



Hygiene and hygienism in the Modern School at Barcelona: between the transformations of customs and the tension over traditions¹

Higiene e higienismo na Escola Moderna de Barcelona (1901-1906):
entre as transformações dos costumes e a tensão com as tradições

Higiene e higienismo en la Escuela Moderna de Barcelona (1901-1906):
entre las transformaciones de las costumbres y la tensión con las tradiciones

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Abstract

This text aims to investigate the ways in which the hygienist rhetoric, prominent at the turn of the 19th century into the 20th century, it was adapted to the purposes of the Modern School of Barcelona (1901-1906), an anarchist school experiment. Based on Social History concepts, especially from English tradition, the aim was to capture this hygienist trend in the prescriptions produced by the aforementioned school and present in its official journal, the *Boletín de la Escuela Moderna*, between 1901 and 1906, as well as in the work *La Escuela Moderna de Barcelona* (1907), published by its founder Francisco Ferrer y Guardia (1859-1909). It was possible to verify, in that school experiment, there was an investment in instilling new knowledge and behaviors in students, since the “old” habits had to be overcome in favor of an improvement in their physical, intellectual and moral health. However, this process was not impassive.

Keywords: Hygienism; Education of the Sensibilities; Modern School of Barcelona.

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Resumo

Este texto se preocupa em investigar os modos como a retórica higienista, proeminente na passagem do séc. XIX para o séc. XX, se adaptou aos propósitos da Escola Moderna de Barcelona (1901-1906), uma experiência escolar anarquista. A partir de conceitos da História Social, sobretudo aquela de tradição inglesa, buscou-se capturar essa voga higienista nas prescrições produzidas pela referida escola e presentes em seu periódico oficial, o *Boletín de la Escuela Moderna*, entre os anos de 1901 e 1906, bem como na obra *La Escuela Moderna de Barcelona* (1907), publicada pelo seu fundador Francisco Ferrer y Guardia (1859-1909). Foi possível constatar que, naquela experiência escolar, investiu-se em inculcar novos conhecimentos e comportamentos nos estudantes, visto que os “antigos” hábitos deveriam ser superados em favor de uma melhora na saúde física, intelectual e moral deles. Entretanto, esse processo não foi impassível.

Palavras-chaves: Higienismo; Educação das Sensibilidade; Escola Moderna de Barcelona.

Resumen

Este texto se preocupa por investigar las formas en que la retórica higienista, prominente en el cambio de siglo XIX al siglo XX, adaptada a los fines de la Escuela Moderna de Barcelona (1901-1906), una experiencia escolar anarquista. A partir de conceptos de la Historia Social, en especial de la tradición inglesa, se intentó plasmar esta moda higienista en las prescripciones elaboradas por la referida escuela presentes en su diario oficial, el *Boletín de la Escuela Moderna*, en el transcurso de los años 1901 a 1906, así como en la obra *La Escuela Moderna de Barcelona* (1907) publicada por su fundador Francisco Ferrer y Guardia (1859-1909). Se pudo constatar que, en esa experiencia escolar, hubo una inversión en inculcar nuevos conocimientos y comportamientos en los alumnos, ya que los “antiguos” hábitos deben ser superados en favor de una mejoría en su salud física, intelectual y moral. Sin embargo, este proceso no fue infranqueable.

Palabras-clave: Higienismo; Educación de la Sensibilidad; Escuela Moderna de Barcelona.

Introduction

It is widely accepted in historiography that hygienist rhetoric gained prominence throughout the 19th century and into the mid-20th century, driven mainly by the reformist interests of medicine, its main propaganda vector. This movement included a set of actions: architectural and urban reforms in large cities; the creation of private and public institutions with the function of establishing health parameters and carrying out health surveillance of the population; the emergence of some medical specialties – psychiatry, gynecology, childcare, neurology, among others; the construction of knowledge aimed at hygienic-sanitary issues, etc. These actions generally aimed at a common interest among those who were inclined in favor of these hygienist attacks that involved the search for the intellectual, physical and moral regeneration of the people. The health reforms undertaken would be the means to overcome the social ills that left large cities in a state of turmoil. However, the hygienist rhetoric was quite polyphonic and multifaceted, presenting ideas, actors and institutions that sometimes converged and sometimes antagonized each other.

However, the point of intersection among the different hygienist groups is the consensus that the population that should undergo a health reform was the poorest. From this understanding emerges the need to modulate the bodies of the proletarian classes, using the bourgeois body as a parameter, under the argument that this would be a way to civilize them. As Cinthya Greive Veiga (2009, p. 70) states:

from the mid-18th century onwards, different knowledge and events contributed to changes in family behavior and in children's education. Among them, we can highlight hygienism and, in the 19th century, schooling, industrialization, eugenics, the consolidation of bourgeois morality and the development of a privatization and privacy culture. Here, in particular, I highlight the diffusion of elementary knowledge to all layers of the population in the 19th century as an indicator of the elites' thinking that it was necessary to extend civility.

