Ethnohistory of the School. Representations of Modernity

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses and discusses the historiographic construct "modernity" and the problem of its representations and their readings and interpretations. It examines the question based on two exemplifications, with the aid of iconographic sources, attributing to them the function of mimesis of the empirical culture of the school: a) the universal exhibitions (modernity as performance); b) the ambivalences of the modern (dialectical understanding of modernity). It concludes with an attempt at a synthetic closure of a hermeneutic character.

KEY WORDS

Modernity; Ethnohistory; Hermeneutics; Universal exhibitions; Dialectics tradition/Innovation; Iconography.

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OF WHICH MODERNITY ARE WE SPEAKING?

In this study we will not talk of modernity in a purist historiographic sense, that is to say, in reference to the modern era to which history scholars refer, who limit this long period between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. We refer, rather, to a historiographic construct of modernity which is more flexible, less canonical and more pluritopic. This means accepting the proposition that modernisation can be seen in shorter time processes and under less fixed reference models as well as in more diversified contexts.

Peter Burke himself, who dedicated his first work to studies on the origins of modernity at the end of the fifteenth century, has had to clarify that today it is necessary to recognise the existence of at least three historical modernities: the original or Renaissance one he studied; the one which commenced in the West with the political revolutions and the industrial revolution at the end of the eighteenth century; and that which started with the newest technoscientific revolution of today. One modernity would thus be overcome and relieved by another and this again by one which is more advanced (Cieszynska, 2014, 13 ff). Even more, if we enter the possible consideration of the continuous succession of contemporary vanguards as a historical incarnation of modernisms, the epiphany of the modern would be still more dynamic and full of change.

In the long time period perspective–the braudelian–which is that suggested by this monograph of *Sisyphus*, the history of education may be examined as a continuity/discontinuity which took off in the origins of renaissance modernity, in connection with the birth of Nation-States, and in parallel to the strategies of religious influence after the Reformation. This historical process would go on expanding, albeit with different rhythms throughout a multisecular period until the present day. Thus the educational institution should see itself as a product derived from modernity itself and, at the same time, as a variable influencing the processes of modernisation of those societies in which compulsory education has been or is being implanted.

In a closer and more precise way, and better adapted to the guidelines of this publication, the modernity which concerns us here would be closer to that proposed by Justino Magalhães–one of the co-ordinators of this monograph–in his recent historiographic study of the question. It would, in this case, cover the frame of the last two centuries from the Enlightenment, which inaugurated a long period as well in which the cultural synthesiser of, in the author's terms, the "school education" would be formed. Throughout this time cycle, institutional education was affected by social implantation, through its pragmatic mediation, of the written culture and literacy in order to create the literary citizen. This was the nuclear option adopted by educational modernity as the leitmotiv of its legitimisation. In the school, the Nation-State found a way to implant and universalise its civilising pragmatics, and to transcend the limits of the pre-modern vernacular cultures, still chained to the oral world. Liberal rationality legitimated its authority elsewhere by tracing a remarkable isomorphism between school life and social life. In this way, the school instituted an anthropology and a new subjectivity by means of the dissemination in the enlightened population of practices and knowledge which were replicas of the social matrix: written culture, lettered mind, literate citizen, school discipline (Magalhães, 2010, 417 ff).

At another level, contemporary hermeneutics, which Antonio Valleriani–favoured disciple of Paul Ricoeur–defines as pluritopical, has underlined that as single canon of modernity cannot be assumed, as early hermeneutics sustained, while each of the cultures discovered and analysed by anthropology sustains its own horizon of what is modern as a higher value (Valleriani, 2003). The fragmentation of practices and discourses which have accompanied postmodernity in recent decades (Escolano, 1996, 325 ff) has, without doubt, reinforced this pluralist view of modernity, at the same time as postulating as a new value of innovation, by adding to that postulated by the different identities, the themes of alterity and diversity originated by the crossing of cultures.

Consequently, we should assume a more flexible view of modernity than that as defined by conventional historiography until now, and as far as the modernisation of the school is concerned, we should prioritise the analyses which contribute to understanding the continuities and the changes which institutional culture has attempted to carry out empirically and pragmatically the processes followed by diverse identifiable civilising modernities historically when trying to implant the paradigm of "school education".

In the above context, we propose to show in this work the verification of some processes of modernisation which have been occurring in past societies from an ethnohistorical perspective, that is to say, from a certain strategy which, by prioritising phenomenology, allows us to recover experience as a value and as a source of knowledge, exemplifying some of the changes observable in the material and empirical testimonies in which educational modernity has been registered.

The history of traditional education was largely legitimated under so-called humanist orientations, owing much to classical and contemporary idealisms, which set out to see the evolution of the school as an expression in time of the generators of the original modernity, from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment. At the same time, that history reflected–within our western framework–the impact of bourgeois mentality which modelled the revolutionary era throughout the last two centuries, as well as of the popular social movements which were produced as reactions to the dynamics of capitalism, highlighting the relationships of education with the development of the idea of progress and with the affirmation of the value of citizenship in enlightened democracies.

The two classical historiographical concepts–the idealist and the positivist–have been questioned from the perspective of a new pragmatism which criticises the ideological and superstructural character of the epistemes it is based on, and have affirmed, a *sensu contrario*, the primordial value which has to be attributed to the empirical culture of the school and which may be examined from the directive practices it is materialised from. For the new critics, the history of education is not what it was for the idealists and the positivists. This was perhaps what would correspond to its ideals and desires, whether achieved or not, but not to effective history, that which takes place in the real world. The new orientation leads us to base educational historiography, in a pragmatic approach, on the study of the significant and discursive practices, or meaningful actions, which allows us to unveil the codes of what some authors have termed "grammar of scholarisation" (Tyack & Cuban, 2000, 167 ff), in whose codes we might find the most achieved pedagogical tradition–also, therefore, that which is ascribed to modernity–and the *habitus* which has modelled the professionalism of the teachers.

This is precisely the historiographic change which has led to ethnohistory and its corollary, hermeneutics, that is, the writing, reading and interpretation of the experiential elements provided by any ethnology. The world of practice is an essential register of what the school was in reality and of the knowledge we have constructed around it. In the *empeiría* of

institutional life, actions, discourses and the governing norms of education materialise in the factual plane. Experience is, at the same time, the field in which the frameworks of modernity or conservativism displayed by educational institutions is exhibited in an observable manner.

History, like all social sciences, has thus followed the sensible proposal of Pierre Bourdieu, who advised attending firstly to the healthy "practical reasons" in which a culture is to be seen (Bourdieu, 2007, pp. 9-10). It has also responded to the indagations of the sociologist Richard Sennett, with its obstinate search for the *techné* underlying any form of practical wisdom, and definitively all activity of intelligent culture (Sennett, 2009, pp. 20-22). The phenomenological immersion, on which the new historiography is based, centres its research attention on the action that memory and ethnohistory reconstruct in the form of factual representations which aspire to configure themselves as a mimesis of the empirical reality analysed. This mimesis would be definitively constituted in the most realistic and plausible image of "culture of practice" referred to by Zigmunt Bauman (Bauman, 2002).

