

Discipline and school controls in Cuba from the perspective of science (1880-1898)¹

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Abstract: The main objective of this article is to analyze the pedagogical approaches related to discipline and school controls, based on the contributions of different branches of science that, with varying degrees of development, contributed to perfecting the teacher's management of behaviors in Cuban educational institutions. The text is structured according to the influence of those disciplines of greatest relevance in the field of pedagogy related to conduct and regulation of order in school institutions; both from sociology, as well as from the contributions of psychology -still in its infancy-, physiology, hygiene and, of course, from the pedagogical techniques themselves conceived at the time. In each section, we can see the different ways of conceiving the nature of children's corporeality, not as an immutable element, but as a historical construction conditioned by different economic, political, social and cultural contexts. The content is set between the 1880s, coinciding with the failure of the first war of liberation in Cuba, and the beginning of a period of intense debate on the subject, and the end of Spanish domination in 1898.

Keywords: school control, education, discipline, hygiene, positivism.

1 Introduction

During the last third of the 19th century, the stimulation of the development of popular education in Cuba was placed among the main demands of the standard-bearers of the philosophy of positivism within the ossified colonial island mold. It was, from the perspective of the time, an indispensable cultural and political link to achieve the great and effective solutions to the problems of the first post-war period of independence (Ten Years' War, 1868-1878). The evolution through education, according to the self-proclaimed "new reformers", became a presupposition for the intellectuals who were looking for the theoretical supports that would sustain their approaches to the transformations of the fin-de-siècle society, based on individual and social improvement, without incurring in revolutionary violence. It was not only a matter of aspiring to the traditional freedoms proclaimed by liberalism; it was essential above all to guarantee the social order on which such freedoms should be exercised.

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The main regeneration path, therefore, appeared to be encrypted in education, understood not as a mere transmission of curricular content, subject to a study plan drawn up from the metropolis, but as a pedagogical conception permeable to the burden of knowledge that would converge in the physical, moral and intellectual formation of the individual and in the improvement of school and social controls. It was about the accumulation and circulation of discourses that produced “truths”; of regulations that would transcend the repressive-legal sphere to establish codes governed by strict scientific verification. In the discourses of science, as Foucault (1993, p. 198) rightly warned, the complex power relations would be legitimized, with all their persuasive, controlling and repressive effects in the asymmetry of social relations.

From a sociological perspective, Le Breton (2002, p. 33) stated: “The body disappears completely and permanently in the web of social symbolism that provides its definition and that establishes the set of labels of rigor in the different situations of personal and collective life.” A symbolism that is based on multiple discursive territories, in rationalities that take up the advances of science, especially medical, psychological, physiological and hygienic. From the model of ideal human formation regulated by “knowledge” would emerge the coordinates and definitions of the type of man that should be formed and his role to play in society, either as a subject of the Crown, during the colonial period, or as a citizen of the republic in the course of the first half of the twentieth century.

In scenarios where direct disciplinary systems prevailed, governed by the traditional model of rewards and punishments, other rationalities would begin to be incorporated that would seek to expand and sophisticate the controls over behaviors in educational settings. From this theoretical perspective, the article is structured according to the influence of those disciplines of greatest relevance in the field of pedagogy related to behaviors and regulations of order in school institutions; both from sociology, as well as from the contributions of psychology -still in its infancy-, physiology, hygiene and, of course, from the pedagogical techniques themselves conceived at the time.

2 The intervention of behaviors from sociology and psychology

The intervention of the truths of science in the field of social controls, as it happened in the order of nature, led to the search for the logical self-reflection of the so-called “sciences of the spirit” or morals, through the application of the method of their natural counterparts. The French mathematician and sociologist Auguste Comte had already established the legitimacy of Sociology and the objective existence of the social fact, explained by the evolutionary laws of the species, it only remained to transform it into a theoretical body and research models. (Corral, 2000, p. 58).

Immersed in his studies of Biology and Physiology, and updated on the most modern advances in scientific thought of the time, the Cuban intellectual Enrique José Varona outlined, in a letter written to his niece Ezequiela, dated April 20, 1877, his considerations about the importance he attributed to educational work in the evolution of the human organism. This process consisted of “[...] taking an organism in the process of growth, and watching it and leading it to its perfect development; to catch the first flashes of a rudimentary perfection, and direct it and lead it to the full and beautiful flowering of a cultivated understanding”. (Varona, 1961, p. 1). Three years later, in his critique of Martínez Escobar’s metaphysics, he insisted that the role of the “practical philosopher” lay in the knowledge of his own natural and social environment, modifiable according to the principles of what he called “moral selection”, which fostered the triumph of “active, intelligent and virtuous races” in the struggle for human existence. (Varona, 1961, p. 34).

In this sense, the Darwinian philosophy of natural selection and the biologizing orientation of Spencer’s sociology formed the theoretical body of Varona’s pedagogy, which was more oriented by the Cuban philosopher towards the physiological and biological than the psychological. In the first two sciences he found what he called the “organic basis of mental phenomena”. The image of E. Entralgo (1937) to define the basis of Varona thought could not be more suggestive: “It can be assured that Varona did not wait for the ship of positivism to reach its properly philosophical ports, but that he traveled on it from its last scientific port of call: biology.” (Entralgo, 1937, p. 17).

In his course on morals, dictated in the early years of 1880, he outlined his theory of behavior, arising from the examination of social facts where the primordial, as Vitier pointed out, resided in the biological. (Vitier, 1937, p. 211). In his sociological analyses he extrapolated the laws of biological development of the human organism to those of society, so that if the individual could be modified by the action of external forces, the social group made up of organs in motion was also susceptible to improvement through moralizing and educational work that would result in gradual improvement and the transmission of renewed qualities to successive generations through the mechanism of inheritance. In his opinion, this was the educational commitment of José de la Luz y Caballero: “He dedicated himself to the little ones to such an extent; because from the infants come men, and he wanted to provide Cuba with a robust and virile generation.” (Varona, 1936, p. 195).

