Transnational Pedagogy.
Rationalist Educationalism in Anarchist Argentina
(1905-1915)

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1. Introduction

Theme & Research Question

When Anselmo Lorenzo and Samuel Torner, both Spanish libertarians, disseminated their educational ideals in early 20th-century Argentina, they acted in the international spirit of the global anarchist movement. At the time, anarchists were the most vigorous defenders of enlightened pedagogical ideas within the wider socialist camp, because they were convinced that an adequate schooling would eliminate ignorance and lead to a radical change in society.[1]

One of the first and most important educational initiatives they embraced was the *Escuela Moderna de Barcelona*, which was founded in 1901 by the Catalan teacher Francisco Ferrer amidst a climate of social unrest, high illiteracy rates and a public school system controlled by the catholic church. The new pedagogical institution put many anarchist principles into practice, such as the commitment to science, atheism, antistatism, and equality. It coeducated boys and girls and accepted students of all social backgrounds.[2] In addition, Ferrer shared the grassroots movement's goal of emancipating the proletariat. Education, the pedagogue believed, would either serve as a means to guarantee freedom or to oppress people. While state schools would reproduce inequalities, he was convinced that the Modern School was nothing less than the vanguard of a revolution that would overthrow the current social order. Although the Spanish government closed Ferrer's institution after just seven years, it continued to impact libertarians around the world.[3]

In Argentina, the teachings of the pedagogue spread easily. The country suffered from social instability and harboured a powerful anarchist movement in which Spaniards and above all Catalans were strongly represented.[4] In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many Europeans, particularly Spaniards and Italians, immigrated to the country, hoping for a better life abroad. However, despite the spectacular economic growth during the Argentine 'Golden Age', which took place between 1880 and 1930 when livestock

[1] Juan, Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia: Anarchist Culture and Politics in Buenos Aires 1890-1930* (Oakland: AK Press, 2010), 144.
[2] Judith Suissa, "Anarchism and Education: A Philosophical Exploration," PhD diss. (University of London, 2006), 107-108.
[3] Ibid., 110-111.
[4] A 1902 registry from the police of Buenos Aires shows that 23% of the 661 registered suspects were Spaniards, most of them of Catalan origin. This is a considerable number as Spaniards only made up 11% of the city's population at the time. See José Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkley/Los Angeles/London: Berkley University Press, 1998), 307-308.

exports to Europe increased,[5] their expectations were often not met. Disappointed with the labour market and the low standard of living, many of them became anarchists. Nevertheless, some were involved in the movement before they arrived in South America. State repression in their home countries, a more fertile ground for their political activities abroad and existing personal ties to the local radical left, attracted many libertarians. These migrations enabled supranational links and a transnational space between Spanish and Argentine anarchists[6] in which Ferrer's pedagogy was one of the topics that were eagerly discussed.

It is the aim of this paper to show why it is necessary to understand Argentine rationalist educationalism between 1905 and 1915 as a cross-border phenomenon. An examination of the transnational dimension of Argentine rationalist educationalism is on the one hand promising because it contributes to our understanding of the country's history of pedagogy. It demonstrates the various ways in which the ideals of the Modern School of Barcelona reached South America through libertarian mediators and how anarchists, who greatly fostered the intellectual debate on education, adapted them to local conditions. Furthermore, this study enriches our knowledge of the local contemporary school system, as some anarchists distanced themselves from the movement and promoted Ferrer's teachings within the public school system. On the other hand, this project promises insights into the identity and views of Argentine anarchists. Since schooling was an important means to spread ideas and to create an alternative culture that was essential to the international integration of the libertarian movement,[7] an analysis of points of ruptures with the Modern School of Barcelona shows how they imagined a future society.

Historical Debate

Research on both Argentine education history and local labour history has increased since the 1980s when the country became a democratic nation. Historians have not only analysed anarchists as actors of organized labour but have also begun to explore socio-cultural aspects of the libertarian movement, including alternative pedagogy.[8] In

[5] Roberto Cortés Conde, *The Political Economy of Argentina in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 14.
[6] James Baer, *Anarchist Immigrants in Spain and Argentina* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 1-3.
[7] Ibid., 71.
[8] Geoffroy de Laforcade and Kirwin Shaffer, "Introduction: The Hidden Story Line of Anarchism in Latin American History," in *In Defiance of Boundaries: Anarchism in Latin American History*, ed. Geoffroy de Laforcade and Kirwin Shaffer (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015), 11.

particular, a group led by the Argentine pedagogue Adriana Puiggrós, who directs the program '*Alternativas pedagógicas y prospectiva educativa en América Latina*' created in 1980 at *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, initiated several research projects.[9] Despite the growing interest in transnational anarchism since the 1990s however, there are no publications that explicitly use a cross-border approach to analyse the subject.

Early works tackle Argentine rationalist educationalism by writing a history of institutions within the political borders of the South American country. Publications such as Dora Barrancos' landmark study of anarchist culture, *Anarquismo, Educación y Costumbres en la Argentina*, shows that libertarian pedagogical institutions implemented and disseminated Ferrer's ideas. By analysing newspapers and magazines, the author describes a detailed history of numerous alternative schools that were inspired by the Catalan pedagogue in the large cities of the Buenos Aires Province during the first three decades of the 20th century. Furthermore, Barrancos discusses the significance of both *Federación Obrera Regional Argentina* (FORA) and the *Liga de Educación Racionalista*, two local institutions that took a leading role in the promotion of libertarian pedagogical initiatives in Argentina.[10] Similarly, Martín Alberto Acri and María del Carmen Cácerez focus on institutional aspects of rationalist educationalism by comparing the Argentine and Mexican movement between 1861 and 1945. The authors provide a compact overview of libertarian schools and other educational projects such as cultural centres, libraries, and periodicals.[11]

Over the past few decades a number of publications have appeared that have turned away from an essentialist-institutional historiography in order to approach the topic through discourse analysis, a method that emerged in historical research in the 1960s. Since anarchist educationalists attached great value to language and, in particular, the written word to disseminate pedagogical ideas, discourse analysis is a promising method to tackle rationalist educationalism in Argentina. However, scholars like Angela Inés Oría who investigate the use of language in different media and communicative contexts, do not explore transnational discourses but rather limit their studies to the Argentine nation-

[9] Aída Conill, "Adriana Puiggrós, Sujetos, Disciplina y Curriculum en los Orígenes del Sistema Educativo Argentino" review of *Sujetos, Disciplina y Curriculum en los Orígenes del Sistema Educativo Argentino*, by Adriana Puiggrós, *CUYO* 8-9, 1991, 233.

[10] Dora Barrancos, *Anarquismo, Educación y Costumbres en la Argentina: de Principios de Siglo*. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Contrapunto, 1990).

[11] Martín Alberto Acri and María del Carmen Cácerez, *La Educación Libertaria en la Argentina y en México, 1861-1945* (Buenos Aires: Libros de Anarres, 2011).

state. By analysing the anarchist press and publications of the prominent local rationalist educator Julio Barcos, Oría illuminates anarchist alternative conceptions on pedagogy. In her dissertation on the changing meaning and consolidation of 'public education' between 1850 and the first decade of the 21st century, she takes into account both the attitudes of Argentine political decision-makers and anarchist circles towards the 'public' to explain the process of reinterpretation of 'public education'. The anarchists' stance on education, Oría observes, stems from the central status they ascribed to the public and must be seen as a mirror-image of the official voice.[12] Pere Solà y Gussinyer examines libertarian discourses published in the press and in pamphlets to demonstrate views of Argentine and Uruguayan rationalist teachers on the public school system during the second decade of the 20th century. His study emphasizes the importance of embedding educational discourses in their historical context. Gussinyer particularly stresses the secularization process that started in Latin America in the last decades of the 19th century and was associated with the establishment of a Modern School system in Argentina, in order to understand local views on Ferrer's teachings.[13]

Even studies that deal with the meaning of Argentine rationalist educationalism for an anarchist identity, which was largely cosmopolitan, do not employ a transnational approach. Mariana di Stefano examines didactic discourses of textbooks distributed in local Modern Schools such as the work of the Italian anarchist Charles Malato. Her study explores alternative reading and writing strategies in Argentina. According to Stefano, thematic, structural, and stylistic transformations changed the discursive approach in libertarian educational institutions and were significant for the construction of a libertarian identity.[14] Similarly, Juan Suriano emphasises the importance of education for the integrity of the movement. His work *Paradoxes of Utopia*, which is based on anarchist books, periodicals, and lectures, demonstrates that anarchism was not only a political and social movement but also a cultural one that produced a variety of novels, plays and short stories, and founded theatres, music groups and schools. The sixth chapter of the work, which discusses Argentine anarchist pedagogy, describes educational efforts as an ideological attempt to cultivate an identity that on the one hand counteracts militarism,

[12] Angela Inés Oría, "Changing Meanings of Public Education in Argentina: A Genealogy," PhD diss., (University of London, 2013).
[13] Pere Solà y Gussinyer, "Los Grupos del Magisterio Racionalista en Argentina y Uruguay hacia 1910 y sus Actitudes ante la Enseñanza Laica Oficial," *Historia de la Educación* 1, (2010): 229-246.
[14] Mariana di Stefano, "Políticas de Lectura en las Escuelas del Anarquismo en la Argentina a Principios del Siglo XX," *Cuadernos del Sur. Letras* 35-36 (2005): 75-95.

patriotism and religion, and on the other hand supports rationalism and the combination of intellectual and manual work.[15]

More recently historians have traced the lives of advocates of the Modern School. Since studies of individual actors show how networks of the institutionally weak anarchist movement functioned, this presents a promising way to tackle the topic. Alexandra Pita Gonzalez wrote an essay on the Argentine pedagogue Julio Barcos, the most prominent figure of the local Modern School movement during the period studied. By analysing the pedagogue's voice in the anarchist press as well as his work *Como Educa el Estado a tu Hijo*, published in 1927, she focuses on his political-educational proposals and demonstrates the importance of individuals for the Argentine rationalist educationalism.[16] Some scholars analyse the trajectories of Spanish educationalists. However, these studies focus on the lives of libertarians in Europe. This also applies to Antonio Ribalta's biographical portrait of Samuel Torner, an Iberian teacher who lived and supported educational initiatives in Buenos Aires for several years. His time in South America and his significance for local educational projects plays only a minor role in the essay compared to his life on the Iberian Peninsula.[17]

Although institutions, discourses, individual actors and a common identity linked libertarian educators in Argentina and Spain, existing publications on Argentine rationalist educationalism have until now not explicitly used a transnational approach. Consequently, they offer little or no information on how the principles of the Modern School spread to the South American country and how local conditions, which differed from those in Spain, affected the appropriation of the Catalan pedagogue's ideas by the Argentine libertarian movement. A reassessment of the topic by means of a transnational perspective therefore leads to a better understanding of the unique history of the Modern School movement in Argentina.

Primary Sources

Since the libertarian press was the main vehicle of Argentine and Spanish rationalist educationalists to spread and discuss pedagogical ideals, libertarian journals and

[15] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopi*a, 143.
[16] Alexandra Pita González, "De La Liga Racionalista a como Educa el Estado a tú Hijo: El Itinerario de Julio Barcos," *Revista Historia* 65-66 (January-December 2012): 123-141.
[17] Antoni Dalmau i Ribalta, "Samuel Torner: Mestre Racionalista i Activista Llibertari (1881-?)," *Educació I Història: Revista d'Història de l'Educació* 18 (July-December 2011): 205-226.

newspapers are promising sources in order to analyse the transnational dimension of Ferrer's teachings in Argentina. This study thus utilizes periodicals published in the anarchist stronghold of Buenos Aires, where most of the Modern Schools were located.

