

ARMANDO HART AND HIS METHODOLOGICAL KEYS FOR THE TEACHING OF MARXISM

Armando Hart y sus claves metodológicas para la enseñanza del marxismo

YENISEY LÓPEZ-CRUZ*

Universidad de Oriente, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba
yenisey@uo.edu.cu
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2985-0933>

LÍDICE DUANY-DESTRADE**

Universidad de Oriente, Santiago de Cuba, Cuba
lidiced@uo.edu.cu
<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3952-9457>

Forma sugerida de citar: López-Cruz, Yenisey & Duany-Destrade, Lídice (2023). Armando Hart and his methodological keys for the teaching of marxism. *Sophia, colección de Filosofía de la Educación*, 35, pp. 265-285.

* In 2006, he completed his Bachelor's degree in Marxist-Leninist Philosophy. He achieved the academic title of Master in Cuban and Caribbean Studies in 2019, with the thesis *The Cuban nineteenth-century ethical tradition in the work Ethics, culture and politics, of Dr. Armando Hart Dávalos*. She is currently an assistant professor at Orient University. Their research results have been published in the journal *Santiago*, in the *Caribbean Journal of Social Sciences*, *Griot*, *journal of Philosophy*.

** He received his PhD in Philosophy in 2014 with the thesis *Antonio Maceo Grajales and the Cuban Ethical Thought of the 19th Century. Conceptual approach*. He is a senior researcher and secretary of the Doctoral Program in Historical and Philosophical Sciences. He is currently a senior lecturer at the University of the East. His research results have been published in the journals *Del Caribe*, *Santiago*, *Revista Caribeña de Ciencias Sociales e Islas*. As well as in books forming part of collective of authors and main author.

Abstract

Armando Hart Dávalos was among the intellectuals who recognized the validity of Marxism when the world was talking about its “crisis”. He assessed about the mistakes made in the assumption of this theory. He also confirmed its usefulness to form in the subjects cultural tools that enable critical thinking and the ability to question the contemporary world. Its reflections are valid for interpreting and transforming the complex social scenarios that characterize reality. In spite of being distinguished as one of the most lucid Marxists, there are not many studies about his reflections. Thus, the present work aims to reveal the methodological keys that are identified in his thought. These keys are necessary for the interpretation and use of Marxism as an educational resource to train the man in charge of changing his context. The results obtained point out as essential keys: the recognition of the anti-dogmatic essence of Marxism, electivism as a theoretical-methodological tool for thinking and doing political praxis, the determining role of material production, including the active role of the subjective aspect, the importance of spiritual life as an essential theme of political life, the relationship between culture and politics, and the recognition of the relative nature of all knowledge associated with political and social processes.

Keywords

Armando Hart, Marxism, teaching, philosophy, Cuba, keys.

Resumen

Armando Hart Dávalos (1930-2017) fue uno de los intelectuales que reconoció la validez del marxismo cuando el mundo hablaba de su “crisis”. Realizó valoraciones sobre los errores cometidos en la asunción de esta teoría. Además confirmó su utilidad para formar individuos con un pensamiento crítico capaces de cuestionar el mundo contemporáneo. Sus reflexiones son válidas para interpretar y transformar los complejos escenarios sociales que caracterizan la realidad. A pesar de ser distinguido como uno de los marxistas más lúcidos, no abundan los estudios en torno a sus reflexiones. De ahí que este trabajo pretenda revelar las claves metodológicas que se identifican en su pensamiento. Las que resultan necesarias para la interpretación y la utilización del marxismo en calidad de recurso educativo para formar al hombre encargado de cambiar su contexto. Los resultados obtenidos señalan como claves esenciales: el reconocimiento de la esencia antidogmática del marxismo, el electivismo como instrumental teórico-metodológico para pensar y hacer praxis política, el papel determinante de la producción material, sin desdeñar el papel activo del aspecto subjetivo y la incidencia de la espiritualidad en la política, la relación entre cultura y política, y el reconocimiento del carácter relativo de todo conocimiento asociado a los procesos políticos y sociales.

Palabras clave

Armando Hart, marxismo, enseñanza, filosofía, Cuba, claves.

Introduction

To establish a healthy society, it is essential to form rational, critical and forward-looking historical subjects, who, in the face of current challenges, channel personal freedom to question and transform society in favor of a dignified life. Higher Education plays an important role in this task. Institutions where future professionals are trained should contribute to creating sustainable human development and a culture of peace (UNESCO, 2021; Sánchez, 2011).



Among the subjects that favor the mission of the Universities to educate is Philosophy. The teaching of this subject must draw on the entire theoretical foundation that defines the construct of nations, to all the systems and thinkers that have interpreted and transformed contexts, in correspondence with the local emergencies. But particularly those who, as Escalona Delfino defined, become “ideological permanencies”, as “[...] survivals or transhistoric permanencies of social utopias [...]”¹.

In the case of the history of Cuban ideas, Armando Hart Dávalos bequeathed valuable thought to understand the present and project the future of Cuba and the world. However, his ideas have been little systematized. History has gathered more of his actions in the insurreccional struggle. And in the popular imagination he is remembered for being the Prime Minister of Education and Culture of the Revolutionary Government, and as a Martian promoter. As López and Duany (2022) say, even though many intellectuals have highlighted their theoretical contributions, there is a gap that encourages to undertake studies from the social sciences where their thinking is evaluated in its dimensions and in its organic unit.