Teachers forged their profession with the good practices they tried out in the everyday life of the school. The exploration of these actions, which are not good or modern because they were thought of or standardised as desirable, but because they were effective in the everyday management of the institutions, and because they took root over the course of time, is the aim of ethnohistory. Such actions were, as far as our analysis is concerned, fully modern. Even in the origins of modernity there were "ignorant masters" who invented certain modalities of *techné* which were effective, even though they seemed rudimentary, and which circulated in different means, giving birth to different forms of professional appropriation in diverse contexts (Pereyra, 1988, 193 ff). This is not a *boutade* in the style of the Jacques Rancière's illiterate master (Rancière, 2002, 31 ff), but a form of value justification which all good empiricism may have.

The above references did not interest traditional academic historiography. They are, however, fundamental content for the construction of the new pragmatic history, that which sets out to look for the keys of the historical persistence of certain patterns which remain codified in what Marc Depaepe and Frank Simon have called the "black box" of school culture (Depaepe & Simon, 1995, p. 10). These elements are precisely what modernities have to tackle in order to introduce changes in the teaching customs and uses established by the institutions. Understanding and explaining such traditions is absolutely necessary in order to interpret the changes fostered by modernity.

All historical ethnography–including school ethnography–concludes with the constructions of a text made up of the diverse materials gathered in the researchers' notebook: a) the objects: archaeological exponents of the material culture; b) the icons: images which illustrate diverse aspects of the

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reality analysed; c) the writings: text products created by the actors in their past experience, and d) the voices: oral or narrative registers transcribing subjects talking to us about the past. The final product of ethnography is a formalised written text, or in other terms, a material, verbal-iconic and testimonial representation which becomes a type of *mise en scène* of the collected elements and actions, or a performance which becomes a plausible mimesis of the reality the researcher may offer of the practices examined.

As an *interpretandum* to writing, understanding and explaining, ethnography is made up of the three structural historiographic operations Michel de Certeau spoke of: the archivistic or documentary, the comprehensive-explanatory and the "writtenness". This last one is precisely what is offered to the readers as a representative construction of the past, or as the final expository synthesis of what has been studied. Regarding this proposal or *hermeneuein,* the interpretive community may pose questions and make plural readings, all of which will work as a dialogue in order to approach a possible and, perhaps, desirable intersubjective version of the text, which is really a representative language of an absent reality–what happened previously but no longer is, what memorialistic practice reconstructs and to whose image is attributed the statute of mimesis susceptible to interpretation (Certeau, 1975, chapter 3).

WHICH REPRESENTATIONS?

How has what is modern been represented in the images offered by historical ethnographies of education?

Are these representations a true mimesis of the reality studied, that is, the analogical proof of identity of the modern or innovating school? Or are they, perhaps, formal constructions, not lacking a certain artificiality, which searches above all for efficacy in the symbolic legitimisation of the role played by the institutions, the social agents and the bureaucracies in the promotion of modernity as a value giving credit to the ideology of their desires and powers? Let us see.

The analysts who approach the study of reality through its representations always need to allude to the implicit limits of the model used, a question already raised in classical dialectics. For the earlier ones, the representation was not the same as the thing represented, but rather, as Jack Goody points out, a certain reconstruction, the image made up of the shadows of the things projected in a cavern. However, the words themselves mean somewhat more than a representative imitation of the things they allude to. This has precisely the value of what Paul Ricoeur calls "living

metaphor", a rhetorical figure which opens the semantic field of the verbal, and also the iconic and dramatic (the action), to the plurality of readings and meanings (Ricoeur, 2001). The English anthropologist also chooses to consider mimesis, according to the above, as a form of re-presentation or re-creation open to the diversity of readings or interpretations (Goody, 1999, p. 23). What is more, this flexibility sits well with the open, pluralist meaning we have agreed to confer on modernity.

To prevent us from falling into the possible fallacies that might lead to an acritical use of the reality/representation/mimesis trident, I should like to comment on an observation that Paul Ricoeur makes when glossing Michel de Certeau's methodological proposal regarding the formalisation of the archive—the first historiographic operation in the establishment of historical sources—in the context of research into the past, as far as this past is necessarily a reality which is already missing from the phenomenological sight of the analyst who is attempting to reconstruct it (Ricoeur, 2003, p. 267).

All representation presupposes an absent reality and aspires to be a faithful imitation of what Michel de Certeau calls *l'absent de l'histoire*. In this action, documents are segregated from practice and from the subjects which created them (Certeau, 1975, 64 ff), at the same time as going to occupy a 'place' in the new intellectual space which is generated in the representation. In the case of those representations which make up ethnohistory, the new setting materialises in the researcher's field notebook where the documents found on the searches are written up. This includes the iconic, oral and material ones, not just the literary ones. The field notebook, being a syncretic text, offers more likelihood of approximating the mimesis to the represented reality.

At times, the mimesis has competed with other types of alternative proposal to classical historiography. Fiction and narratives based on memory aspire, according to Roger Chartier, to be an alternative to history itself, insofar as these constructions sustain that they are probably no less legitimate than conventional histories, which are always exclusively attributed the values of truth and scientific worth, without ever demonstrating this sufficiently, at least to the satisfaction of all (Chartier, 2007, p. 34). Furthermore, the products of memory and narrativity, be it imaginary or fictional, offer more motivating and didactic tales, according to the reception and appropriation of their messages by the subjects and collectives of people who make use of them, and to whom the subjective or intersubjective interpretation is finally transferred.

Be that as it may, to the practical effects which interest us here, we have to agree that, as the semiologist Roland Barthes indicated, all image is a certificate of the existence of what is represented, which initially provides efficient proof of a certain reality. It is not, therefore, a more metaphorical register (Barthes, 1986, p. 95). Another thing all together is the interpretation we may make of it regarding the real world preserved by the memory

condensers which are all the sources which speak to us of the past, and which, in the present study, refer to the processes of change and modernisation which have affected the history of the school.

The representations are configured otherwise, as Jack Goody underlined, as norms inherent to all human expression, necessary in any process of communication. They occupy a central symbolic and imaginary space in social and cultural identity and, furthermore, constitute and observable measure to elucidate the implicit anthropology they carry (Goody, 1999, p. 12). When trying to reconstruct what was in the past the reality being studied, the ethnohistory of education, as well as the material and visual archaeology works with objects and representations of what Martin Lawn called "abandoned modernities" (Lawn, 2012), that is to say, with physical materialities which were once signs of change and which later, on being substituted with other, more innovating ones, fell into decay. The so-called modern times have behaved, on an aesthetic and technological level above all (although also in social uses as well), like a succession of vanguards, that is, like a continuous substitution of modernities for others. These modernities have been objectified in the representations originated by the archaeological remains which have been preserved.