The pair civilized *versus* barbarians/uncivilized/savages was recurrently present in hygienist narratives, in etiquette manuals and in the prescriptions of public health doctors. This polarization gained strength with the emergence of anthropometric and ethnographic studies focused solely on the biological dimension of the population, such as eugenics, anthropometry, craniology, etc. Such schools of thought emphasized the advantages of the Aryan and bourgeois population compared to other races and social classes. Hobsbawm (2019, p. 56) comments that, at the turn of the 19th century into the 20th century,

humanity was increasingly divided into the energetic and talented strain of the middle class and the indolent masses, condemned to inferiority due to their genetic deficiencies. Biology was used to explain inequality, particularly for those who felt destined for superiority.

In this way, regenerating the people was synonymous with finding ways to prepare the population bodies in the image and likeness of bourgeois bodies. Certainly, the involvement of different sectors of society was unquestionable in sustaining the superlative ambitions of this plan, while the notorious symbiosis between medicine and education was seen as an almost inevitable movement. In some way, this hygienic rhetoric gained echoes in schools, as some studies demonstrate, which encouraged the emergence of “hygiene” knowledge in school programs and intensified concerns about

children's bodies in schools (Bañuelos, 2000; Pozo Andrés, 2000; Lopes de Paiva, 2004; Rocha, 2009; Viñao, 2010; Moreno et al., 2012). "Hygiene" within schools had the role of solving the social problems that afflicted the poorest population, even though the hygiene problems arising from these classes were, for the most part, of an economic nature. They included the lack of resources for an adequate nutritional diet; the need for housing with basic sanitation; access to drinking water; not to mention the long hours of work in factories for men, women and children. Several intellectuals, at that time, argued that many of the social problems, endemic diseases and poverty could be solved with a change in behavior and the assimilation of knowledge related to "hygiene". In fact, the clash among the customs that students from lower classes took to school and the hygienist mentality that circulated at the time was pressing. A fact that made the persecution of popular traditions a maxim among doctors, pedagogues, teachers, politicians and other agents involved in childhood education (Ocaña, 1998; Ocaña; Perdiguero, 2006).

Thus, the aim of this text is to understand how the hygienist rhetoric, whose purpose was to regulate children's behaviors and bodies in school under the aegis of the bourgeois character, fits into the pedagogical assumptions of the Modern School of Barcelona (1901-1906), an anarchist educational experiment. To this end, the prescriptions on "hygiene", "body exercises" and "cleanliness inspection" are analyzed, knowledge present in its program, as well as the role of the "school doctor" Andrés Martínez Vargas (1861-1948) in that experiment. These prescriptions can be extracted from the official organ of the Modern School, the *Boletín de la Escuela Moderna*, between 1901 and 1906. In addition, the work *La Escuela Moderna* (2013 [1907]²), written by its founder Francisco Ferrer y Guardia, was analyzed.

For the investigation that is aimed at, the concept of "moral economy" used by Edward Palmer Thompson (1998) was mobilized. From this perspective, the focus of the analysis is not exclusively on economic problems, but extends to understanding how customs, popular traditions, prayers, habits, rituals, etc. influence social phenomena, as well as people's everyday lives. As Thompson himself comments, when he explains what he sought with his study about hunger riots, addressed in his emblematic work text *A economia moral da multidão inglesa no século XVIII* (1998, p. 204),

My objective of analysis was the *mentalité* or, as I prefer to say, the political culture, expectations, traditions and even superstitions of the workers who were most frequently involved in market actions; the relations – sometimes negotiations – between the crowd and the rulers, called by the unsatisfactory term 'mutiny'.

The economic dimension and popular traditions meet in an arena of conflicts, disputes and negotiations, or more objectively, people do not move only when motivated by economic problems, but also by the needs invoked by custom, a driving force that cannot be neglected. The case extends to the analyses of the history of education, in which one must pay attention to how customs, behaviors and tradition operate in everyday school life. The clashes between generations, authorities and social classes are deeper and cannot be easily seen without paying attention to the subjectivities arising from the customs that students and teachers bring into the school.

² In brackets is the year of the first edition [1907] of the work.

Modern School of Barcelona: the attacks against ignorance and the emancipation of the proletariat

The history of the Modern School of Barcelona is often confused with the historical trajectory of its founder, due to the fact that Francisco Ferrer y Guardia dedicated his life's efforts to building a school project that would subvert the logic of traditional education, especially that originating from the Catholic Church in Spain. It is important to remember that Ferrer y Guardia, from his period of exile in France, from 1885 until his death in 1909, was always involved in the teaching profession, whether teaching Spanish in Paris or focusing on the activities of the Modern School³. It is also worth noting that he experienced the excitement of French intellectuals over the educational reforms of the 1880s, undertaken by Jules Ferry in France, as well as the favorable environment in Spain for the efforts of an *intelligentsia* concerned with the “modernization” of the country’s educational system, driven by the *regenerationist* movement. It was based on the experiences acquired in that context that, when he returned to Barcelona, Ferrer y Guardia decided to found a school. As soon as he arrived, he looked for a suitable location, bought the materials and organized those interested to work as teachers.

