

Between Mass Schooling and Exceptional Citizens: Cultural and Psychological Discourses in Early 20th-Century Argentine Textbooks.

In Event: *Raising Exceptional Children: Psychology, Education, and Motherhood*

Tue, July 14, 2:30 to 4:00pm, EICC, Floor: Level 2, Lennox 2
English Abstract

This presentation analyses the reading textbooks used for children's education in Argentina in the early 20th century, as they were used as teaching tools for the literacy process and for transmitting specific socio-cultural values.

These books contained short texts, scenes from everyday life, poems, and theatrical performances of various kinds, especially those dedicated to different national holidays. The school textbooks complied with the minimum content requirements established by the National Education Council and conveyed normative models of behaviour, both at school and at home, and in family relationships, to contribute to the processes of cultural homogenisation inherent in the project of consolidating the Argentine Nation-State.

This presentation aims to analyse these sources from three perspectives. Firstly, the forms of differentiated education for boys and girls, evidenced in the assignment of specific tasks, roles, and values for each sex. Secondly, the tension between mass education aimed at cultural unification and the identification and promotion of talent, excellence, and exceptionality as desirable attributes for future citizens. Finally, the role of Psychology as a natural science legitimizing educational practice, particularly through the observation, classification, and education of children.

I examine the circulation of psychological knowledge in these texts, and its role in shaping a humanistic-scientific pedagogical ideology from a perspective of cultural disciplinary history and gender studies. I argue that these textbooks contributed not only to formal literacy but also to the symbolic construction of the 'men of the future,' imagined as disciplined, morally virtuous subjects and potential guides of national progress.

Author

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