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From soul to matter: the new Spanish Francoist pedagogy's plunge into experimental pedagogy and the influence of Raymond Buyse

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the approach to experimental pedagogy adopted by the new Spanish pedagogy which arose after Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War. To this end, it first outlines the spiritualist and anti-scientific approaches which prevailed in the new pedagogy of the postwar era, before charting the survival, lying beneath this anti-modernist rhetoric, of an experimental tradition linked to certain clergymen. It then shows how the leading pedagogue of Franco's Spain, Víctor García Hoz, ended up endorsing this school of thought, and analyses the influence in this evolution of the neo-scholasticism of the University of Louvain and the experimental pedagogy developed by Raymond Buyse, who maintained close ties with Spain throughout the 1940s. The paper also focuses on the key role played by Spanish pedagogy in the construction of an international network of Catholic pedagogues. Finally, a number of explanatory hypotheses are presented to explain the paradox posed by this endorsement of the more scientific version of pedagogy by a vehemently Catholic group of academics.

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General Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) precipitated a major upheaval in Spanish pedagogy, with leading figures in the field being obliged to go into exile and the principal scientific journals closing down. The existing pedagogy was razed to the ground, and on the site of its destruction the regime built instead a new version based on the Catholic and imperial principles derived from the anti-modern attitude dominant at the time in the Spanish university sphere. Nevertheless, barely one decade later, the new Francoist pedagogy abandoned its initial mysticism and spiritualism to embrace the most quantitative, science-oriented approach to the study of education: experimental pedagogy.

This paper aims to explore this paradoxical *volte-face* and the role played in it by the University of Louvain and, more specifically, Raymond Buyse. To this end, it first outlines the spiritualist and anti-scientific approaches which prevailed in the new pedagogy of the postwar era, before charting the survival, underneath this anti-modernist rhetoric, of an experimental tradition linked to certain clergymen. It then shows how the leading pedagogue of Franco's Spain, Víctor García Hoz, ended up endorsing

this school of thought. We then go on to analyse the influence in this evolution of the neo-scholasticism of the University of Louvain and the experimental pedagogy developed by Raymond Buyse, who maintained close ties with Spain throughout the 1940s. The paper also focuses on the key role played by Spanish pedagogy in the construction of an international network of Catholic pedagogues. Finally, a number of explanatory hypotheses are presented to explain the paradox posed by this endorsement of the more scientific version of pedagogy by a vehemently Catholic group of educationalists.

The initial spiritualism of Francoist pedagogy

The victors of the Spanish Civil War rejected the materialistic and rationalistic science that had emerged during the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century and the dichotomy between faith and reason established since then in Western thinking. They aspired to overcome this dichotomy through the restoration of sixteenth-century Spanish imperial science, in which all forms of knowledge were subservient to God. Far from being a merely rhetorical resource, this approach guided the initial science policy of the Franco regime, and was the driving force behind the reactionary utopia embodied by the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* (Higher Council for Scientific Research, CSIC).¹

This opposition to Western science encompassed many disciplines, including pedagogy. In the absence of leading educationalists to support Franco's cause, the pedagogic discourse espoused by the rebels was developed both during the Civil War and immediately afterwards by a group of school inspectors who had been trained at the institutions of liberal Spain.² These inspectors rejected the pedagogy that had been developed in Spain since the nineteenth century, claiming that it was imported and foreign. They accused it of having abandoned the true Spanish pedagogical tradition, which was rooted in Catholicism and the Empire, and charged it with having been duped by the empty verbalism of foreign authors ("some of which were Jews"),³ the corrosive and anti-Spanish nature of whose ideas was only thinly concealed beneath their patina of method and technique. Thus, the effort made by Spanish pedagogy over previous decades to connect with Western educational thinking was spurned as an act of snobbism or submission to a passing fad, not to mention a flagrant betrayal of their country in favour of Spain's traditional enemies. What was proposed instead was a return to the Spanish tradition of pedagogic institutions which had educated the "august politicians, governors and captains" of the Empire.⁴

The rejection of modern Western pedagogy was even more intense in the case of those movements which aspired to some degree of scientific rigour in relation to the

¹Antonio Fco. Canales, "The Reactionary Utopia: The CSIC and Spanish Imperial Science," in *Science Policies and Twentieth-Century Dictatorships. Spain, Italy and Argentina*, ed. A. Gómez, B. Balmer, and A.F. Canales (London: Ashgate, 2015), 79–102.

²On the continuities and ruptures in the discourse of these inspectors, see María del Mar del Pozo Andrés and Sjaak Braster, "The Reinvention of the New Education Movement in the Franco Dictatorship (Spain, 1936–1976)," *Paedagogica Historica* 42, no. 1 (2006): 109–26; Antonio Viñao, "Politics, Education and Pedagogy: Ruptures, Continuities and Discontinuities (Spain 1936–1939)," *Paedagogica Historica* 51, no. 4 (2015): 405–17.

³Orencio Pacareo, "La nueva pedagogía," *Boletín de Educación de Zaragoza* 3 (1937). This anti-Semitic reference in a country in which there had been no Jews since their expulsion in 1492 underlined the radical nature of the Francoist ideology.

⁴Alfonso Iniesta Corredor, *La tradición educativa española y Don Andrés Manjón* (Madrid: Magisterio Español, 1941), 19.

empirical study of children. Francoist inspectors held that, ultimately, pedagogic movements with scientific pretensions were nothing more than a weapon at the service of the enemies of the Catholic Church and Spain; in the words of the fascist press, they were the “hydra of Geneva”,⁵ referring to the Jean Jacques Rousseau Institute where outstanding psycho-pedagogues such as Ferrière, Claparède, Bovet, and Piaget all worked. In this sense, Alfonso Iniesta Corredor (1901–1994) had already denounced in 1934 “the foreignizing school of ultramodern essays and ultra-scientific tests”.⁶ There was also inspector Antonio J. Onieva Santamaría (1886–1977), perhaps the most original pedagogue of the initial years of the Franco regime, who argued that all modern Western pedagogy, particularly the scientific kind, had been based on abnormal children, who were particularly suitable for experimentation. He reproached “Decroly and his henchmen” for having attempted to construct the pedagogy of the normal child on the basis of these non-representative cases.⁷ Whether from the standpoint of traditional Catholic approaches, as in the case of Iniesta, or from the new fascist version defended by Onieva, the pro-Franco inspectors coincided in espousing a holistic and spiritualistic notion of the Spanish child, and were therefore united in their opposition to the “soulless psychology” that aimed to “pigeon-hole children”⁸ and reduce them to mere “metre and measure”.⁹

This spiritualistic, almost mystic, stance which characterised the discourse of the inspectors both during and immediately after the war seemed fated to become the reigning outlook also of the new academic pedagogy of the Franco regime. The rupture which occurred in the academic field was much more radical than that which took place at the professional level. All of those pedagogues who had occupied university posts prior to the Civil War in Madrid and Barcelona were forced into exile, with the sole exception of Father Zaragüeta, while key journals in the field, such as the *Revista de Pedagogía* (Madrid) and the *Revista de Psicología i Pedagogia* (Barcelona), were shut down. Thus, Francoism swept the entire field away, in order to construct, *ex novo*, a new pedagogy in line with national-Catholic principles. For this purpose, a specific pedagogical institute was set up in the heart of the CSIC, the large-scale apparatus designed to control new Spanish science.

The CSIC’s San José de Calasanz Institute of Pedagogy was the springboard which, in just a few years, catapulted its young secretary, Víctor García Hoz (1911–1998), to the apex of academic pedagogy under Francoism. García Hoz was a practising school-teacher and the only pre-war university graduate from the Pedagogy Section set up in 1932. In 1940, he became the first Doctor of Pedagogy, defending a thesis on the concept of fighting within Spanish asceticism and youth education. His chosen topic represented a twofold rupture, breaking away from both the defeated pedagogic tradition of the pre-war era and that advocated by the victorious Francoist inspectors who, ultimately, did nothing more than develop the traditional themes from a new national-Catholic and fascist perspective. In opposition to this disciplinary continuity, Víctor

⁵Juan Mainer Baqué and Julio Mateos Montero, *Saber, poder y servicio. Un pedagogo orgánico del Estado: Adolfo Maillou* (Valencia: Tirant lo Blanch, 2011), 56.

