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Ferdinand Buisson and the emergence of pedagogical museums: clues of an international movement, nineteenth century

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I analyse documents from the Pedagogical Museum of Paris, particularly the writings of Ferdinand Buisson (1878–1879), in which the author addresses not only the French experience but others too. This analysis allowed me to outline a network of transnational sociability composed by intellectuals, pedagogues, and people from public instruction who were concerned with the creation and consolidation of national pedagogical museums. The clues on the French Museum project allowed us to observe circulations, inspirations, appropriations, and exchanges in relation to models implemented in several countries. It also allowed for the insertion of national pedagogical museums, emerging in the second half of the nineteenth century as part of an international movement; subjects from different nations promoted the circulation, appropriation, and exchange of ideas and practices to achieve a scientific education, advocated transnational comparative studies, and created pedagogical museums as strategic tools for achieving this goal.

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An international movement

The emergence of pedagogical museums in the second half of the nineteenth century is related herein to an international movement context in which intellectuals, educators, and specialists from different nations promoted the circulation and exchange of ideas to achieve scientific education, advocated transnational comparative studies on education, and created pedagogical museums as strategic tools for achieving this goal. The conceptions and practices of this museum typology showed variable denominations, characteristics, and objectives according to the referred countries; however, the existence of this institution was considered by the involved subjects a justification for an adequate implementation and dissemination of education, especially what was then called writings of Ferdinand Buisson on the creation primary instruction. In this article, I analyse especially the writings of Buisson about the Pedagogical Museum in France and about his

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experiences in world expositions in other countries.¹ The clues left by this intellectual allow us to sketch a framework in which intellectuals from several countries formed a social network to advance education, where pedagogical museums were considered as institutions extremely relevant to achieve the proposed objective.² The transnational research aims to enrich the approaches that discuss the contributions from different nations for the understanding of educational and museological processes.³ Moreover, in the historiographical context of museums, it sought to give visibility to a particular appropriation of this institution in the education context has been poorly studied by the museological field.⁴ National pedagogical museums challenge the understanding of museum history which mapped museums as past monuments by establishing a dialogue with the dead, or as a place of artistic learning and appreciation of art collections.⁵ Although it can be characterised as a nineteenth-century museum, whose main characteristic would be the search for a civilising ideal, these museums show singular appropriations of the museum conception by the subjects involved in education. In this sense, the idea of a Museum project seems to be operational to consider the conception process of these institutions and the engagement of social actors in the sense of achieving their ideals.⁶ The Museum project of the Pedagogical Museum of Paris was configured therefore from the different people, especially Ferdinand Buisson. Thus, on one hand the creation of the modern museum is perceived as a reconfiguration of private collections, especially works of art, made public within a rational movement of totality construction linked to the nation; on the other hand, the museum trajectory examined carefully has the potential to

¹Sandra Jatahy Pesavento, *Exposições universais: espetáculos da modernidade do século XIX* (São Paulo, Hucitec, 1997); Klaus Dittrich, "As Exposições Mundiais Como Meios Para a Circulação Transnacional de Conhecimentos Sobre O Ensino Primário Durante a Segunda Metade Do Século 19," *Historia Da Educacao* 17, no. 41 (2013): 213–34; Heloisa Barbuy, "O Brasil Vai a Paris Em 1889: Um Lugar Na Exposição Universal," *Anais Do Museu Paulista* 4, no. jan. dez (1996): 211–61; Moysés Kuhlmann Júnior, *As Grandes Festas Didáticas: A Educação Brasileira E as Exposições Universais (1866–1922)* (Bragança Paulista: Editora da Universidade São Francisco, 2001).

²Jean François Sirinelli, "Os Intelectuais," in *Por Uma História Política*, ed. FGV, 2ª (Rio de Janeiro, 2003), 231–69; and Martin Law, *Modelling the Future: Exhibitions and the Materiality of the Education* (London: Symposium Books, 2009).

³Klaus Pattel, "An Emperor without Clothes? The Debate about Transnational History Twenty-five Years on," *Histoire@Politique* 26 (2015): 78–87; Damiano Matasci, "França, a Escola Republicana e o exterior: Perspectiva Para Uma História Internacional da Educação no século 19," *História da Educação* 20, no. 50 (2016): 139–55; Dittrich, "As Exposições Mundiais"; Thomas Popkewitz, "Pensando em el yo y em los otros," *Historia transnacional y comparada. História da Educação* 36 (2017): 189–205, Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca; Joseph Majault, *Le Musée Pédagogique: Origines et Fondation (1872–1979)* (Paris: CNDP, 1978); Alexandre Fontaine and Damiano Matasci, "Centraliser, Exposer, Diffuser: Les Musées Pédagogiques et La Circulation Des Savoirs Scolaires En Europe (1850–1900)," *Revue Germanique Internationale* 21 (2015): 65–78, <http://journals.openedition.org/rgi/1515>; Bruno Poucet, Les musées d'éducation. *Musées & Collections Publiques de France*, n. 206 (mars 1996): 12–17; Julien Guillemoteau, *Du Musée Pédagogique au Institut Pédagogique National (1879–1956)* (Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche: Centre National de Documentation Pédagogique, 1979).

⁴Dominique Poulot, "Alexandre Lenoir et les musées des monuments français," in *Les lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1984): Tomo II La nation, 497–531; Dominique Poulot, *Musée, Nation, Patrimoine, 1789–1815* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997); Dominique Poulot, *Une Histoire Des Musées de France, XVIII–XIX Siècles* (Paris: La Decouverte, 2008); Françoise Mairesse, *Musée: Temple Spectaculaire* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2002); Roland Schaefer, *L'invention Des Musées* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993); Edouard Pommier, "Naissance des Musées Des Province," in *Les lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1984): Tomo II La nation, 451–95; Maria M. Lopes, *O Brasil Descobre a Pesquisa Científica* (Belo Horizonte: Hucitec, 2005); Ana Brefe, *Museu Paulista: Affonso de Taunay e a Memória Nacional* (São Paulo: Editora UNESP/Museu Paulista, 2005); Julio Ruiz Berrio, *Hacia Una Tipología de Los Museos de Educación* (Alcalá: Asociación Nacional de Editores de Libros y Materiales de Enseñanza, 2000); Maria Helena Camara Bastos, *Pro Patria Laboremus: Joaquim José de Menezes Vieira (1848–1897)*, ed. EDUSF (Bragança Paulista, 2002).