The newspaper *La Protesta* provides a good overview of how different currents within the movement responded to the spread of educationalist thought. It was the most important instrument of anarchist propaganda in Argentina during the 19th and 20th centuries, as it maintained close ties to FORA and linked diverse anarchist groups.[18] Created in 1897, it existed with interruptions until 2015. The newspaper, which has been printed daily since 1904, has published journalistic articles on the local and global labour movement, as well as theoretical texts on anarchism and libertarian theory. The numerous reports on Modern Schools, discussions about rationalist educationalism, and pedagogical essays show that education has always played an important role in *La Protesta*. Several editors who ran the newspaper during the period in question were prominent advocates of pedagogy. Under the direction of the poet and dramatist Alberto Ghiraldo between 1904 and 1906, *La Protesta* began to promote the establishment of 'free' schools. Juan Creaghe, the educator and director of the *Escuela Racionalista de Luján*, became head of the periodical in 1907.[19] Although it is not clear how long he oversaw the newspaper and who took this position the following years, the educational publicist Eduardo Gilimón became part of the editorial board in 1908. In addition, Gilimón directed the associated monthly periodical *La Protesta. Suplemento Mensual* between 1908 and 1909. Although newspapers are mute sources that do not allow transparency regarding the creation or reception of their articles,[20] the content of both periodicals suggests that their readership consisted mainly of workers affiliated with anarchism.

Furthermore, this study is based on two cultural journals that have published articles by writers, pedagogues or other educated thinkers of the broader libertarian movement. They were therefore not limited to a poorly educated anarchist readership but addressed larger sections of society. The aforementioned Alberto Ghiraldo, who edited the literature journal *Ideas y Figuras*, published 136 irregular appearing issues between 1906 and 1916. *Ideas y Figuras* presented the thoughts and lives of prominent figures, most of whom

[18] Latin American Desk IISH, "La Protesta, Argentina," *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 92 (April 2012): 85.

[19] AméricaLee. CeDInCI, "La Protesta. Índice de Títulos," http://americalee.cedinci.org/portfolio-items/la-protesta/.

[20] Bart van der Steen, Charlotte van Rooden and Merel Snoep, "Who are the Squatters? Challenging Sterotypes through a Case Study of Squatting in the Dutch City of Leiden 1970-1980," *Journal of Urban History* (2019): 13.

seemed to suggest a link between Argentine and Spanish libertarians, as well as a cultural universalism.[21] It served as centre of discussion on topics such as anarchism, modernity, literature, anti-clericalism, the labour movement and women's emancipation. The issues devoted to Francisco Ferrer, Anselmo Lorenzo, Julio Barcos and Anselmo Lorenzo, all of whom promoted rationalist educationalism, show that pedagogy was a recurring theme in the magazine.

Francisco Ferrer was one of the most important local pedagogical journals of the second decade of the 20th century. It was published between 1911 and 1912 under the direction of the teacher Samuel Torner to spread the ideas of the Modern School in Argentina. It was not only an important forum for educational discussions but also supported the organization of pedagogical projects.[22] The collaborators of the magazine, who were mainly anarchists and a few socialists, were all involved in the field of education. However, they had different pedagogical views, as their articles on childhood, general principles of rationalism, school curricula and the current political situation demonstrate.[23]

Methodology

This project argues that Argentine rationalist educationalism is a cultural phenomenon that must be positioned centrally in a cross-border history. Transnationalism, a concept first used in Randolph Bourne's 1916 migration study *Transnational America*, established itself in many other fields of study in the early 1990s.[24] As this new research paradigm connects different geographical levels as well as the interaction of national or local cultures with external influences, it proves to be an adequate approach.[25] However, transnational history is not only a study of links and flows of people, ideas, objects, processes and patterns that operate across polities and societies but also includes

[21] Armando Victorio Minguzzi, "Introducción: *Ideas y Figuras*: Estrategias Intelectuales y Dualidades Polémicas," in *La Revista Ideas y Figuras de Buenos Aires a Madrid (1909-1919): Estudios e Índices*, ed. Armando Victorio Minguzzi, Carina Peraldi and Fernanda de la Rosa (La Plata: UNLP, 2014), 6-7, 18.
[22] Acri and Cácerez, *La Educación Libertaria*, 147.
[23] Mariana di Stefano, "Politicas del Lenguaje del Anarquismo Argentino," PhD diss. (Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2009), 110.
[24] Gabriela Ossenbach and María del Mar del Pozo, "Postcolonial Models, Cultural Transfers and Transnational Perspectives in Latin America: A Research Agenda," *Paedagogica Historica* 47, no. 5 (2011): 581.
[25] Constance Bantman and David Berry, "Introduction: New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour And Syndicalism: the Individual, the National and the Transnational," in *New Perspectives on Anarchism, Labour and Syndicalism: The Individual, the National and the Transnational*, ed. Constance Bantman and David Berry (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 4.

comparativism. According to Marcel van der Linden, 'transnational' is "the placing in a wider context of all historical processes, […] by means of comparison with processes elsewhere, the study of interaction processes, or a combination of the two".[26]

Anarchism and labour history in general speak for the relevance of the concept since internationalism, as an ideal and practical goal, turned into a major concern after the foundation of the First International in 1864. For this reason, labour history has experienced a shift to transnationalism since 1990, when Marcel van der Linden and Wayne Thorpe published the pioneering study *Revolutionary Syndicalism in International Perspective*.[27] Moreover, scholars such as Lynne Trethewey and Kay Whitehead pointed out the value of this concept for the history of education. A cross-border perspective, the authors observe, allows "to investigate educational ideas that transcend national boundaries" and contests the traditional notion of centres and peripheries of education history.[28] Similarly, Gabriela Ossenbach and María del Mar del Pozo understand that pedagogic culture is built "on a foundation of ideas, terms, institutions and practices that 'travel'". Education, they believe, will become a central element in transnational history, "given the privileged position it occupies in the observation and interpretation of phenomena such as acculturation and enculturation, the transmission and adaption of culture, and the relationship between dominant and receptive cultures".[29]

Guided by universalist interests, the global anarchist movement inherently possessed a dimension of transfer. Therefore, cultural transfer, an approach aligned alongside transnational history, characterises Argentine rationalist educationalism accurately. Originally developed by Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, two French scholars of German literature in the mid-1980s to overcome the methodological shortcomings of traditional comparative studies,[30] cultural transfer theory established itself in many research areas. In contrast to earlier approaches that assume clear-cut national cultures, it follows the insight gained in postcolonial studies that nations or cultural areas are not autonomous entities. By applying the categories of introduction, transmission, reception

[26] Marcel van der Linden, "Globalizing Labour Historiography: the IISH Approach," International Institute of Social History, 2002, http://www.iisg.nl/publications/globlab.pdf, 2.
[27] Bantman and Berry, "Introduction," 2.
[28] Lynne Trethewey and Kay Whitehead, "Beyond Centre and Periphery: Transnationalism in Two Teacher\Suffragettes' Work," *History of Education* 32, no. 5 (2003): 548.
[29] Ossenbach and Mar del Pozo, "Postcolonial Models," 583.
[30] Stefanie Stockhorst, "Introduction: Cultural Transfer through Translation: A Current Perspective in Enlightenment Studies," in *Cultural Transfer through Translation: The Circulation of Enlightened Thought in Europe by Means of Translation*, ed. Stefanie Stockhorst (Amsterdam\New York: Rodopi, 2010), 7.

and appropriation, the model of cultural transfer shows that they are rather dynamically interrelated systems.[31]

Transfer studies consider exchange as the norm and explore interdependencies and entanglements between geographic and cultural spaces. They focus on the transformation of culture through moving ideas and objects as well as through travelling people, the media and economic policy structures that form the framework for these transfers. Unlike previous studies, which describe transmissions as linear processes from an active to an passive participant, this approach explores adaptation procedures. It discovers contingencies and discontinuous modes of transfer by taking into account the contexts of the home and host culture, which represent different systems of meaning. Hence, this concept highlights how locals actively transformed and appropriated transferred objects, ideas and practices that were often used differently in the new environment.[32]

This paper, which draws on concepts of transnationalism and cultural transfer, is thematically setup considering the origin, mobilization and appropriation of Ferrer's pedagogy. By means of a secondary analysis, I first explain the origins and teachings of the Modern School of Barcelona. The following chapters employ a textual analysis of the previously introduced Argentine periodicals between 1905 and 1915. In a first step, I used a biographical approach to trace the lives of Samuel Torner and Anselmo Lorenzo, two Spanish mediators who illustrate the relevance of the individual level for the dissemination of rationalist educational ideas to Argentina. Anarchism was and continuous to be a very individualized movement. Due to the lack of a hierarchical organization, it draws its strength from individuals, the 'nodes' in the networks.[33] Since it was Iberian and Argentine educationalists who disseminated rationalist pedagogical ideas in the country and maintained a transnational exchange on education, an analysis of individual figures of the movement adds to our knowledge of the transatlantic integration of libertarians. Taking into account the local context, the following chapter explores how the different currents of the Argentine libertarian movement received and appropriated the principles of the new educational institution by focusing on points of rupture with the original ideas of Modern School. An additional secondary analysis with regard to the

[31] Ibid., 19.

[32] Anna Veronika Wendland, "Cultural Transfer," in *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, ed. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin\Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 45-47.

[33] Constance Bantman and Bert Altena, "Introduction: Problematizing Scales of Analysis in Network-Based Social Movements," in *Reassessing the Transnational Turn: Scales of Analysis in Anarchist and Syndicalist Studies*, ed. Constance Bantman and Bert Altena (New York: Routledge, 2014), 4.

intellectual history of the local libertarian movement and the country's socio-political conditions clarifies why these discontinuities have emerged. Although this study crosses borders, it does not dispense the role of the nation. It is important to take into account the efficiency of the public school system and governmental restrictions on anarchists and alternative pedagogical institutions to understand how libertarians adapted Ferrer's ideas to the local context.

Some conceptual considerations are necessary before dealing with the topic. First, rationalist educationalists did not form a homogenous entity. Not all of them were anarchists. Rather, many currents like socialism and radical liberalism felt connected to it. Consequently, this paper analyses 'rationalist educationalism in anarchist Argentina' instead of 'anarchist rationalist educationalism'. Moreover, I will not speak of 'anarchist' but of 'rationalist' schools, a term that refers to educational institutions that have been dubbed as 'secular', 'free', 'integral' or 'libertarian'. In addition, anarchist supporters of the Modern School belonged to various groups within the movement, which not only harbours points of contact and encounter but also of rupture and disconnection.[34] This paper, which examines both the voices of anarchist core participants and the fringes of the movement, uses concepts of the historian Juan Suriano to express the degree of proximity of libertarians to anarchist theory. 'Purists' defended doctrinal orthodoxy and behaved almost like party intellectuals, defining correct and incorrect lines. This group, consisting of a small number of leaders, acted as an educated elite and tried to convince the militant base to accept their views. While education played only a secondary role for 'purists', the minority of 'heterodox' educationalists, who were the 'heirs' of Barcelona's Modern School, were primarily advocates of pedagogy and thus much more doctrinally flexible.[35]

The paper starts with a description of the origin of rationalist educational ideas. The first chapter explains the historical context of the Modern School, provides a biographical portrait of Francisco Ferrer and describes the core principles of his teachings. The main part of the study is divided into two sections. It begins with an analysis of the different modes of transfer of Ferrer's ideas to Argentina by introducing Samuel Torner and Anselmo Lorenzo. The following chapter discusses the appropriation of rationalist educationalism in the South American country by focusing on points of rupture. It explains why and to what extent local 'purist' and 'heterodox' advocates of pedagogy

[34] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 143.
[35] Ibid., 44.

have deviated from the original ideas of the Catalan pedagogue by considering the socio-cultural context of Argentina. In the conclusion, I will argue that Argentine rationalist educationalism must be understood as a transnational phenomenon shaped not only by its Spanish origin but also by its new environment.

2. The Origin of the Modern School

At the beginning of the 20th century Spain faced major challenges. The country lost its last colonies and any possibility of becoming a world power, which the population saw as a national catastrophe. In addition, the country was economically underdeveloped and the wealthy social classes refused to give up their privileges while workers and peasants lived in miserable conditions.[36] The deficient educational system seemed to offer no way out of social inequality. Although the government founded the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts in 1900 with the aim of improving public education,[37] it achieved little success.