A Consultative Board was organized with the proposal to carry out the work, composed of “D. Jaime Peiró, teacher; D. E. Canibell, from the Arús Library; D. J. Salas Antón, lawyer; J. Peiró, doctor; D. Jaime Brossa, publicist; C. Jacquinet, Director; and F. Ferrer y Guardia, founder” (Muro, 2009, p. 57). The Modern School also had an Honorary Committee formed by the

chancellor of the University of Barcelona, Rodríguez Méndez, the naturalist Odón de Buen, the biologist Ramon y Cajal, the doctors Lluria and Martínez Vargas, the anarcho-syndicalist Anselmo Lorenzo, José Prat and the teachers Salas Antón, Corominas, Maseras and C. Jacquinet (Muro, 2009, p. 57).

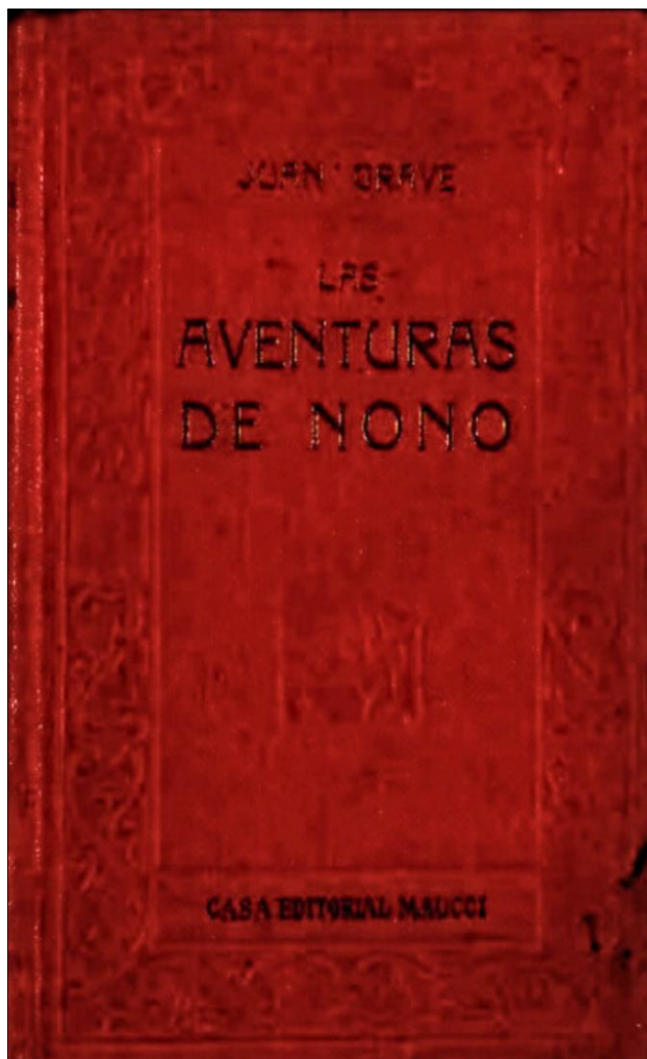
Soon after the organization of its collaborating members and the selection of a space, the aforementioned institution began its activities on September 8, 1901, at the address of Bailen Street, 56⁴. The location was in a small building in the central area of Barcelona, close to the *Parc de la Ciudadella and Plaza Tetuan*.

Among its collaborators were some anarchists, such as José Prat, Ricardo Mella, Anselmo Lorenzo, Paul Robin, among others (Lugan, 1921). The presence of anarchists in the routine of the Modern School made it an experience that diverged in some aspects from other educational institutions in Spain. It is worth noting the presence of content in its program that emphasized criticism of monarchical governments, capitalism, and patriotism. In addition, some of its school textbooks had as their central theme the disqualification of the Catholic Church, with a strong anticlerical and scientific tone. In other words, much of the content transmitted by the Modern School had a clear political dimension, in the sense of revealing to students which institutions and ideas did not converge with the school's purposes of combating all types of domination. As an example, we can mention the textbooks *La Aventura de Nono* (Grave, 1903) and *La Origen del Cristianismo* (Malvert, 1906), both translated and edited by the anarchist Anselmo Lorenzo (Prado da Silva, 2021).

³ In order to learn more about the life trajectory of Francisco Ferrer y Guardia and the Modern School of Barcelona, see: Solà Gussinyer, 1980

⁴ The first installation of the Modern School was on the same street, however, at no. 70. It remained in this location for a short time, soon moving to its permanent headquarters, at no. 56.