In all the documentation generated by this Martian intellectual during his revolutionary practice, a Marxist thought is discovered. If this theory begins being underestimated with the downfall of European socialism, Hart (2005) stands as a defender of it. Reflections that, in the words of Duany (2020), are valuable in times when we talk about the crisis of Marxism and its value as a science and theory for action, in favor of the construction of a world of social justice.

Armando Hart’s understanding of the thought of Marx, Engels and Lenin enabled him to establish the practical and methodological usefulness of Marxism. From this point of view, he developed in his conception critical demonstrations and reflections about this theory as a method that enhances intellectual capacities and social practices necessary in the training of Cuban professionals. His thought constitutes a synthesis, updating and revitalization of it according to the formation process of the subject of social transformation, and they seal their contributions to Cuban revolutionary Marxist thought.

Therefore, these reflections are necessary keys for teaching philosophy in university classrooms. Becoming educational resources to motivate, energize and update the contents not only of that subject, but of the whole discipline of Marxism, one of those defined in the basic curriculum of Cuban university careers, according to the Basic Document for the Design of Study Plan E, prepared by the Ministry of Higher Education (2016).

The latter allows us to identify the lack of a systematized treatment of Armando Hart Dávalos' thought, through which the aspects that, as educational resources, are valuable to form historical subjects committed to their contexts from the discipline of Marxism are revealed.

The objective of this article is to reveal the methodological keys that are identified in the thought of Amando Hart Dávalos. Those that, as an educational resource, from the discipline of Marxism, are valuable to train the man in charge of changing their context. Among these, the assumption of electivism as a theoretical and methodological instrument and the dialectical and materialistic understanding of social processes are identified as essential.

The research is developed from a dialectical materialist approach, supported by the hermeneutic paradigm to interpret and analyze the texts². During its development, the historical logical, the analytical-synthetic, the inductive-deductive methods were used as scientific methods, all useful to meet the goal of this scientific scrutiny.

The result of the investigation has been organized in two stages. It starts by evaluating the behavior of teaching philosophy in Cuban universities. Diagnosis that allows us to recognize how, despite being a neuralgic content in the training of professionals, has faced problems that affect the fulfillment of its educational and instructional objectives.

Marxism in the training of Cuban professionals

Higher education is increasingly facing serious challenges. As Yanes (2016) points out, the complexity of today's world is emerging of individuals able to interpret contexts from general laws, which allow penetrating the essence of processes and phenomena that occur in nature, society and thought. Empowering universities, within the subjects to teach the contents of the subject of Philosophy, favors the formation of a complex, critical, rational and radical thought (pp. 121-141).

However, in contrast to this, Orozco (2015) points out, there is a tendency to decrease the presence of philosophy and the reduction of its content in curriculum design (p. 326). Today there seems to be an apparent reduction of the academic time of this subject to expand the contents of the profession. For Pupo (2004), today the incalculable practical value of this synthetic-integrative knowledge is unknown, which offers a useful theoretical corpus not only to understand the relationship of man with the world, but to transform it (p.1).



Philosophy offers the subject useful theoretical assumptions to transform himself and to reconstruct his context, determined by the material conditions of life and result of the evolution of human knowledge; it is not something timeless and abstract, but constitutes an expression of its time. Likewise, its historical evolution is characterized by being a process of continuity, rupture and overcoming. It shows the ascension of the process of human knowledge, its own essence and its multifaceted links with reality.

In this path of development of the universal philosophical work, Marxism constituted a special moment of overcoming and breaking. It represented a revolution in thought, characterized fundamentally by the conversion of philosophy into science. As Lenin (1980) pointed out, his genius was "... in having solved the problems previously posed by the advanced thinking of humanity. His doctrine appeared as an immediate direct continuation of the doctrines of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy and socialism" (p. 21).

Although it arises in Europe, it is assumed in Latin America by a revolutionary class that lends itself to radical social transformations. His inauguration has been distinguished from other regions of the world. Sánchez (2018) states that it has been in correspondence with the revolutionary political struggles around anti-imperialist, nationalist and patriotic positions, facing the economic, social and cultural political problems generated by neoliberal globalization (Sánchez, 2018).

From January 1, 1959, in Cuba, Marxism was assumed as the theoretical and conceptual support of the entire nascent revolution. In explaining the process of institutionalization and massification of Marxist thought, González (2021) points out that it was still complex, particularly because of the controversies raised between two opposing positions. One represented by those who supported the total Soviet influence, and another, the Cuban socialist, who advocated to resume the historical national socialist thought, but without discarding authentic Marxism. In González's (2021) teaching, Marxism is institutionalized as a "general theoretical foundation within the academic, teaching and research environment". The obligation to study Marxist political philosophy and economics was promoted in all university plans (pp. 2-3).

Today, Marxism becomes part of the basic curriculum of all university careers. The Ministry of Higher Education (Cuba, 2016) states that its mission is to provide students with the philosophical, theoretical, methodological and political-ideological assumptions that underpin the scientific conception of the world, for the practical-revolutionary inter-



pretation of the complex problems of the contemporary world (pp. 17-18). The first subject of the cycle is Philosophy, followed by Political Economy and it concludes with Political Theory.