Hence the importance he gave to moral education, indispensable for the positive “regeneration” of the social organism: “[...] everything is correlative in social life, and an organ cannot be healthy if the rest of the body is sick.” (Varona, 1961, p. 107). The dilemma for Varona (1961) was to find a method of interpretation compatible with scientific knowledge and that could be applied to a social organism in which, according to his words,

there cohabited, from exponents of “the most refined culture of ethical sense” to supporters of “full savagery”.

But unlike the intellectuals who turned to science as a conceptual subterfuge, from which emanated the doctrines and concepts that legitimized the differences, while prostrating the so-called “inferior races” in their traditional lethargy of poverty and brutalization, the Cuban intellectual found in science and the arts the formative pillars of societies in their evolution. Thus, he promoted educational work due to its modifying impact on children’s behavior, a whole moral therapy that sought to correct and heal the individual from a very early age, but also to establish sophisticated controls on a social conglomerate composed of blacks, mestizos and poor whites, considered highly explosive and detrimental to the guarantee of the post-war order.

The evolutionary theory, according to Spencerian guidelines, found in María Luisa Dolz y Arango,² one of its most important exponents in Cuba. The pedagogue agreed with Varona (1961) when referring to the influence of the natural and social environment on education, although she did not extrapolate biological laws to the field of society. The director of the Isabel la Católica school was aware that her interest in elevating the status of Cuban women should in no way be based on nativist tendencies (supporters of innatism), whose supporters included those who condemned the “inferior races” to perish in the struggle for existence, as well as those who supported the incapacity and weakness of the female sex. The greatest influence on the evolution of the organism was therefore centered on external factors, and in particular education:

Although the etiological mechanism of inheritance is one of the factors that form the human personality, we have to recognize that it is not the only one, and that the direction and the environment in which the individual develops have a very powerful influence, which often counteracts the former. (Dolz, 1896, p. 8).

The appropriation of positivism allowed the pedagogue to argue the importance of educational work in women, preparing them for life by strengthening their potential, both intellectual, moral and physical: “[...] taking advantage of the latent germs, verifying a selection work that strengthens and multiplies those that show propitious, and weakens and annihilates their antipodes”. (Dolz, 1896, pp. 6-7).

The development of sociology, as well as anthropology and physiology, would have an impact on the psychophysiological conceptions applied to education. Both Dolz (1896)

² In 1876 she obtained the title of elementary primary school teacher and the following year that of senior primary school teacher. In 1879 she bought the Colegio Isabel la Católica, without neglecting her further education: in 1888 she obtained the diploma of bachelor; in 1890, the degree of a graduate in Natural Sciences and in 1899 the doctorate of the same disciplines. The María Luisa Dolz school was the first in Cuba to prepare young girls to obtain the title of bachelor.

and Varona (1961) recognized the relative independence of Psychology as a science with respect to Physiology and both referred to the theory of the Scottish psychologist and educator Alexander Bain. In the case of the Cuban intellectual, the approach to Bain allowed him to refute the metaphysics taught by Martínez Escobar at the University, which supported a opposition between the “facts of consciousness” and the “physiological phenomena”, by warning that “every sensation gives rise to nervous currents, the persistence of the sensation, after the external stimulus, is nothing more than the less intense vibration of the same fibers.” (Varona, 1961, p. 34).

However, as Guadarrama rightly warned, although in this way he sought to overcome the purely speculative reduction of psychic phenomena to nervous ones, by trying to find “the form of the nervous wave when it stops being an impression”, Varona was unaware of the qualitative specificity of subjective phenomena, proper to the object of study of psychology. (Guadarrama, Oropeza, 1987, p. 87).

Dolz (1896), influenced by the psychology of the French Théodule Ribot, director of the *Philosophical Review of Paris* and scholar of affective phenomena, devoted herself more to the considerations of psychic facts, especially those related to will and character, precisely those she needed to apply this knowledge to her eminently educational work.

According to the educator, Ribot was responsible for the advantages that psychological resources brought to education, “for having initiated the separation of metaphysics from psychology, recognizing that the secret to strengthening the will lies in the skillful culture of affective states.” She also explained the French intellectual’s confrontation with theories that conceptualized character “as an immutable block over which we have no power.” (Dolz, 1896, p. 15). Dolz not only placed himself on the plane of experimentation and physiological observation, but he also leaned more towards the recently introduced introspection of Wilhelm Wundt, a proposal that placed greater emphasis on consciousness and its questioning, that is, on psychology as a science, which covered both the field of sensations and feelings:

Physiological and neuropathic suggestion is a modern experience of great importance from the point of view of education because it establishes the possibility of creating in a spirit, at the moment of its evolution, artificial instincts capable of balancing natural tendencies. If sensations are suggested by physiological means, ideas, feelings and volitions can also be suggested by psychological and moral means that repress the effects of heredity [...] the state of the child is like that of the hypnotized, a favorable terrain for everything. (Dolz, 1896, p. 15).

The educator’s interest was in the modification of the human character in the evolutionary process of conduct, whose last stage or stage would be “morality”, which was reached gradually, through “successive steps of its development.” In that order was the

physical education of the organism, the starting point for a more effective intellectual and moral education. To this end, she included Gymnastics within the so-called “subjects of

The intellectual converged in her definitions about the physical and moral education of the individual with the pedagogical approaches of Varona (1961). For the latter, it was necessary to begin by banishing from the school establishments the barbaric whippings, characterized in the new context as remnants of slavery and directing the teaching practices along the paths of what he called “total education”. As for the thought of Dolz (1896), his attachment to the psychological theories of emotions and passions,³ provided him with sufficient arguments that allowed him to support his disapproval of corporal punishment in girls and boys. On the contrary, he considered that: “A gesture of approval, an encouraging phrase, usually galvanizes the child’s energy, producing fruitful and flattering results. On the contrary, constant repression, harassment, and violence are sterile and even pernicious.” (Dolz, 1896, p. 17).