Spain's political instability prevented the continuation of educational programs such as the expansion of primary schools. For this reason, the country did not overcome the lack of public pedagogical institutions, which is why education remained a domain of the church. In many urban areas there were more catholic than state schools. Moreover, the ministry did not solve conflicts over teacher salaries, secondary school curricula and the status of religion in school. Students also had to pay fees to attend classes, which were mandatory until the age of nine before being increased to twelve in 1909.[38] As a result, the population was poorly educated. In 1910 more than 59% of Spaniards were still illiterate - a relatively high number in Europe in those days.[39] In light of this situation, many intellectuals criticized the status quo of the country, with pedagogical issues in particular playing an important role in the debates.[40] One of the most prominent detractors of the contemporary education system was Francisco Ferrer.

Francisco Ferrer y Guardia was born on January 10, 1859 in Alella, a Catalan village near Barcelona. Even though his parents, Jaime Ferrer and Maria de los Angeles Guardia, were well-off farmers, he received only a modest education due to the poor school conditions in Spain at that time. He attended the local municipal school until the age of ten, followed by two more years at a similar educational institution in the nearby village of Teyá. Ferrer

[36] Carme García-Yeste et al., "The Modern School of Francisco Ferrer i Guàrdia (1859-1909): an International and Current Figure," *Teachers College Record. The Voice of Scholarship in Education* 118, no.4 (2016): 2-3.
[37] Consuelo Flecha García, "Education in Spain: Close-up of its History in the 20th Century," *Analytical Reports in International Education* 4, no. 1 (October 2011): 17.
[38] Ibid., 19.
[39] Carolyn Boyd, "The Anarchists and Education in Spain: 1868-1909," *The Journal of Modern History* 48, no. 4 (December 1976): 134.
[40] García-Yeste et al., "The Modern School," 3.

was already interested in the political struggle as a child and became a freethinker and republican in early adulthood.[41] For this reason, he was in French exile when state repression in Spain increased in late 19th century. In Paris, where he lived between 1886 and 1901, he developed his interest in modern education. Working as a teacher he got involved in anticlerical and libertarian-anarchist circles that campaigned for both 'integral education' and anarcho-syndicalism. In addition, he came into contact with various thinkers such as Élisée Reclus, Paul Robin, Sébastien Faure, Jean Grave, Charles Malato and Mathieu-Georges Paraf-Javal. In September 1901, shortly after his return to Spain, Ferrer founded the Modern School in Barcelona, financially supported by Ernestine Meunié, one of his former French students.[42]

Francisco Ferrer considered schooling as essential for the common good as he believed that education was a prerequisite to create a society without hierarchies and privileges. He was convinced that the future would "sprout from school" and that everything "built on another foundation" would be "built on sand". Schooling would either serve tyranny or liberty, which is why education was the "starting point" for both "barbarism and "civilization".[43] The Catalan pedagogue rejected both the political conditions and the educational system in Spain. According to Ferrer, public schools had no ideal purpose but were rather a powerful instrument of the ruling elite. The latter would spread governmental and religious doctrines through schools to dominate "children physically, morally and intellectually to control the development of their faculties in the way desired" and deprive them of "contact with nature to modify them as required". In practice, education was therefore synonymous with domination.[44]

Even reformist teachers, he believed, continued to impose the authorities' bourgeois values. Ferrer therefore aimed to implement an alternative to the dominant catholic and state schools that would break the prevailing monopoly of the upper class over science and give non-privileged sections of society access to the truth that belonged to everyone. He was convinced that his pedagogy created free, mentally, morally, and physically well-equipped people with a higher awareness of inequality, who would eventually lead to a

[41] William Archer, *The Life, Trial and Death of Francisco Ferrer* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2001), 3-5.
[42] Fidler, "The Escuela Moderna Movement of Francisco Ferrer," 103, 107.
[43] Francisco Ferrer, *La Escuela Moderna* (Montevideo: Ed. "Solidaridad" , 1960), 22.
[44] Ibid., 59.

revolution. Spontaneous and self-determining, the enlightened 'new human' was to build a future libertarian society.[45]

The Modern School of Barcelona was not only a means of future emancipation of the proletariat but also an experiment of an ideal society at a micro level. Since the principles of equality and solidarity were the foundations of the new educational institution, there would be no hierarchical relationships between teachers and students who saw themselves as equals. In addition, coeducation, an experiment that evoked deep-rooted religious and social prejudices, enabled students of all genders and social backgrounds to enrol in Modern Schools.[46] Since the intelligence and morality of boys and girls would develop in a similar way, they were to attend class together. Moreover, the coeducation of boys and girls was essential to combat gender inequality and make women true companions of men.[47] Ferrer was convinced that students were particularly perceptible to the systematic equality practiced in his educational institution. While schools that were aimed exclusively at rich students would tend to protect the privileges of wealthy classes, the Modern School would encourage contacts between children of different backgrounds and oppose the perception of inequalities. In order to guarantee equality in class, Ferrer declined to punish, award and grade children. The "qualified immoral act of examination", he believed, led to "insane vanity of the highly awarded" and "gnawing envy and humiliation" of lower-grade students.[48]

Despite this emphasis on equality, Ferrer was at the same time a spokesman of child-centred education of the Naturalist school of Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel.[49] He propagated respect for and trust in the individual child. According to Ferrer, enlightened teachers would not impose their own ideas on the children but rather stimulate the pupils' imagination, respond to individual needs and encourage self-learning. This should be achieved through 'integral education', a term invented by Charles Fourier and further developed by Paul Robin. 'Integral education' conveys an understanding of the class structure of capitalist society, which manifests itself in the separation of manual and intellectual work. Consequently, it supports the cultivation of both physical and mental

[45] David Gribble, "Good News for Francisco Ferrer – how Anarchist Ideals in Education have survived around the World," in *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*, ed. Jonathan Purkis and James Bowen (Manchester/ New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 182-183.
[46] Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 20.
[47] Ferrer, *La Escuela Moderna*, 30.
[48] Ibid., 36, 65.
[49] Fidler, "The Escuela Moderna Movement of Francisco Ferrer," 104.

skills. Although the concept did not denounce 'book-learning' altogether, it refused an intellectualization of life. Since Ferrer was convinced that 'premature' exposition to books, memorization, routine and conventional learning prevented the natural development of all aspects of a child's personality, he encouraged learning from direct experience. Practical training, visits to museums, factories and laboratories or excursions to study geography, geology and botany were an important part of school education. In addition, the lack of rigid timetables reflects the focus of the Modern School on the needs of the individual child. Students were allowed to come and go as they wished and created their own work schedules. Overall, education should be spontaneous and depend on the students' ideas of what class should look like.[50]

The increasing number of children attending Modern Schools indicates the success of Ferrer's project. At the end of the first year, 70 girls and boys registered in the educational institution, in 1904 the school already had 114 enrolments and in 1905, 126 pupils. There were 14 Ferrer-inspired schools in Barcelona alone and a total of 34 in Catalonia, Valencia and Andalusia at the end of 1905.[51] Nevertheless, the project was short-term. In 1906 Mateo Morral, a friend of Ferrer who had worked for the publishing house of the Modern School, tried to assassinate Alfonso XIII and his bride. Subsequently, Ferrer was arrested and, although unproven, declared guilty for the crime. Moreover, the Spanish government closed his Modern School after only five years of existence.[52]

Nevertheless, Ferrer, who was released after a year, was not discouraged by these developments. He was a co-founder of the *Liga Internacional para la Educación Racional de la Infancia* in Paris in 1908, an organization that campaigned for the ideals of rationalist educationalism described above. Although this venture never thrived, Ferrer launched several journals with the League to spread his educational ideals. Among them were *l'École Rénovée* published in Brussels and Amsterdam and *La Scuola Laica* issued in Rome. Furthermore, he was editor of the *Bulletin of the Modern School*, the official organ of the Modern School, [53] and his book *The Origins and Ideals of the Modern School* appeared in 1908.

Shortly afterwards, however, the activism of the pedagogue ended. In July 1909 spontaneous popular riots broke out in Spain as a protest against the Moroccan War. The

[50] Suissa, *Anarchism and Education*, 108-109.
[51] Avrich, *The Modern School Movement*, 20, 26.
[52] Ibid., 28.
[53] Boyd, "The Anarchists and Education in Spain," 156-157.

'Tragic Week' escalated when anarchists burned down public schools and churches. Despite the lack of evidence, the government accused the educator of having instigated the uprising. In October 13th, 1909 Spain's authorities executed Ferrer, who was a convenient scapegoat and powerful enemy of the established order. Moreover, the government closed 130 rationalist schools after the incident.[54]

However, Ferrer's execution by no means removed his influence on advocates of education but rather contributed immensely to his popularity. Although he was, compared with his contemporaries Faure, Robin, Reclus, relatively undistinguished as a creator or anarchist propaganda or as a 'scientific' pedagogue, the events of 1906 and 1909 put his works in the spotlight. He became a symbol of anti-establishment and anti-clericalism for diverse groups around the world, ranging from libertarian-republican to anarcho-syndicalist and libertarian activists. His pedagogy was seen as a battle against ignorance, superstition, illiteracy and poverty.[55] While his work was scarcely known in many countries before his death in 1909, the ideas of the Modern School reached Argentina quite some time earlier.[56]

[54] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 168.
[55] Fidler, "The Escuela Moderna Movement of Francisco Ferrer," 109.
[56] Solà y Gussinyer, "Los Grupos del Magisterio," 234-235.

3. Transatlantic Mediators

Spanish libertarians brought the teachings of the Modern School of Barcelona to Argentina. Many of them settled in the country in the early 20th century when massive immigration from Europe to South America took place for economic and political reasons. Such flows were certainly significant for the intellectual exchange between Argentine and Spanish anarchists, because immigrants brought ideas and experiences with them.[57] However, not only migrants acted as cultural mediators. Although many Spaniards never left their homeland, they participated in a common transnational network. For this reason, they not only enabled communication with compatriots in Argentina but promoted the creation of an identity that knitted together the anarchist movements of both sides of the Atlantic.

Instead of giving a comprehensive overview of Iberian actors involved in this project, this section presents two advocates of the Modern School whose contrasting biographies illustrate how ideas traversed the Atlantic. The lives of Samuel Torner and his father-in-law Anselmo Lorenzo are representative of a generation of Spaniards with similar professional backgrounds, thoughts and hopes. Although both embodied bonds and movements that crossed state boundaries, were interested in rationalist educationalism and worked for Ferrer, the way in which they disseminated the values of the Modern School differed greatly.

Samuel Torner was a 'heterodox' and an 'active mediator'. The educator directed two Modern Schools in Spain before he emigrated to South America in 1909. In Argentina, where he lived until 1914, he continuously campaigned for rationalist pedagogy. He opened a Modern School and worked as a teacher in Buenos Aires. In addition, he played a key role in creating the Argentine section of the aforementioned *Liga Internacional para la Educación Racional de la Infancia*. Furthermore, he was editor of the journal *Francisco Ferrer*, which was an important forum for libertarian pedagogues.

In contrast, Lorenzo, one of the most famous Spanish anarchists of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA), was a 'purist' who never went to Argentina. Nevertheless, the typographer translated an impressive number of works and wrote several self-authored publications on behalf of the Modern School of Barcelona, most of which circulated in the local movement and contributed to a common 'culture of

[57] Baer, *Anarchist Immigrants*, 1.

education' shared by Argentine and Spanish libertarians. Moreover, independently of Ferrer, he published various works and articles on education, which were sold through bookstores or published in the local libertarian press. Even though the publicist had ties to anarchists in Buenos Aires, the vast majority of his texts which appeared in Argentine periodicals and refer to education, were not explicitly written for the local audience but copied from Spanish newspapers. Hence, this paper considers Lorenzo as a 'passive mediator' of rationalist pedagogy in the Southern Cone.

Samuel Torner

One of the most prominent figures of Spain's Modern School movement was Samuel Torner. Nevertheless, scholars have not paid much attention to him so far. Studies dealing with the educator are mainly concerned with the broader topic of Modern Schools on the Iberian Peninsula. Relatively little is known about Torner in general, but less about his activities in Buenos Aires. The few historians who have analysed his role in Argentina, have not considered his influence on local rationalist pedagogy from a transnational perspective.[58] However, Torner must be seen as an important actor that linked Spanish and Argentine advocates of education. Before analysing why he was an 'active mediator' of Ferrer's teachings to Argentina and how local libertarians received him, it is essential to understand what kind of experiences he had gained in Spain before he went to South America.