The teaching of this theory has not been free of errors and complexities, as Ferrer *et al.* (2021) point out. From its inception to the present day, internal and external factors have affected its acceptance and the fulfillment of its social mission. Among them, having a system of outdated knowledge and not problematizing its content (pp. 55-62). The author Carmen Julia Pulido (2018) makes an analysis, in our opinion successful and objective, of the causes and how the crisis is expressed in the teaching of Marxism. She is optimistic when she talks about the future of this discipline, and asserts that the solution lies in the use of the cognitive weapons that this subject offers to evaluate contemporary problems, which constitute our own strengths and which are found throughout Cuban thought. This thought is today poorly exposed, as Guerra points out (2010), there can be “a way of thinking and living critical to the alienations originated by the systems of domination and exclusion” (p.14).

At the end of 2000, the Ministry of Higher Education issued Resolution No. 83 approving amendments to the subjects of the Marxist Discipline. These include time frames, order of precedence, general purpose and methodological indications. Among the lines of work, emphasis is placed on the articulation of Marxism with the most revolutionary ideas of the nation (p. 5).

In correspondence with the above, it is urgent to renew the contents and enrich them from the point of view of followers of Marxism who have enriched it in the light of current emergencies. Such is the case of Armando Hart Dávalos.

Keys to Teaching Marxism

In the authors' opinion, two keys that are evident in Hart's thought can be assumed as educational resources in the teaching of Marxism: antidogmatism and electivism. Both are effective in valuing all the universal and national theoretical production, facilitating the assumption of the ideas that have resulted from the apprehension of individuals to transform socio-historical contexts.

The first of the keys on which the teacher who teaches the discipline of Marxism must rely is the recognition of its anti-dogmatic essence. Faced with the so-called “crisis of Marxism”, Hart (2005) points



out that this is a body of ideas that are not “eternal truths” or recipes, but that orient and encourage towards the social liberation of the human being (p. 25). He notes that it was conceived not only as a theoretical instrument to interpret different contexts and study social realities and economic trends. Above all, it is an ideological weapon for revolutionary transformation, in a process that also implies its own enrichment. This thinker takes into account the materialistic principle of concrete historical analysis.

As for Hart (2005), Marxism is, and assumes it, a method, an instrument that reveals itself as a scientific foundation and philosophy of praxis for human redemption, of antidogmatic essence, characterized by “being a spiral, which forces permanently its own nature to analyze new behaviors present in real life” (pp. 20-21). It recognizes that cultural heritage cannot be dismissed. The philosophical and social thought of Marx, Engels and Lenin must be studied with a socio-historical analysis, but tempered for the present days. This is possible only because Marxism Leninism is a science that provides tools to understand a reality not foreseen by its founders (pp. 20-21).

In correspondence with the above, antidogmatism characterized Hart’s thought and action. In this way, it leaves for higher education an essential premise, which endures in its lines of work:

Universities cannot live on the sidelines of their times, because they risk being shrouded, as they were before the Reform, in infectious inertia. To do this, they have to be nimbly inserted into the updates of the surrounding environment, with flexibility and without losing rigor, as agents driving development, of the new, they have to be able to ensure the urgent answers that the country demands (Carreras, 2013, p. 320).

Hart (2005) calls to re-read the original works of the classics of Marxism, to scientifically interpret the complex scenario that characterizes human society today (p. 21). Particularly all the contradictions and social phenomena that today affect the world due to unipolarity, imperial hegemonism, neoliberal globalization and the negative impact of science and technology. It is also a valuable theory to understand the revolutionary processes that have taken place in Latin America. In short, the successes and failures of the American left. Among them the nationalist phenomenon, the increase in labor productivity in the most developed capitalist countries and the neo-colonial exploitation in the third world, the scientific-technical revolution and its impact, the strong social antagonisms, globalization and its impact on culture, imperial hegemonism.



As well as: the subjective causes of the disappearance of European socialism, the tendencies and main lines of capitalism and its process of decline, the contradiction between imperialism and neocolonialism, revolutionary despotism, among others. Not to mention the courage to explain the Cuban experience and the mistakes that should not be made.

Following Hart (2005), Marxism is indispensable in vocational training. Not only as a scientific method for studying the reality, but also to revolutionarily transform society and achieve human liberation (pp. 62-71).

Hart (2005) recommends the scholars and professors of this discipline “to relate the ideas put forward by the classics with objective phenomena present in society and in history” (pp.19-29), and alerts them to the danger of teaching this science from the manuals. This criterion is in correspondence with the position taken in the face of the intellectual controversy arising from the teaching of Marxism. He said that for a better understanding of philosophers and their theories it was necessary to move away from interpretations and manuals. It was essential “to go to their original sources to interpret and study what has really happened, with a view to guiding the actions of today and tomorrow” (p. 20). Acting in the classrooms with this idea potentiates in the students critical reflections regarding the reproductive learning.

Another key is associated with Cuban electivism. Hart (2014) assumes electivism as a theoretical-methodological instrument to think and do his political praxis, adjusted to the eagerness to choose the best of all systems, without ascribing to any (p.159). In this sense, it uses electivism as a method to analyze the inheritance of the universal and Cuban philosophical tradition, in its unity, overcoming and breaking. And to develop a critical choice, as opposed to preconceived judgments.

The conception defines the electivism assumed by Armando Hart in his dialectical aspect, i.e., as Pérez notes (2012), the usefulness of making “a coherent critical selection that points to the trends and possibilities of its practical application, considering the mutable character of reality and the level of relativity that accompanies the truth at every moment of the historical development of sciences” (p. 97). Therefore, his proposal was aimed at providing objectivity and scientificity to the analyzes related to the defense of the interests of the oppressed and exploited, “without ideological isms” (Carreras³, 2017, p. 30). In other words, this method led him use the necessary arguments to oppose hegemonic theories. Hart therefore rejects “the uncritical assimilation of what comes from the out-



side and accepts its critical assimilation on the basis of the analysis of concrete realities” (Carreras, 2017, p. 107).