Varona (1961) and Dolz (1896) were committed to the formation of free men and women, capable of transforming the colonial environment; of providing successive generations of Cubans with the educational foundations from which a model of citizen capable of carrying out their functions in the intellectual, physical, and moral order could be projected. They sought to forge a character, a will that had to start from the recognition of one’s own thoughts for the solution of one’s own problems.

3 Medical intervention in the child’s organism and corporality

Although from sociology and psychology exponents such as Varona (1961) and Dolz (1896) approached behavior phenomena in search of establishing conceptual and interpretive bases for the fin-de-siècle colonial reality and its possibilities for change, it was the medical sciences in this period that would provide pedagogy with the greatest and most sophisticated arguments for intervention in school behavior. Medical examination, in this sense, delved into the particularities of the child’s nature at its different stages. Palpation, auscultation, chemical tests of urine, gastric juices, blood, etc., provided an important arsenal of information that included the child’s hereditary and personal background.

Unlike in previous decades, interest went beyond the study of the newborn, which was explained by the ease with which the infant could be observed, to include its physical and organic development. In this sense, the study began to go back to the prenatal or “in-

³ The ideas of Théodule Ribot (1901) about the durability of emotions and passions, and the relationship of the latter with character, referred to Herbartian theory which, from a pedagogical perspective, distinguished between “government” and “discipline”; the first, ephemeral, occurred in the immediacy of the teacher’s action to restore a violated order; the second, on the other hand, was directed at the formation of the character and morality of the student, with more mediate consequences and longer lasting effects.

trauterine” stage, as this stage of ontogeny began to be called. In this sense, emphasis was placed on maternal hygiene as a prophylactic resource to avoid congenital malformations. The conception of clinical records in “puericulture” analyses⁴ gained in rigor with the integration of new data that introduced the child into an increasingly broad network of knowledge.

In Cuba, since the 1820s, Ramón de la Sagra (1827, p. 54) had published in the *Anales de Ciencias, Agricultura y Comercio* his research on the study of the influence of puberty on the moral constitution of individuals, particularly in black children, apparently pioneering work in this type of incursion. Scientific institutionalization from the 1860s, and especially after the end of the first war for independence, promoted the study of problems of childhood diseases, as well as publications referring to domestic hygiene precepts. Varona, for his part, from the Anthropological Society of the Island of Cuba, delved more from physiology and psychology into the tastes of black children.

Each small individual became a subject to be recorded, through serial documents prepared by specialists interested in recording the smallest details of the schoolchild: “morbid history of the family and of the sick child,” “age,” “history of his dentition,” “state of his fontanels,” “his habits,” “his intellectual and moral development,” “pulse,” “temperature.” These controls made possible, at the same time, both the therapy used and the “prognoses” of the illnesses and their evolution, whose importance, according to the surgeon Antonio Jover, (1893, p. 12) “is all the greater as frequently the data collected by observation are reduced to the purely objective.”

With such records, doctors could offer pedagogues and teachers the necessary elements to intervene in those dispositions that were harmful to children and society, eliminating them from the beginning, while facilitating the location and preservation of useful and more perfected traits. In the field of school discipline, pedagogical literature did not yet relate the impact of medical approaches in what would later be called “indirect disciplinary means” or preventive; however, the clinical view of the child’s body allowed for other readings of childhood and, therefore, provided “specialized” arguments for the discourses against physical punishment and the correction of certain behaviors and social stereotypes.

The academic and social prominence of doctors, and particularly surgeons, would be felt in all areas of science. The scientific community would not only have to confront any medical, judicial or school act that caused physical pain, but also the advances in its different specialties would be directed at establishing new therapeutic techniques and procedures tending to minimize or eradicate the ailments in patients, prisoners and schoolchil-

⁴ The French physician Alfred Pierre Caron (1865) first used the term “puericulture” to refer to “the science of raising children,” but it was Professor Pinard (1875) who, in addressing a communication to the Academy of Medicine in Paris, established a new definition of Puericulture, understood by him as “[...] the science that has as its object the investigation of knowledge relating to the reproduction, conservation and improvement of the human species.”

dren. The elimination of bodily pain through the use of anesthesia in surgical operations and the modernization of surgery in Cuba, the result of the successes of asepsis and antisepsis, propagated by the physician Gabriel Casuso, placed this branch of medical knowledge in a privileged position among the rest of the clinical sciences with repercussions in other spheres of society. The idea was to be able to amputate diseased organs and to intervene for longer and more effectively on the damaged body, with the use of precise surgical techniques and instruments.

Likewise, advances in dentistry and in the area of bacteriology with the use of carbolic water as a disinfectant and cocaine and procaine as local anesthesia, made it possible to overcome many ailments in minors undergoing treatments with the traditional use of fat, butter and other products that caused acute infections. (Martínez, 1963). Great educators such as Esteban Borrero Echeverría from Camagüey and Luis Agüera were graduates in medicine and surgery, the latter, in addition to being a professor of Hygienic Gymnastics, also worked as a dentist. In all cases, they were staunch opponents of any physical or moral punishment that degraded the student's body or psyche.