We have to confess, despite the above, that education has not been so dynamic, as far as the processes of renovation are concerned, as other technical and social sectors of life and culture, although in certain periods, such as in the cycle of movement of the New School, the so-called escholanovism, it has been inspired by the dynamic inherent to the periods of change in other fields. If other historical cross sections of the educational modernising process are examined, the successive synchronic texts to be analysed would surely offer the image of a palimpsest, on which we would discover diverse writings belonging to different evolutionary moments. This ethnographical model would elucidate layers of emerging and dominant scripts, together with others of decadent and even obsolete pedagogical models. The archaeological material of teaching allows us to exhume these abandoned modernities, which in their time were unequivocal signs of innovation. This exploration facilitates the discovery of some keys to historical logic which help us to explain the persistencies and substitutions in the process of change, which defines the critical task of the new cultural history of education, frequently based on material sources or on their representations.

The ethnologist historian finds objects, images and writings for the pedagogical world, be it *in situ*–sometimes in forgotten corners of the institutions themselves, or in museums and archives, in private collections, in antique shops, and even in rubbish containers for the school material which is no longer used. With these materialities, the researcher often makes syncretic assemblies which pretend to be more or less truthful with regard

to the reality which the remains belonged to when they were in use. By means of a certain do-it-yourself operation, the ethnographologist produces representations in series, as a puzzle or in a mosaic which, at least in hypothesis, are, it is supposed, a mirror in playback of what might have been the reality explored. If this exercise is directed to showing the changes brought about by modernisation, the historian may contrast the new image with earlier scenographs, which will be seen as archaic.

It should be warned that many conserved images of the school past were produced by the same educational institutions which were the subject of representation or by the agents who tutored the system. They implicitly bear the intention of the image creator to offer the public the innovations which showed unequivocally positive signs of advance towards the desired modernity. In other words, they were proof of goodness on the path of progress. On other occasions the scenes could denounce certain critical aspects of the reality represented. Some of these scenographies can even be included in the pictorialist current, a method of setting up scenes like pictorial performances constructed with a certain theatricality or photographic mannerism. The iconographs may finally respond to memory rituals, incorporating in the *mise en scène* certain fetishist gestures which distance the representations produced from the desirable spontaneity which would allow us to contrast the truth of the modernity offered by the images (Escolano, 2015, 45 ff).

A considerable portion of the previous *mises en scène* were designed to corroborate and reinforce the myth that universal education was a *pharmakon* for all the evils of civilisation and an unequivocal achievement of the established discourse regarding the progress of society and man, the *leitmotiv* inherent in the very idea of modernity. *Happy and in school [Felices y escolarizados]* was the title of a suggestive and controversial monograph by the Spanish historian, Raimundo Cuesta, and whose central argument centred on the criticism of the binomial school-happiness which has attempted to legitimise the development of educational systems in the contemporary period as a process towards the welfare of individuals and the community, a discourse which the author considers to be partly an ideological fallacy of modernism and of the dominant discourse in the period of the liberal revolutions which would even affect a certain conception of childhood and adolescence as entities who were to be mainly tutored as minors by the "intelligentsia" of the knowledge-power system (Cuesta, 2005, 187 ff).

TWO EXAMPLES

From the above considerations which make up, even with the limits we have noted, the new norms of school ethnohistory, we shall analyse two subthemes which will allow us to exemplify, mainly by means of iconographs, the possible modes of representation and symbolical legitimisation of what we may understand as educational modernity. These exemplifications set out to offer a visual sample of how school ethnohistory can investigate and explain the processes of change and the signs of continuity circulating in the past so as to illustrate the links to modernisation in the field of educational practice. All of this is placed in the context of educational institution pragmatics, which is not the same as would correspond to other fields of school culture, such as the academic or political ones.

One of these examples affects the universal exhibitions which took place in the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, a topic we have already seen in another historiographic study (Escolano, 2009). The representations we can follow concerning this field are, in general, of a performance nature, insofar as they attempted to publicise or exhibit, in terms of political and economic or technological marketing, the objects, images and texts in which contemporary modernity was expressed. In these great theatres of humanity, which is what the exhibitions were, the images they announced and diffused can be seen as performances, that is to say, as exhibitions which propagated the achievements that the national societies, the companies of social and professional corporations showed in order to confirm their progress and positive advances on the world stage.

A second example shows the double-headed and dialectical character that modernity has had since its origins, attempting to offer a more complex and dynamic image of the innovation processes than a simple performance. This example, alternative and complementary to the previous one, does not just underline the positive aspects of the innovator insofar as the dialectical relations which are always present in the interactive play of the modern with the old, which is introduced in a certain historical moment as a novelty with respect to established tradition, that is to say of the past which is presented as a practice in decline.

The relationships between tradition and modernity may be illustrated by means of *ad hoc* iconographies of the everyday world and of the world of the school in diverse periods and in distinct thematic sectors which make up the field of education as an empirically representable and visualisable fact. Some scenographies which have circulated as convincing evidence of certain known historical facts show signs that reveal changes in the real situation they represent, and these visible transformations are the expression of how the processes of change towards modernity have been shown publicly.

Audiovisual anthropology, a new current in cultural studies, which is based on the intelligent use of the image, offers new paths in the detection, explanation and interpretation of the underlying practices and discourses of the language of the visible, or, if it is preferred, in the rhetoric of the image about which Roland Barthes (García Vera & Velasco, 2011) spoke some time ago. The anthropology of our period, as has already been said, often falls back on history to explain the genealogy of cultures, and historiography has also been anthropologised to some extent in order to adopt a more cultural perspective of time and of societies, not only in its methods but also in the discourses which affect the hermeneutic understanding and explanation of the ways of civilization, that is to say, its own episteme.

MODERNITY AS PERFORMANCE: THE UNIVERSAL EXHIBITIONS

The universal exhibitions were the expression of the level of modernity of a period. They established images, discourses and practices which were offered worldwide as vanguards of the time and as new horizons in the advance to the future. Their proposals originated new representations of civilisations, peoples, cultures, and also of education. At the same time, these great international exhibitions gave visibility to many people who, until then, had no history. It introduced them via this public space into the great theatre of humanity, that is to say, into the new modernity.

António Nóvoa has underlined how these world exhibitions formed, at that time, new public spaces which gave social visibility to the advances offered by national educational systems in their period of birth and implantation, and how they influenced the educators and the politicians, along with the invention and development of the so-called "school model" which circulated and was imposed as a normalising device in various cultural sectors and which originated the mass institutional education (Nóvoa, 2006).

Performance, publicity and marketing are constructs which are associated thanks to their complementary semantic similarities. An exhibition is held to publicise a message as a commercial attraction. Products were sold in these exhibitions, prestige was at stake and national identities were affirmed. The universal exhibitions showed how signs of modernity, in the framework of the creations of industrial society, the most outstanding educational innovations of the different countries, and, among these, the materials which made up the incipient technology of the schools in the so-called era of progress. Such performances were also offered according to the logic of the market and of the industrial revolution.

At another level, the exhibitions, as Moisés Kuhlmann underlined, were "great didactic parties" which could be defined, using the language of

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metaphor, as a "temple" in which the liturgical admiration of the visitors was offered certain market techniques created to support the feeling of "secular faith" in the progress of industry and civilisation (Kuhlmann, 2001, 24 ff). Walter Benjamin considered them as places of pilgrimage for the different types of public, on whose stages the objects could even reach the category of fetish (Benjamin, 1972). Other authors have defined them as "display cabinets of progress" in the "concert of nations", a kind of shop window or space open to competition regulated and credited by prizes and distinctions (Neves, 1986). Some have even qualified them, looking back to Denis Diderot and his project of compendium of a universal taxonomy of knowledge, as "a living and illustrated encyclopaedia of civilisation" (Silverman, 1977, p. 78). It is clear, therefore, that these international shows were an enormous window open to the world–a nomadic exhibition travelling from city to city–which offered *urbi et orbi* the modern representation of the world, and, in our field, of the school.