⁵Dominique Poulot, *Une Histoire Des Musées de France, XVIII–XIX Siècles* (Paris: La Decouverte, 2008).

⁶François Mairesse, *Musée: Temple Spectaculaire* (Lyon: Presses Universitaire de Lyon, 2002).

emphasise particular processes and dynamics which exclude such general understanding and are embedded in diverse movements that, in turn, are articulated in a transnational perspective.⁷ Furthermore, the movement that articulated subjects from different countries around the creation and consolidation of national pedagogical museums dialogues with the movement of Natural History museums and the consolidation of an international network among scientists, carried out through travels, journal exchanges, and correspondence, besides the exchange of flora and fauna specimens.⁸ Thereby, the immersion in vestiges of the history of the Pedagogical Museum of Paris made it possible to delimit a transnational movement for interlinking subjects involved in public instruction at the end of the nineteenth century.⁹

Several nations already have pedagogical museums

Ferdinand Buisson can be considered the greatest propeller on the creation of the Pedagogical Museum of France, from 1878.¹⁰ It was not by chance that Ferdinand Buisson was involved with the establishment of the Pedagogical Museum in his country.¹¹ The Minister of Public Instruction, Jules Simon, requested that he organise the French primary instruction section for the World Exposition 1873 in Vienna. His election as commissioner of this great show raised strong criticism, mainly from the Catholic press.¹² However, in Vienna, Buisson achieved his plans to study the foreign school sections and fully detailed the situation of primary school, which he sent to several countries. In this way, it consolidated his participation in a transnational network.¹³ With this experience, Buisson eventually managed, in 1876, the French mission of the Philadelphia Exposition, United States.¹⁴ The mission of Buisson and five other French experts

⁷ Giovani Levi, "Sobre a Micro-História," in *A Escrita Da História: Novas Perspectivas* (São Paulo: Editora da UNESP, 1992), 133–61; Poulot, *Une Histoire Des Musées*.

⁸ Maria M. Lopes, *O Brasil Descobre a Pesquisa Científica* (Belo Horizonte: Hucitec, 2005); Nelson Sanjad, *A Coruja de Minerva: O Museu Paraense Entre O Império E a República (1866-1907)*, ed. Instituto Brasileiro de Museus (Rio de Janeiro, 2011).

⁹ The presented results based on the writings of F. Buisson derive from a broader investigation and consultation of documents of the Pedagogical Museum in the National Archives of France, Pierre-Lafitte headquarters.

¹⁰ The conception and creation of the Pedagogical Museum of France were characterised as a non-linear process. With the departure of Jules Simon from the Ministry of Public Instruction in 1873, the project was interrupted. However, in that same year, Bardoux, appointed as the new Minister, included the creation of the museum in the ministerial budget. For further information, see Ferdinand Buisson, *Nouveau Dictionnaire de Pédagogie et d'Instruction Primaire* [online] (1911), Institut Français de l'Éducation. <http://www.inrp.fr/edition-electronique/lodel/dictionnaire-ferdinand-buisson/document.php?id=3241> (accessed March 25, 2019); Majault, *Le Musée Pédagogique*; Zita Rosane Possamai, "Exhibition, Collection, School Museum: Preliminary Ideas of an Imagined Museum," *Educar Em Revista*, no. 58 (2015): 103–19, <https://doi.org/10.1590/0104-4060.43467>.

¹¹ Ferdinand Buisson was born on 20 December 1841, in Paris, and died on 16 February 1932, in Thieuloy-Saint-Antoine. Bachelor of Arts and Associate Professor of Philosophy, Buisson refused to swear allegiance to Napoleon III and, for this reason, had to take refuge in Switzerland, where he taught between 1866 and 1879 at the Académie de Neuchâtel. With the fall of the Empire in 1872, Buisson was appointed inspector of primary school in Sena by Minister Jules Simon: Patrick Dubois, "Le Dictionnaire de F. Buisson et Ses Auteurs (1878–1887)," *Histoire de L'Éducation*, no. 85 (2000): 25–47; Maria Helena Camara Bastos, "Ferdinand Buisson No Brasil: Pistas, Vestígios E Sinais de Suas Ideias Pedagógicas," *History of Education Journal* 4, no. 8 (June 25, 2000): 79–109, http://seer.ufrgs.br/index.php/asphe/article/view/30140/pdf#.WV_SD8jpnrl.mendeley.

¹² Dittrich, "As Exposições Mundiais."

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ In the same year of 1876, F. Buisson signed the first contract with the publisher Hachette for the elaboration of the *Dictionary of Pedagogy and Primary Education (Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire)*. According to Dubois, conceived initially to have a thousand pages, the work was expanded to four volumes and had its edition concluded in 1887 with 4000 pages. The work was considered by Pierre Nora as one of the *places of memory* of the French nation, constituting itself a document of the French education in the period. Dubois, *Le Dictionnaire de F. Buisson*; Pierre Nora (dir.), *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997). It is important to mention that in the *Dictionnaire Buisson*, the entries "musées pédagogiques" and "musées scolaires" were included in edition 1911: see Ferdinand Buisson, *Nouveau Dictionnaire*.

visited the great exposition for five weeks, and for six weeks travelled to several states of the United States and Canada in order to visit and learn about school institutions. This mission resulted in new contacts and solidification of ties with American experts, with emphasis on names such as John Eaton, Commissioner of Education, and John D. Philbrick, superintendent of public schools.¹⁵

Thus, Buisson accumulated exhaustive knowledge on primary schools, as well as experienced the process of forming the collections of several pedagogical museums from other countries, originating from the exposed artefacts, that assisted him to design the French museum. Based on these experiences and from the international support, Buisson considered the preparations for the 1878 exposition in France as an opportunity for the establishment of a museum to house objects from the 27 countries participating in the show. Thus, in the same year, he published two abridged texts in *Le Manuel Général*, weekly pedagogical magazine of Librairie Hachette, under the title *Project d'établissement d'un Musée Pédagogique*.¹⁶ For Joseph Majault the production and publication of these writings constituted the first preparation stage of the Pedagogical Museum and consisted of a press campaign with the particular aim of “preventing the attacks or convincing the hesitants”.¹⁷

Thus, the first part of the paper presents initiatives in other countries and the second part the local implantation process of the French pedagogical museum. According to Buisson, the creation of a Pedagogical Museum or Museum of Primary School in Paris, would be among the projects that would meet the characteristics of practical utility and easy execution on the occasion of the World Exposition of 1878. It was highlighted that France was the only country that did not have such an institution among those concerned with popular education. In order to demonstrate that the French difficulties would not be greater than abroad, Buisson mentioned experiences in 11 countries, following the chronological order of the emergence of these institutions in each addressed country: England, Canada, Russia, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, Netherlands, and Belgium.¹⁸ Through these descriptions, some more detailed than others, the author offers clues about emerging educational museums in European countries and in the Americas in that period.

