

TRIBUTE TO RUBEN ARDILA (1942-2025)

Rubén Ardila has left us forever. His friends, colleagues, disciples, and countless readers will sadly miss him.

Colombian by birth, he was a psychologist for the entire world. But at the same time he always remembered his Spanish roots, and felt a special fraternity with all the Ibero-American peoples, or Latin Americans, as he liked to say.

At the root of his psychological training was an exiled Spanish psychologist, Mercedes Rodrigo, who took the first steps to establish the psychology career in Colombia, steps that Rubén took advantage of and never forgot. And when he later turned to psychology, he would have in Ramon y Cajal one of his models: “to be a great scientist who worked in neurological research and went very far” (he says in his ‘Autobiography’).

He trained in Nebraska as an experimental psychologist, and took on, among other tasks, the promotion in the Latin American world of that psychology based on experience and research, absolutely comparable to that done in the most advanced countries. Two of his books, *Walden Three* and *The Experimental Synthesis of Behavior*, reveal his desire to preserve all that was preservable in Skinnerian behaviorism, complemented in all that was necessary with the study of the cognitive dimension, the historical-social reality of the person, and the demand for progress and freedom so intense in the Ibero-American world.

In this way, his figure has represented an intellectual level in all international meetings: he was a model of a scientific researcher aware of the humanistic concerns of the countries of the Southern Cone. This is evident in the volume that he published not long ago with his correspondence with several great figures of international science.

He has written more than thirty books, -among them a very sincere and interesting *Autobiography*. He has founded magazines, such as the *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología*; he has made the history, and even the prehistory, of Latin American psychology. He participated in countless IAAP activities, and was a president of Division 18 of the History of Applied Psychology. And at the same time he has tried to advance towards what he thought would be the future of psychology in our world.

Spanish-speaking psychologists are now losing an emblematic figure, but in that loss we all feel closer and more united. But his desire to combine universal science and the national demands of democracy and freedom will remain a model for all. As Machado sang, “He who leaves leads, and he who has lived lives.”

Helio Carpintero