⁶Alfonso Iniesta Corredor, *La escuela grata* (Madrid: FAE, 1934), 5.

⁷Antonio J. Onieva, “Tarea y Consigna,” *Revista de Educación Hispánica* 2 (1937), 6.

⁸Antonio J. Onieva, *La nueva escuela española (Realización práctica)* (Valladolid: Librería Santarén, 1939), 33.

⁹Onieva, “Tarea y Consigna,” 6.

García Hoz's ideas embodied a leap towards both philosophy and, even more notably, theology. It is important to note that García Hoz was a member of the Higher Council of Catholic Action, that he had chosen Monsignor Escrivá de Balaguer, the founder of the emerging *Opus Dei*, as his confessor, and that he himself eventually became a member of this religious institution.¹⁰

The new Institute's publication policy seems to confirm this religious reorientation; García Hoz's thesis was soon followed by other works written by clergymen. The Institute also published a book on the pedagogy of the gospel, another by the classic Catholic pedagogue Otto Willmann, and works dedicated to Spanish thinkers of the Imperial era.¹¹ Similarly, the first issues of the Institute's new journal (*Revista Española de Pedagogía*) included articles on pedagogy and original sin, the problems of Catechism, sacred books, charity, and Lull's mysticism. There was also a monographic issue dedicated to Saint Joseph Calasanz.¹²

Thus, the Institute of Pedagogy seemed to fit perfectly into the reactionary Catholic traditionalism which reigned in the academic world during the early years of Franco's dictatorship. The new Francoist pedagogy moved away from educational practice and distanced itself even more from the more scientific movements, becoming instead a kind of philosophy subordinate to theology. Nevertheless, a more detailed analysis of the San José de Calasanz Institute reveals a much more complex reality. Beneath the national-Catholic delirium of the immediate postwar period, a tradition of clearly scientific and quantitative experimental pedagogy survived, linked to empirical research. And paradoxically enough, it was this tradition that García Hoz would end up embracing.

The underground experimental tradition

From the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, an openly scientific psychopedagogic tradition had developed in Spain thanks to the trail blazed by Doctor Luis Simarro Lacabra (1851–1921), Professor of Experimental Psychology in Madrid since 1902. It was in the spirit of this medical and biological tradition that psychiatrists such as Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora (1886–1971) and Emilio Mira y López (1896–1964) carried out their work and that experimental laboratories were founded. This psychopedagogic movement gained official impetus during the 1920s through the Vocational Guidance Institutes, in which eminent psychometrists such as José Mallart y Cutó (1897–1989) worked.¹³ As a result, a set of sophisticated apparatuses and questionnaires

¹⁰José Fernández Huerta, "D. Víctor García Hoz, nuevo director del Instituto 'San José de Calasanz' de Pedagogía," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 3, no. 12 (1945): 394; Víctor García Hoz, "Mi encuentro con Monseñor Escrivá de Balaguer," in *Así le vieron*, ed. Rafael Serrano (Madrid: Rialp, 1992), 83; Andrés Vázquez de Prada, *El fundador del Opus Dei. III. Los caminos divinos de la tierra* (Madrid: Rialp, 2003), 158.

¹¹M.S. Gillet, *La educación de la conciencia* (1943); *Religión y Pedagogía* (1946); Valentín Caballero, *Orientaciones Pedagógicas de San José de Calasanz* (1945); Rodolfo Fierro Torres *Pedagogía social de Don Bosco* (1949); Rosa Marín Cabrero, *Pedagogía del Evangelio* (1946); Otto Willmann, *Teoría de la formación humana* (1948); Emilio Hernández Rodríguez, *Las ideas pedagógicas del Dr. Pedro López de Montoya*; Fermín de Urmeneta, *La doctrina psicológica y pedagógica de Luis Vivesfo* (1949). Each published in Madrid by the Instituto de Pedagogía San José de Calasanz in the year indicated.

¹²*Revista Española de Pedagogía*, vols 1–7 (1943–1949).

¹³Miguel Angel Cerezo Manrique, *Los comienzos de la psicopedagogía en España, 1882–1936* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2001).

became popular in Spain, as means of gathering empirical data on “the different physical and psychic variables which affect children’s development”.¹⁴ A key figure in the progressive Spanish pedagogic tradition, Domingo Barnés Salinas (1879–1940) became professor in Paidology in 1918, when according to Depaepe this approach began its decline.¹⁵ Barnés, who would later be made Minister of Education during the Second Republic, disseminated the principles of anthropometry and psychometry as applied to paidology, advocating the creation of small-scale psycho-pedagogic laboratories to be annexed to each school in the country. According to Conrad Vilanou, this experimental and scientific tradition was completely dismantled by the Franco regime.¹⁶

This radical rupture seems to fit with the sacristy-like image and “rancid scholasticism”¹⁷ projected by postwar pedagogy. The usual historiographical narratives associate the scientific approach to education with the progressive tradition, and there is a huge body of data that would seem to support this view. Luis Simarro himself had been a progressive liberal and a mason who, in 1879, had resigned his post as director of a mental hospital in Madrid and moved to Paris as the result of a disagreement with his local bishop.¹⁸ Fifty years later, the principal representatives of his legacy, including Gonzalo Lafora, Emilio Mira, and Domingo Barnés, were forced to follow his footsteps and go into exile. The very belligerent rhetoric of the regime and its condemnation of modern science as anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish conforms the main foundation of this narrative.

A more detailed analysis, however, reveals that this image is superficial; certain facts fail to fit with the narrative, even prior to the Civil War. A good example of this is the case of Georges Dwelshauvers (1866–1937), director of the laboratory of experimental psychology of the Catalan regional government in Barcelona. The Belgian researcher had been the standard-bearer of the progressive movement in 1890, following the refusal of the Free University of Brussels to authorise the reading of his thesis due to its positivist and materialist content. However, after his sojourn in Spain, he ended up working at the Catholic Institute of Paris in 1924. Indeed, when Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship closed his laboratory in Barcelona, his staunchest public defenders were not the heirs of the progressive, anticlerical movement which formerly had supported him in Brussels (of which there were many in Catalonia at that time), but rather, illustrious representatives of the Catholic-conservative Catalanist movement. This suggests that his activities were probably a far cry from being perceived as progressive, much less irreligious.¹⁹

Even more discordant with the usual narrative is the fact that one of the main psycho-pedagogic laboratories of the pre-war period was established in 1925 by the Jesuit priest Fernando M. Palmés (1879–1962) at the order’s *Colegio Máximo* in

¹⁴Conrad Vilanou, “Pensamiento y discursos pedagógicos en España, 1898–1940,” in *La educación a examen (1898–1998)*. Vol 1, ed. Julio Ruiz Berrio et al. (Zaragoza, Ministerio de Educación y Cultura – Institución Fernando el Católico, 1999), 27.

¹⁵Marc Depaepe, “The Practical and Professional Relevance of Educational Research and Pedagogical Knowledge from the Perspective of History: Reflections on the Belgian Case In Its International Background,” *European Educational Research Journal* 1, no. 2 (2002): 369.

¹⁶Vilanou, “Pensamiento y discursos,” 29.

¹⁷Antonio Bolívar, “Tiempo y contexto del discurso curricular en España,” *Profesorado. Revista de currículum y formación del profesorado* 2, no. 2 (1998): 1.

¹⁸Assumpció Vidal Parellada, *Luis Simarro y su tiempo* (Madrid: CSIC, 2007), 48.

¹⁹On the “affair Dwelshauvers” of 1890, see Wim Van Rooy, “L’Agitation étudiante et la fondation de l’Université Nouvelle en 1894,” *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 1–2 (1976): 202–3; Pierre F. Daled, *Spiritualisme et matérialisme au XIXe siècle. L’Université libre de Bruxelles et la religion* (Bruxelles: Université de Bruxelles, 1998), 210–21. On his stay in Barcelona, see Miquel Siguan and Montserrat Kirchner, “Georges Dwelshauvers. Un psicólogo flamenco en Cataluña,” *Anuario de Psicología* 32, no. 1 (2001): 92, 100.