Many of the images and the contents of the fairs entered the school by means of the posters, iconographs, manuals, literature, press and other kinds of publicity, thus forming a universal message of the level achieved by civilisation, a discourse which was necessary to spread not only as intellectual content but also as an expression of the ethos inherent to all cultures, considered both individually and globally. Some of this information was even transferred to the first pedagogical and ethnographical museums, codifying iconic stereotypes of the national, anthropological, social and aesthetic heritage of the people, the nations and the empires. This repertory of texts, images and material realities established a social and professional image set, that is, a culture.

A whole future is initiated, therefore, in the scenographies of the new modernity. *Modelling the Future* is the title that Martin Lawn gives to the publication of the collective work on the subject in Symposium Books, a collection of the studies presented in the colloquium which took place in the International Centre of School Culture (CEINCE) in 2007 (Lawn, 2009), with the participation of historians from cities where one of the first exhibitions took place (London, Paris, Chicago, Buenos Aires, Tokyo...) of the second half of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries. By examining the educational materials that these international exhibitions showed as "modernities" we can discover the elements of the future announced and initiated in them.

The materialities and representations shown in the universal exhibitions thus offer new registers for cultural and educational history from an ethnographic and hermeneutic perspective, which is to say for a research orientation which emphasises the examination of archaeological remains and their interpretation by means of the reading of the index signs that the objects and icons exhibit when seen as representative texts which are

synthesisers of modernity. Hence the exhibitions constitute a field of study of a high testimonial value for historians of the empirical culture of the school.

These shows opened spaces to receive and exhibit the inventions which were the tools of the early modes of school production, developed alongside the educational systems. They were the meeting place for the first editors of school manuals, the inventors of mechanical devices of the incipient teaching technology, the representatives of state bureaucracies interested in showing their own achievements and seeing the advances of others, the associations behind the fomenting of popular culture, among others. Thus, in these periodical meetings, social and professional audiences were created and a public image was configured which was identifiable and recognisable by all for the school as institution open to the modern world and to civilising progress within the heart of the new industrial society.

Figure 1.1. School in Tolosa, Spain (1856) and *Figure 1.2.* Commercial fair in Aveiro, Portugal (2007). Two images originating from the exhibitions. The first one corresponds to the presentation made by a school in Tolosa, Guipúzcoa, Spain, of a new method of teaching reading from the Universal Exhibition of Paris, 1856. The second is an image from a show or commercial fair held in Aveiro, Portugal, in 2007. One and a half centuries separate one from the other. The technology has changed: from the traditional tables with benches, blackboard, moveable letters, boards–to the digital devices. The geometry and placing of the elements in the classrooms as well as where the participants are placed, are still familiar in their morphology. In the first one, the teacher, of a priestly attitude, teaches from the plinth or raised platform under the sign of the cross. The second one is much more functional and mobile as well as being secular.

One and another source, those who invented and created the image set of the unknown sceneries and the sociocultural stereotypes of the people who visited the exhibitions, as well as those who spread the first modern materialities of teaching, constitute today a new archive in which we may explore the educational practices and the ethnographical elements which

allow us to approach the construction of the material heritage of the school and a certain archaeology of education, empirically based and at a microhistorical level.

The universal exhibitions were the first show case—a kind of *orbis pictus*—in which the previously noted twin dimension of the world of education was shown in public: firstly, with reference to the school codification of the image shown through the texts and other didactic mediations of the natural, social and technical reality of the peoples of the world as a curricular content of instruction: secondly, as far as the internal culture of the school itself is concerned, insofar as those stages of modern civilisation could exhibit and communicate to all members of the public the first objects, icons and texts of the incipient education industry and of the new ergological tools belonging to the profession of teacher.

Throughout the historical cycle we are analysing, the fairs of contemporary modernity constituted ritual meetings to which the civilised countries felt themselves called to give account of and to learn the new advances being achieved in the spiral of modernity. They were a spectacle, a scene for pedagogical commerce, a space for the meeting and comparative evaluation of nations and a kind of Olympic theatre in which cultural identities and diversities could be shown. At the same time, there was competition on a global scale regarding the economic and technical achievements of each country.

Many realities from all over the world could be seen for the first time and this proto-representation would structure the observations, the cultural and pedagogical stereotypes which would be transferred to cartography and books. At the same time that these images would become one of the first data banks they would also constitute the first cognitive clichés about the contemporary world.

In this environment were also born the first prejudices that influenced the relation game of perceptive themes on which the interaction between the nationalisms and imperialisms of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries was based. All this occurred in parallel to the invention by the State of the school as public space, in such a way that the exhibitions were to create a certain fusion or interaction in the management of a convergent discursive formation, of a long and wide-spreading influence, about the things and the words which affected the political and social legitimisation of education in the contemporary world.
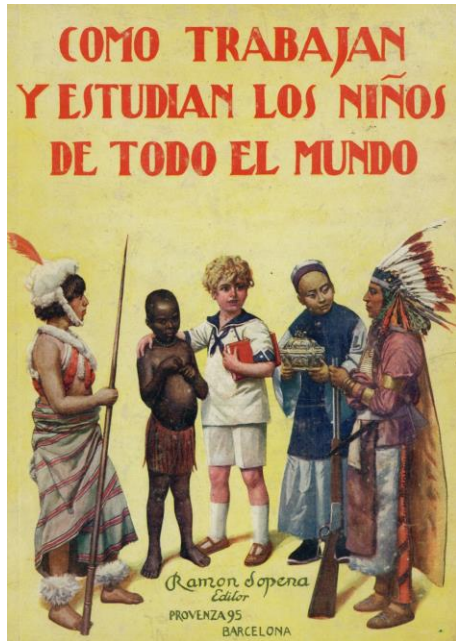
Figure 2. Ramón Sopena Book. The school manuals were exhibited on stands at the exhibitions. Some showed the prizes they had received, crediting their modernity. Others reflected their internationalism, also a modernist feature. See the cover of a Spanish school manual from the beginning of the twentieth century, edited by the publisher Ramón Sopena of Barcelona. The *mise en page* clearly shows an ethnocentric discourse. The white boy is in the centre of the illustration and responds to the European modernist model. With a book in his hand, he is the stereotype of the evolved, enlightened child, protector of the children of other ethnic groups, which emerge from the abysms of barbarian or exotic life. Images such as these are also an expression of the imperialist discourse of the hegemonic countries.
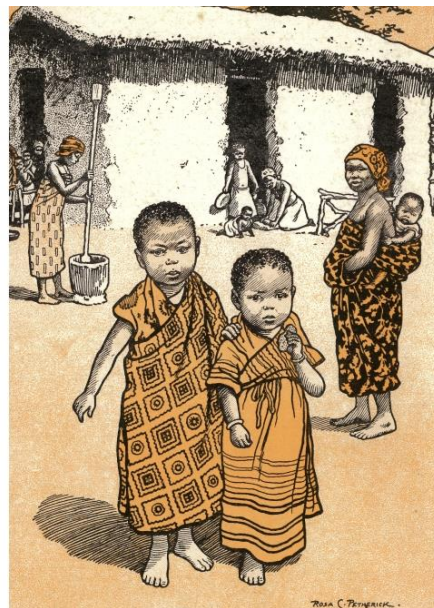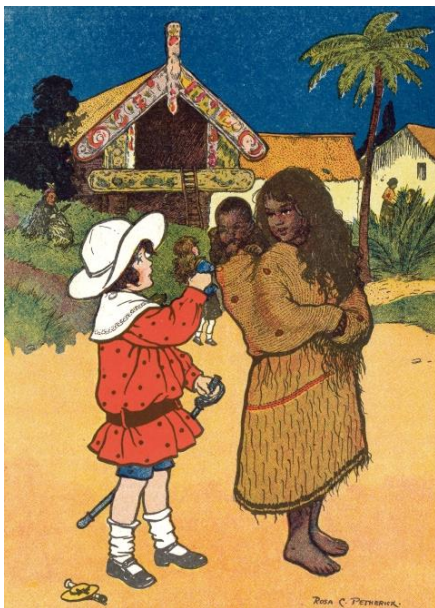