Figure 1 – Cover of the book *Las Aventuras de Nono*, by Jean Grave



Heritage: Fundación Francisco Ferrer y Guardia.

For Ferrer y Guardia, the fight against all types of domination would only be possible through rational and scientific education, in order to intellectually and morally emancipate the Spanish proletariat. Therefore, according to its founder:

The mission of the Modern School is to make the boys and girls entrusted to its care become educated, truthful, just and free from any prejudice. To this end, dogmatic study will be replaced by the rationalized study of natural sciences (Ferrer y Guardia, 2013 [1907], p. 38).

It is no coincidence that at that time, the Modern School program was configured in knowledge that was dear to intellectuals, doctors, politicians and educators who saw science and rationalist education as a path to the “regeneration” of the people. The role of bringing about improvements in the lives of the population was presented in knowledge such as “hygiene”, “human physiology”, “body exercises”, “cleanliness inspections”, among others. In addition, given the concerns about sanitation, the role of school doctor was established, with the aim of enforcing the school's hygienist ambitions, and this person was a reference on the subject.

In 1902, at the invitation of Francisco Ferrer y Guardia, pediatrician Andrés Martínez Vargas, a professor at the University of Barcelona at the time, began his participation as a school doctor at the Modern School. The initial idea was to hold public lectures every Sunday, at which parents, children and all interested people could attend his lectures. However, Martínez Vargas's collaboration, over the years, ended up becoming more intense, leading to an increase in his participation with sanitary inspections, prescriptions for activities and prophylactic measures to be adopted by teachers, in addition to the preparation of a manual about school *botiquin*.⁵

In the next topic, we will see how these prescriptions and practices of hygienist knowledge succeeded in the Modern School program.

Bodies, customs and traditions in the Modern School

At the turn of the 19th century into the 20th century, the pressing need, coming from Spanish sectors, to give importance to the body in schools, materialized with the royal decree of October 26, 1901, signed by the then Minister of Public Education and Fine Arts, Count of Ramanones. His central purpose was to reform the primary education system in Spain, establishing new knowledge for the programs of public schools in the country (España, 1901, p. 498). Among this knowledge was the introduction of content on “hygiene” and “body exercises” as mandatory in primary education. This fact had a satisfactory effect on the social environment, especially on the Spanish *intelligentsia* concerned with hygiene and health issues. Many doctors, politicians, educators, architects, psychologists, etc. adhered to the hygienist rhetoric under the supposed argument that health reforms and actions would be the first step towards modernizing the country and improving the Spanish race, in order to lessen the effects of endemic diseases and illnesses through physical and moral improvement of the population. This “modernizing” campaign, which encouraged physical and moral reform in the population, would also provide results in terms of physical abilities for work, which would supposedly bring benefits to the country's economy (Viñao, 2004).

The Modern School of Barcelona, although it did not fully reproduce the mandatory program enacted in the aforementioned law⁶, adopted a substantial part of this program, including the knowledge of “hygiene” and “body exercises”. Certainly, “[...] health education and instruction for children [...]” (Vargas, 1903, p. 28) were of fundamental importance in that school, as the school doctor Andrés Martínez Vargas commented. The introduction of hygiene knowledge thus became a maxim in the teaching of the Modern School. This health instruction sought to fulfill the responsibility of modifying students' bad behavior, such as: “[...] using the same bathroom, the same cup, exchanging pencils, mechanical pencils that pass from hand to hand and from mouth to mouth, sharing snacks such as bread and other treats [...]”, since these customs were seen by Martínez Vargas as “[...] a dangerous promiscuity for the community” (Vargas, 1903, p. 26). In the pediatrician's view, these habits were vectors for the transmission of diseases, so it was necessary to act firmly against them. The role of the school doctor would be to combat them through “[...] weekly or biweekly hygiene conferences, and proceeded to accustom students to hygiene practices, washing hands, mouth, bathing, swimming, cleaning nails, etc.” (Vargas, 1903, p. 28).

In general, this system of theoretical and practical activities provided the tools to condition children's hygiene habits. Such teaching focused on instilling in students the knowledge about the human body, as well as therapeutic procedures, the purpose of which was

⁵ In order to learn more about pediatricians, see: Andrés, 1981; Matías, 2015. Regarding the role of school doctors in Spain at the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century, see: Mar del Pozo Andrés, 2000

⁶ For example, “Historia Sagrada e Cristã”, a mandatory subject in primary school curricula, was not included in the curriculum of the Modern School of Barcelona. In fact, many of the textbooks used in this school experiment were labeled as anticlerical. For more information on this subject, see: Muro, 2009; Solà Gussinyer, 1980

promote the maintenance of physical and intellectual health. “By teaching children to love their health, I end up preserving it [...]”, comments Vargas (1903, p. 28) who, from this perspective, sought to go beyond the walls of the Modern School, since by teaching children hygiene habits, “[...] at home they pass on the advice they have learned to their parents and friends and in this way a suitable school irradiation is verified” (Vargas, 1903, p. 28).