The first example reported is in neighbouring England, whose South Kensington Museum is considered by Buisson as a repository of models for use in the national teaching of arts applied to industry. According to him, the creation of this museum was directly linked to the need to advance the teaching of industrial design in that country, soon after the World Exposition of 1851. He mentions that the Arts Society expanded the idea by performing an exposition of objects for general teaching, whose success led the new museum to create an education section with the assembled objects. It was suggested from Buisson's words that he would discuss in a separate booklet the London museum as an example for the French museum, in order to deal with the formation of the labour force in the context of the

¹⁵Ferdinand Buisson, *Projet D'établissement D'un Musée Pedagogique* (Paris, 1878); Dittrich, “As Exposições Mundiais.”

¹⁶The analysis was based on the typed document consulted in the National Archives of France and the reference to the publication of the writing in the bulletin *Le Manuel Général*, in March 2 and April 6, 1878, was found in Majault, *Le Musée Pédagogique*. The original text has seven pages, and on page five the title is repeated again, plus “(2nd article)”. There is no reference date in this writing and Ferdinand Buisson signed the text with his initials.

¹⁷Majault, *Le Musée Pédagogique*, 88.

¹⁸In these articles, Ferdinand Buisson does not mention his compiled sources of information on the pedagogical museums of several countries. From the clues in the text itself, it is possible to notice that the information of some countries was obtained during the world expositions held in Vienna (1873) and Philadelphia (1876) and at the Geographical Exposition of Paris (1875).

English industrial revolution. Thus, in his words, this museum would serve as a depository by bringing together different models aimed at teaching the arts and design applied to industry.

The experience of Toronto, Canada, is considered by Ferdinand Buisson as a “true museum” and “a central sui generis establishment”. According to him, the Museum of Education is open to the public and keeps the collections of books, maps, school apparatus, scientific instruments for school use, photographs, and school building plans arranged in several rooms. Additionally, it is a depository of books and teaching materials distributed to students by the municipalities. The Educational Depository acquired books and materials in large quantity and at reduced price, passed on to the local committees that, in turn, distributed to the schools at cost price. This strategy allowed a considerable saving for the population to acquire books, notebooks, images, objects, and materials to object lessons. Ferdinand Buisson considers the establishment as a model, highlighting the two sections: the pedagogical museum and the school store. Moreover, the museum received and placed for public reading the main pedagogical magazines from all countries; offered free publicity to publishers and authors; provided information to school principals for pedagogical improvement; assisted the assembly of local expositions; held conferences and published newsletters and catalogues.

The third country mentioned in Buisson’s article is Russia, whose Pedagogical Museum of Military Schools was established in 1864 and, in 1871, became independent and attached to the General Museum of Applied Sciences. In the author’s words, based on the specimens, maps, and photographs showed by this museum at the Geographical Exposition of Paris in 1875, this would be a very well-organised museum. Its statutes include the objectives of collecting information on school material and procedures used in several countries with the aim to improve the physical installation and pedagogical organisation of schools; to bring together all types of teaching objects that merit study or are copied by specialists or simply appreciated by the public; to gather and translate foreign documents for research. The collections available to the public consisted of hundreds of objects intended for teaching mathematics, physics, natural history, geography, ethnography, and history, as well as thousands of stereoscopic views for the object lessons. A school furniture section, a hygiene section, and also a 12,000-volume library composed the museum.

According to Buisson, a permanent committee, composed by a president and four members, managed the Russian museum and coordinated a dozen commissions, in charge of studying several objects. In this way, the museum maintained a systematic and informed inventory of school richness around the world with the intention of using what is most appropriate to the country’s needs. The objects are classified into three categories: necessary, useful, and admissible, although it does not provide further explanations of the characteristics of each group. The museum encouraged the local manufacture of school materials at lower prices; issued certificates to devices submitted to its examination; published bulletins; organised local expositions; participated in foreign expositions; and held conferences and popular lectures, whose summaries were published as small brochures and distributed to the public.

Ferdinand Buisson also presented experiences in Italy and Austria, whose museums would have originated from the World Exposition of Vienna in 1873. In this way, it intends to strengthen the idea that the upcoming exposition in Paris would constitute an opportunity for the creation of the French museum. He mentioned that Ruggiero Bonghi, the Italian delegate at the Vienna Exposition had obtained school expositions from several countries to make up the future museum. When he returned to Rome, the museum was formalised in 1874, installed

in the old Roman College, and began to receive an annual endowment. Open to the public the following year, the museum initially published the bulletin *Giornale del museo d'istruzione*, later official bulletin of the ministry; held conferences; owned a circulating library; lent models and devices to municipalities. With Bonghi's departure from the Italian Ministry of Public Instruction, where he remained between 1874 and 1876, Buisson expressed the wish that the very brilliant start of the museum in Rome wasn't compromised by administration changes.

The author followed his roll of pedagogical museums and addressed the Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry, inspired by the London museum, since he took advantage of the World Exposition of 1873 to receive several objects left by the exhibitor countries. Its richness could be seen three years later at the Philadelphia Exposition through photographic images, as reported by Buisson. Similarly, to the Austrian Museum, the other experiences were also showed succinctly by Ferdinand Buisson. About the International Museum of Education in Pesh, Hungary, he mentioned efforts to maintain the exchange of publications and school apparatuses. About Germany, he mentioned the existence of several museums similar to those previously described; drew attention to the Royal Deposit similar to that of Vienna, located in Munich and to a permanent exposition of books and educational apparatuses held in Berlin, without further information. About Switzerland, he mentioned that it has held permanent expositions of teaching materials in Zurich since 1873 and, like France, prioritised primary education to the detriment of secondary and higher education. He mentioned the museum with a considerable background in Amsterdam, Netherlands, as well as announced plans for a new municipal building in Brussels to host a large school museum, organised by the Teaching League, which would contain reading rooms, public courses and pedagogical conferences, and other activities.