Dialectical electivism distinguished, in the words of this Martian intellectual, the assumption of Marxism in the case of Cuba. It thus strongly points out that:

[...] those who understood the ideas of Marx and Engels in the full sense, went to their essences, applied them to the concrete objective reality before them and did so intelligently and without concessions, were able to promote a revolutionary change in history (Hart, 2014, p. 74).

It is essential, then, when explaining in the classrooms how Marxism came and was applied in Cuba, to bear in mind that Cuban thought is characterized by being the result of a process of continuity and rupture. In other words, all our national theoretical construct has been transversed by ideas that seek to solve our local problems, particularly those related with economic and political dependence and the aspiration of a society based on social justice. One of the essences of Marxism is that it constitutes an ideological weapon in favor of the humble and in search of a humanistic social ideal. Therefore, no barrier can be established between national revolutionary thought and Marxist theory. The essence of Marxism, he says, is to be found among Cuban thinkers, which enabled them to achieve what had hitherto been a libertarian utopia, i.e., the construction of a socialist project that is not a copy of European socialism. Hence, Hart (2014) pointed out: “[...] the keys to avoid the mistakes of the so-called real socialism in the Marxist thought are in Cuba” (p.108).

For Hart (2006), Cuban thought is the one that has responded to the nation’s epochal urgencies. He has also been open to all the universal thought that would be useful to him in explaining and transforming his reality (p. 22). And where he considered it, eyes should be directed in order to reveal his particularities and his practical value in carrying out social transformations.

The Cuban educational reform, which must have been carried out with the advent of the triumphant revolution, assumes an educational ideal based on the tradition of struggle and the ideas of Cuban thinkers, in union with the most universal of Western thought. All this to develop skills that will guarantee the training of a professional in correspondence with the imperatives of our reality and contemporary social practice, and in line with the moral values that must distinguish the revolutionary professional.

Coinciding with Pulido (2018), we affirm that the teaching of Marxism suffered from the approach to Cuban thought and the followers



of this theory. It is only on the basis of the ideological significance of the disappearance of the socialist field that steps have been made, still insufficient, to incorporate the subject of Cuban thought into the content of the subject, leaving aside the Latin American thought and much of the universal, with the intention that these contents be addressed in the post-graduate level from what is assumed as continuous training.

The Role of Subjectivity in the Teaching of Marxism in Cuba

The distortion of Marxism by some of his followers motivated Hart to reflect on “economic determinism.” Interpretation that minimized the value that the classics gave to the role of subjectivity for social processes. In relation to this, ideas that are revealed as methodological keys for the teaching of this theory are discovered in the thought of this Martian.

Evaluating Hart’s response to the fundamental problem of philosophy is, in our opinion, essential to understand his revolutionary thought and praxis. Meanwhile, as Carreras Varona (2014) indicates, this “opened an unsuspected path to human knowledge to the exercise of the will of man” (p.167). The theoretical clarification of the problems of identity between being and thinking and its dialectical relationship is key in terms of ontological aspect. Hart’s position is materialistic. But it stops to clarify the “unbridgeable gulf” that some followers of Marxism had established between the objective (matter or being) and the subjective (spirit or conscience) (p.166).

For Hart (Carreras, 2014), man is made of flesh and spirit, and in essence constitutes a single identity. Therefore he considered that “the debate around the primary between matter or consciousness must be overcome by highlighting that separating or divorcing these two great components of life is wrong” (pp. 166-167). In this way, it reaffirms the damage done by the reductionist Marxists to the theory, by divorcing the material from the spiritual life. He then calls for a rereading of Marx so as not to be reductionist and to ignore that classical materialism, when valuing subjective factors in historical processes, embodied an ethical notion.

Based on this, Hart (2017) assumes as essential the way in which the classics explained the determining role of material production, without disregarding the active role of the subjective aspect (p.18). He then analyzes one of the fundamental theses of Marxism: the relationship established between economic base and superstructure. For Hart (2005),



this thesis “is the key to open the way for scientific knowledge of the history of society” (p. 4). It warns that, “the foundation of social balance and its coherence lies in it” (p. 6).

However, Armando Hart recognizes that the classics did not stop at delving into the role of the superstructure and its independence from the economic base, as has been pointed out by many as economic determinism. This is a criterion adopted by dogmatic Marxists who did not recognize the dialectical relationship between these elements and ignored that their materialistic essence is “precisely in the cause and effect relationship and its infinite multiplicity of interrelations” (Hart, 2005, p. 6).

Based on this, it is important to establish that Hart does not deny the economic factor as determining the forms of the superstructure, but it considers it important not to underestimate the role of the superstructure or to treat its complexities in an anti-cultural way. It then delves into how the forms of the superstructure affect material life, and stops to explain the dialectical relationship of these elements as an expression of cause and effect, as well as their link with social relations. It calls to study the complexity of this relationship between economic base and superstructure in order to understand the social changes that arise in society in terms of human dignity, and the negative results in the construction of socialism.

This led Hart (2005) to consider the neuralgic of rigorously addressing the role of superstructure. Although material and economic living conditions determine social movements, he asserts. [...] cultural paradigms are required to realize them [...] (p. 13). Therefore, it considers the subjective priority to ensure a social revolution founded on justice, where it is inevitable to safeguard social and human values. Only by respecting this relationship, he asserts, is the victory of socialism assured over the voracious capitalism that destroys humanity (p.13).