Barcelona.²⁰ Also, it was another Jesuit, Ramón Ruiz Amado (1861–1934), who in 1924 translated Meumann's seminal book *Abriss der experimentellen Pädagogik* into Spanish.²¹ Catholicism and scientific approaches to education, then, were not so irreconcilable as the narrative derived from the victorious national-Catholic rhetoric would seem to indicate.

Indeed, the most evident proof of the fact that this narrative did not hold true even in the immediate postwar period lies in the person selected by the victors to direct the San José de Calasanz Institute of Pedagogy: Father Manuel Barbado Viejo (1884–1945). Father Barbado was a Dominican who, from 1918 onwards, had taught at the Dominican University of Rome, more commonly known as the Angelicum. However, he did not teach theology, but rather experimental psychology, and it was precisely a chair in this discipline to which he was appointed at the University of Madrid after the Civil War.²² Several different testimonies highlight the importance of Barbado in the move to broaden the obscurantist anti-modern outlook of young postwar pedagogues and to introduce them to the scientific and experimental approach. As one of them stated, “he refuted the evil, almost demonic, reputation of psychological and didactic-pedagogic experimentation”.²³

The survival of this experimental tradition, fostered by Father Barbado during the postwar period, is evident in the editorial activities of the Institute of Pedagogy he directed. In 1942, the second book published by the entity, a work describing the application of Rorschach's psycho-diagnostic test,²⁴ reflected a scientific tradition located at the opposite extreme of the asceticism with which García Hoz had opened the series of publications. Similarly, overshadowed by the other clearly national-Catholic works mentioned earlier, the first issues of the *Revista Española de Pedagogía* also published a number of papers by Jesuit priests who had worked in experimental psychology prior to the war, including Fathers Fernando M. Palmés²⁵ and Antonio Garmendía de Otaola (1905–1971), who published a number of studies on Rorschach's test throughout the 1940s.²⁶ The journal also published papers by José

²⁰Alicia Peralta Serrano, “El padre Ferran M. Palmés y el laboratorio de psicología experimental del Colegio Máximo San Ignacio de Sarrià de Barcelona,” *Revista de Historia de la Psicología* 15, no. 3-4 (1994): 461–75.

²¹Arturo de la Orden, “La investigación educativa en España: antecedentes y perspectiva,” *Participación educativa* 3, no. 5 (2014): 33.

²²Víctor García Hoz, “Semblanza del P. Barbado,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía*, 3, no. 9-10 (1945). See also Esteban Pérez-Delgado y José Luiz Zanón, “La psicología experimental del Manuel Barbado,” in *Personajes para una historia de la psicología en España*, ed. Milagros Saiz and Dolores Saiz (Madrid: Pirámide, 1996): 355–62.

²³José Fernández Huerta, “Tres decenios de innovación didáctico-experimental (1943–1973),” *Enseñanza* 1 (1993): 12. See also Ángeles Galino, “Vivencias y datos para la reflexión. Centenario de los estudios de pedagogía en la universidad,” in *Pedagogía y educación ante el siglo XXI*, ed. Julio Ruiz Berrio (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2005), 20.

²⁴Felipe Tranque García, *Estudio de la personalidad por el test psicodiagnóstico de Rorschach*. (Madrid: Instituto San José de Calasanz, 1942).

²⁵Fernando M. Palmés, “Técnica de Memoria en el proceso de aprender,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 1, no. 1 (1943); “La autoridad dinámicamente considerada,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 2, no. 8 (1944); “La autoridad en la disciplina directiva,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 3, no. 9-10 (1945); “La autoridad en la disciplina represiva,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 3, no. 12, (1945) and 4, no. 13/14 (1946); “La autoridad en la disciplina pedagógica,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 2, no. 6-7 (1944); “La autoridad en la disciplina preventivas,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 3, no. 11 (1945).

²⁶Antonio Garmendía de Otaola, “Personalidad y medio ambiente,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 2, no. 5 (1944); “Los tests Rorschach y el examen de la inteligencia,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 3, no. 9-10 (1945); “Individuo, comunidad y educación,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 6, no. 23 (1948); “Color y afectividad según los tests de Rorschach,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 5, no. 19 (1947); “El tipo vivencia B o ‘introvertivo’ de Rorschach,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 8, no. 30 (1950); “Un problema fundamental en el método psicodiagnóstico de Rorschach: Interpretación de las figuras como forma de percepción,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 10, no. 40 (1952).

Mallart, the embodiment of Spanish psychometry applied to vocational guidance, who at the time was still under investigation as part of the purge process.²⁷

Therefore, contrary to what is usually thought, the experimental tradition survived the dismantling of modern Spanish pedagogy, and developed discreetly beneath the imperial Catholic delirium. Paradoxically, its main advocates were clergymen. But this was not the only paradox of the postwar era, since, rather than being weakened by the death of Father Barbado in 1945, the scientific approach to pedagogy became the official school of Francoist pedagogy thanks to García Hoz.

Víctor García Hoz and the plunge into quantitativism

During the mid-1940s, Víctor García Hoz became the undisputed leader of the new Francoist pedagogy, a position due mainly to two posts which bestowed upon him unquestionable power; as the chair in Pedagogy in Madrid in 1944, he was the sole Professor of Pedagogy in Spain, while upon the death of Father Barbado in 1945 he assumed the directorship of the San José de Calasanz Institute of Pedagogy. From this position of leadership, García Hoz was able to guide Spanish pedagogy in any direction he wished, since he controlled such basic mechanisms as the selection of young grant students admitted to the Institute and the lecturers associated with his Chair. He also controlled academic mechanisms such as publications and the Institute's journal. Thus, everything seemed to indicate that Catholic philosophy and historical studies linked to the country's imperial past were to constitute the backbone of the new Francoist pedagogy. However, having reached the pinnacle of academic power, Víctor García Hoz sidelined the philosophical-theological approaches of his early career and, paradoxically, he embraced with enthusiasm both quantitativism and scientism in their purest form.

García Hoz's interest in experimental pedagogy can in fact be traced back to September 1941. His appointment as secretary of the Institute of Pedagogy coincided with the start of a series of papers published in the journal for primary teachers *Escuela Española*, in which he outlined the principles of experimental pedagogy, its overlap with psychology, its classificatory applications and certain methodological errors.²⁸ In the spring of 1943, coinciding with the publication of the first issue of the Institute's new journal (*Revista Española de Pedagogía*), García Hoz revealed his preference for experimental pedagogy to the academic community in a paper in which he defended it as the most appropriate contemporary school of thought in the field of didactics.²⁹ In the same issue, he also published the results of his experimental research using a psychometric approach to entrance exams. In the next issue, he published a paper on series calculation.³⁰

These ostensibly quantitative contributions have been overshadowed by the Catholic traditionalist tone of his other works during that same period. For example, in 1944 García

²⁷José Mallart, "Problemas nacionales de pedagogía del trabajo," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 1, no. 2 (1943); "La orientación profesional y la escuela," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 2, no. 5, (1944) and 2, no. 6-7 (1944); "En el II centenario de Pestalozzi," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 4, no. 13-14 (1946).

²⁸Víctor García Hoz, "Valor de los 'tests' pedagógicos," *Escuela Española* 1, no. 16 (1941): 197; "Experimentación psicológica y experimentación pedagógica," *Escuela Española* 1, no. 19 (1941): 223; "Los errores de la investigación en pedagogía" *Escuela Española* 1, 20 (1941): 239 and "Un factor olvidado en la clasificación de los alumnos," *Escuela Española* 2, no. 33 (1942): 3.

²⁹Víctor García Hoz, "Sobre el concepto de didáctica," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 1, no. 1 (1943): 66-8.

³⁰Víctor García Hoz, "El ingreso en las normales y centros de enseñanza media," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 1, no. 1 (1943); "Acerca del cálculo y representación de la simetría de las series," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 1, no. 2 (1943).