About the United States, he referred to the International Museum of Education, located in the same place as the great exposition and remembered the existence of the International Education Office of Washington, directed for eight years by General John Eaton. Apparently, Buisson does not say much about the Washington Office in that writing. In the report of the mission to the United States, he mentioned the difficulties experienced by this auxiliary institution of the Ministry of Education responsible for gathering information on schools, teaching methods, and everything else that involved the progress of education in the United States. It deals in greater detail with the library belonging to the Office that had a collection composed of encyclopaedias; pedagogical works of literature and art; reports and newspapers from several schools in the United States; and reports from different countries, including France and other European countries and American countries, such as Argentina and Brazil. He also mentioned John Eaton's desire to exchange publications and information on education between his country and France.¹⁹

The *Projet d'établissement d'un Musée Pédagogique*, as well as the reports of the international missions produced by Ferdinand Buisson, explains a practice that composed a movement very common in the nineteenth century regarding exchange among countries in the perspective of comparative studies and in the learning of knowledge and practices from other nations. These exchanges occurred through educational missions, international expositions with a special section dedicated to education, and through international education

¹⁹Buisson, *Projet D'établissement D'un Musée Pedagogique*.

congresses.²⁰ The main concern of intellectuals, educators, and specialists was the implementation of national education systems and the need to learn about those aspects that would solve the raised internal problems based on experience from abroad.²¹

Furthermore, the moment of production and publication of these writings by Ferdinand Buisson, as well as the creation of the Pedagogical Museum itself, are inserted in the context of a debate led by the French republicans, soon after taking office, when decisions on implementation of the Ferry laws were at stake, which in 1881 and 1882 instituted compulsory, secular, and free school. The international comparison emphasised the French delay in primary education in relation to other countries.²² Similarly, Ferdinand Buisson tried to prove that France was also behind other nations in relation to the pedagogical museum, designed as an instrument for the educational progress of nations.

A pedagogical museum for France

Ferdinand Buisson ended this first text repeating what he had said at the beginning, i.e. all countries concerned with primary education have their national museum of primary education. In the beginning of the second text, he makes clear that although France is almost the only great nation without a pedagogical museum, it is not because it was the last to design it or to put it into practice. Thus, he discussed the initiatives that occurred in the country with a view to achieve such a plan, which had gained recognition from Pompée's speech at the opening section of the pedagogical conferences at the World Exposition of 1867 in Paris. In Pompée's words, quoted by Buisson:

Why not to create a permanent and international exposition in Paris with all the objects that can help teachers to develop the physical, moral and intellectual faculties of the children entrusted to their care? It would be a place of information, comparison and study; an open place designed to establish the real value of processes, instruments, books, methods ... a peaceful sanctuary to work on projects of future generations.²³

However, according to Buisson, these ideas were more remote:

In order to speak properly, M. Pompée, by outlining the likely ideal plan of this "world pedagogical institute," partially restored a proposal that was undoubtedly forgotten, to which Julien de Paris in 1817 had referred in a very curious publication: it was about organizing a kind of establishment dedicated to comparative statistics on education, its methods, its processes and its results. "The science of education, he said, like all others, consists of facts and observations organized into analytical frameworks which allow approximations and comparisons in order to deduce the principles and rules so that education becomes a positive science. As research on

²⁰Kuhlmann Júnior, *As Grandes Festas Didáticas*.

²¹Matasci, "França, a Escola Republicana."

²²Ibid.

²³"Pourquoi ne fonderait-on pas à Paris une Exposition permanente et internationale de tous les objets qui, peuvent faciliter aux instituteurs le développement des facultés physiques, morales et intellectuelles des enfants confiés à leurs soins? Ce serait ... un lieu de renseignement, de comparaison et d'étude, un libre établissement destiné à fixer la valeur réelle des procédés, des instrumens, des livres, des méthodes ... un sanctuaire pacifique élevé aux projets des générations futures": Buisson, *Projet D'établissement D'un Musée Pédagogique*, 5.

comparative anatomy advances anatomy, research on comparative education must provide new means for improving education.”²⁴

The quotation of Julien de Paris in the text of Buisson seeks to highlight the greater goal to be achieved by France, a positive science of education, with the Pedagogical Museum inserted as an instrument in this process. The author continued informing about the conception process of the museum:

In 1872, however, it was resumed with some energy and the execution was followed closely. By a decision mentioned in the Administrative Bulletin of the Ministry, n. 279, p. 193 – 6 May 1872 – Mr. Jules Simon decided that a collection of books, tables and equipment to be used by schools, nursery rooms and adult courses should be established in the Ministry and attached to the second office of the Directorate of Primary Education and should contain the main specimens of teaching materials used abroad.²⁵

From this decision, on 14 December 1872, a circular sent to the rectors reported the organisation of a school museum in the Ministry of Public Instruction assisted by the City of Paris and requested documents and information on the primary education. Thus, Buisson concluded that the design of this establishment had begun its execution, since a place had been conferred by the City of Paris in the school stores, in Quai Morland. Some work was performed there and a modest inauguration section occurred. The Government, however, did not continue the design, and the Society of Teachers of Sena decided to open a pedagogical museum at 60 Verrerie Street, subsidised by the municipal council. Although he considered it rudimentary and insufficient, Buisson praised this initiative and emphasised the necessity of such establishment. Thus, he makes an appeal:

Encouraged by all these precedents, both French and foreign, the administration would do a timely work by establishing worthily for our country such establishment that can yield so many services, either as permanent exposition of class material, or as technical library of primary education.²⁶

In his enthusiastic rhetoric for creating the institution, he added the advantages to France of having such an institution, compared to the experience of the United States:

The advantages of this creation do not seem contestable. They are at least evident to France, as well as to those of the Washington Education Office for Americans, because in

²⁴“A proprement parler, M. Pompée, en traçant le plan quelque peu idéal de cet ‘Institut pédagogique universel’, reprenait lui-même en partie une proposition bien oubliée sans doute, celle dont Julien de Paris en 1817 avait fait l’objet d’une très-curieuse brochure: il s’agissait d’organiser une sorte d’établissement consacré à la statistique comparée de l’éducation, de ses méthodes, de ses procédés, de ses résultats. ‘La science de l’éducation, dissit-il, comme toutes les autres, se compose de faits et d’observations. Il paraît donc nécessaire de former pour cette science, comme on l’a fait pour les autres branches de nos connaissances, des collections de faits et d’observations rangées dans des tables analytiques qui permettent de les rapprocher et de les comparer pour en déduire des principes certains, des règles déterminées, afin que l’éducation devienne une science à peu près positive. Les recherches sur l’anatomie comparée ont fait avancer l’anatomie. De même les recherches sur l’éducation comparée doivent fournir des moyens nouveaux de perfectionner l’éducation””: *ibid.*

²⁵“En 1872 cependant il fut repris avec une certaine énergie, et l’exécution suivit de près. Par un arrêté mentionné au Bulletin administrative du ministère, (n. 279, p. 193, 6 mai 1872) M. Jules Simon avait décidé qu’une collection de livres, de tableaux e d’appareils à l’usage des écoles, des salles d’asile et des cours d’adultes, serait établie au ministère et attachés au 2o bureau de la Direction de l’enseignement primaire, et qu’elle contiendrait en outre les specimens principaux du matériel e des ouvrages d’enseignement en usage à l’étranger””: *ibid.*, 6.