By recognizing the political, legal, ideological, moral and cultural superstructure as the way through which the economy operates, Hart (2005) makes clear the danger of underestimating its role, values or dealing with its complexities in an anti-cultural way (p. 40).

Attending to spiritual production, a contemporary imperative

Linked to what was analyzed before, Hart’s assessments of spiritual life stand out. This topic has attracted the attention of the Martinean in many of his writings, and it is adjusted to the contemporary demands of explai-

ning, understanding and constructing socialism, and they are essentially aimed at valuing, in the light of Leninist theory of Social Revolution, the social revolutions in the 20th century.

According to Hart (2014), it is not a limitation that Marx and Engels were not explicit in assessing the role of spiritual production in the revolutionary process. That was not their social urgency. They were urged to reveal the decisive role of capitalist production in the exploitation of the working class. The essence of the classics was to “separate the chasm created between spiritual and material production” (p. 74), in which is one of their contributions, in recognizing that man needed to have his primary needs of life satisfied, and then to create spiritual production. These assessments are needed in the classroom to support the thesis that Marxism is not a dogma and its validity.

276



Hart (2014) uses the philosophical precept of objective conditioning of ideas to explain the fact that the classics of Marxism had not stopped in developing the value of spiritual production in social processes. Not to criticize them, they responded to a social urgency of their historical epoch. The current situation demands, the intellectual affirms, to pay attention to spiritual phenomena, as a vital issue for maintaining revolutionary processes in the universal sense, and the Cuban in particular. It is a task for which all the peoples of America and the world are waiting (p. 85).

In this sense, Hart focuses his attention on such important issues as the objective foundation of the spiritual. The need to use the cultural heritage of peoples in revolutions, the importance of libertarian utopias, and the ideological function of art.

In current social processes, Hart states (Hart and Carreras, 2014), the value of humanity’s cultural heritage should not be dismissed. Distorting the philosophical legacy, particularly Marxism, and renouncing the teachings of the first Lenin-led socialist revolution, led to depriving culture of “the rich and unlimited human capacity to create, love, and dream.” As well as the inability to produce the changes needed for the construction of “real socialism” (p. 74). These ideas, in the authors’ opinion, reinforce the present value of Marxism and the Socialist Revolution. Theory and social project that show a better world, associated with justice, human dignity, against what prevails and is considered as a standard of quality of life: ideology and the capitalist economic model.

In the case of Cuba, this intellectual is of the view that the construction of socialism starts from a universal heritage, but also from a rich national heritage where the yearnings for justice and the high sense of human sensitivity converge. Therefore, it does not conceive of antago-

nism between national spiritual production and Marxist theory. This reinforces what has already been addressed about the need to update the contents of the discipline of Marxism. Hart was aware that even though the institutionalization of national education had a strong Marxist basis, it was not appropriate to discard the rest of the theoretical work, particularly the national one. Fortunately, the failure to pay attention to national ideas has been overtaken, and the treatment of Cuban thought is enhanced in the curricula.

Hart (2005) reaffirms the value of Marxist theory about social transformations in favor of freedom and the conquest of happiness (p. 26). It agrees with the classics that social revolutions are not random events, but the result of objective and subjective conditions. Already noted by Marx and Engels as the determinant of “social being,” Hart pays attention to “social consciousness.” Particularly the scientific foundation of the human capacity to produce its spiritual life. This means that social utopias are not the product of social alienation and constitute the impulse from which men orient their transformative human practice.

In the same order around spiritual production, the reflections of Hart (2005) reveal the recognition of the ethical foundation of Marxist theory as another key to consider. Although the parents of Marxism did not make extensive ethical reflections, the ethical was reflected in society designed to dignify the human being. And how, by discovering scientific truths, they place the subject at the center of their attention, capable of transforming their reality (pp. 48-49).

This idea is also defended and developed by Vázquez Sánchez (2006), a prominent ethical scholar, when he pointed out:

Although in Marx we do not find an ethics in the strict sense, as a body of truths systematically articulated, it cannot be ignored that, throughout his work, there are explicit -not to mention the most abundant implicit- reflections, affirmations and ideas about the ideological nature of morality and its social historical character, its link with the relations of production and class interests, as well as its function in society, and particularly in socialist society (p. 298).

Hart (2005) in the Marxist critique of capitalism and in the defense of the social utopia of a society of justice and equality discovers the ethical foundation of this theory. Hence he stated:

We can cement ethics from the study of surplus value, and place the honor of work as the essential stone of a civic morality; another element to highlight is the human willingness to associate with the goal of forging a



society enriched materially and spiritually. They constitute fundamental values of ethics: to exalt the honor of work and the social vocation of the human being (Hart, 2005, pp. 48-49).

The above idea is reiterated in the work of the Cuban thinker. It exposes the critique made by the classics of Marxism to the capitalist system. They uncover the immoral foundation of private property and surplus value, and they underpin the moral value of social property and with it the values of socialism: the love of work and collectivism. Hart (2017) reinforces, the Marxist interpretation that “the struggle for the poor” is “the centerpiece of universal ethics”, only in this way, he states, can “the true dimension and scope of the great errors that took place under the banner of socialism in the twentieth century be understood” (p. 43).

This view favors that, in university classrooms, the teacher promotes exchanges in which the current socio-political scenario is debated. Empowering students to take an objective critical position on the Cuban reality and the value of the socialist social project. Pertinent in times when the value of socialism is minimized and capitalism is exalted. Contributing to the formation of students in correspondence with the imperatives of our reality and in accordance with the moral values that must distinguish the revolutionary professional.