Hoz published a widely cited article on the principal schools of thought within international pedagogy in which he called for a pedagogy of salvation based on theology.³¹ Whereas this article has been alluded to often in historiography, insufficient attention has been paid to his previous quantitativist papers, or indeed to the entire text of this particular article. According to García Hoz, the key content of that paper was rooted in a prior talk, but he opted not to publish the original text and instead added a preamble and a final section which clashed somewhat with the general structure and sense of the mid-section. The sole aim of these additions was to justify the experimental approach within pedagogy while at the same time advocating the idea of a pedagogy of salvation. These dissonant modifications are extremely revealing, and point to García Hoz's desire to configure experimental pedagogy as an equally legitimate *second path* in the midst of the fundamentalist, anti-modern reaction.

This plunge into quantitativism was confirmed after he was appointed to the only chair in Pedagogy in Spain. In that same year, 1944, García Hoz published a book on statistics applied to education, and shortly afterwards, he published two seminal articles on experimental pedagogy: a study of school vocabulary (1946)³² and an experimental study on the role of teachers (1948).³³ During this period, he also published a university manual on the basic rules of empirical pedagogy.³⁴ During the 1950s, he focused his research on adapting international tests to the Spanish context, or creating new ones such as the drawing scale, the instruction scale, and the common vocabulary scale.³⁵

Experimental pedagogy thus became one of the principal areas of the new Francoist pedagogy, with a fair number of young scientists conducting research in this field throughout the 1940s. Examples include Esteban Villarejo Mínguez, who completed a doctoral thesis in 1946 on the Spanish spelling scale, and José Fernández Huerta, who earned his PhD in 1950 with a thesis on the writing scale.³⁶

It is difficult to imagine that a staunch Catholic such as García Hoz would have ventured alone down what was, for the dominant Catholic fundamentalist mindset, such a suspect path. And, of course, he did not. Despite the intellectual narrow-mindedness and international isolation of the Franco regime, García Hoz had an international guide of unquestionable religious and ideological pedigree: the Catholic University of Louvain and, more specifically, the experimental pedagogue Raymond Buyse.

International ties: Raymond Buyse and the University of Louvain

From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, the Catholic University of Louvain became a benchmark for the renovation of Catholic thinking. From his Chair in

³¹Víctor García Hoz, "Algunas direcciones actuales de la pedagogía," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 2, no. 8 (1944). For the interpretations on this article, see Ramón López Martín and Alejandro Mayodormo "Las orientaciones pedagógicas del sistema escolar," in *Estudios sobre la política educativa durante el franquismo*, ed. Alejandro Mayodormo (Valencia: Universitat de València, 1999), 55; Rubén Pallol Trigueros, "La Filosofía en la universidad nacionalcatólica," in *La Universidad nacionalcatólica. La reacción antimoderna*, ed. Luis Enrique Otero Carvajal (Madrid: Universidad Carlos III, 2014), 489. At the other extreme, Mainer seems to give more importance to these additions than the source actually allows: Juan Mainer Baque, *La forja de un campo profesional. Pedagogía y didáctica de las ciencias sociales en España (1900–1970)* (Madrid: CSIC, 2009), 507.

³²Víctor García Hoz, "Evolución cuantitativa del vocabulario en escolares de nueve a dieciocho años," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 4, no. 16 (1946).

³³Víctor García Hoz, "El estudio experimental de la función docente," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 6, no. 21 (1948).

³⁴Víctor García Hoz, *Normas elementales de pedagogía empírica* (Madrid: Bolaños y Aguilar, 1946).

³⁵Fernández Huerta, "Tres decenios de innovación," 15.

³⁶Orden, "La investigación educativa," 35.

Thomistic Philosophy, Cardinal Mercier defended a neo-scholastic conception that would enable Catholics to overcome their reticence in relation to modern science and engage in scientific research.³⁷ Unsurprisingly, the University's intellectual influence over the Catholic world spread and multiplied exponentially under the Franco regime, which had purged its own universities in order to place them exclusively in the hands of Catholics and fascists.³⁸

In the field of Spanish pedagogy, the closest figure to Louvain was the professor and priest Father Juan Zaragüeta Bengoechea (1883–1974),³⁹ who had earned both his undergraduate degree and PhD at said university. He had even been invited to stay on as a lecturer there by Cardinal Mercier himself.⁴⁰ However, he chose to return to his native country and teach at the Spanish institutes of higher education, and from 1932 at the Section of Pedagogy at the University of Madrid. After the Civil War, Zaragüeta maintained the somewhat precarious activities of this Section, working alongside the assistant lecturer Carmen Gayarre,⁴¹ and supervised all the theses in pedagogy presented during the postwar period. Zaragüeta's notable influence on Spanish pedagogy is evident in the fact that three out of the four university chairs in this discipline which existed in Spain in the mid-1950s were held by doctors whose theses he himself had supervised: Víctor García Hoz in 1944, Anselmo Romero Marín (1908–1999) in 1949, and María Ángeles Galino Carrillo (1915–2014) in 1953.⁴² The fourth chair, which was set up in the new Barcelona faculty, had an even more direct connection to Louvain, since it was held from 1956 onwards by the veteran priest Father Juan Tusquets Terrats (1901–1998), who had graduated in 1922 from the Belgian university.⁴³

The aforementioned Jesuit priest, Father Antonio Garmendía de Otaola, author of the papers on Rorschach's test which were published in the Institute's journal, had also studied in Louvain at the end of the 1930s, earning his PhD in 1940.⁴⁴ Finally, the leading Spanish postwar psychologist, José Germain, spent the Civil War in Louvain working with Albert Michotte. Upon his return to Spain, thanks to the intervention of Father Gemelli from Milan, Germain started work at the university, alongside Father Barbado.⁴⁵

³⁷Conrad Vilanou and Begoña Lafuente, "El Cardenal Mercier y la Universidad Católica de Lovaina. Sus ecos en España," *Cuadernos de Pensamiento* 24 (2011): 149–88.

³⁸See Luis Enrique Otero Carvajal, dir., *La Universidad nacionalcatólica. La reacción antimoderna* (Madrid: Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, 2014).

³⁹Juan Zaragüeta Bengoechea (1883–1974) did ecclesiastical studies in Spain and received his doctorate in philosophy at the University of Louvain in 1908 and then at the University of Madrid in 1914. In 1917 he was appointed Professor of Religion and Morals at the Higher School of Teacher Training and from 1932 he went on to take the chair of Methodology of Social and Economic Sciences in the Section of Pedagogy of the University of Madrid. After the war, his chair in the Section of Pedagogy was reconverted into a chair of Rational Psychology in the Section of Philosophy (1946). From 1947 to 1963 he was director of the Luis Vives Institute of Philosophy of the CSIC and the *Revista de Filosofía*: Gonzalo Jover, Xavier Laudo, and Conrad Vilanou, "Juan Zaragüeta y los orígenes de la Filosofía de la Educación en España: un pedagogo entre dos mundos," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 72, no. 258, (2014): 331; Conrad Vilanou and Begoña Lafuente, "El Cardenal Mercier y la Universidad Católica de Lovaina. Sus ecos en España," *Cuadernos de Pensamiento* 24 (2011): 179.

⁴⁰Vilanou and Lafuente, "El Cardenal Mercier," 179.

⁴¹Julio Ruiz Berrio, "Manuel Bartolomé Cossío y los comienzos de los estudios de Pedagogía en la Universidad," in *Un siglo de pedagogía científica en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid* (Madrid: UCM, 2004), 25.

⁴²Mainer, *La forja de un campo profesional*, 821.

⁴³Conrad Vilanou, "La tradición pedagógica neoescolástica: en el centenario del nacimiento de Juan Tusquets (1901–1998)," *Espíritu: cuadernos del Instituto Filosófico de Balmesiana* 51, no. 125 (2002): 66.

⁴⁴M. Arroyo Simón. "El P. Antonio Garmendía de Otaola, S.J. (1906–1971)," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 29, no. 113 (1971).

⁴⁵Juan Antonio Mora, "Semblanza biográfica del Dr. D. José Germain Cebrián," *Consejo General de Colegios Oficiales de Psicólogos* 70 (1998).