The tone of Martínez Vargas’ speech lies in his reformist aspirations, which were not limited to changing the students’ habits alone, while the social problem was not limited to the Modern School, but above all, the interior of the school reflected the health problems that plagued large modern metropolises. Endemic diseases resulting from overpopulation in urban areas, industrialization and the unhealthiness of the work environment; difficulties in accessing drinking water; long working hours that took a toll on the health of the poorest population – both children and adults; and poor housing conditions are some of the experiences that particularly affected the underprivileged (Mayor Mayor, 2002). Although these were recognized economic problems, for many intellectuals, they could be mitigated by acquiring knowledge of hygiene. Thus, the scope of the education transmitted by the Modern School was justified by the fact that there was a social phenomenon recognized by Martínez Vargas as a greater evil: ignorance.

It is discouraging to see the prevailing ignorance in society, in which institutions, employees, classes and individuals walk blindly, when they are not obstinately committed to practicing the harmful, the evil, considering it as healthy and good, and the pain increases considering that all this set of distortions translates into discord, enmity, anger and premature death (Boletín, 1902, p.11).

In another passage, one of the school doctor's prescriptions dealt with the dangers of home remedies, in which he asserted that mothers used therapeutic methods on their children without medical guidance, and how this practice could be harmful to the health of children. In this prescription, he stated:

The victims of ignorance are countless. But the most terrible thing about this fact are the innocent children who pay with acute pain, deformities or even with their own lives, because of the negligence of their relatives and the interference of their people (Vargas, 1905, p. 9).

It was crystallized in the school doctor's vision that the evil that contaminated the behavior and minds of children was the ignorance of adults, understood as an intellectual problem. In other words, the lack of education led parents to neglect scientific evidence from medical and health circles, legitimizing popular traditions, such as prayers, healing treatments, ceremonies and drinks, which were seen as substitutes or the only way to proceed with regard to therapeutic methods for diseases. As Le Breton (2006) states, social medicine, in general, fought against therapeutic teas, massage routines, salt and herb baths, prayers, among other procedures, attributing them as wild practices, quackery, charlatanism, witchcraft, and similar labels, to disqualify such traditions under the pretext of modernizing medicinal rites (Le Breton, 2006). It is clear that the Modern School assumes a similar position. In addition to modernizing students' knowledge and behavior, it would also aim to maintain the biological life of this population in the face of all the hostile experiences emerging from a society undergoing a rapid process of urbanization and industrialization, as was the case in Barcelona.

Therefore, the Modern School's acquiescence in educating with scientific knowledge and assimilating new customs follows the logic in which certain traditions that could be harmful

to children's health should be overcome and, for this reason, should be combated. In view of this, it was no coincidence that among the "hygiene" content present in the Modern School program, it was also possible to verify theoretical teaching about the body and its functioning.

The students will be taught to know their own bodies and the basic rules of elementary hygiene that are essential to maintain health. First, the teacher will show the structure of the human body: the skeleton, then the muscles, organs of movement, making it clear that bones do not always have the same hardness, since bones are completely soft in children and do not acquire consistency until the end of growth, making it extremely important to always maintain regular movements so as not to alter the shape of the bones when they still maintain flexibility. (Jacquinet, 1901a, p. 37).

The principal of Modern School, Clemence Jacquinet, presented the program on "hygiene" and "human physiology," justifying that the need for it was to educate children about the human body and ways to maintain their physical health. Concerns about cleanliness, both of the body and of clothing, posture, and habits that were directed towards procedures of civility, were frequent guidelines in the prescriptions and practices of activities conducted with the purpose of standardizing children to a model of a clean body.

This statement can be verified in another practice carried out by the actors of Modern School, that is, the "cleanliness inspections." These inspections occurred every day at two times, when the students entered the classroom and when they returned from recess. In the words of principal Jacquinet: "Cleanliness inspections are very necessary in preparatory classes. At this point, the teacher will not tolerate the slightest negligence, ensuring that all students present, in their person and in their clothing, an irreproachable appearance" (Jacquinet, 1901b, p. 10), adding, further, the warnings that "[...] children will be warned that their head, face and hands will be examined every morning and afternoon" (Jacquinet, 1901b, p. 11). These inspections took place outside the classroom, "[...] for example, during recess when the weather allows, allowing access to the classroom only to children considered worthy of entering" (Jacquinet, 1901b, p. 11).