4 Childhood stereotypes from physiology and hygiene

Since the mid-nineteenth century, pedagogical discourses in Cuba reinforced the integration of hygiene standards as part of the moral education of the student; their cleanliness, food, the physical conditions in which they developed their life and also their studies. From the 1880s, concern for the knowledge and care of minors found in the development of physiology and hygiene applied to the school branch true intervention techniques on children's behavior.

Infant hygiene, which included good manners, began to be socialized as a standard of beauty. Beginning in the second half of the 19th century, other aesthetic models were emphasized that were not strictly physical, which had been very fashionable until that time with the exercise of the children's body in gymnastics classes.

Despite this confrontation with the frequent children's mockery directed at their peers with physical defects, pedagogues and hygienists warned of the importance of avoiding certain postures that attacked the body figure. There was a tradition in this sense dating back to the *Ordenanzas* of Caballero in 1794, which regulated the position that the student's body should assume in the "writing schools", and which Rousseau already recommended for his *Emile*. These anatomical regulations would be extended in the new situation to other children's movements and, to this effect, the attention of parents and teachers was called to correct habits in children such as "walking hunched over", "too straight", "arms out", "dead arm" and "head too upright". (Estrada, 1879, p. 26).

The graded gymnastic exercises and physical education would establish the ideal guidelines for the adequate physical and physiological development of Cuban children. In the aforementioned advice given by Varona to his niece about how to educate her son, he warned her: "Our role must be limited to constant observation and vigilance, to indirectly lead the robust child toward those games that put the greatest number of organs into operation, and the weak or sickly child toward those that serve to strengthen the weak members." (Varona, 1961, p. 5). The intellectual did not share the criteria of those who criticized the effectiveness of the Gymnasium for overloading the students physically and mentally, although he prioritized children's games, especially the "physiologically useful games," administered depending on the character of the children: the ball; for the lazy, the rope swing and the board (*cachumbambé*) for the timid. He warned, however, of the harmful effects of gymnastics classes immediately after lunch, a practice established in most schools.

This relationship between physical exercises and physiology was discussed in detail by Angel de la Cruz Muñoz at the first Pedagogical Congress, held in the city of Matanzas in 1884. Like Varona, the Matanzas teacher encouraged "orderly" exercises that helped the functioning of the child's body: "Running and jumping exercises: the first is a bulwark against tuberculosis due to its influence on the function of the lung organ." And he established the links between the muscular and nervous systems: "The less the muscular system is exercised, the more irritable the nervous system is." (Congress, 1884, p. 179).

Other pedagogues shared with Varona the idea of isolating physical exercises from meals, part of the hygiene of the digestive system, while insisting on the counterproductive effects of corrective practices based on the withdrawal of food from the student. In the *Cartilla pedagógica para uso de las personas que se dedican al magisterio*, printed in Matanzas by Idelfonso Estrada y Zenea, it was recommended to take into account the interrelation between the digestive and nervous systems: "[...] not depriving them of food, nor delaying the hours in which they are accustomed to taking it; for this influences their health, which nothing tends to alter as much as disorder at mealtimes." (Estrada, 1879, p. 37).

At the 1884 Congress, several presentations dealt with this matter, taking into account that the majority of those present taught in rural public schools, with a child population that suffered the effects of hunger. Hence the exclamation of the Corral Falso teacher, Bruno Valdés Miranda: "Cuba, above all, needs to eat." (Congress, 1884, p. 163).

The deficiency in the diet of the families of the lower classes came to light in the Congress, as well as in other writings of intellectuals of the time. Although in previous decades the use of coffee was assumed as an important drink in the breakfast of the peasant child, physiological and hygienic research began to relate its negative effects on the human organism: "In high doses daily, abuse withers the complexion, exalts the brain and the marrow, alters the nervous system, produces muscular cramps, upsets the stomach, causes

listlessness, general weakness, intestinal and heart disturbances, insomnia and paralysis.” (San Martín, 1887, p. 8). The same observation made by Manuel Valdés Rodríguez to the insufficient nutrition of children from lower classes, practically reduced to food and “excessive coffee”:

If the hygienist doctor were to stop and analyze the way and manner in which the nutrition of the children of our lower classes is verified, he could affirm with astonishment that the quantity, nor the quality of the substances, barely represent 40 percent of what hygiene requires for the purposes of existence. It results from such things that serious digestive disorders, rickets and the most regrettable disorders soon occur. (Valdés, 1891, p. 13).

In fact, the withdrawal of food, including sweets and fruits, began to disappear within the prescriptions of the large private schools. For example, the El Buen Pastor school in Havana, founded in 1889 by the priest Juan Rafael María Vivó, established among its punishments the prohibition of external students from going out to eat at home. The school would pay for the food on the first day and, in the case of repeated offences, the child’s parents would pay half a silver peso. (Prospectus, 1889). Nor did the regulations for free schools for poor children include the suppression of food between disciplinary devices.⁵

The development of hygiene and medical sciences in general also brought about a change in the treatment of wet nurses, whose physical and moral state was related to the digestive disorders of newborns. For the hygienist Manuel Delfín (1897), for example, among the most harmful practices related to feeding was the supply of mint, lemon balm, and lemon verbena, among other aromatic plants, to the infant, due to the serious nervous effects they caused. He also criticized “artificial breastfeeding” through the ingestion of cow, goat, or donkey milk: the child should be breastfed by the mother at certain times, “to allow time for the ingestion of the ingested food” or by a “healthy wet nurse.”