Figure 3. Children of New Zealand and Africa (1917). In the years of the first exhibitions, the determinist sociology of Taine and Wundt's *Volkerpsicologie* fostered the study of the natural features of peoples, based on differential ethnic and cultural substrates. The representations exhibited in the Universal Exhibitions and those later collected in the school manuals contributed to creating and spreading national and continental stereotypes, including those relative to the infancy of peoples who had not yet had access to modernity as is shown by the icons we have taken from this text of 1917.

The emerging technologies of the new school became a symbol of the level of modernity–a performance–that the education systems were achieving in their respective countries, and even an indication of the comparative degree of their progress. From another point of view, such materialities opened the school world to the processes of technification which were occurring in other fields of life, and even generated interaction among the administrators, the creators of the media and the producing companies.
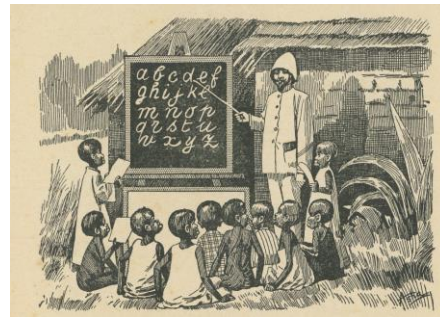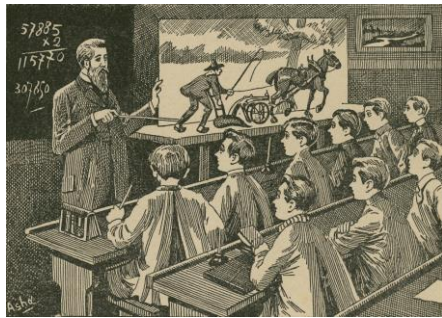
Figures 4.1. Danish School and *Figure 4.2.* School of Senegal. School books from the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries also transmitted images of the schools in different countries, sometimes of very different cultures. See, for example, these scenographies of a Danish school, with modern means and methods, and another from Senegal, representative of a very archaic, pre-modern colonial pattern.

The exhibitions were, at the same time, in the period of the liberal-bourgeois revolutions which fostered competitiveness and postulated the idea of progress as the dominating discourse, spaces for the comparison of nations, a kind of international kaleidoscope in which the countries observed each other, learning one from the other (Guereña, 2007, p. 33). The prizes won in them were used as publicity as well as self-esteem and evaluation of the others (Plum, 1977). The Palace of Industry, with the Street of Nations, of the Paris Exhibition of 1867, of vanguard architecture, had been conceived as a giant cosmopolitan shop window with circular galleries and radial streets, where the situation of each country was, in itself, an evident sign of its place in the ranking of nations.

Spain, it would seem, had not known how to show an image of modernity fitting of the time. Despite its 2.648 exhibitors and participation in all sectors, the balance of our presence in the 1867 Exhibition offered an image which was too stuck in tradition, according to the observer Orellana, beginning with its lordly architecture, serious and severe, and not at all in agreement with the industrial styles of the new technology (Orellana, 1867, p. 128). The exoticism of the Spanish pavilion was still inspired by the world of bullfighting and

other topics relative to our traditional life, as well as by other historical nostalgia, dreams which, for the visitor, were already in obvious decline. The writer Benito Pérez Galdós, who attended the exhibition to "study and enjoy himself", realised this Spanish inability to seduce others in the labyrinth of Paris, and felt himself called to set out the urgent need to rethink Spain, a prelude to the upheaval of the regenerationist intellectuals of 1898 (Guereña, 1989).

The comparison of nations originated complaints which reached almost diplomatic levels, such as that which sprang from a map published by mister Manier, corresponding to the Paris Exhibition of 1867, which reflected the progress of countries in the field of public instruction, and which represented Spain, with notorious injustice according the response offered by Asciclo F. Vallín in the booklet presented in the 1878 Exhibition (Vallín, 1878), in a position which did not correspond, accompanying countries which were far more backward than ours such as Russia and Turkey. Vallín's rectification, published in Spanish, French and English, for general diffusion, was based on the latest statistical data and set out to restore national honour by situating Spain in the second block of countries, together with Belgium, Norway, Holland and England–a more respectable position–behind Switzerland, Germany, Sweden, Denmark and France, but ahead of others such as Austria, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Russian and Turkey. This defence of national honour, an insult for its apologists and defenders, even reached the French press, where articles were published illustrating the new data in an attempt to restore Spain's image in public opinion.

The universal exhibitions began, therefore, to play their role as *ad hoc* stages to facilitate competitiveness, in a period which historians consider proto-statistical, in which what began as practice would later become a discipline of the field of pedagogical science: Comparative Education. Asciclo F. Vallín even proposed in his presentation the celebration of an International Congress on Popular Education in which, by means of a unified or standardised form, the data would be collected to elaborate a world map with the statistic of elemental education of each country and continent. This would be updated at least every ten years. This proposal recalls the earliest developments in comparison in education, a field whose constitution was also influenced by the visits to the international exhibitions.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE POPULAR INSTRUCTION IN EUROPE.

