



## A Life Dedicated to Psychology

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### Editorial

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### Editorial

In this autobiographical article, I will try to outline my professional career in the field of «science of the spirit» as José Martí Pérez (1853-1895) called it, who—like the venerable father Félix Varela Morales (1788-1853), and Don Enrique José Varona Pera (1849-1933)—is one of the founding stones of Cuban psychology.

It is not easy to talk about yourself, that is, in the first person; However, I will try to do it, since—whether I like it or not— «I am on my way out» of this so-called «valley of tears». I was born in the city of Cruces, former province of Las Villas (today Cienfuegos) in Cuba, on April 15, 1945, the year the Second World War ended. I studied general education at the «Martí» Academy and upper primary school in the «Emelina Roqueta» Higher Primary School, in my hometown, while I completed my secondary education at the Santa Clara Normal School for Teachers, where I graduated as a Normalist Teacher, and higher education at the «Martha Abreu» Central University. de las Villas (UCLV), where I received my doctorate in Pedagogy, in the sixties of the 20th century.

The *curriculum* of the Normal School for Teachers included General Psychology and Child Psychology as basic subjects, while - in the Pedagogy career - it included not only General Psychology and Child Psychology, but also Psychology. of Adolescent and Educational Psychology, taught by professors, Drs. Ernesto González Puig, Armando Martínez, founder of the Nuestros Hijos program on Cuban Television, Silvio de la Torre Grovas, rector of the UCLV in the sixties of the previous century, and Raúl Capote Aranzolas, respectively. Most of my psychology professors (all deceased) had orthodox psychoanalytic training or orientation;

Consequently, this psychological theory influenced—in a decisive manner—my way of perceiving and interpreting psychic phenomena, as well as the symptoms and signs that make up the clinical picture presented by the patients with whom I interacted during my active professional life. Those were my first encounters—very happy indeed—with psychology as a neuroscience and as a social science, the knowledge of which fascinated me so much that I adopted the firm decision to dedicate myself body, mind and soul to its professional practice, perceived as a nourishing source of ethics, humanism and spirituality. At first - and influenced by my basically pedagogical training - I leaned towards Educational Psychology, and when I made my first stammers in the field of Clinical Psychology, they were oriented towards the Child and Adolescent Clinic, until, in May 1974, I was able to materialize my love for the «science of the spirit» with my arrival at the Havana Psychiatric Hospital (HPH), whose founding director, Dr. Eduardo Bernabé Ordaz Ducungé (1921-2006), commander of the Rebel Army, opened me wide outside the doors of that mental health institution, the vanguard—on a national and international scale—of psychosocial rehabilitation and mental health.

Since I arrived at HPH, I contacted Dr. Gilberto Gumá Plá, a psychologist—at that time—of the former Mental Hygiene Dispensary (later, Department of Specialized Treatments), who was my Rorschach Psychodiagnosis teacher, and he taught me the a-b-c of that method of personality research, scientifically and artistically designed by the brilliant Swiss psychiatrist, Hermann Rorschach (1884-1922), whose masterpiece I love with all the strength of my spiritual being.

Once in that health institution, Dr. Bernabé Ordaz asked me to delve deeper into the educational and psychopedagogical bases of Occupational Therapy, an essential support of Psychosocial Rehabilitation; task that I fulfilled with great pleasure. From that fruitful foray came the article



«Occupational Therapy: educational and psychopedagogical bases», published in the Magazine of the Psychiatric Hospital of Havana, in 1974.

Shortly after being at the HPH, Dr. Allan Rosell Anido (1923-1982), former director of the School of Psychology and former dean of the Faculty of Sciences at the UCLV, asked Dr. Bernabé Ordaz to authorize my incorporation into the Psychiatry service that he directed. The director agreed and I went to work with Dr. Rosell Anido, with whom I shared teaching-educational responsibilities at UCLV. In that service, dedicated to the admission of patients with acute psychological disorders (especially different types of schizophrenia and manic-depressive psychosis), my familiarization with clinical psychology in the care of adults with psychological conditions began.

My care work included the application of the Rorschach Psychodiagnosis as part of the comprehensive psychological evaluation of female patients admitted to said service, in addition to group psychotherapy and the therapeutic community, among other educational-therapeutic activities.

I was linked to the Service of Dr. Allan Rosell Anido until 1980, when I was appointed advisor to the Vice Directorate of Rehabilitation, and later, to the Vice Directorate of Teaching, headed by Dr. Noemi Pérez Valdés (1926-2008), emeritus professor of the University of Medical Sciences of Havana, with whom he established solid professional and emotional-spiritual ties until the unfortunate death of such an illustrious personality of insular and Ibero-American psychology.

In the eighties of the last century I joined - as a full member - the Society of Neurosciences of Cuba and the Cuban League against Epilepsy, and since the '90s, I belong to the International Society of Psychogeriatric, based in Illinois, United States, to the Cuban Society of Health Psychology, and years later, to the Cuban Society of Psychology, of the last two, I am a full and full member, respectively. In that same decade, I joined higher medical teaching at the «10 de Octubre» Faculty of Medical Sciences, where I taught the Health Education module, in the context of the Hygiene and Epidemiology subject.

At that higher medical education center, I remained active until the 1997-1998 academic year, when I asked the dean of the faculty for my release to dedicate myself—full time—to the Rorschach Provincial Psychodiagnostics Center, founded by Dr. Bernabé Ordaz in 1997, and where he had the responsibility of coordinating and conducting the clinical-teaching workshops and teaching Rorschach Psychodiagnostics postgraduate courses to psychologists, psychiatrists and neurologists, who showed a marked interest in the theoretical-practical knowledge of such a

valuable diagnostic and investigative instrument. In this scientific-academic context, I developed –together with the neurophysiologist, Prof. Dr. Ariel Faure Vidal– the line of research Rorschach Psychodiagnosis and Digital Electroencephalography, which obtained awards in several national, provincial and municipal scientific events, as well as recognitions. at international conferences on Psychology, Psychiatry and Neurology.