Samuel Torner i Viñallonga, born in Barcelona on April 10, 1881, was son of the Argentine Josep Torner i Capdevila and his Catalan wife Dolors Viñallonga i Mauri.[59] When he was only sixteen, he received the title of teacher "in a tough battle, not renouncing" his "freethinking and radical ideas, in front of a catholic court in the Escuela Normal de Barcelona", he reported in the Valencian periodical *El Pueblo*.[60] In 1901, shortly before the creation of the Modern School, he founded the *Academia Libre "La Nueva Humanidad"* in Sans, Barcelona, where he was director and worked as a teacher. In the same year, however, he abandoned the academy because of the increasing

[58] Antoni Dalmau I Ribalta, "Samuel Torner, Mestre Racionalista i Activista Llibertari (1881-?)," *Educació I Història: Revista d`Història de l'Educació* 18 (July-December 2011). Luis Lázaro Lorente, *La Escuela Moderna de Valencia* (Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana, 1989), Chapter III/1: Samuel Torner Vinallonga, 123-156.
[59] Dalmau I Ribalta, "Samuel Torner," 207-208.
[60] Samuel Torner, "Ensenando (sic) Moderna. Contestando a un Maestrico," El Pueblo (26.VII-1908), 1, quoted in: Lorente, *La Escuela Moderna de Valencia*, 124.

repression by the government following the declaration of a general strike in Barcelona in May 1901.[61]

After presumably teaching at a protestant school for three years, a new era began in his life in which he worked closely with Ferrer. Torner not only coordinated several Modern Schools for a few months during the detainment of the Catalan pedagogue after the terrorist attack on the Spanish king but also oversaw two important educational institutions. In 1904 he became head of a branch school of Barcelona's *Escuela Moderna* in the Catalan city Villanueva y Geltrú, a position he held until 1906, when he took over the management of the *Escuela Moderna de Valencia.* This must have been a significant experience for Torner since the Valencian school expanded and deepened the aspirations of Ferrer's educational project in Barcelona. In contrast to the Catalan institution, it offered coeducational courses for adults and attracted more students of the popular classes due to reduced fees.[62]

However, Torner not only advocated his ideals in school. Even though it is not possible to definitely assign him to any political direction in these years, the 'heterodox' clearly sympathized with the anarchists. He joined strikes, took part in a campaign for liberating several imprisoned workers and wrote pamphlets. Despite being arrested several times for participating in activities organized by anarchist labour front, he continued to promote his pedagogical ideals within the movement.[63] Torner held various lectures on the new educational institution, supported a campaign for the freedom of Ferrer and the reopening of the Catalan school, and was an active publicist on pedagogy. Between 1907 and 1909 he edited the monthly magazine *Humanidad Nueva*, which was the official voice of the *Escuela Moderna de Valencia*.[64]

In the aftermath of Spain's 'Tragic Week', the Valencian school was closed and Torner was first imprisoned and then banished. Like many other anarchists who emigrated for political reasons, he decided to go to Buenos Aires.[65] *La Protesta* mentioned him for the first time in October 1909: "Thanks to the Spanish government" that had "indirectly forced the emigration of a large number of teachers from Spain", Samuel Torner, "the director of the Modern School of Valencia", an educational institution which "according

[61] Lorente, *La Escuela Moderna de Valencia*, 124.
[62] Ibid., 2, 125-126.
[63] Ibid., 140.
[64] Dalmau i Ribalta, "Samuel Torner," 216-217.
[65] Ibid., 220.

to reports" belonged to "the best organized ones in Spain", had arrived in Argentina.[66] In 1914, after four and a half years, the pedagogue returned to the Iberian peninsula where he resumed his position as director of the reopened school in Valencia and continued to advocate his ideals in the press. Since scholars lost track of Torner in the 1920s, his later life and the day he died are still unknown.[67]

Samuel Torner brought ideas and experiences he had gained through his collaboration with Ferrer to Argentina. During the entire period between September 1909 and March 1914, when he was living in Buenos Aires, he remained an active proponent of rationalist educationalism. This is reflected, among others, by the fact that he regularly participated in meetings and talks referring to the Modern School. One such event he attended was a pedagogical-literary conference held in the country's capital in favour of the Modern School of Buenos Aires. *La Protesta* announced that the "former professor of the Modern School of Valencia" was among the speakers, lecturing about "the educational work of the Modern School and its moral, intellectual and social influence on the proletariat".[68] However, Torner did not only take part in reunions in Buenos Aires but also supported the spread of his ideals throughout Argentina. In the following year, the libertarian press reported that the educator travelled to the city Bahia Blanca "to take part in acts of rationalist propaganda". After showing "his approval for the universal protest motivated by the murder of Ferrer", he held a lecture titled "The child in the school and in the family". Subsequently, he presented the "work of Ferrer, the organization of his school, his conferences and the book collection published by him" and called for the "peaceful implantation of modern education".[69]

Moreover, the anarchist historian Diego Abad de Santillán mentioned that Torner founded a Modern School in Buenos Aires in 1910, where he worked as a teacher for one season.[70] Unfortunately, crucial sources are lost, which is why little is known about the project and it is unclear to what extent it has contributed to the spread of rationalist educationalism. Although we can assume that it was only maintained for a relatively short time because it is not mentioned in Toner's journal, which has been published since May 1911, it must have contributed to the dissemination of alternative pedagogical ideas in

[66] "Buena Iniciativa", LP, October 16, 1909.
[67] Dalmau i Ribalta, "Samuel Torner," 223.
[68] "Gran Conferencia Pedagógica-literaria," LP, April 27, 1910.
[69] "Conferencia", FF, no. 7, August 15, 1911, 7.
[70] Diego Abad de Santillán, *El Movimiento Anarquista en la Argentina: Desde sus Comienzos hasta 1910* (Buenos Aires: Ed. Argonauta, 1910), 169-170.

Argentina. After all, one of the key figures of the Modern School movement with relevant experience as director, created this educational institution to instruct Argentine students, modelled on the *Escuela Moderna de Barcelona*.

Furthermore, between 1911 and 1912, Torner was the editor of the then most important educational journal in Argentina: *Francisco Ferrer*. He wanted to "continue the work" he did "in Europe together with his friend Ferrer" by means of the periodical, which he perceived as a "biweekly fight, combat and orientation".[71] The entire income of this venture was "dedicated to educational development", as the editors promised in a further issue of the magazine. They not only aimed to "procure school supplies" for local pedagogical institutions but also wanted to "financially support European schools".[72]

In addition, the journal regularly announced upcoming events and reported on past evening events called '*veladas'*, conferences and lectures. These meetings were aimed both at instructing workers and at improving the financial situation of pedagogical initiatives. According to the magazine, many people throughout the country aimed to "realize conferences and veladas to spread rationalist education". In some cases they organized events "for the benefit of the Escuela or the periodical".[73] The editors of *Francisco Ferrer* also arranged meetings such as the conference on the occasion of Ferrer's anniversary of death on October 13th, 1911, the proceeds of which were donated to the Modern School.[74]

Torner occasionally published self-authored articles in the periodical, criticizing Argentina's public education system, propagating the values of the Modern School and asking the readership to support pedagogical projects. Some of his contributions initiated long-lasting debates within the local libertarian movement. Most importantly, he was convinced to oppose any kind of ideologization in school. This goal, which he already had back in Spain,[75] becomes clear in *Francisco Ferrer*. In one of his articles, Torner spoke out against the "prejudice rooted in the community, baptizing the rationalist school with specific adjectives" since these instilled "suspicions and misgivings". For this reason, the Modern School would refuse any additional name, "starting with secular,

[71] Samuel Torner, "A Todos," FF, no. 5, July 1, 1911, 2.
[72] "Notas," FF, no. 2, May 15, 1911, 10.
[73] FF, no. 5, July 1, 1911, 3.
[74] "Homenaje a F. Ferrer y Guardia," FF, no. 10, September 1, 1911, 17.
[75] Lorente, *La Escuela Moderna de Valencia*, 157.

neutral and ending with anarchist". It was "not possible to label truth", he wrote, and science was "not white or black, nor red".[76]

Moreover, Torner contributed to the spread of Ferrer's ideas because he played an important role in the establishment of the *Liga de Educación Racionalista*, which had the purpose of combating religious and nationalist influences on education, re-establish the Modern School and build a broad educational alternative that would appeal to all Argentines. As early as 1911, *Francisco Ferrer* promoted the creation of the *Liga*. According to the educator, this institution consisted "of known and conscious individuals" that were "in charge of the Modern School's implementation" and to which the editors would "hand over the money that was collected for this objective". He believed that it was necessary to set up an organization that realized the work they had been sponsoring for a long time and which would be "an autonomous group of the *Liga Internacional de Educación Racional* founded by Ferrer".[77] Unlike many other places around the world in which such sections had already been created, rationalist educationalists were "still isolated and silent in Argentina",[78] he wrote in another article. After the founding of the *Liga*, *Francisco Ferrer* became its official voice, followed by the journal *La Escuela Popular* between 1912 and 1914.[79]

Many libertarians perceived Torner as an advocate of rationalist education who sought to achieve a more just society, as letters addressed to the pedagogue and published in his 'heterodox' journal show. 'F. Campo', a reader of the pedagogue's periodical valued *Francisco Ferrer* highly because of its "great articles", as he assured in his letter. Reading the magazine was "the best way of personal regeneration" and would lead "the human species to better and happy times, when people would be "full of light and instruction". Moreover, he praised Torner's promotion of the opening of Modern Schools in Argentina since these equipped "the individual with skills to enjoy life" and were "the most progressive ones.[80]

However, the 'purist' daily *La Protesta* barely mentions the pedagogue. He appears in its reporting only for a short time after his arrival in Argentina, which announces his presence at educational events a few times. Even though there is not enough information

[76] Samuel Torner, "Razonamiento," FF, no. 7, August 1, 1911, 14.
[77] Samuel Torner, "La Escuela Moderna en Buenos Aires: Necesidad de una Entidad Protectora – La Liga de Enseñanza Racional," FF, no. 16, January 1912, 8.
[78] Samuel Torner, "La Liga Internacional para la Educación Racional de la Infancia," FF, no. 18, March 31, 1912, 13.
[79] Suriano, Paradoxes of Utopia, 165.
[80] F. Campo, "Señor Samuel Torner," FF, no. 6, July 15, 1911, 12.

about Torner's attitude towards anarchism in these years, it is likely that the schism that occurred between 'heterodox' rationalist educators and 'purists' after the repression in late 1909 and 1910 also affected him. After the government had closed the three libertarian schools operating in and around Buenos Aires in 1909, another heavy blow followed the next year with the Law of Social Defence, which allowed the deportation of foreign anarchists. This act was catastrophic for the movement in general and in particular for its weak educational flank. As a result, 'purists' became less willing to spend energy on pedagogical projects and many educators distanced themselves from anarchism.[81]

Anselmo Lorenzo

Anselmo Lorenzo Asperilla was clearly one of the most renowned Spanish anarchists of the early 20th century who transferred educational ideas from the Iberian Peninsula to Argentina. Although many scholars have described him as a key figure of the Modern School of Barcelona, his commitment to education plays a comparatively minor role within the large number of works that mainly focus on his participation in the Spanish labour movement. Few publications explicitly address his significance for rationalist pedagogy. However, these studies do not employ a transnational framework that is crucial to gain insights into his influence beyond Spain.[82] Before elaborating why Lorenzo was a 'passive' mediator of Ferrer's ideas in Argentina and how the local libertarian movement perceived him, it is worth taking a look at his life to understand how he became involved in the Modern School movement.

Anselmo Lorenzo was born as the son of a working-class family in Toledo on April 21, 1841. Poorly educated, he first worked in the candle factory of his uncle in Madrid before he became a typographer. Influenced by the republican-federal ideas of Francisco Pi y Margall and the work of the anarchist thinker Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, he turned into a prominent figure of the Iberian labour movement. As one of the 'Fathers of Spanish Anarchism', he was a member of Spain's section of the First International, *Federación*

[81] Suriano, Paradoxes of Utopia, 164.

