

Algunas consideraciones sobre la vida de Félix Varela y José Martí

Some considerations about the life of Félix Varela and José Martí

Alvis García-Gómez

Universidad de Guantánamo, Cuba

Correo electrónico:alvis@cug.co.cu

Recibido: 16 de enero de 2019

Aceptado: 12 de marzo de 2019

Resumen: Se estudia la relación entre la obra de dos grandes pensadores cubanos: Félix Varela y José Martí, quienes confluyen en trayectoria y propósito en la formación de valores humanistas. El propósito de este análisis es despertar el interés por el estudio de la vida de estos intelectuales en docentes y estudiantes universitarios. Se emplearon como métodos de investigación el histórico - lógico y el de análisis y síntesis para la sistematización de los fundamentos teóricos que sustentan este trabajo.

Palabras clave: José Martí Pérez; Félix Varela Morales; Educación en valores; Humanismo

Abstract: The relationship between the works of two great Cuban thinkers: Felix Varela and José Martí, who converge in trajectory and purpose in the formation of humanistic values, is studied. The purpose of this analysis is to awaken interest in the study of the lives of these intellectuals in teachers and university students. The historical - logical and the analysis and synthesis methods for the systematization of the theoretical foundations that sustain this work were used as research methods.

Keywords: José Martí Pérez; Félix Varela Morales; Education in values; Humanism

In the work aspects of the being and the work of Felix Varela and Morales, such as: features of his life, philosophic, teaching and political career are reflected to deepen the genesis of his letters to Elpidio and, in the case of José Martí we are only interested in the Golden Age and, specifically, Tres héroes y Bebé and Mr. Don Pomposo.

In the case of Bebé and Mr. Don Pomposo, a union appears in the analogy that between the man of The Golden Age and the mother of Bebé is established due to the situation that Martí (1953) attributes and cites:

... and every time Bebé sees his mother, he throws his little arm around her waist, or sits next to her on the sidewalk, to tell him how the flowers grow, and where the light comes from in the sun, and of what the needle with which it sews is made, and if it is

true that the silk of her dress is made by worms, and if the worms are making the earth.
(p. 68)

Martí tries to awaken and strengthen in the child the interest and convictions for human values.

In the particular case, Martí is read first with a valerian look and then he returns to Varela with Martian illumination. It cannot continue to be claimed that, since it is the last and to refer, apparently, to purely religious questions, Letters to Elpidio is a minor work, not to mention the Golden Age alone, which is the first and principal product of the children - youth Cuban's literary series

The objective of the essay is to emphasize that the work of the two thinkers are linked because they agree on ideas, the currents that flow through them have great significance, their doctrines are manifestations of the most proper and inseparable of the body of Cuban culture.

Félix Francisco José María de la Concepción Varela and Morales was born on November 20, 1788 on Obispo Street, between Villegas and Aguacate, in Havana City. His mother, María Josefa Morales, of Castilian origin as her husband, Lt. Francisco Varela.

At the age of thirteen his father dies, and his grandfather returns to Havana to encourage him to complete his secondary studies. It is at this stage that he decides to follow in the footsteps of his teacher O'Reilly, instead of the traditional military career he has in his blood twice. He entered the Royal and Councilor College of San Carlos and San Ambrosio as an aspirant to the diocesan priesthood and simultaneously studies at the Royal and Pontifical University of San Jerónimo.

At his request, in 1806, when he was barely 18 years old, the Bishop of Havana, José Díaz de Espada and Fernández Landa, who had such a decisive influence on his life, authorized him to receive minor orders as a priest. In 1807, one year later, with no official appointment yet, Espada himself appointed him Latin preceptor.

He held the Chair of Philosophy, which included Logic, Moral, Metaphysics and Physics. Disciplined, he renounces his parochial dream and becomes, as his tutor, Espada, expected, the most brilliant professor in San Carlos.

In 1821, he published the Electric Philosophy Institutions work; in 1812, Elenco, on the doctrines of logic, metaphysics and morality; in 1816, Lessons in philosophy; in 1817, The elements of the Castilian language. In these texts appears all the theoretical foundation of its pedagogical dynamic management that, for its certainty and effectiveness, maintains absolute validity.

It is precisely the coherence, the organicity of Varela's total thought, that allows him to define what and how to teach and, consequently, to define the type of receptor of that what and that how. This receiver is the potential doer of why for his teaching: to train men capable of thinking for themselves, for whom the social good is the true reason of personal happiness.