²⁶“Encouragée par tous ces precedents tant français qu’étrangers, l’administration ne fera-t-elle pas une oeuvre opportune en établissant définitivement et d’une façon digne de notre pays cet établissement qui peut rendre tant de services soit comme exposition permanente de matériel de classe, soit comme bibliothèque technique de l’instruction primaire?”: *ibid.*, 7.

both cases the establishment is the same: a pedagogical museum, a school archives deposit, and an official and unofficial central information office about everything related to education.²⁷

It was not by chance that Buisson quoted the Washington Office, known due to the French mission he had coordinated at the Philadelphia International Show. Additionally, France and the United States comprised a network of actors focused on the primary education development in the 1870s, and Buisson acknowledged several aspects of the American republican education he had known during that mission.²⁸ Thereby, the bureau of statistics was created from this American experience, the direction of which was entrusted to Buisson.²⁹ However, this excerpt explains that the museum project of Ferdinand Buisson combined the characteristics of several experiences shown previously by him in this writing. Thus, he devised a single establishment composed of a pedagogical museum, a school archives depository, and a central information office on education. In the absence of a better design, it is possible to realise that the practices performed in different countries are the basis for the institution devised by Ferdinand Buisson.

Even without the precise design of the future institution, it is essential in Buisson's narrative to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the World Exposition in Paris. With the museum formalised, Buisson thought he could ask the exhibitors, before the closing of the big show, that the materials should be left for the new institution. In this regard, he argues by recalling, even repetitively, similar proceedings at the Vienna Exposition, when exhibitors left their artefacts for museums under implantation in Vienna and Rome. In addition, he emphasised that present in the exposition will be the members of the jury and the delegates from different countries, being a propitious occasion for the accomplishment of exchanges, potentiated by the personal contact among the participants. The author concluded his writing by considering that public opinion will recognise the efforts made by the administration to add to the Industrial Exposition a real use, permanent lessons and teachings to those in charge of instructing youth.

Two months after the publication of these articles, the Minister Bardoux presented a draft law in the Chamber of Deputies for the creation of the Pedagogical Museum, whose explanatory memorandum contained the same arguments as the articles of F. Buisson. However, the draft law is returned to the government because it was not considered a legislative matter. Without the institutionalisation of the museum as he wished, however, Buisson did not miss the opportunity to receive donations from the exhibitor countries at the World Exposition, and was authorised by the Ministry to make the necessary contacts. Thus, several countries left the collections they exposed in Paris for the future French museum, including the Washington Office and the South Kensington Museum.³⁰

²⁷En soi, les avantages de cette création ne semblent pas contestable. Ils sont au moins aussi évidents par la France, que le sont ceux du Bureau d'éducation de Washington pour les Américains: car dans les deux cas la destination de l'établissement est la même: c'est un musée pédagogique, un depot des archives scolaires et un bureau central de renseignements offices et officieux sur tout ce qui intéresse l'instruction": *ibid.*, 5.

²⁸Dittrich, "As Exposições Mundiais."

²⁹Majault, *Le Musée Pédagogique*.

³⁰*Ibid.*

In this way, the gathering of school materials from several countries formed an initial collection for the pedagogical museum to be created, and Buisson was commissioned to organise it in October 1878.³¹

The following events enabled the effective establishment of the French pedagogical museum, as well as the consolidation of Buisson's prestige in the Ministry, where he had been promoted to general inspector of primary education at the time of the World Exposition in Paris. In February 1879, the new republican ministry started, whose new Minister of Public Instruction was Jules Ferry.³² In the same month, Buisson assumed the position of director of primary education. In this way, the French republicans reached, also in the national context,³³ the space they had already achieved abroad and began to reorganise national public instruction in line with its principles.³⁴

A report addressed to the President of the French Republic signed by Jules Ferry, issued on 13 May 1879, resembles structure and content to Ferdinand Buisson's text, previously analysed. The report begins by emphasising a marked movement in France in the last eight years in favour of popular education and that it is important to produce at the expense of the state all the results expected from it. In this sense, he emphasised the report:

In this respect, nothing is more useful than a large information and study center, which, under the name of Pedagogical Museum, would combine official publications, school building plans, classroom apparatuses, and textbooks, pedagogical collections relevant in France and abroad.³⁵

The document informs that the Ministry received many school objects destined to the future Pedagogical Museum from several countries after the closing of the World Exposition. These artefacts were kept in the Chamber of Deputies room, assigned to the international jury during the World Exposition. Afterwards, the background to the idea by Julien de Paris and from the 1867 Exposition is presented, as previously seen. Then it relates the museums already created in several countries, precisely those addressed by Ferdinand Buisson in his writing, synthesising some information and adding some details not previously mentioned about some museums. It keeps reporting on the successive acts and measures taken to implement the design. It is also mentioned that on 16 May 1878, the Public Instruction Minister, Bardoux, presented to the Chamber of Deputies a draft law to create a National Museum of Primary Education, composed of a permanent office of school statistics; a pedagogical library of national and foreign works and a permanent and public exposition of school materials. The project was resubmitted at the request of the minister to the general commission of primary education,

³¹Ibid.

³²Mona Ozouf, *Jules Ferry: La Liberté et La Tradition*, Galimar, 1st ed. (Paris, 2014).

³³Dittrich, "As Exposições Mundiais."

³⁴Dubois, "Le Dictionnaire de F. Buisson."