Louvain, therefore, became the backdrop to postwar pedagogy in Spain, and Raymond Buyse (1889–1974) its principal figure of reference. Buyse had been Decroly's assistant in 1922 on a research trip through the United States where they met the acclaimed educationist John Dewey as well as some of the main figures in psychopedagogy such as Edward Thorndike and William McCall.⁴⁶ One year later, in 1923, Buyse was appointed lecturer at the University of Louvain, where he became full professor in 1946.⁴⁷ Beginning in 1928 he directed an experimental pedagogy laboratory in Louvain, which in 1944 became the *Institut de psychologie appliquée et de pédagogie*.⁴⁸ The evolution of Buyse, then, shows a double break with his former mentor Decroly. On the ideological level, he remained faithful to his religious beliefs, while Decroly moved in the free-thinking world of Brussels.⁴⁹ In the disciplinary field, Buyse gives an account of the move from pretentious pedagogy towards more realistic, empirical procedures with a much more limited focus. In opposition to the overambitious pedagogy, the experimental pedagogy of Buyse was limited to “the study of teaching processes, methods and means”.⁵⁰

Buyse's relationship with Spanish academia under the Franco regime began very early. In 1940, he published two articles in the journal *Psicotecnia*, followed by a number of works in the *Revista Española de Pedagogía* over the course of the decade.⁵¹ This collaboration with Spain culminated in a visit to the country in 1948 to participate in the Fourth Meeting of Pedagogical Studies, a kind of Summer School held at the International Menéndez Pelayo University in Santander, during which García Hoz brought together the young generation of Spanish pedagogues. Buyse gave two talks at the meeting, one on the organisation of psychological and pedagogical studies in Louvain, and the other on medicine and pedagogy.⁵² Buyse's positive disposition towards Francoist pedagogy was, therefore, quite clear from the immediate postwar period onwards. It is extremely significant that three of the five articles that Buyse authored between 1940 and 1945 were published in Spain.⁵³ In 1944, he went so far as to state that the advances made in pedagogy in Spain had surpassed even those made in France.⁵⁴

Buyse's affinity with the Spanish intelligentsia of the postwar period was not just disciplinary in nature; it was also religious, as well as ideological and political. During the period which saw the collapse of many European democracies, large swathes of European Catholics coincided in their yearning for the political re-establishment of Europe along lines other than those envisaged by the liberal tradition. In other words, they coincided in

⁴⁶Marc Depaepe and Lieven D'hulst, *An Educational Pilgrimage to the United States: Travel Diary of Raymon Buyse, 1922* (Leuven; Leuven University Press, 2011), 86–8.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 45.

⁴⁸Arthur Gille, “Raymond Buyse, promoteur de la pédagogie expérimentale,” in *L'oeuvre pédagogique de Raymond Buyse* (Louvain: Vander, 1969), 25; Katia Montalbetti, *La pedagogía sperimentale di Raymond Buyse* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2002), 128, 100.

⁴⁹Marc Depaepe and Angelo Van Grop “Constructing the Eden of Our Earthly Existence: Empiricism and the History of Educational Research in Belgium before the Second World War,” in *Beyond Empiricism: On Criteria for Educational Research*, ed. Paul Smeyers and Marc Depape (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 59.

⁵⁰Depaepe, “The Practical and Professional Relevance,” 369–70.

⁵¹Raymond Buyse, “Valor y límites de los tests en psicología experimental,” *Psicotecnia* 6, no. 3 (1940): 102–11; “Limitaciones de la experimentación en pedagogía,” *Psicotecnia* 3-4 (1940): 192–9; “Consideraciones sobre la obra escolar de la Francia contemporánea,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 2, no. 5 (1944): 63–123; “Idea de un curso de pedagogía experimental,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 5, no. 20 (1947): 547–59; “Origen y desarrollo de la pedagogía experimental,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 7, no. 28 (1949): 591–609.

⁵²José Fernández Huerta, “Cuarta Reunión de Estudios Pedagógicos,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 6, no. 24 (1948): 604–5.

⁵³Gille, “Raymond Buyse,” in *L'oeuvre pédagogique*, 102.

⁵⁴Buyse, “Consideraciones sobre la obra escolar,” 107.

their longing for a Europe based on the traditional values of God, Homeland, and Family. Raymond Buyse outlined this political and ideological stance in a lengthy article on education in France, published in the *Revista Española de Pedagogía* in 1943.⁵⁵

In this work, Buyse harshly criticised the French education system, and was particularly scathing with regard to the democratic and republican principles underpinning it. His basic premise was that the republican tradition, which was rooted in the French Revolution, went against the moral unity of France. Hence, beyond certain sporadic successes, all its achievements were ultimately false and artificial. Using classic traditionalist arguments, he insisted that there was a clash between the real France and the France of political parties, which was opposed to the true nature of the country and was therefore artificial (79). With this observation, he was echoing the reactionary criticism levelled at statism, which reduced national life to an imposition by the State on all other social agents: family, profession, and the Church (81). In the name of a fictitious general freedom, this statism had generated a tyrannical, despotic education system which subjected the individual to the State and curtailed all personal liberty. The result was a set of artificial educational institutions that were completely disconnected from the essence of the nation, and which imposed moral anarchy and a merely verbalist patriotism. The only conclusion possible was that it had been the republican school which had been responsible for France's defeat at the hands of the Nazis. The similarities between this stance and that espoused by the Vichy Regime were notable, and indeed Buyse had no qualms about praising Pétain (71) and his virile discourse (75).

In relation to the future, Buyse advocated the re-establishment of all institutions on the basis of new values that included increasing the birth rate, restoring the dignity of the family, curbing the rural exodus, and the perseverance and love for a job well done (85), all key values of the authoritarian far right, which oscillated between pure traditionalism and the modernity embodied by fascism. In all senses, though, radical opposition to democracy constituted the common denominator uniting both approaches. Thus, Buyse denounced the confusion between social democracy and political democracy, claiming that the latter necessarily led to “the rule of radical incompetence and essential irresponsibility” (81). Other clichés of anti-democratic thought were the opposition to universal suffrage (79), which was held to lead to a despotism of the majority far worse than that of one single man (80) and “false democracy”, devoted to permanent change. The main target of his concerns, however, were the republican politicians themselves, who had been selected from a group of incompetents for partisan interests, and who, after betraying the nation (85), then fled like cowards, with the Minister of Education leading the retreat (83). Finally, as if to banish any lingering doubts about where his political affinities lay, Buyse concluded his paper with a quote from a speech by Salazar, in which the Portuguese dictator praised the restitution of God, Homeland, authority, family, and the glory of work as the principal certainties upon which to build a strong State (121).

Buyse's political convictions meshed perfectly with the national-Catholic sector of the Franco regime. It is therefore hardly surprising that the Catholics who had appropriated Spanish pedagogy evinced great interest in this Belgian professor who seemed to speak their language. But the relationship between Spain and Buyse was by no means a one-way street. His references to Vichy France and Portugal, but not to Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany, underscored Buyse's preference for an authoritarian state rooted in Catholicism, a formula

⁵⁵Buyse, “Consideraciones sobre la obra escolar”. The numbers in parentheses in the following two paragraphs refer to pages of this paper.

for which Franco's Spain became a true paradigm following World War II. Thus, a fruitful symbiosis was established between Buyse and the proponents of the new Spanish Francoist pedagogy. The benefit for the latter was a much-sought measure of international legitimisation with which to rebuff those who saw them as mere upstarts risen to eminence on the basis of military might. Buyse, on the other hand, found in Spain a platform from which to build a Catholic network of pedagogues in the postwar world – a world characterised by the victory of the much reviled democracy and, even worse, communism.