Although the teacher should be attentive to inspecting the children's hands, face, head and clothes, so that they did not enter the classroom without proper hygiene, Jacquinet emphasized that he should also be sensitive to the students' conditions, since the lack of hygienic treatment came from children's naivety. Thus, the teacher should not humiliate them for this reason: "But since this visit, like everything related to education, requires great care, to be effective, it must be thorough without degenerating into humiliation" (Jacquinet, 1901b, p. 10). Therefore, according to the principal, teachers, when inspecting the cleanliness of schoolchildren, should comply with certain procedures: 1. it was necessary to avoid "[...] using a harsh tone [...]" (Jacquinet, 1901b, p. 11), since the teacher's role was "[...] to show a reaction of astonishment at the clumsiness of the child who does not know how to clean himself and who should be handed over to the representative to teach him how to wash himself, considering that it is very advantageous to force him to do it alone" (Jacquinet, 1901b, p. 11); 2. when possible, direct "[...] students to take a bath at least once a week [...]" (Jacquinet, 1901b, p. 11) in the facilities of the Modern School itself; and 3. the teacher should explain "[...] the advantages of cleanliness and the disadvantages of dirtiness [...]" (Jacquinet, 1901b, p. 10), with his/her instructions focused on "[...] matters of body hygiene and cleanliness, explaining the advantages of baths, general washing, etc." (Jacquinet, 1901b, p. 11).

It is clear that there was a rationalized ritual, with patterns of conduct and appearance that the students were supposed to assimilate. Since theoretical teaching about hygiene was not

enough, the students learned in practice, as the teachers themselves or other pedagogical agents took the children to wash. There was a sophisticated method of inducing customs, but the habits that the children acquired in the home, or in other environments outside the Modern School, did not coincide with the model established there. As Jacquinet stated, children would only enter the classroom “[...] when they were considered worthy of entering” (Jacquinet, 1901b, p.11). This implies understanding that such customs brought by children were not worthy of the standards established by the principal.

This regulatory model of habits and the child’s body plays with the duality between good and bad; ugly and beautiful; worthy and unworthy, with the intention of qualifying what was correct for children to reproduce and what was not. Supported by science, the Modern School developed a series of ethical and moral behaviors, associated with “truth”, with a “correct” model to be followed. As Jacquinet reinforced, the teacher on “[...] the first day of class explains the advantages of cleanliness and the disadvantages of dirt, both in the correct sense and by extension applied to morality” (Jacquinet, 1901b, p. 10).

Educating for civility

However, the Modern School did not focus its efforts on educating children's bodies and habits only through those activities traditionally recognized for this purpose, but also invested in artistic activities to develop hygienic measures, such as singing lessons. In a prescription on teaching singing, it was reiterated that students should have impeccable behavior. They were required to be orderly and diligent, one of the main concerns during the class was the students’ tone of voice. Although the prescription took into account the teaching of singing, its indications extended to the level of behavior. In one passage, the author reiterates that singing would not be shouting, something common among students, because: “Because of the effort required to speak loudly, the child speaks loudly, raising his or her voice to a higher tone than usual”. The habit of singing in a very loud tone was not seen as healthy, nor as admirable behavior, since “[...] it becomes an abominable [...] custom that is found very frequently in some women and many men” (Boletín, 1906, p. 109).

Singing teaching would also have the function of educating the child to behave in private and public life, assimilating behaviors to demonstrate good appearance, as well as revealing himself or herself as a person of “good manners” and “civilized”. To this end, the way of speaking was seen as a behavior that should be molded to what was said about good manners, such as having good diction: “The child who gets used to this monotony of supporting the voice by speaking equally on each syllable” develops a terrible habit, as he will thus “lose all diction” (Boletín, 1906, p. 109).

The intention to change the children’s habits to something understood as more in line with the logic of civility, especially that spread by the bourgeois classes, is notable. Thus, students should change the “[...] bad habit of spitting on the floor, coughing without putting their hand in front of their mouth. All these precautions are of great hygienic importance” (Jacquinet, 1902, p. 83). The principal also adds:

For example, you can speak in class, but never shout. You must always be in a regular posture and discard careless and lazy postures [...]. I also recommend that students be inspired to love the classroom. Everyone should make sure that there are no papers on the floor, books scattered on the tables, or paint stains on the floor or walls. Each object that has been used should be carefully put back in its place before picking up another, and if there is a need to indicate something on a map or a table, a special stick should be used for this purpose and nothing should be touched with the finger (Jacquinet, 1901b, p. 11).

Order was understood as sanitary and civil behavior. It was necessary to transmit knowledge to children that would make them practice habits of zeal and care, in addition to keeping the classroom looking good – this is why the habits of “good manners” and civility were so widespread at that time. Being well dressed, clean, and having civil customs were habits suggested in Spanish manuals of urbanity and hygiene at the end of the 19th century (Guereña, 2000). The historian Jean-Louis Guereña thus defines the purposes of the manuals of urbanity in Spanish schools.

The insistence observed in these manuals about “sanitize” the boys’ and girls’ lives to whom they are directed clearly follows criteria of economic and social rationality, to the extent that hygiene becomes yet another instrument of social control within urbanity (Guereña, 2000, p. 69).