[82] Dolores Marín Silvestre, "Anselmo Lorenzo: del Educador y Librepensador al Científico Social," in *En el Alba del Anarquismo: Anselmo Lorenzo, 1914-2014*, ed. Jordi Maíz Chacón (Palma de Mallorca: Calumnia Ediciones, 2017), 139-167. Albert Esteruelas i Teixidó and María Teresa Valbuena, "Francisco Ferrer y Guardia, Anselmo Lorenzo y la Escuela Moderna," in *Doctor Buenaventura Delgado Criado: Pedagogo e Historiador*, ed. Conrad Vilanou Torrano (Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona, 2009), 609-624.

Regional Española, since its creation in 1869 and later of *Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores*, founded in 1910.[83]

In 1896 Lorenzo was arrested after a bomb attack on a procession during Corpus Day. Even though it was unclear who was responsible for the incident, the government blamed the anarchists. After a few months of imprisonment in the Montjuic castle, Lorenzo was banished from the country. He took refuge in Paris, where he met many famous anarchist intellectuals such as Charles Malato, Sébastien Faure, and Jean Grave.[84] Moreover, he established a friendship with Ferrer that strongly influenced his future militancy, as the Catalan pedagogue fostered Lorenzo's interest in educational questions. After his return to Barcelona in 1898, he started to collaborate with Ferrer. Apart from editing his friend's periodical *La Huelga General* in which he published articles on revolutionary syndicalism, Lorenzo supported *Solidaridad Obrera*, a newspaper partly funded by Ferrer. Later, he translated several works of libertarian thinkers for the Modern School of Barcelona.[85] Lorenzo described this collaboration as a turning point in his life. "There was an important change in my way of life: Francisco Ferrer y Guardia, the founder of the Modern School of Barcelona, the martyr of rationalist education associated me with his work, entrusting me with the translation of the French works necessary for the library", he stated in his autobiography *El Proletariado Militante*. The anarchist revolutionary apparently devoted all of his energy to this project. "My new duties absorbed my time completely", he continued.[86]

Unfortunately, his cooperation with Ferrer did not last long since the latter was arrested and executed after the 'Tragic Week', as previously explained. Lorenzo could not escape the reaction either but was able to return to Barcelona after a relatively short time in exile. Back in the Catalan capital, he resumed his position as translator of the Modern School, as Ferrer had wished in his testament. Until November 30, 1914, when he passed away suddenly,[87] Lorenzo remained an advocate of his friend's teachings. The Modern School,

[83] Paco Madrid, "Introducción: Anselmo Lorenzo, un Tipógrafo Anarquista," in *Anselmo Lorenzo, un militante proletario en el ojo del huracán. Antología*, ed. Francisco Madrid *(*Barcelona: Virus Editorial, 2008), 12.
[84] Ibid., 35.
[85] Ibid., 37-38.
[86] Anselmo Lorenzo, *El Proletario Militante: Memorias de un Internacionalista: Libro Segundo* (Barcelona: A. López, 1923), 4.
[87] Madrid, "Anselmo Lorenzo," 40, 43.

he wrote in his foreword to Ferrer's posthumously published book *La Escuela Moderna*, was the "entrance gate of the new path of human freedom".[88]

Even though the typographer never lived in South America, he contributed as a 'passive mediator' to the spread of rationalist ideas to Argentina. In 1901, the same year of the founding of the Modern School, Ferrer had created an affiliated publishing house that played an important role in his educational project. *Publicaciones de la Escuela Moderna* fostered an alternative 'culture of education' that crossed state borders by editing 'progressive' and 'scientific' textbooks and literature of numerous European authors to address students and adults around the world.[89] Although it is not clear to what extent these publications were used in Argentine educational practices, they must have had a significant impact since several libraries in Buenos Aires today, including the *Biblioteca-Archivo de Estudios Libertarios de la Federación Libertaria Argentina*, the *Biblioteca Popular José Ingenieros* and the *Sociedad Luz*, own a large part of the Catalan pedagogue's collection.[90]

Among the publications of the Modern School were a total of 12 texts translated by Lorenzo from French into Spanish as well as a couple of self-authored works,[91] all of which circulated continuously between 1905 and 1915 within the Argentine anarchist movement. Local publishing houses like *Casa Editorial de Maucci*, Elvira Fernández' *Casa Editoral*, *Publicaciones de la Escuela Moderna de Villa Crespo* and *Librería, Imprenta y Cigarrería* released several of his works. Booksellers furthermore imported and sold them in libertarian stores such as *La Pequeña Moderna, Librería Sociológica, La Escuela Moderna, Librería "La Internacional", Librería de La Protesta* and *Librería de Ideas y Figuras*, the two latter ones being associated with the periodicals of the same name. In addition, the Argentine anarchist press, which was an important means of educating "ignorant workers", published articles authored by Lorenzo. Since anarchists believed that the written word would secure the universalistic stance of the movement, they were highly supportive of libertarian texts published in Argentina or worldwide.[92] For this reason, periodicals not only kept Lorenzo's works for sale or loan but also

[88] Anselmo Lorenzo, "Vorwort zur Spanischen Ausgabe," in *Die Moderne Schule: Nachgelassene Erklärungen und Betrachtungen über die rationalistische Lehrmethode* (Berlin: Der Syndikalist, 1923), 8.
[89] Pascual Velázquez and Antonio Viñao, "Un Programa de Educación Popular: El Legado de Ferrer Guardia y la Editorial Publicaciones de la Escuela Moderna (1901-1936)," *Educació i Història: Revista d'Història de l' Educació* 16 (2010): 88, 99.
[90] Di Stefano, "Políticas de Lectura," 79.
[91] Velázquez and Viñao, "Un Programa de Educación Popular," 100.
[92] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 132-133.

published advertisements of other bookshops. Moreover, they released literature recommendations and even serialized several of his texts.

Lorenzo's first translation, commissioned by the new educational institution, was the reader *Las Aventuras de Nono* by Jean Grave. The novel about the son of a poor worker, Nono, who dreams of an anarchist paradise called *Autonomía*, was, according to Ferrer, "the favourite book" of the Modern School since it fitted "perfectly to rationalist pedagogy".[93] Like in Spain, it became a classic in Argentina. The bookshop *La Pequeña Moderna* still promoted its sale four years after the first release of the Spanish version and *La Escuela Moderna* even ten years later.[94] His translation of *La Substancia Universal*, an ontology and philosophy of science by Albert Bloch and Mathieu-Georges Paraf Javal, was also well known among Argentine anarchists. It not only appeared repeatedly in the advertising of the bookstores but was even published by *La Protesta* in regular instalments between September 1905 and February 1906. In 1914 *Librería de La Protesta* still advertised it.[95] Élisée Reclus' six-part volume *El Hombre y la Tierra*, one of the most emblematic publications of the Modern School issued between 1906 and 1909,[96] was certainly the biggest undertaking of Lorenzo. The book of the French anarchist geographer was sold, among others, by Bautista Fueyo. The bookseller praised it as the "masterpiece of the great author, who is universally renowned" and stated that it had "to interest everyone who reads and thinks" since it offered the "necessary knowledge for orientation in the struggles of modern civilization".[97] The anarchist press contributed to the success of the book. *La Protesta* published a review in 1913 authored by Lorenzo, who wrote that "El Hombre y La Tierra" should "not be missing in any library", as it contained "useful teachings" and explained how "to avoid all kinds of bourgeois deviations".[98] Likewise, the newspaper recommended reading Jean Grave's revolutionary pamphlet *Tierra Libre*, which was translated by the anarchist typographer. According to *La Protesta*, studious comrades should know the "communist fantasy" because it would provide "conceptions of perfect future proactivity", "wise notions of community that are necessary to know and discuss" and "the solution of many urgent problems".[99]

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[93] Francisco Ferrer, "Al Profesorado," Prologue of Jean Grave: Las Aventuras de Nono, trans. Anselmo Lorenzo (Barcelona, 1902).
[94] "Libros," LP, December 6, 1906. "Aviso: Publicaciones de la Escuela Moderna," LP, November 24, 1912.
[95] "Librería de La Protesta," LP, March 26, 1914.
[96] Velázquez and Viñao, "Un Programa de Educación Popular," 89.
[97] Bautista Fueyo, Advertisement, LPSM, June 1908.
[98] Anselmo Lorenzo, "Bibliografía,": El Hombre y la Tierra," LP, August 28, 1913.
[99] "Tierra Libre," LP, April 1, 1908.

Moreover, various works written by Lorenzo spread to Argentina on behalf of the Modern School. Among those were his biography *El Proletariado Militante*, a work that discusses the correspondence between nature, people and society entitled *El Banquete de la Vida*, and his text *El Criterio Libertario*, which describes the 1903 conference on the inauguration of the Workers' Centre in the Catalan city of Sabadell. All of these publications were serialized in *La Protesta* over an impressive number of issues and held in bookshops. In addition, local libertarian stores disseminated Ferrer's book *La Escuela Moderna*, to which Lorenzo had written the preface.

However, the anarchist revolutionary also published texts independently of Ferrer that found readers in Argentina. *La Protesta* announced in October 1913 to have achieved his work *Hacia la Emancipación*, which would be an "interesting study of emancipatory action" of, among others, "rationalist education".[100] Moreover, he was a publicist on education in the Argentine press, which served as an alternative communication network across state borders. His texts appeared in various periodicals, including *Francisco Ferrer*, *La Protesta* and *Ideas y Figuras*. An article published in the latter shows his conviction of the relevance of education. According to the typographer, rationalist pedagogy was the "basis of a just and perfect society, the summary of everything good and the annihilation of everything bad". He was convinced that future generations would understand the historical significance of the Modern School. Looking back to the 20th century, they would realize that people had been torn between faith and logic, that there had been "illiterates who ignored everything and literates who exploited ignorance".[101] In addition, a striking number of his texts which appeared in the local libertarian press, dealt with education in the context of syndicalism. Labour syndicalism, Lorenzo believed, "must necessarily be based on school rationalism" to ensure the "uninterrupted and flourishing continuation" of propaganda and organization, as he wrote in an article published in *Francisco Ferrer*.[102]

The circulation of Lorenzo's publications and the considerable amount of articles on education authored by him show that local libertarians were interested in the Spaniard and his ideas. They not only saw the 'purist' as one of the founding fathers of the First International's Spanish section but also linked him to Francisco Ferrer's Modern School, as the considerable number of articles that commemorated the anarchist typographer after

[100] "Hacia la Emancipación: Por Anselmo Lorenzo," LP, October 5, 1913.
[101] Anselmo Lorenzo, „Justificación Histórica," IF, no. 17, October 13, 1909.
[102] Anselmo Lorenzo, "Sindicalismo y Racionalismo," FF, no. 1, May 10, 1911, 3.

his death demonstrate. The Spaniard and teacher Constancio Romeo described the anarchist in *La Protesta* as "a convinced rebel". Since rebellion would attract rebellion, "Francisco Ferrer Guardia, who was also a rebel, cooperated with Anselmo Lorenzo". Together they had introduced "the sublime literary creations that until then had been banned". The Modern School would have been "the mighty fortress from which the two" had "fired in form of a book the most formidable projectiles against the hateful tyranny and fierce capitalism" supported by the "canon of truth invoked by science".[103]

Similarly, Augusto Gonzalvo, who regularly wrote articles for *Francisco Ferrer*, portrayed Lorenzo as a confidant of the Catalan pedagogue. According to the author, the "old internationalist, who sincerely" upheld "his revolutionary conviction", was "the most unconditional collaborator" of the Modern School, "the intimate and loyal friend of its founder", and the "hardworking writer who made the honourable translations of the collection of the Modern School".[104]

[103] Constancio Romeo, "Crónica Extranjera: La muerte de Anselmo Lorenzo," LP, January 1, 1915.
[104] Augusto Gonzalvo, "Anselmo Lorenzo," FF, no. 11, October 13, 1911, 11.