NATIONS.		Extension in square kilometres.	POPULATION.	Number of schools.	Number of scholars.	Expenditure. Francs.
1.st CLASS.	Switzerland	41390	2.759854	7000	42000	8.708174
	Germany	539816	42.727360	60000	6.010150	140.000000
	Sweden	442818	4.429713	8770	615135	10.642000
	Denmark	38237	1.903000	2909	259508	5.330000
	France	528572	36.905788	71289	4.725000	60.000000
2.d CLASS.	Belgium	29455	5.403000	8246	669192	24.806428
	Norway	318192	1.807555	6459	215391	4.388807
	Holland	32973	3.865456	3734	444707	15.318136
	Spain	507000	16.800000	29038	1.633288	26.000000
	Great-Britain	314951	33.805419	58075	3.000000	65.000000
3.d CLASS.	Austria-Hungary	622440	37.350000	29267	3.044996	69.000000
	Italy	296323	27.769475	47411	1.931617	27.000000
	Greece	50123	1.457894	1373	93000	2.000000
	Portugal	89625	4.047110	4513	198131	2.025000
4.th CLASS.	Russia	5.380000	73.643627	32000	1 130000	25.000000
	Turkey *	»	»	»	»	»
SUMS		9.231915	294.675251	370084	24.390115	485.218545

NATIONS.		Attendance to school for every 100 inhabitants.	Inhabitants for every school.	Inhabitants for every scholar.	Scholars corresponding to every school.	Annual expenditure for every school. Francs.	Annual expenditure for every scholar. Francs.	Annual expenditure for every inhabitant. Francs.
1.st CLASS.	Switzerland	15,22	394	6,57	60	1244	20,73	3,19
	Germany	14,06	712	7,02	100	2333	23,29	3,27
	Sweden	13,88	505	7,20	70	1214	17,30	2,40
	Denmark	13,63	654	7,33	89	1832	20,54	2,80
	France	12,82	518	7,81	66	842	12,69	1,62
2.d CLASS.	Belgium	12,38	655	8,07	81	3008	37,07	4,60
	Norway	11,91	280	8,40	33	695	20,37	2,42
	Holland	11,54	1035	8,70	119	4102	34,44	4,00
	Spain	9,72	578	10,28	56	895	15,91	1,55
	Great-Britain	8,87	582	11,26	82	1119	21,66	1,92
3.d CLASS.	Austria-Hungary	8,15	1276	12,26	104	2357	22,66	1,85
	Italy	6,91	586	14,37	41	569	13,97	0,97
	Greece	6,38	1062	15,66	67	1456	21,50	1,37
	Portugal	4,89	896	20,42	44	449	10,22	0,50
4.th CLASS.	Russia	1,53	2301	65	35	781	22,13	0,33
	Turkey *	»	»	»	»	»	»	»
AVERAGES		8,27	796	12	66	1311	19,89	1,65

* The numbers referent to Turkey are not published for want of recent and duly comprobated data.

Figure 5. Vallín Frame. Data collected by Asciclo F. Vallín in his report on the situation of popular instructtion in Europa. Note the grouping of nations in 'classes' according to the degree of cultural development, and the variables which are analysed (extension, population, schooling, budgets…) The quantification is a reflection of the positivist mentality which was beginning to be affirmed in the bureaucracies of the liberal period and of the value accorded to comparison as a mathematical criteria of social truth. These new values also found support in the exhibitions.

Figure 6. Map of Asciclo F. Vallín of Popular Instruction in Europe (1878). As well as constituting a modern cartographical representation, the map is a kind of social portrait which structures and fixes the perception of educational realities. Colours and diagrams, geometrically disposed to accept the numerical data, offer an image, gestaltic and analytical at the same time, of a Europe organised in nations and blocks. These subsets also transmit the idea that educational progress works in an organic and gradual way and that the move from one block to another always supposes a leap in the evolution of civilisation.

The technology of education shown in the exhibitions enters this way in the industrial cycle, reinforced by positivism, and in the economic and moral logic of efficiency, but pedagogues, not free of corporative prejudices, had relativised until not long before the value of the material as cultural production, and occasionally, from attitudes between neoidealist and critical, rejected the world of means once more. Practical teachers, book publishers, inventors and even members of the administration participated in these world events, bearing witness the fully modern attitudes. However, academic pedagogy, installed at the time in teacher training colleges and some universities, did not participate in that enthusiasm, taking shelter in speculative discourses of little theoretical and practical value. Indeed, the teacher training colleges came little and late to these world meetings. This fact showed the excision between the empirical and academic cultures, which would be a historical constant even to the present day. Differentiated values regarding criteria of modernity also operated in such dualism. This might be attributed to school practices, to the theoretical discourses and the norms governing these institutions. As is well known, this division has also affected historiography.

MODERNITY: AMBIVALENCE AND DIALECTICS

It was the sociologist Zigmunt Bauman who highlighted with most emphasis something which had already been pointed out by Theodor W. Adorno in *Dialectics of the Enlightenment* (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1998): the ever double headed character, ambivalent and dialectical of modernity, or, what is the same, the sustained fight of modernity to find a place between order and contingency, the system and ambiguity, tradition and change. This battle could also be seen on the symbolical level–not just that of reality–through the dialectics between the representative manifestations by which modernity introduced itself.

Society, according to the idea that Bauman adopted from Georg Simmel, is not a balanced and stable organic compound. In the internal nucleus of the modernity paradigm are the proposals for change and the reactions of the conflict that these changes raise with the past. This self-same modernity fully opened the doors to dissent, to resistance to change and even to certain forms of cultural discontent of which Sigmund Freud would later speak (Bauman, 2005, pp. 77-78). Modernity, therefore, could be seen as a cultural construct which was essentially ambivalent and dialectic, and not just as a performative register of the new, as the followers of the positivist idea of progress and the dynamic agents of the international exhibitions wanted to believe.

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In several of his works, the Polish-British sociologist has set out to elucidate the artefacts of order in the change to the new, and the reactive mechanisms seen in certain systemic persistences of the past together with the threats of the future which led to uncertainty at the same time. The elimination of the ambivalence would be to deny the most obvious sense of what has happened. If modernity insists on extinguishing the ambivalence, the critical phenomenologist will raise the suspicion about the ethical and cultural consequences underlying modernisation (Bauman, 2005, pp. 26 and 48). Here Bauman echoes the Nietzschean logic of suspicion and of the negative dialectics of the Frankfurt School. Enlightened reason, as Horkheimer and Adorno saw, on which lies the myth of the modern, pursued the dominion of nature. It needed to control, and even repress, the non-rational reactions of the citizens and of the collectives which were revealed even in fully modernising contexts (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1998, p. 29).

In previous paragraphs we have alluded to the palimpsest nature of the historical ethnographies of the school, as seen in the co-existence of modern materials and visuals together with older ones, the emergent and the archaic. On examining the representations offered by ethnohistory as suggested by analyses inspired in the theoretical suppositions we have considered above, the empirical school culture which may be observed in the iconographies also suggests a dialectical interpretation of experiential reality, on planes which may be ambivalent, and sometimes even contradictory, with the logic of modernisation.

Let us see an example in order to step down from generic considerations to the plane of reality. The images which can be seen next to this text correspond to present-day schools in the Mexican region of Chiapas. One of them shows the introduction of innovations from the digital world into schools for Indoamericans. This is the one which would offer the interface of the change to modernity. Next to it, another image offers a register of the persistence of tradition: a girl works with an abacus made from local materials. These two planes represent the co-existence in the same institution, and at the same time of innovation and continuity, of modernity and *techné* rooted in the endogenous material culture of the community.