³⁵"Rien n'est plus utile, à cet égard, qu'un gran centre de renseignements et d'études qui, sous le nom de Musée pédagogique, réunirait les publications officielles, le plans des maisons d'école, les appareils de classe, les livres d'enseignements, les recueils pédagogiques avantageusement remarqué, en France et à l'étranger": Jules Ferry, "Musée Pédagogique. Rapport Au Presidente de La République Française Par Jules Ferry. Paris, 13 de Maio de 1879," n.d., 1.

whose members were unanimously in favour of the proposal. However, they suggested that the minister should create the museum by decree and not by draft law.

Thus, Jules Ferry completed the work of his predecessor, requesting the President of the Republic, Jules Grévy, the formalisation and installation in a state-owned building of the new institution composed of a museum, a library, and historical, statistical, and pedagogical archives. The decree of 13 May 1879, provided in its first article the creation in the Ministry of Public Instruction of a Pedagogical Museum and a central library of primary school, composed of several collections of school materials, historical and statistical documents and school books from France and abroad.³⁶ The second article stated that the director of the institution would be a general inspector of primary school, someone who was not a member of staff. Lastly, the third article entrusted the Ministry of Public Instruction and the Fine Arts to implement the referred decree. Thus was the foundation of the Pedagogical Museum of France formalised.³⁷

The South Kensington Museum, a model for Buisson?

After the creation of the Pedagogical Museum in Paris, a booklet published by Ferdinand Buisson in 1879 and entitled *Le Musée Pédagogique de Paris et celui de South-Kensington à Londres* offers other clues about the French appropriation of ideas and practices from educational museums in other countries.³⁸

F. Buisson visited the South Kensington Museum in October 1878, soon after being commissioned to organise the French museum. In this booklet, the author presents the London museum and presents brief news about the Pedagogical Museum, created along with the Ministry of Public Instruction and which included a library of primary education, the location, collections, and the newspapers available at museum for consultation. First, he informs that the museum is installed in the Bourbon Palace, in rooms borrowed by the Chamber of Deputies and that it should leave this place in October. In view of the lack of space in the facilities of the ministry, the museum should be installed at the former Rollin College, at Rue Lhomond 42, Paris, where it will wait for the definitive installation of the state. Subsequently, it relates the objects already assembled by the museum: school boards; apparatus for lesson of things; maps; diverse models. The library is composed of books from the United States, Canada, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, and Russia, besides French works made available to the Ministry by authors and publishers. He also emphasised that the assembly of pedagogical journals from France and abroad would soon compose an information set on popular teaching. A list of foreign pedagogical journals from Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Holland, Spain, Austria, Alsace Lorraine, Germany, England, the United States, Canada, Greece, and Peru, received at the Pedagogical Museum in Paris, closes the publication.

Ferdinand Buisson then states that it is relevant to show the South Kensington Museum in London and the resources it offers to those dedicated to teaching. He

³⁶The decree was signed by Minister Jules Ferry on behalf of the President of the Republic Jules Grévy.

³⁷Majault points out that this second project differs from the one presented by Bardoux in 1878 because it did not include the statistical service, which remained with the fifth office of the directorate of primary education, thus being restricted to only two services: museum and library.

³⁸Ferdinand Buisson, *Le Musée Pédagogique de Paris et Celui de South-Kensington a Londres*, ed. Librairie Classique de Paul Dupont (Paris, 1879).

reports that the information to be announced about the British museum is quoted from a publication submitted to the Minister of Public Instruction by Benjamin Buisson, his brother and former student of the Higher Normal School, an Academy official who had been commissioned by the ministry of a pedagogical mission in England, where it remained for several years.³⁹

The collection of objects related to education from the South Kensington Museum had been donated by the Arts Society, which had held an exposition at Saint Martin Hall in 1854. Many exhibited objects were donated to the government and formed the embryo of the Pedagogical Museum. Collections were incremented due to voluntary contributions by the major publishers. After the World Exposition of 1871 and the exposition of objects and scientific devices occurred in 1876, the collections were greatly enriched by donations and by the purchase of a large number of objects. Among the principal donors was Prince Albert, whose precious patronage contributed powerfully to the creation and organisation of the entire museum, particularly what was designed to encourage scientific and artistic teaching.

An official catalogue contained the list with classification of objects in order to facilitate the information search and comparisons among them. Each object was labelled separately with indications of denomination, function, commercial price, name of the donor or exhibitor, and address of the manufacturer or publisher. Thus, the museum's collection was composed of: models of school buildings and school furniture, in which models of certain schools were highlighted; plants of several schools; other objects for elementary education (tables, school desks, blackboards, school clocks, instructional objects, educational solitaire, mobile alphabets, writing materials, gymnastic apparatus); games for kindergarten; and scientific apparatus and precision instruments (small machine models). Besides the existing collection, it was enriched by donation, loan, or purchase of a good part of objects in the special exposition of scientific instruments of 1876; photographs of the astronomical instruments of the naval observatory in Washington (USA); scientific instruments invented by Griesbach to explain the sound phenomena; photographs of scientific devices belonging to various Italian universities and museums; sideral clock, stopwatch, microscopes, acoustic devices; apparatus showing the telegraphy evolution; ancient and modern weights and measures; and calculating machines, among others.

Besides these materials, the museum had a special education library with more than 38,000 volumes, attended by a large number of teachers and students, including students from vocational and secondary schools. This pedagogical library is divided into 12 classes: (i) works on school buildings, furniture and accessories; (ii) general works of education, language, national history, writing, mathematics, classical and modern languages; (iii) Drawing and fine arts; (iv) Music; (v) Domestic and political economy; (vi) Geography and astronomy; (vii) Natural history; (viii) Chemistry; (ix) Physics; (x) Mechanical sciences; (xi) Teaching for blind and deaf-mute; (xii) Hygiene and physical education. The latest figures from all the major education journals and the best educational magazines from England and abroad as well as statistical studies

³⁹According to Ferdinand Buisson, this information was obtained from A.C. King, a member of the Antiquarian Society and curator of the Museum of London, but references are also found in a Buisson's text on the reports and catalogues of the museum, available at the Paris Pedagogical Museum.

related to teaching were available on the main table of the library reading room. Classical dictionaries and books of elementary and secondary education were located in the library entrance. Statistics of the last three years showed the number of readers who attended the library: in 1876, 20,986 readers; in 1877, 22,003, and in 1878, 24,791 readers (among which 5812 teachers; 10,009 students; 8,940 other readers). B. Buisson keeps reporting that admission to the museum is free three times a week from 10 am to 7 pm. On the other three days of the week, it is open free for students with a card and the overall public has to pay “6 pence (60 centimes)”. The museum is not open on Sundays, but the Sunday Society chaired by Sir Henry Thompson joined efforts to open the museums and libraries to the working classes.⁴⁰ According to B. Buisson, the Kensington Museum also constituted a teaching centre and realised pedagogical conferences, mainly courses in science and arts, were performed there to develop artistic taste and elementary scientific knowledge in the industrial classes. Responses to a questionnaire addressed to all persons attending several pedagogical courses of South Kensington indicated that a considerable number of students had been successful.