Varela (1997) stated:

We say that a man has talent, when we observe that he understands easily, and quickly combines his ideas with accuracy. This is assured to be a gift of nature, which cannot be denied, but observation is equally true, and a methodical study can increase natural lights, and somehow supply its scarcity. (pp. 21-22)

He argued that education, if it is properly oriented, if it part of the principle of knowing how the individual learns and requires active participation in the acquisition of that knowledge, can create the conditions for the development of their capabilities and possibilities. Summarizes the essence of all his work directed in this sense when he affirms

The practice of thinking well is the way of the great thinkers. It is the practice, the exercise of reflecting and not in any way, but rather, what makes the true ones, the great thinkers, ancestry to which he belongs and which will belong more than one of his multiple students. (Varela, 1997, p.23).

Varela found it impossible to accept a citizen existence liable to despotism or tyranny, to the rule of the Spanish metropolis. His legacy, in addition of being philosophical, pedagogical and ethical, is also a foundation of Cuban society and culture, and his creative activity begins to be oriented towards independence. Upon assuming the Chair of Public Law defines it as "the chair of freedom, of the rights of man."

Varela, when analyzing the Letters to Elpidio is based on the axiological, it reflects a value that not only is oriented, but leads, transforms, carries the hand of perfection. He wrote them thinking of youth as the only one willing to understand, assume and want the freedom of Cuba more than his own life.

This work increased the universe of its real readers, its value is exceptional in a country where corruption, the neglect of homeland duties, and the concept of freedom had been enthroned in the spheres of power wanting to implant tyranny.

Do not forget that this Varela of Letters to Elpidio is a man of only 32 years of age. The work is inscribed in the course of Cuban thought with original characters and its projection within our culture is only comparable to the imprint of its own author. When writing it, integrates logic, knowledge and ethics into the exercise of that thought and action, which constitutes a rise in the spiral of its educational and formative trajectory, and a weapon of struggle.

For its part, The Golden Age, by José Martí (1953), was a monthly publication of recreation and instruction dedicated to children in America. In his prologue the Master wrote:

Para eso publica La Edad de Oro: para que los niños americanos sepan cómo se vivía, y se vive hoy, en América, y las demás tierras, y cómo se hacen tantas cosas de cristal y de hierro, y las máquinas de vapor, y los puentes colgantes, y la luz eléctrica, para que cuando el niño vea una piedra de color sepa por qué tiene colores la piedra, y que quiere decir cada color, para que el niño conozca los libros famosos donde se cuentan las batallas y las religiones de los pueblos antiguos...(p. 17)

Martí conceived his work for children as a periodical publication of declared educational intention, in which the formation of humanistic values, of a civic conduct, reaches the level of cultural project in the most exact and profound sense of its expression.

Martí knew that the panorama of teaching in Cuba and in America was not far from the one that had been the target of Varela's criticisms, the one he had so wisely defined since his years as a teacher.

For this reason Martí (1953) in Tres Héroes talks with the child's interlocutor: "the child, from what he can think, must think about everything he sees, he must suffer for all those who cannot live honestly, he must work because they can be honored all men and must be an honest man "(p.70). Martí delineates two qualitatively different levels of thought. The clarification from which can think, and eliminate the other: the spontaneous, natural, consubstantial to the species, to insinuate that this is not the one that interests. The child concept itself presupposes it. It is the other degree of thought, the one that expresses, a higher and elaborate step of consciousness, which claims its interest, although it does not specify the moment of its appearance.

We are in the presence of thinking well of Varela, the same think that characterizes the great thinkers who begin to form since, according to Martí, the child can think and must think about everything he sees, that is, as Varela also proposed (1940) "Choose well without adhering with relevance to anyone" (p. 72).

On the other hand, when Varela (1940) states that "only those who cannot be slaves are truly free" (p.92), they are placed by the depth and transcendence of the affirmation in a conceptual elaboration plan, not surpassed until the appearance of the Martian thought.

In this sense, Martí stands out, who starts from Varela's trial in a somewhat tangential way, in order to rise directly. For Martí (1953). "Freedom is the right that every man has to be honest, and to think and speak without hypocrisy" (p. 75).

Also, the child from which he can think must think about everything he sees, must suffer for all those who cannot live honestly, in this case there is a biunivocal relationship between being honest and thinking, and saying what you think based on the right that gives freedom.

Both the work of Varela *Cartas a Elpidio*, and the work of Martí, have the tendency to highlight human values.

Letters to Elpidio and The Golden Age are manifested as models of Cuban events in two of the most transcendental moments of history and thought that underlies and gives life to the war of 95 and the entire citizen existence that happened to it. In both works the same principle of teaching to think well appears: to develop an individual who, both in the particular and in the citizen, has in the homeland the idea of the greater good for himself and for all.

At any time of the citizen events we can go to the sources of knowledge, feelings and values that Letters to Elpidio and The Golden Age mean.

Bibliographic references

Martí Pérez, J. (1953). *Obras Completas* (Vol. 1). La Habana: Lex.

Varela, F. (1940). *Lecciones de filosofía*. La Habana. Universidad de la Habana.

Varela, F. (1997). *Lecciones de filosofía*. La Habana. Universidad de la Habana.