourt, Gustavo Du Bouchet, Adelaida de Juan, Alejo Carpentier, Isabel Monal, among others.

Throughout his extensive work, the interest and the articulating axis was the support in the formation and education of the human condition. This view was favored by his work as a grassroots historian. His greatest legacy is the one of teacher both of the undergraduate and postgraduate, which allowed him to guide the professional development of a large number of teachers and doctors in Pedagogical Sciences and Education Sciences.

Among his many essays, one that reflects his thought of guide, counselor and creator of excellent teachers and researchers is published in the Magazine *Lights Own*, of the Education National Union, referring to Rafael María de Mendive, in which he stated that Mendive was a teacher and poet, and that his greatest poetry was José Martí, since for him his best work were the

disciples with whom he worked intensely, giving them all his knowledge, wisdom and broad and comprehensive culture, as a science of life and man. He used to say that they had suffered his nonsense, but he was satisfied because he had helped them to become educators and outstanding thinkers featured in Cuba and other Latin American countries.

Regarding this, he commented with genuine pride: "This production is not written or published. It is closed in the hearts, both of the teacher, as well as of the students. That is my great work that, incidentally, is invisible to the eye, because it is essential, as it is expressed in *El Principito*. I extend this tribute and this distinction to all those who in one way or another, in one place or another, have learned with me and I have learned with them, because that, and only that, is the teaching-learning process"

He did not choose the teaching vocation; however, because of life circumstances, he had to devote to education. For a time he taught History, for which he was not prepared from the pedagogical point of view, because in his career he did not receive this subject. To teach, he learned helped by other experienced classmates with their individual effort and with specific studies on Science Education, Philosophy and languages, among others. It was like everyone else, a product of the circumstances.

As can be seen when reading his works, he did not abandon history, and there is an edge that remains in this sense throughout his life, with monographic and panoramic studies in which he stops to reveal that "... the discovery by José A. Caballero, Félix Varela, Luz y Caballero, José Martí, Enrique José Varona, Aguayo, Valdés Rodríguez, et al, was shaping an educational conception based on the roots of our thought. Reading current thinkers I checked the modernity of

these thinkers and others not mentioned".

For all this he reaffirmed: "The history of Cuban educational thought is a monument that must be known, studied and followed, with the assurance that it guides us correctly on the path of education, which is to say the most important cultural path for humanize man".

The evolution of his thinking can be seen in his work and in the way he confronts problems, in which at first he assumed a somewhat closed philosophical conception, but from his critical pedagogical maturity he had a more flexible and elective reasoning, that is, a genuinely Cuban thought.

He was a follower to the death of José Martí, as was evidenced in the collective work entitled Martí and Education, in which it is hold that the Apostle came to have a view on this subject very Coherent, despite of his ideas were expressed throughout his entire work. "It is necessary to go and give it unit to find the greatness of his thought in an integral way. The Marti ideology is a great synthesis of the Cuban ideology that closes the nineteenth century and up to these days, and the thought of Fidel Castro follows the line of Marti's thought which hosts, of course, in his mind, tempered to other conceptions and other historical circumstances" he often said.

From the most legitimate roots of the Cuban thought, and following Martí, he found in his research other figures who helped him much in his formation, among them: the Cuban philosopher Rigoberto Pupo, who had accepted the need for reform of thought as he poses; Dr. Luis Álvarez, from Camagüey, was a great inspiration, from the point of view of assuming the cultural approach that he proposes in his works for Cuban thought.

He had also the influence of an outstanding Catalan thinker, Octavi Fullat Genis, professor of Philosophy of Education and Pedagogy, an eminence known in Europe and Latin America, with which he had direct links and who was impressed by his extensive way of thinking about the Sciences of Education, which is why he cites it repeatedly in his works.

Since its vision of sciences he managed to graduate, as tutor, to more than 25 doctors in Pedagogy and Education, which today are representatives of the prestigious educational Cuban intellectual, with influences of other countries. Among them: Jaime Canfux, Ida Hernández, Leticia Rodríguez, Emilia Gallego, Zoila Benítez, Luis Abreu, Elfio Pérez, Pedro Hernández, Leonardo Pérez Lemus, Gustavo Deler, Moraima Orozco, José Rodríguez Ben, Amparo Suárez Lorenzo, Gilberto A. Marrero Hernandez, Mercedes Keeling Alvarez, Maria Caridad Gonzalez Leiva Adela Martinez Rosa Mariño Carmen Stuart, by only mentioning the Cubans. He had Mexican, Colombians and Angolans aspirants.

The work carried out alongside Max Figueroa Araujo, Lidia Turner Martí, Lesbia Cánovas Fabelo and others, who have directed the Central Institute of Pedagogical Sciences of Cuba, allowed him to learn and provide much support to Cuban and world education.

The working relationships with the Cuban Minister of Education, in the period 1972-1990, José Ramón Fernández and his life partner Asela de los Santos, with whom he developed arduous work, was a privilege for the teacher. He always confessed, in each stage with his followers and families, the meaning of both in shaping his professional and personal life.

I could not close this tribute without mentioning their dedication to educational research, which

sometimes led to discrepancies with some of the scientific community, for wanting to show that Education Sciences, which are Humanistic, should not be addressed in the same way as the Natural and Exact Sciences, to devise a way to exercise critical scientific criteria and does not become as critical spoilsport life, as he used to say paraphrasing the illustrious Varona.

He was a faithful collaborator of the Center of Studies for the Improvement of Higher Education, belonging to the University of Havana; The Center of studies of Higher Education Sciences, of the University of Pinar de Rio; the Academy of Sciences of Cuba, which he was Academician for 14 years; the Economic Society of Friends of the Country; Association of Educators of Cuba and the National Commission of Scientific Grade, in each case, he managed to favor Educational Sciences.

He received numerous distinctions and awards because of his professional life and had a wide scientific production published, in some cases translated into English, French and Portuguese.

He founded a family together with María del Rosario Esparis Martínez, the mother of his two children and companion throughout his life.

In my particular case, I must say that in the 22 years of learning with him, thanks to the luck of being his student and personal friend, he was a guidance guide, a scientific father and a beacon as a human being. As Martí said:

(...) "Each one, when he dies, shows heaven his finished work, his written book, his gleaming plow, the spike he cut, the tree he planted. They are the rights to rest: sad he who

dies without having done something" (Martí, 1965).

Filial de La Habana de la Asociación de Pedagogos de Cuba.

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Conflict of interest:

Author declares not to have any conflicts of interest.

Author's Contribution:

Author declares not to have any conflict of interest.



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