4. Taking Roots: Ferrer's Ideas in Argentina

Ferrer's teachings had a strong influence in Argentina since 1905, where local advocates of education received and appropriated them. Despite the different perspectives of 'purist' and 'heterodox' libertarians on pedagogical issues, which are reflected in the large number of corresponding debates in anarchist periodicals, there was no clear schism within the movement throughout the period studied. Labour-oriented libertarians and those who were specifically dedicated to education maintained a lively intellectual exchange in the anarchist press, as the transatlantic mediators of this study, Anselmo Lorenzo and Samuel Torner, exemplify. Not only the shared family background linked the two advocates of the Modern School but also the regular collaboration of Lorenzo in Torner's pedagogical journal *Francisco Ferrer*. Furthermore, numerous 'heterodox' and 'purist' groups supported the *Comité de Escuelas Libres* founded in 1905, which campaigned for the implementation of rationalist educationalism and in 1909 realized a school council made up of representatives of the various syndicates.[105] In addition, the two currents of anarchism shared educational premises. Although directors and teachers of alternative schools were mainly 'heterodox', these ventures relied on the support of the broader anarchist camp. A Modern School in Mar del Plata illustrates this. During the direction of José Sagristá, a pedagogue and former head of the *Escuela Galileo de Barcelona*, which was affiliated with Ferrer's educational institution, the school was partly funded by the local bakers' union.[106]

Even after 1909, when 'purist' and 'heterodox' libertarians gradually distanced themselves from each other, they carried on working together on pedagogical projects. Some educationalists like Julio Barcos, the most distinguished Argentine rationalist pedagogue of that time, continued to promote alternative schools after their turn to reformism. In 1911, after already heaving disseminated rationalist ideas within the system, Barcos supported the establishment of the *Escuela de Talleres*, a non-governmental institution located in Buenos Aires that offered night courses.[107] Moreover, the Argentine educator still participated in conferences held in the Modern School of La Plata in 1915.[108]

[105] Acri and Cácerez, *La Educación Libertaria*, 136-137.
[106] Barrancos, *Anarquismo, Educación y Costumbres*, 112.
[107] Ibid., 137.
[108] Ibid., 142.

Although both 'purist' and 'heterodox' anarchists sympathized with Ferrer's ideas, they did, for different reasons, not fully accept them. This chapter portrays the appropriation of rationalist educationalism in the cultural context of Argentina. It examines why and to what extent the two streams of anarchism deviated from the original conceptions of the Catalan pedagogue. The majority of the anarchists were less willing to spend energy on educational initiatives. 'Purists' legitimized their rather sceptical stance on pedagogical initiatives with reference to the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, the chief propagator of 19th century anarchism. Like the Russian revolutionary, they viewed education as a minor objective. While this position corresponds with the reception of the Modern School by 'purists' in Spain,[109] the withdrawal of 'heterodox' educationalists from antistatism was characteristic of Argentina.[110] Since rationalist pedagogical ideals had top priority for the latter, the turn to reformism was a pragmatic step to implement their goals, as the example of Julio Barcos, illustrates.

From Major to Minor Objective: the 'Purist' Attitude towards Education

The growing interest of local anarchists in pedagogy in the first decade of the 20th century has to be placed in the context of increasing state centralization and government control over education since the 1880s. In 1884 the Argentine authorities sanctioned Law No. 1420, which initiated a far-reaching reorganization of primary schools that became compulsory, secular, free and public.[111] As a result, the state centralized regulatory tasks and gradually took control of education from the church. This was a clever move considering Argentina's 'struggle for a national identity' in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Education was particularly useful in the integration of the country, which experienced massive immigration that peeked between 1890 and 1910. Given these challenges, the public school system was a powerful instrument to promote cultural homogeneity and the identification of immigrants with the South American nation.[112]
At the same time, the libertarian movement realized that education could also be used in the interest of the 'oppressed'. Educating the workers was therefore an essential part of the anarchists' ideological framework. Alternative pedagogical projects offered libertarians who opposed the rising power of the state and its public school system a new

[109] Boyd, "The Anarchists and Education," 129-132.
[110] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 165.
[111] Oría, *Changing Meanings of Public Education*, 29.
[112] Ibid., 31-32.

arena of struggle and resistance. At its 5th congress in 1905, FORA therefore recommended all associations to provide financial support for alternative educational institutions.[113] Modern Schools, the anarchists believed, would counteract the monopoly of the government on education and its promotion of nationalism, militarism and religion. At the same time, alternative schooling would support the creation of a proletarian identity and raise the workers' consciousness about social inequality.[114]

Although the anarchist labour front recognized the importance of pedagogy and largely supported the Modern School, they deviated from the teachings of Francisco Ferrer. Unlike the Catalan pedagogue, they did not believe that the Modern School would, through a gradual moral and intellectual progress, eventually lead to a radical change in society. 'Purists' thus focused on moulding a small minority of cultured and educated workers who would represent the future revolutionary vanguard.[115] Instead of spending their energy on pedagogical initiatives, they prioritized direct action. The Argentine labour movement, particularly in the federal capital, was heavily unionised at the beginning of the 20th century. Local workers, most notably those employed in the ports or in the railway sector, used strikes early on as a form of protest. These ventures differed in their contexts, objectives, kinds of action and territorial scopes. During the period examined, several local general strikes took place in 1905, January 1908, May 1909, October 1909 and 1910. In addition, nation-wide strikes occurred in January and August 1907.[116] Most of the participants aimed to improve wages and working conditions. Ideological considerations only motivated a minority of the rank and file, although anarchist public rhetoric propagated that direct action would overthrow the constitutional status quo.[117]

'Purists' legitimized their sceptical attitude towards education by drawing on Michael Bakunin. The Russian revolutionary developed the essentials of his doctrines in Italy in the 1860s,[118] which were spread by internationalists and reached South America with the first Italian and Spanish immigrants about a decade later. His anarchist thoughts found fertile ground in Argentina: as early as 1874, there were several local sections of the

[113] María del Mar Araus Segura, "La Escuela Moderna en Iberoamérica: Repercusión de la Muerte de Francisco Ferrer Guardia," *Boletin Americanista* 52 (2002): 12.
[114] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 143.
[115] Ibid., 148.
[116] Augustín Santella, *Labor Conflict and Capitalist Hegemony in Argentina* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 54-55.
[117] Ruth Thompson, "The Limitations of Ideology in the Early Argentine Labour Movement," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 16, no.1 (1984): 83.
[118] Nunzio Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864-1892* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 3-4.

IWMA and in the 1890s Buenos Aires became a stronghold of anarchism worldwide until the decline of the movement after the military coup of General Uriburu in 1930.[119] Although Bakunin shared Ferrer's conviction that it was necessary to create a 'new human' through an integral, equal and secular instruction, he disagreed with the latter in several respects.

Despite their common goal of a social revolution, Argentine Libertarians and the Catalan pedagogue had different opinions on how to realise it. Unlike Ferrer, they neither believed that a proper school education was possible under capitalist conditions, nor did they regard it as crucial for future liberation. An article by 'R. A. del R', published in *La Protesta*, exemplifies the then prevailing view of the Argentine movement on pedagogy. Even though the author's identity is unknown, his attitude towards education clearly exposes him as a 'purist'. According to the anarchist, "intellectual development" would "not reach the proletariat until the economic means are conquered", which would "purify and develop the physical organism". Despite his belief that it was necessary to instruct the workers, "theoretical education" would "always be secondary". He criticised "theoreticians called anarchists" who thought that "the elevation of the proletariat" began "with a technical education", an idea he perceived as the "negation of revolutionary-practical anarchism". Alternatively, 'R. A. del R.' thought that direct action would truly enlighten the individual and trigger the overthrow of the capitalist system. The "development of the faculties of the spirit and of the body" was strengthened "through revolutionary action" and not "based on philosophical pedagogy". The latter produced "nothing more than silence", while action created "a philosophy with intense light" whose "luminous torch" would lead to "another act".[120]

The pedagogical views of 'R. A. del R.' and Gilimón reflect the thoughts of Bakunin, who claimed that good education required different conditions. "Morality", he argued, could "be effectively preached only by example". However, "socialist morality" was "altogether contrary to existing morality", which is why teachers who were necessarily "dominated to a greater or smaller extent by the latter", acted "in the presence of the pupils in a manner wholly contrary to what they preach". Consequently, "the first

[119] Fanny Simon, "Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalim in South America," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 26, no. 1 (February 1946): 39.
[120] R. A. del R., "Desarrollo Físico e Intelectual del Proletariado," LP, November 24, 1907.

question for the people" was economic emancipation, followed by political and finally intellectual liberation.[121]

Moreover, in contrast to Ferrer, Argentine 'purists' did not perceive the elevation of the proletariat as a long-term process focused on alternative education. Instead, they were primarily concerned with the present and spent more energy on direct action as a further article by 'R. A. del R.' shows. Even though "revolutionary struggle" was "very difficult", it had "the great advantage of solving the immediate problems" of the workers "in a short and effective way".[122] Similarly, Gilimón favoured insurrectionism to quickly improve the living conditions of the proletariat. Without directly mentioning Ferrer, he criticized the Catalan educator, who was convinced that the revolution would take place in the distant future. "We don't believe, to say it again, that those who consider anarchy as something realizable only within a large number of years, long after the probable term of life, do much to make anarchy a reality," Gilimón wrote in *La Protesta*. This demanded an "exaggerated altruism" expecting people "to take more care of the welfare of future generations than of their own", he continued. In addition, this approach would "make anarchism a literary school" in which people would "pointlessly fight each other", turn the movement into "a more or less violent reformism" and "make mincemeat of revolutionary ideas".[123] A few weeks later, Gilimón once again warned of the dangers that the idea of the emancipation of the proletariat as an event of the far future held. According to the 'purist', it had been repeated "over and over again" that the revolution was a "distant thing". For this reason, it would have become "fatally alone" and "nobody" would "care about it". He was convinced that "this apathy" was "in sharp contrast to the revolutionary activity of Bakunin", which was "powerful and ready for action at any moment".[124]

Gilimón's and 'R. A. del R.'s high affinity for revolutionary urgency once again reveals the typical commitment of the majority of the local movement to Bakuninism. The anarchist theorist believed that strikes, which he considered as pivotal to "arouse the masses for a social struggle", would liberate the proletariat in the near future. Strikes, were "of enormous value" because they encouraged "social revolutionary instincts",

[121] Mikhail Bakunin, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin: Scientific Anarchism* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1953), 336.
[122] R. A. del R., "Gran Enseñanza Practica," LP, March 11, 1907.
[123] Eduardo Gilimón, "Una Obra Imprescindible," LP, August 15, 1909.
[124] Eduardo Gilimón, "La Enseñanza," LP, September 3, 1909.

"create, organize, and form a workers' army", "break down the power of the bourgeoisie and the state, and lay the ground for a new world".[125]

The 'purist' conception of education as a minor objective and their pursuit of immediate goals was not only evident in theoretical debates but also on a practical level, which led to basic strategic disagreements with 'heterodox' rationalists. With the typical revolutionary urgency, 'purist' voices on the one hand frequently criticized the slow implementation of pedagogical projects, which was due to the lack of funds and the concern of 'heterodox' libertarians about sufficient quality standards.[126] Frustrated with the unrealized opening of a Modern School in Buenos Aires, Gilimón complained in October 1908 that "this school has been planned since April 1907 […] without the project becoming a reality". However, the anarchists were "not enamoured of plans" because facts mattered. The school should be a reality already – it has been a plan for long enough", he continued.[127]

On the other hand, 'heterodox' educationalists repeatedly criticized anarchists for their supposedly non-existent or inadequate support of educational initiatives. The editorial board of *Francisco Ferrer*, for example, accused the workers in 1911 of being ignorant of the creation of a Modern School in Buenos Aires. Even though some of them were "more sensitive" because they belonged to the "radical workers who form associations" and "those who struggle", most of the anarchists believed that a change in society depended on the direct "action of the workers". Therefore, they only strived for "necessary improvements for men today".[128] Similarly, the 'heterodox' libertarian Ricardo López lamented that although rationalist schooling was revolutionary, "the work anarchists" would "care less about" was "the installation of schools".[129]

However, even though 'purists' did not prioritize education like their 'heterodox' comrades, this criticism is exaggerated. Despite increasing state repression and steep obstacles to organization after 1909, which caused great damage to the anarchist movement and especially its fragile educational flank,[130] 'purists' promoted pedagogical issues throughout the period studied. Education was clearly an important topic in *La Protesta* as it published numerous essays on the subject, financial reports of alternative

[125] Bakunin, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, 384-385.
[126] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 163.
[127] Eduardo Gilimón, "La Escuela Moderna," LP, October 1, 1908.
[128] "La Escuela Moderna en Buenos Aires," FF, no. 13, November 15, 1911, 8.
[129] Ricardo López, "Revolución y Educación: Sistemáticos y Analíticos," LP, January 11, 1914.
[130] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 164.

schools and announcements of upcoming events of libertarian pedagogical institutions. Even after the adoption of the Law of Social Defence in 1910, which legalized the banishment of anarchists and greatly damaged the movement, enthusiasm for educating the workers had not completely disappeared. It was only in April 1915 when FORA decided to no longer advocate the establishment of schools that their educational ventures finally lost cohesion.[131]

The uneasy coexistence of the two currents of anarchism and the movement's growing fragility due to government repression since 1909, however did contribute to some 'heterodox' educationalists radically deviating from another core principle of the Modern School.