It is in this framework of collaboration between the academic world of the Franco regime and international Catholicism that one should situate the participation of the Dutch Franciscan James Herman Van der Veldt (1893–unknown) in the 1946 Meeting of Pedagogic Studies, two years prior to Buyse's attendance at the same event. A Professor of Psychology at the Catholic University of Washington, Van der Veldt was trained at Louvain⁵⁶ and fitted García Hoz's criteria perfectly, since he combined a scientist's approach to research as an experimental psychologist with his condition as a clergyman, thus providing a guarantee of Catholic orthodoxy. Indeed, some years later he co-authored the classic text *Psychiatry and Catholicism*, alongside Robert P. Odenwald. Since Van der Veldt had met Father Barbado in Rome,⁵⁷ it is logical to assume that it was the Dominican who made his visit possible. It also helped that he spoke fluent Spanish.⁵⁸ His mastery of the language amplified the effect of his participation in the meeting, turning him into a "broad window onto the outside world" for Francoist pedagogy, which aggressively advertised his visit as a demonstration of its *true* international scope.⁵⁹ Following his visit, Van der Veldt published two papers in the *Revista Española de Pedagogía* and a book in the Institute of Pedagogy.⁶⁰

The third international reference for Spanish pedagogy during the postwar period was Emile Planchard (1905–1990). A lecturer at the University of Coimbra in Portugal, Planchard had been born in Belgium and had also studied at Louvain. García Hoz had been advocating his thinking since the early 1940s, and in 1949 he translated his book *La pédagogie scolaire contemporaine* into Spanish, although it was not published by the Institute, but rather by Rialp, the publishing house belonging to Opus Dei.⁶¹

Paedagogica: the international network of Catholic pedagogues

The effort to reconstruct pedagogy after the rupture caused by the Civil War culminated in the International Pedagogy Conference held in Santander and San Sebastián in the summer of 1949. The conference, which attracted over 300 Spanish delegates and foreign delegates from 20 different countries,⁶² aspired to present the new Francoist pedagogy to the world, and constituted a broad-ranging political-academic operation

⁵⁶Victor García Hoz, "El Padre Van Der Veldt," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 4, no. 16 (1946): 479–80.

⁵⁷James H. Van der Veldt and Robert P. Odenwald, *Psychiatry and Catholicism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1952).

⁵⁸García Hoz, "El padre Van Der Veldt," 180.

⁵⁹"II Reunión de Estudios Pedagógicos en la Universidad 'Menéndez y Pelayo,'" *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 4, no. 16 (1946): 472.

⁶⁰James H. Van der Veldt "¿Por qué aprendemos?," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 5, no. 17 (1947): 57–65; "La transferencia de los conocimientos," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 4, no. 16 (1946), 361–402; *Cuestiones de Psicología* (Madrid: Instituto de Pedagogía San José de Calasanz, 1947).

⁶¹Emile Planchard, *La Pedagogía contemporánea* (Madrid: Rialp, 1949).

⁶²José Fernández Huerta and Esteban Villarejo, "Primer Congreso Internacional de Pedagogía," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 7, no. 27 (1949).

carried out at the height of the regime's isolation. The strong ties of the foreign delegates to the Catholic Church (many were priests) underscored Catholicism's role as the regime's principal ally in its fight against international ostracism.

The conference bore significant fruit in this area. Within its framework the groundwork was laid for an international network of Catholic pedagogues⁶³ centred around the Paedagogica society which, for several years, published a journal of the same name.⁶⁴ Heading up the committee charged with organising the new society was Víctor García Hoz, who as a result achieved the highest level of international renown of any Spanish pedagogue. He was accompanied in this task by Raymond Buyse, the aforementioned Father Van der Veldt from Washington and Emile Planchard from Coimbra, all of whom had been leading figures in Spanish pedagogy in the years before the conference and who were united by the fact of having studied at the University of Louvain.

The committee included other eminent Catholic pedagogues,⁶⁵ such as Laure Dupraz (1896–1967)⁶⁶ from Fribourg (Switzerland); the specialist in the history of Catholic education in England, Arthur Charles Frederick Beales (1905–1974)⁶⁷ from Kings College, London; the experimental psychologist Avril S. Barr (1892–1962)⁶⁸ from the University of Wisconsin, and three Italians: Mario Casotti (1896–1975) from the Catholic University of Milan;⁶⁹ his disciple, Gesualdo Nosengo (1906–1968),⁷⁰ from the Pontifical Propaganda

⁶³On the importance of networks in history of education, see Angelo Van Gorp, Marc Depaepe, and Frank Simon, "Backing the Actor as Agent in Discipline Formation: An Example of the 'Secondary Disciplinarization' of the Educational Sciences, Based On the Networks of Ovide Decroly (1901–1931)," *Paedagogica Historica* 40, no. 5-6 (2004): 591–616; Joyce Goodman, "Women and International Intellectual Co-Operation," *Paedagogica Historica* 48, no. 3 (2012): 357–68; Eckhardt Fuchs, *Networks and the History of Education*, special issue edited by Eckhardt Fuchs, *Paedagogica Historica* 43, no. 2 (2007).

⁶⁴On the society Paedagogica, see also Katia Montalbetti, *La pedagogía sperimentale*, 70–1. This author includes in the network the reputed Italian Catholic pedagogue Aldo Agazzi, who in fact did not attend the meeting.

⁶⁵See Esteban Villarejo Mínguez, "Algunas figuras extranjeras del Congreso Internacional de Pedagogía," *Bordón* 4-5 (1949): 11; Galino, "Vivencias y datos para la reflexión," 20.

⁶⁶Laure Dupraz (1896–1967) was born in Geneva and was the daughter of a surgeon. She studied at the École Normal de Sainte-Ursule in Fribourg. Later she graduated in Mathematics and became Doctor in Arts at the University of Fribourg, where from 1933 to 1943 she directed the secondary school for girls. In 1942 she was appointed to teach pedagogy at the university and in 1948 she became the first female professor at the University of Fribourg. A year later, in 1949, she was the first woman to occupy the position of dean in Switzerland: Marie-Thérèse Weber, "Laure Dupraz (1896–1967)," in *Femmes Pedagogues*, ed. Jean Houssaye (Paris: Fabert, 2008–2009), 491–4.

⁶⁷Arthur Charles Frederick Beales (1905–1974) spent most of his career at King's College, London. From 1964 on he held the chair of history of education. He was received in 1935 into the Roman Catholic Church and devoted his research to the education of English Catholics: James Scotland, "Professor A.C.F. Beales: A Memorial," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 23, no. 1 (1975): 5–6.

⁶⁸Avril S. Barr started his career as high school history teacher in South Dakota. Soon he was linked to the Indiana University in Bloomington and finally he arrived in 1924 to the University of Wisconsin where he became professor in 1929. His research was focused on measurement and prediction of teaching efficiency: John F. Ohles, "Barr, Avril S.," in *Biographical Dictionary of American Educators. Vol 1*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), 92–93.

⁶⁹Mario Casotti (1896–1975) studied philosophy in Pisa and received his doctorate in Rome in 1919. He was a disciple of the philosopher Giovanni Gentile and a follower of his pedagogical idealism (*attualismo*). In 1924 he suddenly converted to Catholicism and Neo-Thomism and responded to the invitation of A. Gemelli to teach pedagogy at the University of the Sacro Cuore in Milan, where he remained until 1964 Franco Cambi "Casotti, Mario," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 34 (1988) [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mario-casotti_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mario-casotti_(Dizionario-Biografico)) (accessed 27 August 2018); Giuseppe Bertagna, "Mario Casotti", in *Dizionario Biografico dell'Educazione 1800–2000*, <http://dbe.editricebibliografica.it/dbe/ricerche.html> (accessed 27 August 2018).

