**SWG Touching Bodies in School**

**FINAL REPORT (2014-2018)**

The Standing Working Group “Touching Bodies” was created in July, 2014, by the General Assembly, during the ISCHE 36 held in London. The convenors are Diana Vidal (Brazil, USP), Ines Dussel (Mexico, Cinvestav) and Marcelo Caruso (Germany, Humboldt University).

**1. General Purpose of the SWG**

In contemporary schools, it is almost impossible that bodies touch other bodies without being questioned or put under suspicion. School regulations, moral orders, and pedagogical discourses have established that teachers and students have to keep their distance. Also, students’ peer relationships are similarly scrutinized. It is not only old punishment practices that are forbidden; bodily expressions of kind and care are practically vanishing from the time-space of schooling. These changes are related to shifts in our understanding of affects and violence; what passed as rituals of initiation in the past may now fall into the category of bullying, and what passed as caress and warmth may now be perceived as sexual harassment or assault.

It seems that we have never talked so much about bodies in school. We have never given so much attention to teachers and students as individuals, subjects of desire, anger, sadness or happiness. There was never so much fear of touching each other, hurting each other, affecting each other. Yet the touching of bodies has not been the object of a closer scrutiny, or made the center of a scholarly conversation among historians of education.

**2. Participation at ISCHE 41 in Berlin 2018**

1. **Call for papers**

We invited researchers attending the ISCHE Meeting in Buenos Aires to submit papers considering the proposition **Touching bodies and Nature** upon the following rationale:

In the education of bodies, nature has been attached with ambivalent meanings. It has been considered as part of an integral education of the body and soul of the child; as a haven from the urban society and its sins, as Rousseau argued; as a subject of study in science classrooms or a didactic resource for object lessons in 19th century; as the ideal environment for freedom and authentic experience for children in the New School movement. Less visibly, it has also appeared as part of the call for teaching in female educators in kindergartens and primary schools, or as support for laws that obliged them to remain single and celibate in many countries. It has discursively framed gender boundaries in school; justified racist contents and hierarchies of knowledge in school curricula; legitimated school failure and success of individuals based on gender or race.

How did school bodies “touch” nature? Was touching other people’s bodies perceived as natural or socially constructed? How was this boundary defined? Were children taught to caress animals and plants? How did school excursions and fieldtrips promoted a contact with nature? How were the different senses involved in these contacts? All these problematics were to be addressed in our panels, making it clear that nature has never been just a topic developed by teachers in class, but a substrate, limen or boundary that has been constitute of educational processes.

Also, in recognition of the ISCHE 2018 Education and Nature theme, the ISCHE Touching Bodies in School SWG and the Objects, Senses and the Material World of Schooling SWG planned joint panels that would take up historical questions concerning distinctions and interplay between the Human and Nonhuman, as well as the Animate and Inanimate.  We sought papers that examined materializations in pedagogy, classrooms and other educational practices of the intersections between “bodies” and “objects”.  Possible topics included educational histories of classroom pets, didactic specimens, plant care, gardening, bacteria, germs, and school meals.  The intent of these jointly convened panels was to surface issues arising as “bodies” and “objects” come into contact with, and are mediated by, one another.  The SWG organizers particularly wished to foreground the ways that distinctions between Human and Nonhuman, living and non-living have historically played out in educational practice.

The SWG on Touching Bodies wanted to make a special Call for Papers for those interested in discussing the materiality and immateriality of contacts between bodies with and across nature.

1. **Panels**

Out of the Call For Papers, three panels were organized which included the participation of twelve researchers.