According to the rapporteur, besides offering trainings, the Kensington Museum had been a large central information office for school authorities in the metropolis and inland, when the Education Act of 1870 imposed a growing concern with school furniture in England.⁴¹ In this context, the Pedagogical Museum of London considerably influenced the context beyond the metropolis, still functioning as a teaching office, where the *metier* professionals could consult aiming to answer questions about certain subjects.

The museum maintained lending service to schools, as presented by the data for the year 1877. In that year, 665 boards were lent to provincial schools and circulated through 80 cities in the United Kingdom; 679 objects of art served as design models, and further, 320 art books were also lent to different schools. Moreover, it was among its activities to request resources to the State to encourage teachers, students, art, and science associations; and to perform provincial expositions. However, the museum had even greater ambitions, according to B. Buisson:

... It is an accessible and attractive study center, where one returns spontaneously, being centralized and methodically organized, besides the education objects, all manuals, journals, general and special books for teaching and for research. It is a comfortable reading and working office designed in a democratic spirit, where the teacher who wants to prepare his lesson the next day can meet the student who reviews the one from the previous day; where the secondary school teacher meets the modest primary teacher ...⁴²

If the South Kensington Museum seems ambitious in covering all these activities and potentialities, especially for the main target audience, composed of teachers and

⁴⁰It seems that this would be a move to open the museums and libraries in general. However, the text does not detail the reasons for not opening these institutions on Sundays.

⁴¹This act consolidated, in England, the state interference in elementary education. More than widening access to school, since 70% of English children were already in school, this act made public schools reach places where they were not present: Maria Cristina Soares Gouvea, “Escola Compulsória Inglesa: História E Historiografia,” *Revista Brasileira de Educação* 18, no. 53 (2013): 377–496.

⁴²“C’est un centre d’études d’un abord facile et attrayant, où l’on revient volontiers, où l’on trouve centralisés et méthodiquement disposés, outre les objets d’éducation, tous les manuels, tous les journaux, tous les livres généraux et spéciaux d’enseignement et de recherches. C’est un confortable cabinet de lecture et de travail conçu dans un esprit tout à fait démocratique, où le maître qui veut préparer sa leçon du lendemain peut se recontrer avec l’élève qui repasse celle du jour ou de la veille, où le professeur de l’enseignement secondaire ne craint pas de coudoyer le modeste instituteur primaire ...”: Buisson, *Le Musée Pédagogique de Paris*, 6.

students, it also wanted to be a *locus* of approximation between the classes, the rich and the workers, according to the words of B. Buisson:

The rich have their clubs, their elegant and comfortable circles; the worker, who also has his working men clubs, conversely finds a particular circle in the Kensington museum, which brings the classes closer together, a kind of people's palace, where science becomes mermaid to seduce and cultivate unconcerned ignorance: attractive medium that no artisan can cross without realizing the means and without feeling the desire to perfect his professional education simultaneously as his general education.⁴³

The ambitious goals for this museum by inserting it into a daring educational enterprise are understood, chaired by Prince Albert and Henry Cole. The South Kensington Museum emerged in its current place in 1857, and in 1899 it was named after its chief benefactor and the Queen of England, renamed as Victoria and Albert Museum.⁴⁴ According to Bruce Robertson,⁴⁵ the museum emerged from the success of the 1851 World Exposition held in London, and the desire to permanently bring together the wealth shown at that time. The English Prince had begun to conceive such an idea even during the exposition period and planned to bring together, in the South Kensington region, national museums, scientific societies subsidised by the national government, and several schools in a university-like complex. Dozens of institutions applied to build up the venture, including the Geological Society, the Arts Society, the Antiquarian Society, the National Gallery, and the University of London. The concern with learning conceived in a link between art and science for the improvement of industrial crafts was in the project core. For Robertson,

The central concern of all these institutions was education. The Victoria and Albert Museum, seen within this flux, is only an art element in a larger scientific, practical and educational enterprise, just as Prince Albert and Henry Cole first understood it. Albert envisioned a metropolis of learning, organized around the production of useful knowledge and benefiting the entire nation.⁴⁶

In the view of Albert and Cole, the museum was an educational enterprise in which the presence of objects made possible the teaching directed to the arts and the design, in pragmatic prerogative for industry development. The complex, built in the decades following the foundation of the South Kensington Museum (Victoria and Albert Museum), was more comprehensive and brought together in that space The Natural History Museum (1864); The Science Museum (1909); the Royal Albert Hall (1867); Royal College of Organists (1903); Royal College of Music (from 1883); Royal College of Art (from 1857; renamed 1897); and Royal School of Needlework (1875), among other institutions.⁴⁷

⁴³"Le riche a ses clubs, ses cercles élégants et confortables; l'ouvrier, qui a aussi les siens (working men clubs), trouve en outre au musée de Kensington un cercle d'une nature particulière, qui rapproche les classes, une sorte de palais du peuple où la science se fait Sirène pour séduire e cultiver l'insoucieuse ignorance: milieu attrayant que nul artisan ne peut traverser sans apercevoir les moyens et sans éprouver le désir de perfectionner son éducation professionnelle, en même temps que son éducation générale": Buisson, 7.

⁴⁴Tim Barringer, "The South Kensington Museum and the Colonial Project," in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998), 11–27.

⁴⁵Bruce Robertson, "The South Kensington Museum in Context: An Alternative History," *Museum and Society* 2, no. 1 (2004): 1–14.

⁴⁶Ibid., 2.

⁴⁷Ibid.