⁷⁰Gesualdo Nosengo (1906–1968) was member from 1928 of the lay religious institute, Compagnia di S. Paolo. In 1935 he graduated in pedagogy at the Università Cattolica di Milano and was assistant to Mario Casotti. In 1940 he went to Rome where he taught at a secondary school. From 1943 he collaborated closely with the Catholic *intelligentsia* that was to lead Italy after the fall of fascism. He taught in the Propaganda Fide of Rome and he participated in numerous Catholic associations. He founded the Catholic Union of Secondary Education Teachers in 1944 and in 1954 the centre for pedagogical studies *Scholé*, together with Aldo Agazzi and Luigi Stefanini: Giuseppe Bertagna, "Nosengo Gesualdo" *Dizionario Biografico dell'Educazione 1800–2000*, <http://dbe.editricebibliografica.it> (accessed 27 August 2018); Roberta Fossati, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (2013) http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gesualdo-nosengo_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (accessed 27 August 2018);

Fidei University in Rome, where Father Van der Veldt had taught; and Leo Magnino (1911–1989),⁷¹ also from Rome, with ties to the International Cultural Relations Department at the Italian Ministry of Education. The committee also comprised two young Spanish fellows of the Institute of Pedagogy and the faculty: José Fernández Huerta (1917–2005)⁷² and María Ángeles Galino (1915–2014).⁷³

The society was officially founded the following year, in November 1950, during a meeting in Rome at which the articles of association were approved and the Board of Directors reorganised. Raymond Buyse was appointed president, with García Hoz, Casotti and Dupraz serving as the three vice presidents. All the others became voting members, with the exception of Father Van der Veldt, while María Ángeles Galino became secretary.⁷⁴

The articles of association clearly established the Catholic nature of the society whose membership was limited to academics “whose ideas are not in opposition to the Catholic faith”.⁷⁵ The society had 42 members, and thus constituted a network that brought together in its Board of Directors Catholic pedagogues from Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, England, Portugal, and the United States, with further ties to universities in Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Lima, Lisbon, Lyon, Notre Dame (USA), Salzburg, and Santiago.⁷⁶ The network included two women, who were pioneers in the academic spheres of their respective countries: María Ángeles Galino, the first female professor in any discipline in Spain, and Laure Dupraz, the first female professor at Fribourg and Switzerland’s first female dean.⁷⁷

A strategic *volte-face*: science as a weapon against progressive pedagogy

The fact that Spanish postwar pedagogues formed part of an international Catholic network is not all that strange. Quite the opposite, in fact; pedagogy successfully complied with the roadmap established by the government, designed to present Francoism to the world as a Catholic regime with no ties whatsoever to fascism. The collaboration which took place with foreign Catholic pedagogues also requires little explanation, given that the Vatican was

Giorgio Chioso, “Nosengo, Gesualdo,” *Dizionario Biografico dell’Educazione 1800–2000* <http://dbe.editricebibliografica.it> (accessed 27 August 2018).

⁷¹ During the 1960s Leo Magnino (1911–1989) was director of foreign cultural relations of Italy and director of the Italian journal *la Cultura nel mondo*: Onésimo Díaz Hernández, *Rafael Calvo Serer y el grupo Arbor* (València: PUV, 2008), 115.

⁷² José Fernández Huerta (1917–2005) began his career as school teacher in the first year of the civil war. In the immediate postwar period (1942) he graduated in pedagogy and received a scholarship at the San José de Calasanz Institute of the CSIC. He became doctor in 1946 and he studied statistics and psychology. He combined his research at the institute with teaching at the University of Madrid until 1962, when he became a professor at the University of Barcelona: Vicente Faubell Zapata, “Una vida al servicio de la ciencia,” *Papeles salmantinos de educación* 6 (2006): 13–24.

⁷³ María Ángeles Galino Carrillo (1915–2014) was a member of the female Catholic Association *Institución Teresiana*, which she ended up directing from 1977 to 1988. She studied to be a schoolteacher and she graduated in Pedagogy immediately after the civil war. She got a fellowship at the San José Calasanz Institute of the CSIC and obtained her doctorate in 1945. In 1953 she became the first woman professor at the Spanish university. Her research focused on the history of education. Later, she held important political positions in the Ministry of Education as General Director of Secondary Education (1969–1971) and General Director of Educational Planning (1971–1973): Yasmina Álvarez González, “La concepción de María Ángeles Galino sobre la mujer,” *Cuadernos del Ateneo* 32 (2014): 124–5.

⁷⁴ Rosa Marín, “Paedagogica,” *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 9, no. 33 (1951): 123–4.

⁷⁵ “Estatutos de Paedagogica,” *Paedagogica* 2, no. 3 (1951): 7.

⁷⁶ Ángeles Galino, “Constitución definitiva de Paedagogica,” *Paedagogica* 2, no. 3 (1951): 6.

⁷⁷ Marie-Thérèse Weber, “Laure Dupraz (1896–1967),” in *Femmes Pedagogues*, ed. Jean Houssaye (Paris: Fabert, 2008–2009), 493.

the regime's most important champion at an international level. However, it is still necessary to explain the paradox posed by postwar Spanish pedagogy's preference for experimental pedagogy (apparently, the most criticised approach to education), rather than more classical approaches such as philosophy or history, which would have been much more orthodox choices. In this sense, it is important to bear in mind that the Spanish version of the Buyse's classic book *L'Expérimentation en Pédagogie* had been published in revolutionary Barcelona in 1937.

The influence of the distinction between means and ends advocated by Mercier's neo-scholasticism, which enabled Catholics to engage in modern science, constituted the backdrop of this decision to endorse experimental pedagogy.⁷⁸ However, on its own it is not enough to explain such a step. Other additional elements must also be taken into consideration, of which two will be explored here: the new Francoist pedagogy's desire for legitimisation and the impact of experimental pedagogy on the traditional Catholic opposition to progressive movements in education.

In relation to the first element, regardless of their merits or achievements, Spanish postwar academics were constantly plagued by the shadow of illegitimacy due to the radical intervention of the regime in the university sphere. In the case of pedagogy, as stated earlier, the panorama after the war was one of utter devastation. Only one clergyman, Zaragüeta, survived the purge, and the task of reconstructing the discipline over the enormous void left by those who had been forced into exile was given to another priest brought specifically from Rome, Father Barbado, and two young graduates.⁷⁹ In comparison with the eminent names of those forced to flee, the intellectual weakness of this group was patently evident. The aggressive stance adopted by the new postwar pedagogy in relation to its vanquished predecessor was merely a demonstration of its underlying awareness of its usurping nature.⁸⁰ In this context, the plunge into quantitativism, with the proliferation of tables, graphs, and calculations, was rooted in a desire to attain the highest degree of academic legitimacy: scientific legitimacy. In the words of Marc Depaepe, it was a case of putting on a "white jacket" in order to acquire a higher status.⁸¹ The aim was to demonstrate that postwar pedagogues were not a group of religious fundamentalists risen to power on the back of a military victory alone, but rather, were competent, modern scientists.

In this sense, there could be no doubt that Buyse's experimental psychology was eminently scientific. The Belgian professor fully endorsed the neopositivist conception of science that was the dominant school of thought at the time, and he had a sound grounding in methodology. In a paper published in 1940, Buyse masterfully established the limitations of pedagogy as a science, beyond the limits of experimentation, and discussed remarkably modern problems such as the lack of definition and vagueness of certain concepts and the irrelevance of certain topics.⁸² Indeed, the paper constituted a roadmap for purging the discipline in order to ensure scientific rigour.

⁷⁸Depaepe, "The Practical and Professional Relevance," 369.

⁷⁹Mainer, *La forja de un campo profesional*, 522.

⁸⁰See, for example, the belligerent rhetoric employed against pre-war pedagogy which accompanied the chronicle of Van de Veldt's visit: "As opposed to the unbridled foreignising passion of the intellectuals of the past", "our aspiration to collaborate with the world, while preserving and reaffirming in this intelligent undertaking, the purest essence of the truth, in which our culture has been rooted for aeons", "authentically Spanish pedagogic science", etc: "II Reunión," 472.

⁸¹Depaepe, "The Practical and Professional Relevance," 371.

This commitment to positivist scientific method introduced a new perspective into traditional Catholic opposition to progressive pedagogy, a perspective which had nothing to do with what experimental pedagogy was *in and of itself*, but rather was connected to what other types of pedagogy *were not*. What could logically be deduced from the scientific nature of experimental pedagogy was the *non-scientific* nature of other pedagogic schools of thought, and it was precisely this conclusion that made it so attractive to Spanish national-Catholics. Once again, the key to understanding this radical development lies in the figure of Raymond Buyse.