The situation of the wet nurse within the family began to take on a different meaning. She would not be the prototype of a slave woman, harmful due to her unhealthy moral influence in the prolonged treatment of the children of rich families. In the Regulations for the *Reglamento para la Asistencia Médico Dental de los niños socorridos por la Sociedad Protectora de los Niños de la Isla de Cuba* (1891, p. 4) it was said: “The nurse lives in the house, the happy or sad life of the family, the child grows up at her side, he is entertained by her, so much so that many of our beautiful ladies, usually say they are the foster sisters of the un-

⁵ The Regulations of the free school for poor girls called Santa Rosalía, established in the city of Santa Clara in 1884 and the Prospectus and regulations of a school for poor girls created and supported by the Victor Hugo Lodge, in Unión de Reyes, Matanzas, also in 1884, included among the punishments private and public reprimand, loss of recess, memory lessons and expulsions, but did not mention the deprivation of any type of food.

fortunate who was innocently deprived of maternal warmth.” Rather than directing criticism against the harmful influences of wet nurses and domestic slaves, the hygienic-pedagogical advice was directed at avoiding other adverse influences in the education of minors that pointed towards the necessary social control in the family environment.

Irregularities in nutritional habits, originating in the family, would appear among the main complaints, especially those related to the excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages and coffee by the parents, as well as smoking. On the other hand, the lack of domestic hygiene was pointed out, especially in the homes most vulnerable to poverty, where many of the same wet nurses and former domestic slaves came from. As the hygienist Manuel Delfín warned: “When the child is the son of alcoholic parents, or is kept in a dark room, without ventilation and without fresh air to breathe, when he is put to bed in a dirty crib or cot and is covered with smelly covers, then nervous disorders occur more easily and with greater force.” (Delfín, 1897, p. 10).

The traditional questioning of one of the most frequent types of punishment: the repetition of exercises in different curricular subjects, generally during recess time, began to articulate among its arguments, the considerations of hygienic science. In the *Diario de Matanzas*, after this procedure was criticized, an article proposed replacing it with the writing of one or two pages adjusted to calligraphic rules. The Matanzas teacher Valdés Miranda responded to this proposal from the pages of *El Profesorado de Cuba*: “Writing a clear, correct, uniform letter, does the position of the body vary? Is it not subject to the same mortifications that it experiences when copying or following the dictation of the voice?” (Valdés, 1882, p. 3). Rather than replacing one type of writing with another, Corral Falso’s teacher established the necessary durations so that the punishment would fit the imperatives of hygiene: the work would last half an hour, with gymnastic exercises interspersed between 10 and 15 minutes.

More than an isolated idea, physical exercise based on hygienic precepts was a whole movement that extended through the most diverse scientific, literary, political, and cultural institutions and, of course, arrived with renewed force to the grounds of pedagogical debates. The proliferation of manuals and notions of hygiene and domestic economy between the years 1880 and 1890 evidenced the interest in such a sensitive subject.⁶ Not by chance, among the most debated points in the aforementioned Congress of 1884 were those concerning the physical development of children and school hygiene. At the peda-

⁶ Manuel Valdés Rodríguez: *Nociones de higiene y economía doméstica para uso de las escuelas de niños*, Librería y Papelería La Nueva Principal, La Habana, 1883, Blas J. San Martín: *Los Sports y la higiene arreglados a los más modernos autores*, Imprenta El Iris, La Habana, 1887, Luis Agüera: *Gimnástica moderna higiénica, médica, ortopédica, ejercicios de adornos, atléticos y de Sports, baños*, Imprenta La Universal, La Habana, 1888, Manuel Delfín: *Elementos de Higiene Práctica*, Impr. Lib. y Papelería La Propagandista, La Habana, 1895, Luis Agüera: *Gimnástica moderna y de consulta para ambos sexos*, Imprenta y Lib. La Propagandista, La Habana, 1899.

gological meeting, the speakers called for comprehensive attention to the study programs, teaching materials, school supplies and, above all, the hygiene of the teaching premises in public schools, the most affected in this sense.

The creation of the Normal School was not enough, according to the speakers at the Matanzas Congress, as long as the study plans remained stagnant and no lessons were given in Physiology and Hygiene, the Art of Education and the Science of Education, along with experimental or practical Psychology. A year before the pedagogical meeting, in the New York newspaper *La América*, Martí published his considerations on the matter:

Classes are given in Ancient Geography, rules of Rhetoric and similar old things: instead, there should be lectures on health, advice on Hygiene, practical advice, clear and simple teaching of the human body, its elements, its functions, the ways to adjust the former to the latter, and to confine the latter to the latter, and to economize the forces, and to direct them well, so that it does not have to be repaired later. (Martí, 1975, p. 298).

Among the figures who spoke out most in favor of establishing the school hygiene service on the Island was the Facultative President of the Dispensaries for poor children in Havana, the doctor Antonio de Gordón y Acosta, author of the pamphlet *La inspección médica oficial en nuestras escuelas*, a document accusing the deplorable state of school hygiene and public hygiene in general, aggravated, of course, by the effects of the extension of the war to the west of the country between 1895 and 1896, as well as the reconcentration orders of General Valeriano Weyler Nicolau and the subsequent naval blockade of the United States. In the words of Gordon: “The school, which is a good thing, is a danger when it is completely divorced from medicine.” (Gordón, 1898, p. 20).

Here is a possible reason why the lecture “Modern Etiology” (1897) given by the American engineer and physician Erastus Wilson at the Society of Clinical Studies in Havana in 1890, was published just seven years later, that is, in the midst of the adverse conditions generated by the colonial conflict in the epidemiological order. In the text, the scientist referred to the development of bacteriology and its influence on the study of infectious diseases that most affected the population and in particular children: consumption, yellow fever, diarrhea, enteritis, malarial fevers, meningitis, typhoid and diphtheria. The study concluded with the impact on the nervous and respiratory system of inhaling air contaminated by gases “and other emanations of putrefying organic matter”, that is, realities of everyday life in the context of Spanish-Cuban belligerence.