The teaching of urbanity, through the manuals analyzed by the historian, seems to be applied to students with the purpose of constructing a class distinction – educating the child to have the appearance and manners appropriate to the social class to which he/she belongs. Those who maintained these “good” habits were considered improved, superior, correct individuals.

In the Modern School, however, it is possible to verify the prescription of education for an urbanity apparently more appropriate to the class interests with which it was associated.

People need formulas for relating to each other, saying goodbye, etc. Their rights must be mutually respected so as not to be disturbed. It is necessary that no one sacrifices themselves, that no one has privileges, which are always odious because they are unfair, as a representation of social injustices. In a word, civility is the counterbalance to brutal selfishness, which would be cynically displayed if delicate beings did not have a sense of what is due to others and, for social balance to subsist, the need to experience the benefits of mutual help and to express them through civility, which is the beautiful expression of fraternal altruism (Duval, 1903, p. 80).

From a particular perspective, the author of this prescription understood that civility valued human fraternity, solidarity and mutual respect, regardless of social classes. It did not matter whether the subject was a peasant or a worker, civility should be practiced among all, as it was considered an expression of natural benevolence, something innate present in humanity, in the broad sense of the word. That is, civility was universal in view of the fact that it should be practiced by all subjects in order to overcome selfishness and individualism. In Duval's understanding, civility and it is something that must be taught or, at least, awakened especially when this imperative of universal benevolence was not present in the subject: “[...] men need formulas to relate, say goodbye, etc. [...]” and civility was “[...] the counterbalance to brutal selfishness” (Duval, 1903, p. 80). This meaning could be instilled in the child, also aiming at moral regeneration. Good relations in society and good manners in behaving with other subjects were understood as a moral trait and indispensable for social cohesion.

It seems to us that the Modern School had two purposes with the teaching of civility. The first was to provide all students with the same knowledge and behaviors that the bourgeoisie established as a class privilege, that is, hygienic habits and “good manners”, seen as privileges that maintained their distinctive character, should be overcome through the popularization of this knowledge and behaviors to everyone. The second was that this measure expressed the elements relevant to the Modern School,

namely fraternity and altruism, in the sense that this sensitivity to universal benevolence, manifested by the new behaviors taught, would allow for good relations among all in society, without establishing any form of oppression. It was, in short, to collectively enable everyone to have the same skills, to be able to share these customs socially and, in this way, to establish social well-being.

Nevertheless, the Modern School's argument to justify the teaching of “hygiene” and new behaviors, as well as the fight against recognized traditional customs or those linked to references from the past, was anchored in political-ideological assumptions, especially the anticlerical tone present in the prescriptions and school manuals. This can be seen in a prescription by Francisco Ferrer y Guardia:

Regarding hygiene, Catholic filth dominates Spain, San Alejo and San Benito Labra, not the only ones, nor the most characteristic pigs that appear on the list of supposed inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven, but some of the most popular among the filthy and innumerable masters of filth. With such types of perfection, immersed in an environment full of ignorance, skillfully and perversely supported by the clergy and royalty of times past, as well as by the liberal bourgeoisie up to our current democratic days; it is clear that the children who come to our school would have to be very weak on the issue of cleanliness: dirt was atavistic. We combat dirt prudently and systematically, showing the children the repugnance that emanates from every dirty object, animal and person; on the contrary, the pleasure and sympathy they should feel towards cleanliness. Afterwards, we explained cleanliness as a matter of beauty and dirt as a characteristic of ugliness, thus entering firmly into the field of hygiene (Ferrer y Guardia, 2013[1907], p. 58-59).

Ferrer y Guardia's warnings about how the content of “hygiene” was taught in the Modern School, although long, are quite enlightening. It is clear that incorporating certain customs for the sake of improving physical and mental health did not only concern biological/physiological issues, but also a way of distinguishing oneself from practices and concepts associated with institutions that referred to old habits and ideologies of the past, especially clerical, monarchical and bourgeois references in Spain.

The entire load of contempt that this hygienist mentality of the Modern School carried against dirt, disorder and lack of health was directed towards tradition and references from the past. The disqualification of Catholic saints – which also implied a disqualification of the Catholic Church – calling them “dirty”, “filthy” and “pigs”, demonstrates the attempt to mark a social and political distinction in the behavioral sphere, namely: practicing hygienic habits of bodily cleanliness was seen as a healthy act, as it allowed one to maintain physical health, but it also constituted practices and prescriptions that were opposite to those attributed to the saints and the Catholic Church. A clear division between right and wrong was established, taking Catholic behaviors and references as a parameter: it was repugnant to be dirty, just like the saints of the Church; in contrast, sympathy for healthy habits that led to bodily cleanliness was encouraged, such as those practiced in the teaching of the Modern School. Furthermore, Ferrer y Guardia's prescription indicates the importance given to feelings and the appeal to sensitize students to adopt these hygienic behaviors as habitual. The dual game between “being disgusting” or “being pleasant”, or even the association of cleanliness with beauty

and dirt with ugliness, which the Catalan pedagogue applied in his argument, reinforces this educational aspect of the Modern School distinguishing itself from certain practices and institutions, doing so through a mobilization of students' feelings.