**PANEL 1. CULTURE AND NATURE: THEORETICAL DEBATES IN EDUCATION**

TOUCHING BODIES: UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA IN THE ELABORATION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN NATURE AND EDUCATION (BRAZIL, FIRST DECADES OF THE 20TH CENTURY), Cynthia Greive Veiga, Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil

DOES ONTOGENESIS REPRODUCE PHYLOGENESIS? THE RECAPITULATION THEORY IN THE DISCOURSES OF PSYCHOLOGY ON STUDENT DEVELOPMENT, Ana Laura Godinho Lima, University of São Paulo

*LET’S MAKE ANIMALS OUR TRUE FRIENDS*. THE NATURE/CULTURE DIVIDE IN THE EMOTIONAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN ATTITUDES TOWARDS ANIMALS. CHILE, C.1900-C.1930, Pablo Toro Blanco, Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile

THING-POWER IN BERNHARD HEINRICH BLASCHES NATURBILDUNG. AN INQUIRY TO THE EDUCATIONAL ECOLOGY OF ROMANTIC PEDAGOGY, Sebastian Engelmann, M.A., Departement for Philosophy of Education, Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen

**PANEL 2. NATURE AND BODIES IN MOVEMENT: EDUCATIONAL DEBATES AND PRACTICES**

INTERDEPENDENT REHABILITATION OF DISABLED BODIES AND DEFORMED NATURE: RE-EDUCATION OF BELGIAN AND FRENCH PHYSICALLY DISABLED GREAT WAR SOLDIERS INTO RURAL LABOURERS (1914-1925), Marisa De Picker, KU Leuven – Centre for the History of Education

TRAVELLING BODY: THE EDUCATIONAL TOUR OF GIRLS IN MODERN CHINA (1910-1940), Zhou Na & Zhou Hongyu, School of history, Central China Normal University, Wuhan, China

KÖRPER- UND GEGENSTÄNDEDARSTELLUNG IM BILDUNGSPROJEKT DER LUTHERISCHEN MISSOURI-SYNODE IN BRASILIEN, Patrícia Weiduschadt, Faculdade de Educação- Universidade Federal de Pelotas- Fae-Ufpel

BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE: DEBATES ON AGRICULTURAL TEACHING IN THE PROVINCE OF MARANHÃO IN THE 19th CENTURY, Alexandre Ribeiro e Silva, School of Education – University of São Paulo

**PANEL 3. HYGIENE, EUGENICS AND THE EDUCATION OF THE BODY**

A NATURE THAT HEALS THE BODY AND BRIGHTENS THE SOUL, Heloísa Helena Pimenta Rocha, Faculdade de Educação, UNICAMP, Brazil

“THE GENTLE LEANING OF A LOVING LITTLE BODY”: THE PROVIDENCE LITHOGRAPH COMPANY AND THE ENVISIONING OF INTIMACY IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSROOM 1920-50, Sandy Brewer, Research Associate, Oxford Brookes University

LA NATURALEZA EN LA EDUCACIÓN ALIMENTARIA ESCOLAR. ARGENTINA, PERIODO DE PROGRAMA DE ASUNTOS, Aisenstein, Angela y Almada, Cecilia – Universidad de San Andrés, Argentina

REFLECTIONS ON EUGENICS, SANITATION, HYGIENE AND RURAL SCHOOLS IN THE EARLY DECADES OF THE 20TH CENTURY, Angélica Pall Oriani, Faculty of Education-USP

**3. Reason to closure the SWG before 5 years**

Over these four years, the SWG proposed 14 panels and congregated 54 researchers, as follows:

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| **2015 ISCHE 37** | **2016 ISCHE 38** | **2017 ISCHE 39** | **2018 ISCHE 40** | **Total** |
| 3 panels  | 4 panels | 4 panels | 3 panels | 14 panels |
| 10 researchers | 15 researchers | 17 researchers | 12 researchers | 54 researchers |

The numbers express a very successful initiative. The SWG received some interesting proposals, and we plan to gather a selection of them in a collective book.

The convenors consider that the SWG main purpose of drawing attention to the body in educational environments was achieved. Many papers on the subject were presented in other panels. The general theme of 38 ISCHE 2016 in Chicago and 40 ISCHE 2018 in Berlin also played an important role in disseminating this concern about bodies, their contacts, and their affects in schools. After four years of work, we believe that it is time to close the activity of the SWG and yield to the work being done by other SWG such as Objects, Senses and Material Worlds or Visual Studies, which are in many ways engaging with similar problematics as the ones addressed by our SWG and that will allow the continuity of the debates that were originally promoted.