Hygiene in its relationship with physiology thus formed a scheme of children’s behavior mediated by habits and customs, an examining and foresight power exercised by specialists, which allowed them to establish networks of control beyond school space and time.

To this end, children were monitored from parents and so on, a machinery of uninterrupted sanction was built. In the name of hygienic precepts, access was gained to the complex social framework; it was a “qualified” power to treat and remedy individual and collective behavior. Rather than rejecting, excluding or beating, the appeal was to new rituals that produced consecrated truths, flexible and calculated disciplines aimed at bodily perfection and, therefore, contrary to any manifestation of somatic pain.

As in previous decades, the hygienist discourse was reduced to the realm of thought and pedagogical orientations, without the colonial state adopting measures aimed at the implementation and regulation of school hygiene in public establishments, as it had already been applied in Spain since 1879 by virtue of the reforms of the Count of Toreno. (Gordon, 1898).⁷

Neither the “Organic Regulation of Primary Education on the Island of Cuba”, published in 1871, nor the new Public Education Plan of 1880, which considered the previous regulation “illegal”, established any provision referring to the Facultative Inspection of schools, which had also existed in the metropolis since 1859. Such imperatives gave rise to frequent interventions by delegates to the Pedagogical Congress of 1884. One of them, the teacher from Bolondrón, Bernabé Cortázar, asked:

[...] where do we house all this? In the poor huts used today, in almost all municipal areas, as school buildings? [...] where physical exercises are to be carried out, as a necessary counterbalance to the losses produced by intellectual action [...] New buildings are needed, capable of meeting the demands of Hygiene and Pedagogy. (Congress, 1884, p. 82).

More than one factor would have an impact on these limitations. In addition to the total abandonment of public establishments by the colonial state, there were also the cultural imperatives of medical practices, especially in rural areas. It was not enough to overcome old clinical procedures and concepts within the medical profession; it was necessary to project against popular beliefs and behaviors as alternative practices, supporting different logics and procedures, which rivaled the institutionalized knowledge of the educated classes. This task required the reaffirmation of medicine in its status as a science, as well as the disqualification of possible competitors.⁸

⁷ The first provision issued by the Spanish government on school hygiene was the Royal Order of March 17, 1879, signed by the Count of Toreno, Minister of Public Works and initiator of important reforms in primary education in the Peninsula. Its text stated: “The application of the principles of hygiene to schools is a necessity, which is becoming more and more imperative as education spreads and the school population grows.”

⁸ A similar process occurred in Mexico during the Porfiriato. According to research by Alberto del Castillo Troncoso, that country witnessed the emergence of a secularized morality contrary to the work carried

The first Regional Medical Congress in 1890 would include among its points children's pathologies, particularly tetanus, as well as hygiene in private schools and other public health issues. Aware of the great obstacles to be faced in the field of popular beliefs, Manuel Delfín, in his book *Treinta años de médico* (1909) insisted that, to confront the practices of the healers ("curanderos") in Cuba, which enjoyed great popularity especially in the rural environment, the poor people should be assisted, and preached "in all tones and in all homes" to ridicule these "doctors and their clients."

The scientific associationism revitalized between the years 1880 and 1890, did not remain outside of this belligerence either. The contamination of water and food, especially milk, the increase in garbage in the streets, and other environmental problems would have a very unfavorable impact on children's health, mainly on the children of the poorest families, the main victims of serious diseases such as malaria, cholera and diphtheria. For this reason, in 1893, at the initiative of the *Crónica Médico Quirúrgica de La Habana* the creation of the so-called League against diphtheria was proposed, with the purpose of "watching over" children, as well as "bringing to the poor's hut the necessary resources to avoid contagion and improve the economic situation." (Funes, 2005, p. 111). In this crusade, it was not enough to reduce the scope of the teaching action to the surveillance of children's behavior in school spaces; the control devices required inspections and sanctions within a much broader field of attention, in such a way as to guarantee, with greater accuracy, the continuity in the practices of clinical observation and correction of each child, whose individuality was reported as an object of specific knowledge in his particular evolution and in the development of his own attitudes or capacities.

Among definitions and control techniques from pedagogy, the conception of the objective teaching method conceived the importance of the qualified observation of the infant in each of the scenarios in which he developed his physical and emotional life. From this perspective, the educational agents had to transcend "the school" to reach those spheres that affected the behavior of the students in schools, not only the family, but all the instances of social relations established within and outside the family group. These pedagogical assumptions were not exempt from questions that arose from different philosophical conceptions when it came to assuming the education of the child.

The Rousseauian conceptions of the "discipline of consequences", called by Spencer (1917, p. 10) "discipline of natural reactions", found in the school of the Russian pedagogue Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy an extreme interpretation that established a kind of infantile

out by men and women from popular sectors, and other behaviors that violated hygiene standards, such as "illegitimate" marital relations. "Medical Morality and Secularization: The Child's Body in the Medical Discourse of the Porfiriato" in <http://www.xoc.uam.mx/polcul/pyc16/albertodelcastillo.pdf>. Accessed January 5, 2012.

laissez faire, without considering the value of the educational guidance and intervention of parents and teachers for the modification of behaviors.⁹

These ideas did not become established on the Island. In this regard, Enrique José Varona placed himself in the middle between the tendencies that favored educational interventionism in all children's activities and occupations and those that advocated the most complete freedom for the child's reactions and instincts. One of his theoretical assumptions was based on the "discipline of consequences," considered by the Cuban intellectual as the goal of all moral education; the child should feel master of himself and for this there was nothing more appropriate than "[...] when he touches an evil and receives harm, whether it comes from nature or from the intelligent will of parents and teachers, he sees in the punishment the effect of a natural, constant and necessary reaction." (Varona, 1961, pp. 11-12). But, at the same time, he called attention to the importance of the educational guidance of teachers, parents and society in general, as he himself said: "We must educate in all ways and everywhere." (Varona, 1961, p. 106).