It should be noted that ethics is one of the pillars of Hart’s thought. His analyzes of the role of ethnicity in the Cuban historical process and in national thought lead to understand why, in his opinion, the foundation of human existence is in morality. But only if we assume the most humanistic ethical postulates that lead to a saying and doing in function of the universal redemption of man. That is, for Hart (2005), “the meaning of human life is in his passion for scientific truth and justice among men” (p. 87).

In the case of the Cuban experience, Hart (2014) identifies Fidel Castro as the most complete Marxist. It considers that it synthesizes the most revolutionary and humanist ethical principles of the twentieth century. It then calls for a study of the thought and actions of the historical leader of the Cuban Revolution. It carries a thought synthesis of the universal ethnicity of America and Cuba. Who in his political praxis recognized the decisive role of moral factors in achieving and defending social achievements (p. 58).

Regarding the reflections on ethics, it is necessary to highlight the timeliness of them in the training of Cuban professionals, considering that Cuban university education has a fundamentally humanistic character, as it is aimed not only to form professional competences, but to form



values that define a better individual, committed to the human species. In correspondence with the primary objective that Hart declares for the Cuban educational system:

Educate for a democratic society, for a free society, prepare each individual to think for himself. If our first duty is to guarantee freedom, let us protect it from ignorance, prejudices and fears, which tend to stop or divert man's march towards the truly free world (Carreras, 2017, p. 593).

Based on the above, Hart manifests another key to take into account in the teaching of Marxism, in this case the relationship established between culture and politics, which he discovers as one of the peculiarities of our theoretical construct, and from which his conception of "cult politics" is founded. The legacy that, as he pointed out, is inherited from the founding fathers of the nation to Fidel Castro: "Felix Varela taught us to think; José de la Luz y Caballero taught us to know; José Martí taught us to act, and Fidel Castro taught us to overcome" (Hart, 2014, p. 58).

Viscerally Martian, Hart (2018) understands politics as "sensitivity to the problems of others, politics as art or the ability to reach others, politics as identification with the aspirations and objectives of the people [...]" (p. 91). Assuming this led him to develop a conception and a political praxis that is in correspondence with what Max Weber (2000) established as an intellectual and "vocation politician" (pp. 21-23).

Therefore, Hart (Carreras 2018) introduces the theme of culture to signify the role of subjectivity in politics. He insists on warning that "[...] culture is not advice to the life of man, it is committed to the destiny of humanity and situated in the nervous system of civilizations" (p. 36). Based on the broad possibilities of achieving human dignity through the link between culture and politics, he warns that, in the face of new contexts, "the need for the unity of our peoples is so profound that it is manifested not by political means, but by cultural means" (p. 174).

Armando Hart, in his position as Minister of Education of the revolutionary Government, stated in the message to the Cuban people: "[...] in a political system in which the moral dignity of the human person represents its highest end, political action, singularly in the economic order, and educational action, are complemented as correlative factors of an inclusive process, aimed at raising the living standards of the people" (Carreras, 2013, p. 313).

His reflections demonstrate that the analysis of culture requires not to do abstraction of its ideo-political dimension, because that would obviate the purpose of its transformative function. In this sense, Hart



(Carreras, 2018) stated: “[...] everyone who assumes from politics the defense of sovereignty and social transformations in our peoples and countries in favor of justice for all has to be a faithful defender of the cultural purposes at longer range” (p. 21). He therefore defended socialist ideology, since “[...] it is about expanding freedom, expanding democracy and deepening the field of art” (p. 81).

These reflections are opposed to the false conception of political neutrality of art. According to Hart (Carreras, 2018) there is a “subtle, dialectical and consequently contradictory nexus between art and politics” (p. 90). What emerges during all of humanity’s historical development. Where, as the intellectual says, the political and ideological role of art is noticed, as a “form of expression that facilitates the transmission of the ideological message” (p. 97).

All of the above revolves around the importance that Hart gives to subjectivity in the construction of socialism, linked to issues related to the ideal of culture of making politics. Particularly when assessing the Cuba case, where he affirms that the cultural heritage of the nation that accompanies our political process must be taught in depth. The conjugation of this legacy with the tradition of Marxist thought will make it possible to form a critical aptitude on strong cultural and scientific bases that allow the defense of our national identity.

Everything that Hart addresses about the political-cultural relationship is essential content of Political Theory. The thought of this intellectual is a must reference in this subject. It offers a system of ideas about politics, from a Marxist-Leninist perspective that revitalize and update this content. His ideas support the objective and classist character of politics, its relationship with class struggle, political participation, political socialization, political culture, democracy, among other aspects. It is all the more useful given that it does so by judging national reality and leftist movements in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. His analysis is not contemplative, his criticism is not counterrevolutionary at all. It is aimed at revealing those deficiencies that break the socialist ideal.

To interpret social processes, Hart (2014) urges us to understand the dialectic of knowledge. Only a dialectical reflection of history makes it possible to remove from it the ways to better build the future. It calls for promoting a critical culture about the development of science, which is opposed to the adoption of rigid models or schemes in social life. This leads to another key to be considered in the teaching of Marxism: the recognition of the relative character of all knowledge, implicit in this is



the revolutionary practical value of the materialism of Marx and Engels. He puts it this way:

Neither deny the possibilities of new knowledge nor elevate the truths discovered to the category of absolute and immutable values. Today's knowledge helps to shape tomorrow's future, as yesterday's made possible our present's. It is in the chain and the process itself of knowing where the true has been, it is in the cause-effect relationship and its possibilities of entanglement that lies the essence of Marx's gnoseology (p.79).