Together with these images, we see a third one which shows examples of school writings, with emoticons linked to the new sensibility of childhood today and with writings which superpose, in the form of a palimpsest, the Spanish language with the local Indoamerican language. The new strategies of assimilation and modernisation give rise to hybrid school productions in which the identifying cultural forms cohabit with those imposed by the standardising devices of modernity. These sources also suggest the co-existence in this real context of a certain bipolarity between identifying and globalising education, which is another sign of the ambivalence found on the plane of praxis between political culture and that of action.

Figure 7. Chiapas, Mexico. These images show ambiguities between the identitary and the modern. They correspond to a school of an Amerindian community of Chiapas, in present-day Mexico. Innovations from the digital world together with local technologies. Emoticons which play with standardising and native writings. This ambivalent image is representative of the dialectical processes of educational modernisation.

Let us go back two centuries to discuss the above with historical representations. On examining images from another time we can also find representations of ambivalence, even in those stages considered to be modern. In the figures accompanying this point of the study, it can be seen how, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, some of the most relevant innovations are shown accompanying the national educational systems at their birth: Pestalozzi's philanthropic school, of pre-romantic orientation, and the Lancasterian mutual school, inspired by the more *militari* organisations. In the first image–that of the Stanz boarding school, founded

by the well-known Swiss pedagogue–the school is conceived as a prolongation of the home, combining study with work and the domestic practices of integration with other training experiences. The second– which corresponds to a French mutual school of the post-revolutionary period of the Restoration–presents an innovating school organisation based on the principles of order and discipline ensuring the practice of mutualism in the first initiatives of mass education fostered by the Nation States and the associations of popular education.

These scenographies have been divulged because both their creators and the historians of education have legitimated them as representations of pedagogical modernity. However, each of them shows a well-differentiated and even opposed model: the former affirms the values of naturalism, philanthropy and paternalist morality, while the latter is based on the model inspired by a mixture of patterns taken from the military life, utopian mutualism and the early industrialisation. Educators and pedagogues, that is to say, those who impulsed and applied the changes of that time and those who provided them a base and later interpreted them (the historians and theorists), saw signs of innovation in these patterns, even though both scenographies–truly choreographic–indeed suggest that modernity does presuppose a unanimous interpretation of change, but may rather adopt different modes and styles, at times even contradictory.
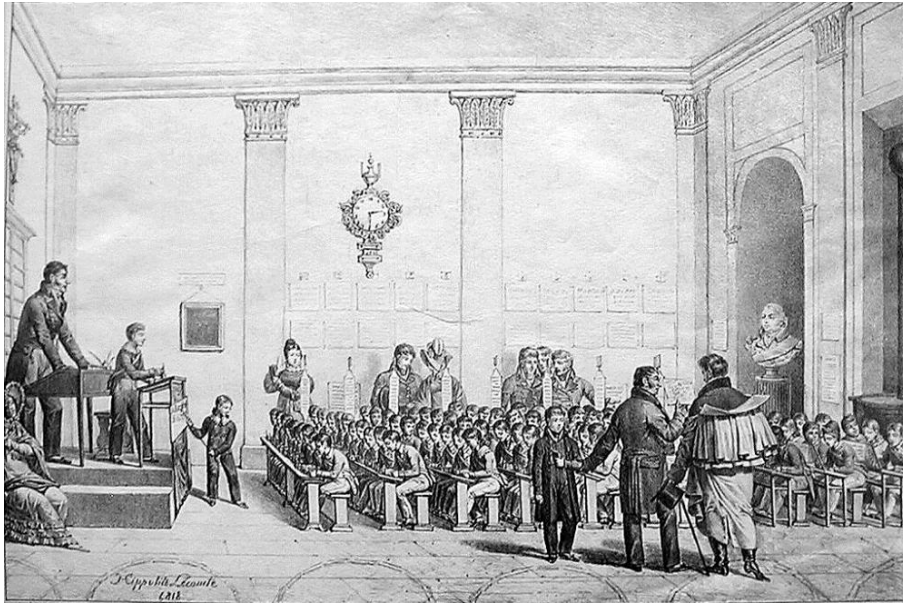

Figure 8.1. Pestalozzi.

Figure 8.2. French Mutual School.

The first scene is from the Stanz Institute, Switzerland, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Pestalozzi takes in war-orphaned boys and girls in a paternalistic attitude and in a domestic environment. The class is not a very academic setting, with furniture and decoration which recalls a family home. The other image corresponds to a French mutual school of 1818. Teacher, pupils and monitors dress in militia fashion. The chair, plinth and benches are arranged according to a structure based on monitor teaching, in sections for help and control. The clock sets the functioning times of the method and the system.

Iconic representations may also offer an image of the changes operating in each historical moment and, arranged in serial sequence, are the visual evidence of the underlying meaning in the process of evolution.

Let us see the four images:

1. English school of the beginning of the nineteenth century in a monastic setting. The children are grouped in interior microspaces: corners or sections. Each pulpit is occupied by a monitor, wearing semi-ecclesiastical clothes. He controls the times, movements and the method, as well as the work discipline. The high-roofed space could be that of a church, with high windows to receive the light and to avoid the distraction of the pupils.

2. Domestic environment school. A German engraving from the end of the nineteenth century. Boys and girls are distributed with no rigid order in the space of a small classroom, where a teacher, a member of the church, manages the educational activity with the help of a woman assistant who

carries out the traditional female activities while controlling the class activities. The pupils read, write, play, get bored, move or sit in an apparent atmosphere of calm and harmony. The furniture and the decoration combine the stiles of house and convent.

3. An American school, published in a Spanish magazine at the end of the 1950s. A technocratic model of a language laboratory. The pupils are isolated in their adjoining cells but unable to interact with each other. This innovation constitutes one of the 'modernities' in the technical renovation of programmed instruction inspired by Skinner's behaviourism in fashion at the time.

4. Interactive model school. Representative of the latest generation. This model would be, in historical or evolutionary terms, the most modern. Actors and technology communicate with each other, breaking the traditional classroom geometry and its model or scheme of spatial structure. The interaction affects both the relationship between actors, pupils and teachers and that established between all the subjects and the technology used in the classroom.

Figure 9.1. English school in a monastic setting (beginning of the nineteenth century), *Figure 9.2.* German domestic environment school (end of the nineteenth century), *Figure 9.3.* American school (end of the 1950s), and *Figure 9.4.* Interactive model school (nowadays). Four models of innovating schools at different stages of modernisation: monastic English school; mutual school; laboratory school; interactive school. They are all, despite the differences of structure and environment, exponents of modernity in their corresponding historical period.

In these icons, ethnohistory may discover four well-differentiated ecosystems of classroom, each one of them modern at the moment they represent, and evolving progressively in the long-term view. They all show modernities which were mostly abandoned over time, although some have survived, in certain aspects, as obsolete bases or as tradition. In anthropology, a basis is something which survives even though it serves no purpose at all. Those nearer in time to ourselves, are renewed faster and with more versatility.