In his classic book published in 1935, Buyse established a distinction between “experimental” pedagogy and “*expérimentée*” pedagogy which, ultimately, denied the scientific nature of pedagogies linked to the New School movement. In 1949 he developed his thesis in a much more aggressive fashion in a paper published in Spain. In his journey through the evolution of pedagogy, Buyse characterised the classic pedagogy of Kant, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Herbart as a moral discipline closely linked to rational philosophy, with no pretensions of being a positive science.⁸³ As such, there was really nothing to be gained by discussing its scientific rigour. However, since the end of the nineteenth century, certain approaches had moved away from this normative sphere to study children and their development with scientific pretensions. Buyse’s assessment of these approaches was basically a negative one. First, he denied their modernity (one of their most attractive attributes and the cornerstone of how they presented themselves to the world), highlighting their superficiality and slavery to fashion: “they are only modern in appearance; they have been rejuvenated on the face of it, but only because they have applied the make-up of the latest fad”.⁸⁴ However, his most fundamental criticism was his questioning of their scientific base. For Buyse, reform pedagogy was characterised by intuition, the fantasy of artistic inspiration and qualitative assessments which used vague analogies to biology and sociology to gain a degree of scientific varnish⁸⁵ and draw “audacious conclusions” and pose “random hypotheses”.⁸⁶ Ultimately, the New School was nothing more than a superficial, easily popularised product, as evident in its success among large numbers of privileged young women who sublimated their maternal instincts in their ferocious defence of these pedagogies.⁸⁷

This vehement criticism was also levelled at the practical developments of the New School in the USA, which Buyse experienced first-hand during his visit in 1922 with Decroly, and included the leading figure in American pedagogic renovation, John Dewey. Buyse claimed that Dewey was basically a philosopher, and denied that he could be considered an experimenter, arguing that, right from the start, he had left his legendary Laboratory School at the University of Chicago in the hands of his wife. While Buyse acknowledged that both these and other new schools aimed to test methods and procedures, he located them in the field of empirical testing, rather than in the realm of experimentation in the strict sense of the term, which, to his mind, involved so much more. Real experimentation required research that was “clearly oriented (working hypothesis), solidly structured (research plan) and rigorously controlled (crucial experiment: decisive confirmatory test)”.⁸⁸

⁸²Buyse, “Limitaciones de la experimentación,” 192–9.

⁸³Buyse, “Origen y desarrollo de la pedagogía,” 593.

⁸⁴Ibid., 594.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Raymond Buyse, *La experimentación en pedagogía* (Barcelona: Labor, 1937), 35.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Buyse, “Origen y desarrollo,” 595.

As a corollary of this argument, Buyse proposed characterising the New School as a case of “*expérencée*” pedagogy, i.e. pedagogy based on experience, as opposed to “experimental” pedagogy, which was based on true experimentation.⁸⁹ This approach was faithfully echoed by Emile Planchard from Coimbra in 1943, and was popularised among school teachers by Víctor García Hoz through the *Escuela Española* journal:

this Pedagogy is not experimental in the rigorous sense of the term; its procedures have not been subjected to exact control; and indeed, nor could they be, since this pedagogic movement encompasses a domain that cannot legitimately be included in the experimental field.⁹⁰

This negation of the scientific nature of the pedagogies related to the New School constituted a bullet to the heart of progressive pedagogy. The major themes with which progressive pedagogy was concerned (ultimately, whom to educate and for what society) failed to respond to the requirements of neutrality and objectivity inherent to the scientific method, and were therefore excluded from the realm of the certainties offered by science. This had a twofold consequence for the doctrines of the New School: first, it placed them in the field of philosophical-political approaches, and second, it meant that, within this new field, they were on no qualitatively higher plane than all the other stances. The New School could therefore be questioned from the perspective of traditional Catholic pedagogy on an equal footing.

This was the framework that allowed for the adoption of the scientific method by Catholic experimental pedagogues. They adopted the methodological dimension of the logical neopositivism which was the prevailing school of thought at the time in philosophy and its rigorous normative view of science. However, they never assumed the neopositivist philosophical principle which held that scientific proposals were the only relevant truths about the world. Instead, they recovered the distinction between means and ends, which in pedagogy was present even in Kant,⁹¹ to restrict the scientific method in the field of means and reserve the scope of the ends to other (superior) truths.

Víctor García Hoz represented the embodiment of this strategic assumption of neopositivism in its purest form. The extensive work of Francoist Spain’s leading pedagogue was characterised by a blend of the strictest quantification and most strident Catholicism in questions of moral education.⁹² At first glance, this approach may seem a little schizophrenic, but in reality it was merely a development of the distinction referred to between means and ends that demonstrated the compatibility (in practice) of supernatural principles and pure scientism, thus contradicting the commonly held notion of the opposition between neopositivism and the obscurantist spiritualism of the postwar era.⁹³ For García Hoz and his school, this opposition simply never existed. On the contrary, a scientific approach to education could be turned into a weapon against

⁸⁹Buyse, “Origen y desarrollo,” 597; *La experimentación*, 34–35. For this distinction, see Depaepe and Van Grop, “Constructing the Eden of our Earthly Existence,” 59–60.

⁹⁰Emile Planchard, “Possibilités et limites de la pédagogie expérimentale,” *Biblos* 19, no. 1 (1943) 17; Víctor García Hoz, “Lo que no es la pedagogía experimental,” *Escuela Española* 137 (1943): 779.

⁹¹Depaepe, “The Practical and Professional Relevance,” 363.

⁹²Laura Graciela Rodríguez, “La influencia de la pedagogía española en Argentina durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX: el caso de Víctor García Hoz,” *CIAN-Revista de Historia de las Universidades* 19, no. 2 (2016): 222–3.

⁹³On this approach, see Bolívar, “Tiempo y contexto,” 4.

traditional adversaries, now purged or in exile, who, as Buyse pointed out, were not scientific, but ideological and political. In this sense, Juan Mainer underscores the combination of “essentialism and technicism, tradition and modernity, supernatural truth and scientific truth” that characterised Spanish pedagogy in the period following the Civil War.⁹⁴

Conclusions

Contrary to what the initial rhetoric might have led us to believe, the new Spanish pedagogy ended up resorting to an approach to research in education with high pretensions of scientific-ness: experimental pedagogy. The professor at the University of Louvain Raymon Buyse was a key reference in this evolution. Buyse defended an experimental pedagogy focused on the technical aspects of education that did not conflict with Catholic principles thanks to the distinction between means and ends proposed by Cardinal Mercier’s neo-scholasticism, but also present in pedagogy since Kant. Moreover, the neopositivist conception of Buyse turned science as applied to educational research into a weapon against progressive reform pedagogy and the New School movement.

Buyse’s approach proved extremely successful for the new Francoist pedagogy. To begin with, it opened up the possibility of developing both the discipline and the profession, something which would otherwise have been very difficult from the initial theological stances. The tests and other measures, along with the processing of the data gathered using formulas, tables, and graphs, provided the specific content which was so vital to demarcating the disciplinary field of a pedagogy which had only been reinstated as a university degree in 1944, conferring to it as well a certain degree of international recognition. But even more important was the fact that quantitativism also opened up new avenues for professional practice and especially for positions in the public system for the graduates in pedagogy. Second, the approach guaranteed the strictest kind of national-Catholic orthodoxy in relation to both means and ends. As regards means, the dive into quantitativism was ideologically harmless, as Depaepe stated, since ultimately, from the narrow space to which it was confined by scientism, experimental pedagogy had little impact on the significant questions of education.⁹⁵ And in relation to ends, the particular political situation in Spain enabled the main danger posed by this new strategy to be averted, since the debate regarding ends was never really going to progress very far under a rigid Catholic dictatorship. Thus, thanks to Buyse, the new Francoist pedagogy somehow managed to square the circle.

Disclosure statement

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⁹⁴Mainer, *La forja de un campo profesional*, 508.

⁹⁵“Experimental pedagogy did not want to have much to do with such ecstasy. It presented itself as ‘neutral’ and ‘objective’, and thus started from a pedagogical and social status quo. What was studied was not the ideal but the real situation, the result being that the research lost much of its innovational force”: Deapepe, “The Practical and Professional Relevance,” 370.

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