The rejection of beatings as a corrective procedure that could lead to child abuse was becoming more and more widespread, both in educational discourse and among the criteria supported by certain groups of the population.

One of the most significant experiences in the creation of intra- and extra-curricular surveillance devices was carried out by the teacher of the San Marcos school, Alejandro María López, with the creation of the so-called "Censorship" in 1882. It was not about eliminating physical controls through the books established and improved throughout the century, but about penetrating every space and time of the child; of transcending the distant and dark records that accumulated lines, dots, crosses and numbers, a whole codification descriptive of individual behaviors and performances. López's new project was based on the establishment of a circuit of controls inside and outside the school, in which Censorship would become one of its parts.

The teacher's call was to institute what he called a "conscious discipline", understanding discipline as "the uninterrupted remembrance of duty, of the laws and of responsibility" (Lopez, 1899, p. 9). The Censorship was a kind of individual conduct card or card, carried by each student of the school during his stay at the school, and in whose elaboration they themselves participated. A "sign" from the teacher to the student, carrying a previously agreed upon meaning, was enough for the latter to mark one of the rectangles numbered from one to twelve in the first upper space and so on up to a maximum of twelve offenses. In case of repeat offenses, the offender was referred to the director of the school, who would

⁹ Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy (1828-1910). In his school Yasnaya Polyana he established a regime of absolute freedom; he considered school as a means of free instruction, flatly rejecting the intervention of the teacher in the education of the students, who should follow their natural inclinations.

decide the application of other supplementary means, which included warning, reprimand, isolation, but never corporal punishment.

In other words, it was about the sophistication of a new type of surveillance in which the student became an accomplice. The key was to make him aware that the true and only “always alert guard, sure accuser and inexorable judge” was his own “moral conscience.” Unlike the “faceless” devices regulated within the physical controls of large private schools, here the technique was no longer anonymous, but more functional. As López said, the key was to find a system “by virtue of which, the certainty of not evading surveillance or not achieving impunity, would serve as a more effective brake on the imminence of punishment.” (López, 1899, p. 14).

By carrying his Censorship with him at all times, and having to see it often, at least as many times as he had to show it to any teacher, he was reminded at every moment of what we could call his position and date, his current account, his debts, his responsibilities. (López, 1899, p. 17).

The system was integrated by other surveillance techniques, in charge of a staff specialized in “police” or “penitential” legislation applied to the school. Among these structures was the “pedagogical police”, which operated in the streets, the “jury of customs” and a “pedagogical court”, in charge of deciding corrections and expulsions. In addition to these bodies, there were three other types of schools, according to the classification of students with discipline problems: the “disciplinary schools” for those classified as “rebels”, the “correctional school” for those with “immoral habits” and the “juvenile penitentiary” reserved for students who showed “principles of delinquency”. (López, 1899, p. 27).

The model conceived by López meant the multiplication of physical control circuits through instances that ensured compliance with what the teacher himself called “school law.” Censorship, it seems, only remained as an experience of the teacher at the San Marcos school, who sought to socialize it, after the beginning of the first military occupation, through the publication of his book *Medios pedagógicos externos*.

Other directors of private establishments devised different models of extracurricular surveillance, such as José Antonio Espinosa, literary director of the El Progreso school. In the regulations of this educational institution, its eighth title “Reciprocal obligations of the school and families” established the obligation of students to deliver monthly to their parents or guardians a document “in which the absences and the grades of achievement and conduct that they have deserved will be recorded. These statements will be returned signed by the representatives of the students.” (Prospectus, 1887, p. 7). For its part, in the aforementioned El Buen Pastor school, there was a “special book”, which contained a set of informa-

tion that parents had to provide about the students, “means to speed up communication if necessary.” (Prospectus, 1889, p. 17).

The conceptualization and practices of “indirect” or preventive discipline, which had in the pedagogue José de la Luz y Caballero its most important exponent in the first half of the 19th century, found in Manuel Valdés Rodríguez its most outstanding successor. The author of *Ensayos sobre educación teórica, práctica y elemental*, written between 1886 and 1893, established a series of rules that, with the use of metaphors, were aimed at confronting what he described as the “admirable and instinctive strategy” of schoolchildren to surprise teachers’ distractions. The good teacher had to be a good observer and an excellent foresight; no detail in the classroom should be alien to him: “You must look at all places and at just one place, at a time [...] Like the actor who, when he comes on stage, sees his audience before him, you must appreciate the whole class.” (Valdés, 1898, p. 41). Visibility, therefore, would be the main premise for the calculated combination of the rest of the foresight rules and the starting point with a view to effective control over bodies.

The teacher from Hoyo y Junco took up the simile of the art of acting in order to underline the importance of the magisterial projection in the classroom, the power of gestures and the voice on the school “stage”: “Sometimes you need to be an actor. If you always speak in the same tone, it is not strange that the students fall asleep [...] Raise or lower your voice, lengthen it or rush it. An unexpected stop, a signal, an expression on the face, are enough to call to order, to restore calm, in an instant or to make someone understand that he is distracted.” (Valdés, 1898, p. 66).

The second element established by the pedagogue had to do with the application of surveillance. Its effectiveness was proportional to the degree of invisibility that the exercise of control reached: “The first factor that explains, as an essential element, the discipline of the child and of the classes, is the constant live influence of the teacher, felt by the student, although without being aware of it.” (Valdés, 1898, p. 46). And to this effect he advised: “Watch, watch. You are the pilot, the helmsman: you lead the boat through a sea, ready to be troubled [...] But watch, without your students noticing it. Let them sense your person, your look; let them guess you, without you making an effort to prove yourself.” (Valdés, 1898, p. 70).