Halfway through last century, in the protohistory of technological change, architectures and audiovisuals could be fused in systemic models which reflected the dominant functionalism of constructions and the connectivity between spatial structures and communicative mediations. Image 10.1 offers a model of functional architectural design, whose external epidermis announces the "implicit pedagogy" of its interior, that corresponding to a school distributed in sections in graduated order. The "modulor", which Le Corbusier defined as an architectonical algorithm, is the element which organises spaces in a *continuum* which concludes with the physical closure or formal limit of the construction. This opens to the surroundings, from which it receives light and to which it adheres as a context. The schematic drawing of the means suggests, as structuring value, the interconnectivity between these and the sceneries into which it is inserted.

The previous icons may be used to illustrate how the representations may initiate readings about the modernities implicit in the exterior and interior of the spaces and in the use of the complementary technologies, which the historian or ethnologist must know how to decipher. Amongst them, we find the possible bipolarities between the technofunctional rationality shown by the exteriors and the supposed effects on the subjects of the biopolitical modes of knowledge-power which the control systems inherent in such architecture have been putting into action.
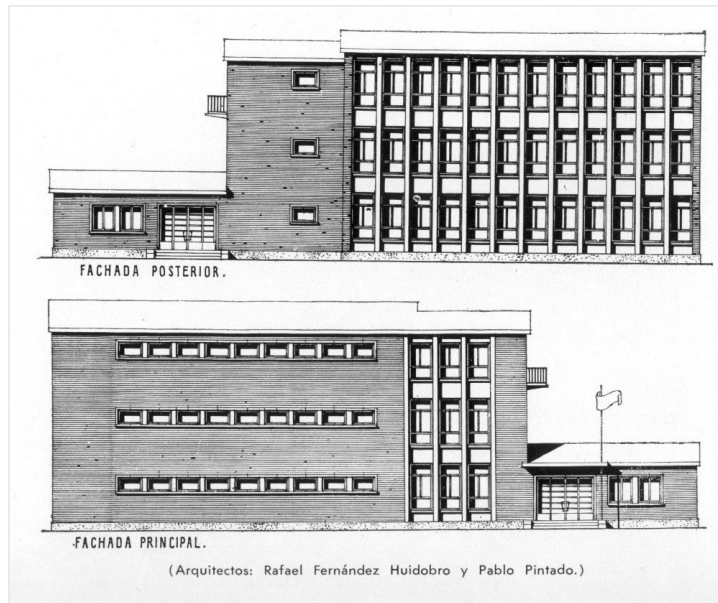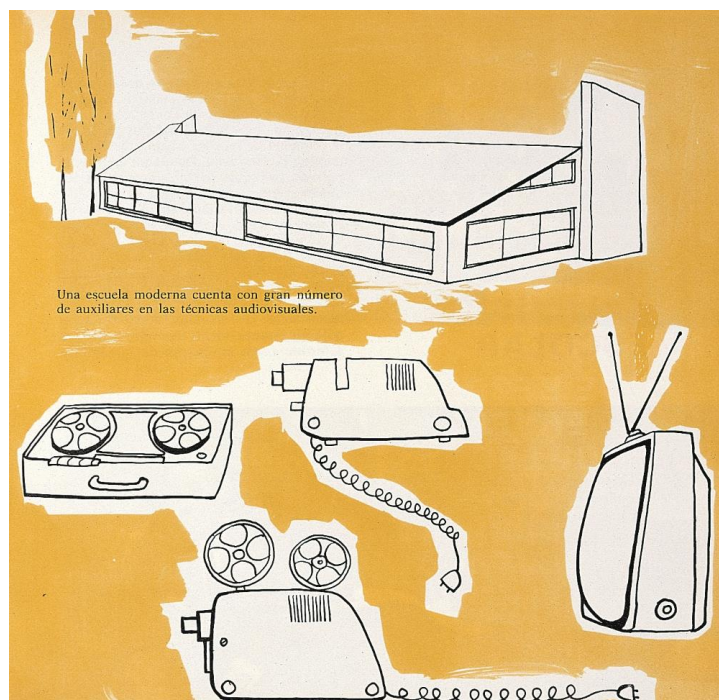
Figure 10.1. Buildings.

Figure 10.2. AVMs.

Two systemic components of the school which was modernising at the beginning of the technological renovation, in the context of industrial society (Spain, 1957): a) Functionalist architectural design, modern in its day, for a primary school centre for graded education. b) Scheme of connection and integration between the modern school architecture and the audiovisual means within it.

In order to transcend phenomenology, ethnohistory always demands a hermeneutic closure, a dense and complex interpretation which explains the meaning of the performative codes and of the processes which show the contradictions inherent to the dialectic of modernity with tradition, to mention only the two subthemes we have proposed in this study. This is not only because mimesis is a form of cultural writing, in a large part symbolical, which must be read, explained and interpreted in order to approach the comprehension of the meanings underlying the visible signs and in the indications of representation which raise hypotheses of intelligibility, including those which may be derived from the pluritopical hermeneutics of which Antonio Valleriani (Valleriani, 2003) speaks, or those which might present iconographic alternatives proposed in the form of heterotopes, a perspective suggested as is known by Michel Foucault (1991), which is only mentioned here as an aside but which requires greater development. Interpretation is also necessary since both the models represented–in our case those relative to the modernity examined–and the languages of representation are cultural constructs.

The two fields of study on which we have polarised our attention offer explicative keys to understand the meanings of the representations which register the signals of modernity and the dialectical relationships between change and continuity. Both explanations are essential in the new cultural history of education in order to be able to reach an integral understanding of the persistences and the innovations, and, more generally, of the sociohistorical construction of the logic which underlies school culture.

From a performative perspective, the images of the modern reveal, through rhetorical forms of communication, the affirmation of cultural identities of the school and the symbolic struggles to impose some patterns over others by means of icons. The games of competitiveness between countries are the expression of market influence and of the power relations which are staged by national politics to show a hierarchical organisation of the interacting nations, which establish new forms of knowledge-power, in which school culture also intervenes. There is no canon of modernity, but at the end of the historical processes certain models are imposed and influence the creation of circles of cultural communications. Such patterns circulate throughout the national education systems and in this circulation diversified processes of appropriation operate which give rise to interpretive variants. Mutual education, for example, adopted diverse forms in India, England, France, Spain and Portugal, and this differentiation has to do with the particular characteristics of the receiving contexts. The theories of the school

of Constanza and the contextual turn of Quentin Skinner would help in the hermeneutic explanation of these peculiarities.

In the dialectical interaction of the modernities with the traditions—the second perspective of the study—, the interpretative examination of the experiences under consideration allow us to question the image of linear progress which has been attributed to the modernisation of the school. In contrast, it favours a more complex, denser and more dialectical comprehension of the historical processes of innovation. It recognises the coexistence at each historical moment of traditions and changes and remits us to the consideration of a writing up of the school culture which approaches the model of a palimpsest to which we have referred on previous occasions. To this effect, modernisation would be a process in which new emerging practices cohabit with norms ascribed to the historical grammar of the school, part of the available tradition, which is a legacy of the heritage of education systems. It would also be an operation in which transferences, appropriations and resistances are produced.

The reading, explanation and understanding of all these sociohistorical processes is not only a hermeneutic act but also the categorical closure which, albeit always open to later analyses, offers an interpretation of the questions raised, in our case those relative to the modernity of the school and its culture.

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