On the other hand, I have participated as an opponent, advisor and member of tribunals, mainly in the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Havana and in the «Enrique José Varona» University of Pedagogical Sciences Since. I have been a systematic contributor to the Magazine of the Psychiatric Hospital of Havana (print and digital versions), of which I was a member of its Editorial Committee, and to the Psychology Bulletin (1978-1998), of which I was assistant editor.

At the end of the 90s of the 20th century, my collaboration with the Cuban Journal of Psychology began, whose director-editor was Prof. Dr. Eduardo Cairo Valcárcel, with whom I established a close professional and emotional-spiritual relationship until led to the physical disappearance of the orientations and interests of Cuban psychology in the last half century.

According to the best of my knowledge and sound judgment, the prevailing themes or orientations in Cuban psychology in the last 50 years have revolved around the philosophical-ideological doctrines that will configure the know-how of the professionals of the «science of the spirit»: before the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, after the revolutionary dawn, and after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Before the triumph of the popular rebellion on the largest island in the Antilles, the teaching of psychology and private healthcare work were subordinated—almost entirely—to the orthodox psychoanalytic approach, with honorable exceptions, which there were: in university teaching. , the professors, Drs. Alfonso Bernal del Riesgo (1902-1976) and Piedad de la Maza Artola, and from Psychiatry, Prof. Dr. Rodolfo Julio Guiral (1901-1975), Prof. Dr. Diego González Martín (1913-1998), founder of the School (today Faculty) of Psychology of the capital Alma Mater, and Dr. Edmundo Gutiérrez Agramonte (1918-2003), editor—until his retirement—of the Magazine of the Psychiatric Hospital of Havana. After the seizure of power by rebel forces on January 1, 1959, and as a consequence of the adoption of a new socio-political and philosophical-ideological model (dialectical and historical materialism), psychoanalytic doctrine was almost completely displaced. of public assistance work, with only one exception... as far as I know: that of Prof. Dr. Carlos Acosta Nodal (1921-2010),

who continued to use it in the context of the doctor-patient relationship and in the classes he taught them. He taught to medical students and residents of the specialty of Psychiatry, both at the «General Calixto García» Teaching Hospital and at the HPH, where he served as Principal Professor of Psychiatry.

On the other hand, Psychoanalysis was separated from the study plan of the Psychology degree at the universities of Las Villas and Havana, to give way to psychology with a Marxist orientation, coming—above all—from the USSR, where reflexology Pavlovian was perceived as the non plus ultra. The so-called Sovietization of psychology and the teaching of the science of the spirit in higher education centers had positive and negative influences on the perception that Caribbean psychologists had of their discipline as a science and profession.

The principle that was taught in the faculties of Psychology established that man was a bio-social unit, which limited—to the greatest degree—the scope of the psychological, cultural and spiritual components in which the health and personality of the homo is structured. sapiens. As a positive aspect, one could highlight the conceptualization and methodology used by Soviet psychologists to understand the theory and praxis of a psychological system, based—essentially—on the results of scientific research, as well as a way of thinking different from that implemented by Orthodox Psychoanalysis, which has its great advantages, but also its great disadvantages.

This is how events unfolded until the resounding fall of the Berlin Wall occurred, and subsequently, the disappearance of the USSR; socio-political events, which gave a one hundred and eighty degree turn to the status quo prevailing at that time: Marxist philosophy stopped having the last word, and instead, two diametrically opposed tendencies confronted each other, still in force today: the being and having.

From the perspective of university teaching and psychological practice in health institutions, the doctrinal range was extended considerably: Psychoanalysis returned to higher education centers, as well as the dissimilar psychological theories that were overshadowed or forgotten during the so-called Sovietization of psychology, returned to the bosom of our Alma Mater.

The principle that man constitutes a bio-psycho-social unit, a theoretical-conceptual elaboration accepted in the era of Perestroika and Glasnost by Soviet psychologists, was replaced by that of the bio-psycho-social unit. cultural and spiritual of the sovereign of creation; principle supported

by a considerable number of professionals in Psychology and Psychiatry. Regarding the interests of Psychology, I can say—without fear of being wrong—that, today, they lean towards technological eclecticism (using the best of each psychological theory or doctrine, in favor of the patient or student, depending on the context. clinical or academic in which the corresponding professional practice is developed), perfect as much as possible the pedagogical methods used by Psychology professors in the teaching of said social-scientific discipline, as well as the valuable eminent Caribbean neuropsychologist.

My collaboration with the Magazine of the Psychiatric Hospital of Havana and the Cuban Journal of Psychology continued for a long time. In them, I published most of my intellectual and spiritual production in the Rorschachian field. I also collaborated—occasionally—with the Paulist Bulletin of Rorschach Psychodiagnosis (Federative Republic of Brazil), as well as with the Latin American Journal of Rorschach (Argentine Republic). In the second decade of this century, I was appointed member of the Editorial Committee of the International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Research (United States).

Since I joined the great HPH family, I participated as a delegate-speaker in national and international scientific events, where I presented my humble contributions to the development of Rorschach Psychodiagnosis in the healthcare, research and teaching spheres. In 2001, the presidency of the Scuola Romana Rorschach—in recognition of my work as a Rorschachist—had the immeasurable kindness of naming me Honorary Member of one of the oldest Rorschachist institutions on the Old Continent.

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I could continue blurring pages, but I write based on an essential principle of journalistic ethics: «if you have something important to say, don't think twice, and say it, but when you say it, be quiet.