From Antistatism to Reformism: 'Heterodox' Pragmatism

'Heterodox' educationalists, who believed in the crucial role of education, did not remain true to the teachings of Ferrer either but adapted them to local needs. They initially agreed with the Catalan pedagogue, who propagated that public schools must be independent from the state, as they were an effective instrument of the ruling class to maintain the status quo.[132] However, in the second decade of the 20th century when followers of the Modern School gradually distanced themselves from the weakened anarchist movement, some of them turned to reformism.

After the Argentine government had closed the few existing Modern Schools in 1909 and prosecuted their administrators and supporters,[133] libertarians raised the question of whether new pedagogical institutions should be established. 'Heterodox' rationalist educationalists were much more reluctant to set up new state-independent schools than in previous years, as an article published in *Francisco Ferrer* in 1911 shows. Although the editors of the journal still wanted to support alternative pedagogical institutions, they did not think it was the right strategy to create multiple schools because it was more effective to "start few but useful, well-oriented ones". The editorial board warned that a school should be able "to bear the costs itself" and that "competent teachers must have the guarantee of independence" since they were "responsible for their work".[134] Many advocates of education shared these concerns based on the experience they had previously

[131] Barrancos, *Anarquismo, Educación y Costumbres*, 141.
[132] Gribble, "Good News for Francisco Ferrer," 183.
[133] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 164.
[134] "Pro-Escuela," FF, no. 8, August 15, 1911, 12.

gained. In recent years they had faced many difficulties in maintaining pedagogical projects, which had mostly been short-term. Alternative schools had struggled with the aforementioned government oppression, tensions with 'purists' on educational issues and the lack of financial support, teaching materials and well-trained teachers.[135]

At the same time, many rationalist educationalists began to see pedagogical institutions of the state with different eyes. '*Un obrero estudioso*', a 'heterodox' libertarian whose identity is unclear and who frequently published articles about pedagogy in *la Protesta*, dared to ask that if the government financed the schools with the money of the people, "why not take advantage of them"? In contrast to secondary schools, which were "forbidden to the poor", this was not the case for primary education, since the state even "tried to ensure that people receive it".[136] The author's willingness to make use of public education reflects the then prevailing opinion of the locals, who largely accepted the official school system. For a population with a large immigrant community, free education provided a means of social upward mobility.[137] Although neither secondary school nor university, which played a strategic role in shaping a national elite, were accessible to everyone, the Argentine state, as already mentioned, considered the 'education of the masses' and the transmission of patriotic values as crucial for the political stability of the country.[138] The primary school system therefore achieved tangible results during the period studied, such as the high literacy of the Argentine population compared to most Latin American and several European countries. According to the national censuses, Argentina's literacy rate rose from 46% in 1895 to 65% in 1914.[139]

Both the problems of "heterodox" educators in maintaining Modern Schools in previous years and the existence of a relatively advanced official school system have prompted some libertarian educators like Julio Barcos to turn to reformism.

Julio Barcos was born in Coronda, a city in the Argentine province of Santa Fe, in 1883. He dedicated his life to teaching and anarcho-communism at an early age and became the most respected local representative of rationalist educationalism between 1905 and 1920. At the beginning of the 20th century, Barcos insisted on the expansion of cultural

[135] Acri and Cácerez, *La Educación Libertaria*, 142.
[136] Un obrero estudioso, "La Escuela y el Obrero," LP, September 11, 1913.
[137] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 148.
[138] Torleif Rosager Hamre, "Histories for a New Nation: Visions of the National Past in Argentine Secondary School Textbooks (1861-1912)," Phd. diss. (University of Oslo: 2014), 131, 133.
[139] Ibid., 127, 129.

endeavours to integrate anarchists across Argentina. The local educator participated in several educational projects such as the *Escuela Laica de Lanús*, which he led from 1907 until he took over the *Escuela Moderna de Buenos Aires* in 1908. However, after Barcos had to give up his position when the Argentine government closed the school the following year,[140] he soon opted for reformism rather than a proletarian revolution as a way to regenerate society. Nevertheless, the local pedagogue did not completely turn away from anarchism until the 1920s when he became a member of both the governing party *Partido Radical* and the *Consejo Nacional de Educación*, the state institution responsible for the management of public elementary schools.[141]

Barcos gradually withdrew from anarchism in the second decade of the 20th century. He no longer relied on alternative projects that depended on the support of the labour movement but approached the official system. Barcos now believed that it was up to Argentina's teaching staff, who he idealized as "apostle of civilization", "soldier of the light" and "irreplaceable worker of the country", to improve the educational situation.[142] Consequently, in 1910 he became cofounder of the first national teachers' union whose goal was to improve the training and working conditions of its members.[143] The *Liga Nacional de Maestros*, Barcos thought, provided the educators of the country with a strong voice by creating a network between them that gave them "unity and character". According to the pedagogue, this was "the only, most efficient and most powerful way" to effect "the course of the Argentine school" and to assure the "happiness of the country".[144] The official position of the previously mentioned *Liga Nacional de Educación Racionalista*, which he headed from 1912, also pictured Barcos' commitment to reformism. Although the *Liga* supported the establishment of alternative schools, the first article of its statement of purpose declared its aim to "gather the efforts of those who understand the need to reform contemporary education",[145] a position that was incompatible with the antistatism of the 'purists'.

However, Barcos' withdrawal from the labour movement was not accompanied by the abandonment of Ferrer's teachings. Instead, the detachment of the Argentine pedagogue from the anarchist revolutionary rhetoric was a pragmatic step that made his aim to spread

[140] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 159-160.
[141] Pita González, "De La Liga Racionalista," 124.
[142] Julio Barcos, "La Crisis Educacional y el Magisterio Argentino," IF, no. 101, December 9, 1913.
[143] Pita González, "De La Liga Racionalista," 123-124.
[144] Julio Barcos, "El Arte de Vivir y el Arte de Educar," FF, no. 2, May 15, 1911, 16.
[145] Liga de Educación Racionalista, "Bases y Fines," La Escuela Popular, no.14, December 1, 1913, quoted in Acri and Cácerez, *La Educación Libertaria*, 157-158.

rationalist educational ideas more viable.[146] An article authored by Barcos demonstrates that he recognized the possibility of incorporating modern pedagogical ideas into the public school system. Official teachers, he stated in *La Protesta*, were not necessarily "short-sighted" but had rather begun to understand that there was a "need to transform schools on a rational, scientific, humanistic and free basis".[147] Furthermore, Barcos' trust in the teaching staff is reflected in the attitude of the *Liga Nacional de Educación*, as the latter believed that more and more local educators were committed to rationalist pedagogy. The institution announced in the anarchist press that "every day the number of men" who belonged to the teaching staff and intelligently combated the "indifference of the state and the use of old methods" increased. According to the *Liga*, Barcos' criticism had made an "impression throughout the republic", which is why the 'heterodox' advocate of the Modern School was no longer alone but had "good comrades" who were "determined to purify the atmosphere of teaching, shake off indifference and impose new methods in education".[148]

Despite of Barcos' recognition of the benefits of the public school system, the rationalist educationalist assured that his "critique of the Argentine school" was "devastating" and that it was necessary to reform it "in its bases and in its aims".[149] His attitude towards state-funded educational institutions clearly shows that as a reformist, he continued to agree to the key points of the Modern School of Barcelona.

Barcos' sociopolitical view on the role of the school in society is strongly reminiscent of the teachings of the Catalan pedagogue. Like Ferrer, the Argentine educator believed in the reproduction of social inequalities in public schools at that time. He criticised that teachers sustained the despotism of the oligarchs. According to an article of the *Liga Nacional de Educación Racionalista* published in *La Protesta*, the state had "always shown little interest in the problems of education". This attitude was "undoubtedly" attributed to the authorities' quest for their "own conservation" because the development of true skills, which created "wills reluctant to the influences of evil", was "a dangerous thing for the existence of institutions that come from the past and strive to live permanently". The education system of the country would therefore give priority to children of wealthy families. Since "intelligence and goodness" were revolutionary

[146] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 167.
[147] Julio Barcos, "Plan de una Escuela Integral," LP, August 21, 1913.
[148] Liga Nacional de Educación Racionalista, "Instrucción Pública: Orientaciones Pedagógicas," LP, Abril 1, 1915.
[149] Julio Barcos, "La Crisis Educacional y el Magisterio Argentino," IF, no. 101, December 9, 1913.

elements, educational institutions were “left to the care of ignorant and indifferent teachers” who only considered the social background of the student. They rewarded “the student at the end of the courses with the honorary diploma” even though the child “might be incapable in every way”. The resulting evil, the *Liga* assured, was “very serious” because it would “multiply the no-goods”. This “breed of parasites” that lived “at the expense of the sweat of the intelligent and good worker” was the main “disseminator of prejudices” and controlled “all institutions of tyranny”.[150]

Although Barcos explained at the opening conference of the League that education could not be determined by the "intellectual inability and moral failure" of politicians,[151] he disagreed with Ferrer in a crucial point. Unlike the founder of the Modern School, he believed in the possibility of addressing these shortcomings within the system. However, a reform of school administration was essential, he emphasized in an essay published in *Ideas y Figuras*. A “popular administration elected by teachers and by the people” was, according to Barcos, the only way to remove “the characteristic oligarchy” that weighed “heavily on all political institutions of the nation” and to “raise the level of public school”.[152]

Moreover, the views of the Argentine libertarian on teaching methods, which he explained in more detail in his work *La Crisis Educacional y el Magisterio Argentino*, show that he continued to propagate rationalist educational ideas. Like the Catalan pedagogue, he campaigned for spontaneity and creativity in the classroom, which he saw as crucial to the development of a child's personality. Barcos thus rejected an organized and systematic school. The “uniformity of curricula”, he observed, destroyed any “original experiment” in public schools. Routine drove out “any innovative idea and any spirit of progress”. Although Barcos understood that it was easier to absorb existing knowledge than to be innovative, he thought that “the mechanizing task of intelligence” ended up “crystallizing it in a small circle of ideas”. To ensure creativity in school he supported the concept of ‘integral education’ practiced at the Modern School of Barcelona. He opposed the intellectualization of students and claimed that the Argentine school was too theoretical, which was “the main reason for its failure”. Therefore, Barcos called for “more physical and cultural-artistic education”. He wanted to transform

[150] Liga Nacional de Educación Racionalista, “Instrucción Pública: Orientaciones Pedagógicas,” LP, Abril 1, 1915.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Julio Barcos, “La Bancarrota Escolar,” IF, no. 110, May 20, 1914.

secondary schools into “centres of practical activities”, into “art and craft studios” because this would be the “only conceivable type of a rationalist integral school”. In addition, Barcos criticised the teaching of patriotism in class demanding “less war history, less songs and greetings to the flag, less patriotic fetishism” and “less militaristic idolatry”. Following Ferrer's teachings, he advocated less hierarchy and coercion in schools. Instead of “prison discipline” he campaigned for “more affection” between students and teachers. However, the Argentine educator was less euphoric about sexual coeducation, an issue he rarely addressed during the period studied. In his text *La Crisis Educacional y el Magisterio Argentino* he only stated cautiously that a mixed school was suitable in all places were economic conditions spoke for it.[153]

[153] Julio Barcos, “La Crisis Educacional y el Magisterio Argentino,” IF, no. 101, December 9, 1913.