The location of the preceptor had to be taken into account, the higher the better the surveillance and control over the students, and, consequently, more effective in the government: “Choose a strategic position. Elevate your position, so that you dominate.” (Valdés, 1898, p. 42). This idea was not new, its implementation was part of a resource that the preceptor himself imposed in the exercise of teaching, the originality lay in incorporating the assignment of positions, as well as the rest of the regulations tending to guarantee the school organization.

Valdés Rodríguez (1898) defined the organization as “the order prior to the child himself, but simultaneously and successively”, it was about the preparation of “the atmosphere” or “the environment of education”, which, in fact, constituted a fourth rule that crossed and conditioned the implementation of any disciplinary regime. (Valdés, 1898, p. 51). The teacher and director of schools from Bayamo, José María Izaguirre, referred to this imbrication of organization-school discipline in his book *Elementos de Pedagogía* (1897): “A good organization enables the teacher to do a greater amount of work in the shortest possible time and with great benefit; it makes the government of the school easier.” (Izaguirre, 1897, p. 31). Although still in its infancy, this was a field of pedagogy that was beginning to gain ground in disciplinary analysis.

A fourth rule of foresight, facilitating surveillance, was based on the order and functionality of space as a physical control device. Unlike what was advised and established by pedagogues in previous decades, Valdés Rodríguez considered it inappropriate to assign positions according to academic performance as a reward, much less to place students behind the teacher: “Make sure that all dangers and all obstacles are always in front of you.” (Valdés, 1898, p. 42). In the organization of the disciplinary space, possible sources of disorder had to be foreseen and neutralized by proximity to the teacher, a kind of “watch and you will win”: “It is necessary to prevent the most brilliant talents from reaching, of course, the first positions, while the average and even the slowest are relegated [...] abandoned children form groups that look for something to exercise their activity.” (Valdés, 1898, p. 47).

The fifth rule was attention to children’s interests, an element closely related to the individualized study of schoolchildren. To this end, he warned that “shortening the period of their plenitude” meant a lack of knowledge of the psychology and physiology of childhood on the part of many preceptors, a presupposition whose scope was impossible to reduce to the school framework. Valdés Rodríguez warned of the importance of the “social sanction” of the agents that converge in the educational act: the family, public life, the market, commerce and industry. The influence of these scenarios on the behavioral formation of schoolchildren was highlighted by pedagogues and hygienists of the time:

The scream, the word, the song, the obscene scream without restraint, without the police attempting to repress it, tolerated peacefully until acquiring, through a degrading prescription, a certain sanction of social and legal right, are means that multiply to consummate the degradation and death of our children. (Valdés, 1891, p. 31).

The teacher from Hoyo y Junco was delving into a key topic within his educational thought and work that would place him among the initiators of experimental pedagogy in Cuba and of the pedological science to be developed in the first decades of the 20th century, with the consequent impact on the orientations of the new conceptions about school

discipline. With good reason Alfredo Miguel Aguayo, when referring to the book *Ensayos sobre educación*, whose title in itself made clear its “theoretical, practical and experimental” orientation, would affirm: “It has been said of it that it is a philosophy of education, but in reality, it is something more than that: it is a work of pedology; where for the first time the Cuban child is studied, and a precursor of modern studies of experimental pedagogy.” (Aguayo, 1913, p. 439).

The development and expansion of new scientific specialties such as experimental psychology, physiological psychology and, above all, pedology or the science dedicated to the study of children, contributed to the theoretical foundation of a new disciplinary approach. The “liberal discipline” was adjusted to the formative imperatives of the citizen of the Republic inaugurated at the dawn of the twentieth century and maintained its presence, with its different variants and nuances, in the pedagogical thought of the first half of the century.

6 Final considerations

The liberating discourse of man in modern industrial society and its adjustment to the political and economic freedom of the individual in a colonial context in the last decades of the nineteenth century, had to be accompanied by regulations and devices of social control over the subjects of a metropolis that had just experienced the first liberating struggle of the Cuban people. Beyond the traditional legal terms with their negative epistemological load [exclusion, rejection, barrier, denials, concealments], the island’s pedagogical power would seek to be exercised in technological schemes, expressed in terms of tactics, but also supported by the intervention of scientific knowledge with incidences in the field of pedagogy, and in particular disciplinary controls.

In the vast majority of sociological and medical-hygienic contributions, it was not a question of revolutionizing the oppressive structures of the colonial regime, but of subjecting wills to the historical task of sustaining a social order that would allow, through evolution, to perfect the “quality of the Cuban” to give itself its own government, either on autonomous bases or, if necessary, in a possible republican scenario, through the citizen, a legal figure to whom rights were assigned, but also duties towards the new institutionality.

In this evolution of representations and regulations of bodily behavior (including physical punishment), and together with the extension of “schooled childhood” in the course of the 19th century, but particularly in its last decades, modern pedagogy was nourished by the advances that occurred in other branches of science with the aim of intervening in unwanted behavior, without resorting to ruthless violence. Such discourses found in the early rationalities of physiology and hygiene prodigious allies for the legitimation of controls in areas of children’s confluence

The sophistication of the surveillance devices and submission to the previously agreed order concealed the ideological springs of domination itself, protected by the discourses of science

Despite these experiences and efforts that managed to materialize in some of the most important private schools, in the daily life of the vast majority of the schools on the Island, traditional pedagogical techniques predominated, with resources that always operated within the classroom. The vast majority of public establishments were unable to pay for the work of doctors, medical inspectors, legal or police personnel who had to integrate the specialized school control circuits, which is why physical or direct control devices (system of rewards and punishments) were those that prevailed in the late colonial period.

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