We found that the hygienist intervention of the Modern School had an effect not only on the inheritance that parents left to their children – the biological and moral aspects, their habits and customs under the argument of improving health and social regeneration – but also, there was an ideological force acting in the argumentation of the choices for certain behaviors and knowledge to be developed in this school.

Final Considerations

When analyzing the prescriptions on the contents of “hygiene”, “human physiology” and “cleanliness inspection”, as well as the prescriptions of the school doctor Martínez Vargas in the program of the Modern School of Barcelona, a clear contrast became evident between the popular traditions, based on the customs and behaviors legitimized by the social groups to which these students belonged, and the hygienist rhetoric promoted by the pedagogical agents of the Modern School – management, school doctor, teachers, etc. There was a tacit tension between the customs brought by the students and what the institution understood as appropriate behavior. This triggered a process of reformulation of the students' habits, or rather, of inducing new practices that were in accordance with the logic of civility, decorum and “good manners”, in line with modern habits of being and living. In other words, it advocated obliterating popular traditions with the justification of establishing a new tradition recognized as “modern”.

We must understand that this hygienist approach at the Modern School had two purposes. The first was to care for the health and maintain the biological life of its students, especially those from less affluent classes. To this end, it focused its efforts on training children's bodies to acquire knowledge and skills in health and hygiene, thus preserving the organic survival of its students, even in the face of the lack of health and hygiene conditioned by poverty. According to its founder,

The Modern School aims to combat all obstacles that hinder the total emancipation of the individual [...] and to this end it adopts humanitarian rationalism, which consists of instilling in children the desire to know the origin of all social injustices so that, by recognizing them, they can combat and oppose them all. The rationalist and scientific education of the Modern School must encompass [...] the study of everything that is favorable to the freedom of the individual and the harmony of the community, through a regime of peace, love and well-being for all without distinction of class or gender (Ferrer y Guardia, 2013 [1907], p. 173).

In this way, it was understood that knowledge was a human heritage and, therefore, should be disseminated to all. As Martínez Vargas rightly put it, the mastery of hygiene knowledge by children was of utmost importance, since through it was possible to mitigate “[...] health problems and contribute to the natural prolongation of material life, virtue and morality; in short, happiness and social justice derive from the knowledge and practice of hygiene” (Boletín, 1902, p. 11). Disseminating scientific knowledge to all would guarantee the poorest the same rights as the wealthy classes. Hence, the appropriation of bourgeois habits and procedures, understood as civilized, is justified. This can be seen in a passage in the *Boletín de la Escuela Moderna*, when the periodical deals with of hygiene for the proletariat.

This happens with morality or even with hygiene, ideas that are somewhat related to each other, as shown by some thinkers who defined them considering them respectively as guides for action or the body, without any practical drawback other than that which prevents the poor abandoned child, who has no other teachers than misery and vice, and the worker, who has his salary as his only resource, from observing a morality that he does not know or [cannot] buy expensive hygiene that is only available to the privileged (Boletín, 1903, p. 45).

The Modern School, in a very pragmatic way, understood that such customs cooperated to improve the organic and social life of the poorest population and, for this reason, invested in teaching hygiene knowledge and in inducing new habits and behaviors in children. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that the behaviors reiterated by the school, from time to time, appeared with intentions beyond the biological dimension.

The ideological component was also the vector of persuasion for students to acquire certain hygienic habits. The way of operating, showing the beauty in clean things and people, and the ugliness in dirt, as well as other forms of polarization – right and wrong; disgusting and pleasant – demonstrate a sophisticated way of the Modern School acting in order to sensitize students. What was at stake in this way of operating was the establishment, for students, of a distinct way of being and acting, in particular, antagonizing representations of the past – clergy and monarchy – and with the social classes that were in dispute with the poorest – the bourgeoisie.

In view of this, it is important to emphasize the caution that must be taken when mobilizing concepts such as “civilizing”, “modernizing”, “regenerating”, etc. whose purpose was to modify ideas, habits and traditions. Depending on the social group that becomes the object of the investigations, the notion of these concepts reveals itself to be polysemic. There are similarities in the way of acting, in the arguments, in the practices and in the prescriptions, however, sometimes these same social groups that act in a similar way, present different ends for the educational process. This was the case of the Modern School, although it shows a certain similarity in its prescriptions around the hygienist issue with the rhetoric that circulated at that time. Its purposes envisioned a very specific destiny due to the ideological issues to which it was associated, since there was a notable socialist project under development in the course of that education.

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