5. Conclusion

The birth and development of ideas is always related to their contexts. For this reason, it is essential to consider both the home and the host culture of ideas that moved in space in order to properly grasp how they were appropriated. Nevertheless, scholars have so far analysed Ferrer-inspired education in Argentina within the geopolitical borders of the country. Using the concepts of transnationalism and cultural transfer, my research therefore adds to the existing knowledge of Argentine education history. This paper demonstrates that local libertarian pedagogy must be understood as a transnational phenomenon.

I first showed that Argentine rationalist educationalism is based on Francisco Ferrer's teachings that originated outside the national framework of the South American country. Researchers of alternative education in Argentina must be familiar with the ideas of the Catalan pedagogue and the context in which they were created. Ferrer founded the Modern School of Barcelona in an environment that differed in time, space and sociocultural aspects from that of his future host culture: in Spain in 1901, at a time when the country was struggling with social unrest. On the one hand, the new pedagogical institution shared socialist preoccupation with education as an instrument of socio-political change. It represented a radical critique of the established order because it aimed to break the cultural monopoly of the ruling class and its ecclesiastical and state-dominated schools. Rationalist pedagogy, Ferrer was convinced, would eventually lead to a revolution and the establishment of a truly equal society. Ultimately, its commitment to science, atheism, antistatism and coeducation of boys and girls, poor or rich, would enlighten the proletariat and raise awareness of social inequality. On the other hand, Ferrer follows the tradition of the libertarian school from Rousseau to Faure, which focused on the individual 'needs' of the child and its 'natural' development. Free of authoritarian structures, schools should promote the creativity and spontaneity of children by offering not only theoretical but also practical education.

Moreover, the new pedagogy reached Argentina through a transnational process, as the following chapter demonstrated. Instead of simply accepting the existence of rationalist educational ideas as given, it is crucial to question why and how they spread to South America. Nevertheless, up until now scholars have not paid much attention to the motivation and importance of individual actors for the local Modern School movement, nor to transfer processes. However, it was Iberian libertarians who brought Ferrer's

thoughts to Argentina and served as important sources of inspiration to local anarchist educational practices, as the trajectories of Samuel Torner and Anselmo Lorenzo illustrate. Their lives show that transnationalism is not only the lens through which historians perceive the past but also how libertarian educationalists lived their 'internationalist' ideals. Studying the contrasting biographies of the two Spaniards adds to our understanding of local rationalist educationalism since they picture different modes of transfer, tendencies and structures, the relevance of which goes beyond the individual case.

Torner and Lorenzo were both determined to spread their values universally and thus helped to create a transatlantic 'culture of education'. By promoting networks that represented anarchist structures of morale-building and consciousness-raising, they knitted together the grassroots movements of the Iberian Peninsula and the Southern Cone. Like many other mediators, the two libertarians facilitated the propagation of international principles of the labour movement, which were essential for the creation of an anarchist identity. They thus promoted what Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller described as a transnational "way of belonging".[154]

'Active mediators' brought the ideas of the Modern School and experiences with them when they migrated to Argentina for economic or political reasons. Many libertarian educationalists like the teacher Samuel Torner left Spain after the 'Tragic Week' in 1909 and went into exile in Buenos Aires, where they continued to propagate rationalist ideas. 'Active mediators' edited local educational periodicals, established and supported Modern Schools and created alternative pedagogical institutions such as the *Liga Nacional de Educación Racional*. Developing a transnational perspective on Argentine rationalist educationalism, however, requires not only an analysis of libertarian actors who physically moved across borders to spread their ideals but also of those, who never left home, as the example of the anarchist revolutionary Anselmo Lorenzo shows. 'Passive' mediators participated in a virtual space shared by Argentine and Spanish libertarians. Their works on education found resonance in Argentina and therefore served as crucial vehicles for the dissemination of rationalist ideas. South American booksellers imported their books, essays, pamphlets, and translations, some of which were edited on behalf of the Modern School of Barcelona. In addition, local publishing houses and the

[154] Janine Dahinden, "Transnationalism Reloaded: The Historical Trajectory of a Concept," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 9 (June 2017): 1478.

Argentine anarchist press supported the transnational discursive community by releasing texts authored by Iberian advocates of pedagogy.

Finally, the last chapter showed that the arrival of Ferrer's teachings in Argentina went along with the development of a rationalist pedagogy characteristic of the South American country since the local movement interpreted, changed and used the new ideas differently than their compatriots in Spain. I do not agree with Dora Barrancos, who, like many scholars denotes libertarian educational projects in Argentina as part of an anarchist 'counterculture'.[155] This is a misleading analytical framework because anarchists belonged to a wider movement of social change. Socialists, liberals and freethinkers all supported local Modern Schools. Anarchist educational efforts mixed with projects of different currents of society and even dialogued with the public school system. For this reason, I prefer the concept of 'alternative culture' proposed by Juan Suriano.[156]

In contrast to previous studies, I do not speak of the 'failure' of the Modern School movement in Argentina. Historians such as Suriano, who rated the libertarians' attempt to create an educational alternative in Buenos Aires at the turn of the 20th century as "modest in its achievements", "fragmentary and mostly unsuccessful",[157] do not grasp the complexity of the subject. There are no 'failed' cultural transfers. Since such an approach would imply a hierarchy of culture in which the inferior part is not sufficiently developed to 'successfully' adopt external cultural elements, I instead emphasise the process of appropriation. Drawing on cultural transfer theory, which asks about the specific reasons for non-adaption in a historical moment,[158] this section detected transformations of rationalist educationalism that have taken place in the course of re-contextualization into the new system of meaning. The chapter showed that alternative pedagogy was not a closed system but underwent radical changes.

The pedagogy of the Catalan educator found fertile ground in Argentina, where the local anarchist movement, strong and diasporic in nature, recognized the importance of education as a field of ideological struggle. 'Purist' and 'heterodox' libertarians worked together on educational projects until 1915 when FORA no longer supported the funding of alternative schools. However, they did, for different reasons, not fully embrace all of Ferrer's thoughts but adapted them to local cultural and socio-political conditions.

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[155] Barrancos, *Anarquismo, Educación y Costumbres*, 17.
[156] Suriano, *Paradoxes of Utopia*, 11.
[157] Ibid., 143.
[158] Wendland, "Cultural Transfer," 55.

Anarchists oriented towards the labour movement did not assign schooling the same priority as Ferrer did, although they never denied its importance. Argentina was highly unionized at the beginning of the 20th century. As a result, direct actions involving many workers who hoped for a quick improvement in wages or working conditions was a more promising resistance to the state than alternative schools. Official voices therefore referred to Michael Bakunin whose political philosophy reached Argentina in the 1870s to legitimize their sceptical stance on education. Drawing on the Russian revolutionary, 'purists' reduced education to a secondary role and left it for the future while favouring union struggle and direct actions to achieve immediate results.

This view of education led to points of rupture within the libertarian movement. Tensions with 'heterodox' educationalists, the 'heirs' of the Modern School of Barcelona who considered schooling as crucial, were evident not only on a theoretical but also on a practical level. While the anarchist labour front criticised the latter for the slow implementation of pedagogical projects, rationalist educationalists complained about the allegedly non-existent or inadequate support of 'purists' for educational ventures, an unjustified criticism given the numerous articles on pedagogy published in the anarchist press. The uneasy coexistence of the two currents intensified from 1909 when government repression augmented. Due to the growing fragility of the anarchist movement and the increasing state obstacles to alternative projects, the participation of 'purists' in educational ventures steadily decreased in the second decade of the 20th century. This was accompanied by a gradual distancing of the two streams of anarchism. While it was initially the broad labour movement that supported Argentine rationalist educationalism, from now on it was mainly the rationalist core that carried out its dissemination by breaking new ground: reformism.

In the 1910s some 'heterodox' educationalists who were specifically devoted to promoting rationalist educationalism began to stray from antistatism, one of the basic principles of the Modern School. Local socio-political and cultural conditions shaped by the Argentine nation-state, facilitated their shift towards reformism. After the government closed alternative schools in and around Buenos Aires in 1909, local educationalists were reluctant to build new ones because they had faced difficulties in previous years. Pedagogical projects had mostly remained short term because of financial and material shortcomings as well as state repression.

At the same time, many advocates of the Modern School recognized the benefits of the then relatively advanced public school system. In contrast to Spain, where people were

poorly educated and schools were still dominated by the clergy, Argentine primary education expanded successfully in the beginning of the 20th century and introduced modern concepts of pedagogy. Consequently, local libertarians had more incentives than their Spanish compatriots to approach the official system. They promoted their ideals in a more efficient way by incorporating elements of rationalist educationalism into progressive, albeit reformist pedagogical tendencies, as the example of Julio Barcos showed.

The most prominent local pedagogue of the period studied illustrates that former anarchists had an impact on the Argentine public school system. Barcos no longer believed that it was the proletarian revolution that would bring about an improvement in the educational situation but rather the teaching staff of the country. He was therefore one of the cofounders of Argentina's first teachers' union created in 1910. Even as a reformer he remained true to the Modern School of Barcelona, as his vehement criticism of the public education system shows. Like Ferrer Barcos saw then existing state schools as a powerful means of the ruling class to reproduce the unequal society. According to the 'heterodox', educational institutions must not prioritize rich students in class, nor restrict access to schools but be open to children of all social backgrounds. In addition, he agreed on didactic terms with the Catalan pedagogue. Barcos rejected the intellectualization of students in public schools and campaigned for spontaneity and more practice in the classroom through 'integral education', a model practiced at the Modern School of Barcelona. Schools, he believed, had to address both individual needs of the children and realize the principle of equality. Moreover, he called for a more friendly relationship between teachers and students and refused the teaching of patriotic values. Only the joint participation in school lessons by boys and girls, an important point in the teachings of the Catalan pedagogue, seemed to have convinced him less. Barcos hardly commented on the topic during the period studied and stated that sexual coeducation would only make sense if the economic situation required it.

This paper has shown, that scholars of Argentine rationalist educationalism cannot fully understand the topic within the national framework of Argentina. The ideas of Francisco Ferrer originated in Spain, reached the Southern Cone through Iberian mediators and changed with regard to the socio-political and cultural conditions of the different system of meaning. It is thus essential to be familiar with the home and the host culture of the Modern School, the different causes and modes of transfer and the appropriation of the

Catalan pedagogue's teachings in Argentina. In short, Argentine rationalist educationalism is a transnational phenomenon.

There is plenty of room for further transnational studies that examine, for example, how local rationalist educationalism impacted pedagogy in Spain. The transfer of pedagogical ideas across the Spanish borders was not a one-way process but multidirectional. This venture raises several sub-questions. Future studies dedicated to this project will have to explore cross-border activities such as the material and immaterial support of Modern Schools in Europe. Not only the transfer of financial aids but also of know-how could play a role. In addition, scholars should analyse how Argentine and Spanish libertarians living in the South American country affected the intellectual exchange on education and related views in Spain. Experience gained in the Argentine context shaped the pedagogical ideas of local educationalists and differed from those of their compatriots in Spain. These ideas could have reached Spain through the anarchist press, publications of books and essays that spread to Europe or personal contacts to the Iberian peninsula. Furthermore, with many advocates of the Modern School returning home it is worth examining how their experiences in Argentina affected future educational activities on the Iberian Peninsula and what kind of ideas they reimported back to their original societies.

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7. Abbreviations

CeDInCI - Centro de Documentación e Investigación de la Cultura de Izquierdas

FF – *Revista Francisco Ferrer*

FORA – *Federación Obrera Regional Argentina*

IF – *Ideas y Figuras. Revista Semanal de Crítica y Arte.*

IISH- International Institute of Social History

IWMA – International Working Men's Association

LP – *La Protesta. Diario de la mañana.*

LPSM – *La Protesta Suplemento Mensual*

UNLP- Universidad Nacional de La Plata