Throughout Hart's work, he alludes to the obligatory study of social processes that have occurred throughout the development of humanity. But not only of the most universal, but of the stages of struggles carried out by each of the peoples. Well, the truth of the present is the result of all national and local history. To explain the present and project the future, one must know the past.

Therefore, we return to the point in which Hart refers to the importance of the assumption of Marxism-Leninism from the conjugation of universal culture, with politics and the ethical sense of life. Achieving a better world requires not ignoring the ethical foundations of the humanist and universal liberation movement that was created under Marxism. This was and has always been the position taken by Cuban thought with respect to Marxist theory. We have been able to guide ourselves by their methods of historical analysis to conquer our reality. Armando Hart (2014) stresses it as follows:

We Cubans assume the scientific, economic and social discoveries of Carlos Marx from the spiritual and ethical culture of our America. We were guided by Marx's thought, because his contributions and his universal humanist sense—the starting point of socialist ethics—served us to interpret human history, gave us clarity in the study of the economic and social evolution of Cuba and Latin America, gave us the methods of historical analysis to confirm the popular root of our patriotism [...] (p. 88).

In present-day Cuba, as Díaz Canel (2022), President of the Republic, is aware that Marxism was merged with the solid political tradition inherited from libertarian struggles (p. 4). This has allowed the consolidation of a socialist conception with solid scientific foundations, the same that, through revolutionary practice, managed to create a humanist society and social justice. This confirms the methodological value of taking the lessons of history. In order to achieve a better future, it is necessary to apply objectively and concretely every knowledge acquired from history, always con-



sidering their economic conditioning. Doing so gives this process a variety of possible practical outcomes from which the real story is formed.

All of this indicates that our nation's educational horizons are based on critical, authentic and deeply humanistic knowledge. Those that constitute tools in the teaching process of Marxism. It is worth promoting teaching from antidogmatic positions, recognizing the active role of the subjective in social transformations, the objective character of utopias and social movements to promote practical and lasting changes. As well as the value of human consciousness, a fundamental agent of social practice, and of ethics in the revolutionary struggle, led by the working class to overcome social inequalities.

All of them provide the educational process with the possibility of translating the emerging problems facing humanity, since teaching must become a process of training professionals with a high sense of universal, prepared to face new contexts and challenges.

282



Conclusions

What has been assessed so far allows us to affirm that the ways and methods used to fulfill the social mission of the discipline of Marxism in Cuban higher education are still insufficient. Hence, this work is a call to the scientific efforts of the national thought, where are the historical and ideological foundations of the Cuban social project. The results would contribute to form transforming subjects of a reality that claims to work in function of the survival of the human species.

The Marxist ideas of Armando Hart Dávalos constitute valuable tools to fulfill the social mission of the discipline of Marxism to enhance in future professionals a critical thought and a social praxis committed to contemporary social urgencies.

Scientific result are identified as methodological keys that as an educational resource contribute to motivate, dynamize and update the discipline of Marxism in the following: the recognition of the antidogmatic essence of Marxism, Cuban electivism as theoretical-methodological instrumental, the explanation to the fundamental problem of Philosophy, the argumentation of the determining role of material production, the ethical foundation of Marxism, the recognition of the dialectical relationship between material and spiritual life, the incidence of spirituality in political life, the relationship between culture and politics, and the relativity of knowledge associated with the understanding of political and social processes.

Notes

- 1 The quote is taken from an unpublished material kept by the authors with the title “Antonio Maceo: a brief look at the philosophical premises of his thought and other determinations”. They prepare a book on the studies of José Antonio Escalona Delfino, a university professor who carried out scientific inquiries into Maceista thought, using historical and philosophical assumptions. A summary of the article is published in the journal *Santiago*, No. 120, 2009, pp. 26-42.
- 2 See Bueno (2022, pp. 95-96) who in the introduction of his article explains what is understood as hermeneutics and its validity for studies such as the one proposed.
- 3 Eloísa Carreras Varona is the executor of Armando Hart’s documents. She directs the project *Crónicas*, which publishes, under her responsibility, the documents of who was her husband in life.

Support and financial support of research

Entity: Universidad de Oriente

Country: Cuba

City: Santiago de Cuba

Subsidized project: Thought, Culture, Economy and History.

Project Code: 9469

This article is the result of the research topic *Ethical, cultural and political relationship in the thought of Armando Hart Dávalos*, to obtain the degree of Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, attached to the Doctoral Program in Historical and Philosophical Sciences of the University of Oriente. Santiago de Cuba, Cuba

283



Bibliography

CARRERAS VARONA, Eloísa

2013 *Por Esto I*: Ediciones abril.

2014 *Hart Pasión por Cuba*. Editorial del Centro de estudios Martianos.

2018 *Cuba una cultura de liberación. Selección de escritos 195-2016. Revolución y cultura*, tomo 5, Vol. 1, Editorial Letras Cubanas.

CUBA. Ministerio de Educación Superior

2016 Documento Base para la Elaboración de los Planes de Estudio E. La Habana: MES

DUANY DESTRADE, Lídice

2020 Releer el marxismo a la luz del Dr. Armando Hart Dávalos. *Islas*, 196 (mayo-agosto), 1-17. <https://bit.ly/3CJbUY1>

DÍAZ-CANEL BERMÚDEZ, Miguel Mario

2022 Es cada vez más necesario e impostergable que los partidos marxistas nos unamos. *Granma*, julio 29.

ESCALONA DELFINO, José Antonio

2009 Antonio Maceo: una breve mirada a las premisas filosóficas de su pensamiento y otras determinaciones. *Revista Santiago*, 120, 26-42. Universidad de Oriente: Ediciones UO. <https://bit.ly/3XpHSBW>

FERRER HECHAVARRIA, Bertha Niuvis, CARRIÓN CABRERA Luisa & ÁLVAREZ MCKITTY, Cecilia

2021 La problematización de la enseñanza del marxismo: una necesidad de la universidad cubana hoy. *EduSol*, 21(77), 55-62. Universidad de Guantánamo. <https://bit.ly/3pqW6WH>

GONZÁLEZ LAGE, Valeria

2021 Hacia un marxismo cubano. El Departamento de Filosofía de la Universidad de La Habana en sus primeras etapas (1962-1965). *Naveg@mérica, Revista electrónica editada por la Asociación Española de Americanistas*, 27. Asociación española de americanistas, España. <http://doi.org/10.6018/nav.492121>

GUERRA BRAVO, Samuel

2010 Caminos de liberación ante el bicentenario. *Sophia*, 9, 13-46. Quito: Abya-Yala. <https://doi.org/10.17163/soph.n9.2010.01>

HART DÁVALOS, Armando

2005 *Marx, Engels y la condición humana. Una visión desde Cuba*. La Habana, Cuba: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales.

2006 *Ética, cultura y política*. Centro de Estudios Martianos.

2009 Prólogo en La obra del artista. Una visión holística del universo, de Frei Betto: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, pp. XV-XVII.

HART DÁVALOS, Armando & CARRERAS VARONA Eloísa

2014 *Por Esto II*. Ediciones Abril.

2017 Volvamos a leer a Engels. En E. Carreras Varona, *Cuba, una cultura de liberación. Selección de escritos del Dr. Armando Hart Dávalos (1952-2016). La Utopía libertaria de nuestra América* (Vol. 10, pp. 17-26). Editorial de Ciencias Sociales

2018 Nunca antes los valores nacionales de nuestra cultura fueron más exaltados que tras el triunfo de la Revolución. En M. Encinosa Fu. (ed.), *Cuba una cultura de liberación. Revolución y cultura. Pasión por Nuestra América* (pp. 58-84). Editorial Letras Cubanas.

LENIN, Vladimir

1980 Tres partes y tres fuentes integrantes del Marxismo. En *Obras escogidas en tres tomos*, t. 1. Editorial Progreso.

LÓPEZ CRUZ, Y. y DUANY DESTRADE Lídice.

2022 Apuntes a la concepción materialista de la historia desde la mirada de Armando Hart Dávalos". En *Santiago 158*, mayo-agosto. <https://santiago.uo.edu.cu/index.php/stgo/issue/view/323>

SÁNCHEZ QUIROZ, Rafael

2018 El marxismo en América Latina y la Revolución cubana. Reflexiones a partir del pensamiento de Fernando Martínez Heredia. *El Cotidiano*, 210, julio-agosto, 73-81. Ediciones Eón. <https://bit.ly/3XoUfOG>

SÁNCHEZ ÁLVAREZ, Vicente

2011 ¿Qué enseñar y para que enseñar filosofía? *Sophia*, 10, 11-36, Quito: Abya-Yala. <https://doi.org/10.17163/soph.n10.2011.01>

ORGANIZACIÓN DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA LA EDUCACIÓN, LA CIENCIA Y LA CULTURA (UNESCO)

2021 *Por qué un día de la filosofía?* <https://dialektika.org/2021/11/18/por-que-un-dia-de-la-filosofia-unesco/>



- OROZCO, Richard Antonio
 2015 Rol y futuro de la filosofía. *Letras*, 86(124), 325-345. <https://doi.org/10.30920/letras.86.124.10>
- PÉREZ FERRER, Alexis
 2012 *La influencia de las concepciones filosóficas de José de la Luz y Caballero en el desarrollo del pensamiento cubano decimonónico*. [Tesis doctoral, Universidad de Oriente].
- PUPO PUPO, Rigoberto
 2004 La Filosofía y su discurso plural. *Revista Espacio el Latino. Com.* <https://bit.ly/3NsQRO5>
- PULIDO BENÍTEZ, Carmen Julia
 2018 La crisis de la enseñanza del marxismo en el sistema educativo superior cubano. *Atlante: Cuadernos de Educación y Desarrollo* (junio). <https://bit.ly/3r06ghA>
- YANES GUZMÁN, Jaime Rafael.
 2016 Pensamiento complejo abstracto en el aula. *Sophia*, 21, 121- 141, Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala, <https://doi.org/10.17163/soph.n21.2016.05>
- VÁZQUEZ SÁNCHEZ, Adolfo
 2006 Ética y marxismo. En A. A. Boron, J. Amadeo y S. González (comps.), *La teoría marxista hoy; problemas y perspectivas* (pp. 297-307). Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales- CLACSO. <https://bit.ly/3CTgvql>
- WEBER, Max
 2000 *Política y Ciencia*. Ediciones elaleph.com. <https://bit.ly/3CKXwOX>

Document reception date: September 13, 2022
 Document review date: December 5, 2022
 Document approval date: December 10, 2023
 Document publication date: July 15, 2023