According to Barringer (in 1998), the 1851 exposition emphasised the importance of the British Empire and trade relations with its colonies, of which India occupied the largest area in the Crystal Palace. The wealth and exoticism of Indian design were prominent in the show and ended the exposition. In the next 50 years, the building constructed to house the South Kensington Museum would centralise the exposition of the object collections formed from the imperial tributes paid by subjected regions. According to this author, the museum had created an orderly representation of a miniature world by bringing together in a single space, located in London as the centre of the Empire, objects from India, Southeast Asia, China, and Japan, as well as the fine and decorative European arts. Additionally, he accomplished an ideal of organising a cultural diversity held by him in characterising a “three-dimensional imperial archive”, as suggested by the author.⁴⁸

This was possibly the vision that had charmed B. Buisson by referring to the museum as a “people’s palace” – a place where all classes can meet, designed internally by factory workers, and externally by peoples of different cultures from English colonial domains. This view resonated with the ideals of Ferdinand Buisson, who had charmed himself with American republican education, in which the individualist ideal of education for all citizens did not fit into a society divided into classes.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the view of the museum as a place where science seduces the unconcerned ignorance was in line with the civilising and scientific ideal of the period when it was expected that it would contribute to the development of education as a science.

In this way, the London museum drew Ferdinand Buisson’s attention as another model to inspire French practice when implementing its pedagogical museum. Buisson had known aspects of this museum in the international expositions he had visited, so that he cited it in the first document mentioned above. I believe that the detail provided by B. Buisson about the South Kensington museum in his report made Ferdinand Buisson not publish a personal report of his visit to London. Thus, he seemed to consider B. Buisson’s publication timely, together with brief information on the newly established French museum.

It is possible to imagine that the international models described by Ferdinand Buisson in his writings and publications inspired the creation of the Pedagogical Museum of Paris, which allows us to think that several functions could be combined in a single institution under the name of Pedagogical Museum. Paradoxically, it is not easy to note the appropriated aspects and actual transfers from other museums to the French experience. However, some points can be raised.

The details provided about the South Kensington Museum library show that such a section was considered relevant by the French experts, and indeed the 1879 decree, mentioned above, predicted the creation of a pedagogical museum together with a central library of primary education, showing the importance of gathering books and publications produced in France and abroad on education in the new space. The relevance of the library can still be observed in the first investment of the institution. In 1880, a draft law was presented to the Chamber of Deputies on behalf of the President of the Republic, the Minister of Public Instruction, and the Minister of Finance, to open a supplementary loan of 45,000 francs for acquisition by the

⁴⁸Barringer, “The South Kensington Museum and the Colonial Project,” 12.

⁴⁹Dittrich, “As Exposições Mundiais.”

Ministry of Public Instruction of the collection of J.J. Rapet, general inspector of primary education.⁵⁰ According to this document Rapet for half a century gathered a collection of valuable French and foreign documents on the history of pedagogy, some of which have already disappeared.⁵¹ Two experts examined this collection, accounting for 4500 works and writings, among 5000 volumes, composed of publications on education, especially primary education, launched in France, Germany, Italy, England, and the United States. The preciousness were among foreign journals dating back to the eighteenth century, as well as official documents. In addition, the writing mentioned especially the collection of 284 works on the Swiss pedagogue Pestalozzi and his method, accompanied by notes of great interest. The draft law reported that due to the Zurich's exposition, only 210 works that composed the Pestalozzi collection in the library had been purchased by the government. Finally, the draft law emphasised that the French government could not fail to acquire such a collection, considered unique in the country. Thus, this collection, besides enriching the library of primary education, would provide materials and information on primary instruction, subject of heated debates at that time.

In 1881, Jules Ferry published the Regulation of the Pedagogical Museum and the Central Library of Primary Education, discussed and defined by the Board of Directors of that institution in the section of 11 July 1881.⁵² The first article of this standard defines that the “*Musée Pédagogique constitue un centre d'informations sur l'enseignement primaire, tant en France qu'à le étranger*”.⁵³ In this way, the definitions of the South Kensington Museum, besides the National Education Office of Washington, are appropriate for the French institution. The second article mentioned the four sections that compose the museum:

- (1) School supplies (school building plans, classroom furniture); (2) Teaching apparatus (boards, models, and geographic, scientific and technological collections); (3) Central library (books for teachers, books for students, school library and popular library); (4) Documents related to the education history.⁵⁴

The first three sections do not differ from the composition of other pedagogical museums described by Ferdinand Buisson, as observed previously. However, in this document, the fourth section, as it does not present further detail, makes its content uncertain. However, a newsletter dated 30 May 1879, from the Ministry addressed to the rectors of Academies of the Country, reinforced the newsletter issued on 14 December 1872, and informed the goal of creating a collection of documents in the

⁵⁰J. Grévy, Chambre des Députés, Projet de Loi, 1880.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²The Board of Directors of the Museum was officially established on 5 May 1880 and met in ordinary session at the beginning of each quarter, when deciding on materials to be acquired to be incorporated into museum collections, as well as on the journals to which the museum should subscribe to be acquired to be incorporated into museum collections, as well as on the journals to which the museum should subscribe: J. Ferry, Ministère de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts, Arrêté, 1880; J. Ferry, Ministère de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts, Règlement Intérieur du Musée Pédagogique et de la Bibliothèque centrale de l'enseignement primaire, 1881.

⁵³“Pedagogical Museum is an information center on primary education, both in France and abroad”: Ferry, Ministère de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts, Règlement Intérieur, p. 1.

⁵⁴(1) Matériel scolaires (plans de maisons d'école; types de mobilier de classes); (2) Appareils d'enseignement (tableaux, modèles, collections géographiques, scientifiques et technologiques); (3) Bibliothèque centrale (livres pour les maîtres, livres pour les élèves, bibliothèque scolaire, bibliothèque populaire); (4) Documents relatifs à l'histoire de l'éducation.”

Museum with the aim of constituting the history of primary education in France that dated as back as possible. For that purpose, he asked the rectors to search libraries for all printed or handwritten works, monographs, and reports on the primary school.⁵⁵ In any case, the role of statistical studies in the Washington Office is not explicit, which distinguished the French museum from its related North American.

In the fourth article, the document defines that museum collections are formed through donations from manufacturers, authors and publishers; by sending the Ministry of Public Instruction and other ministerial bodies, besides school administrations from abroad; acquisitions deemed as relevant by the Board of Directors. Furthermore, the museum receives, as temporary deposit, books and objects for teaching that publishers wish to disclose.

The seventh article is particularly interesting to define the target audience of the Pedagogical Museum. It informs that the museum is open from 10 am to 4 pm every day (except Monday) to people holding a work card, issued by the museum or the directorate of primary education, Ministry of Public Instruction. The general public could attend the museum on Sundays and Thursdays. Therefore, it is possible to note that the museum was directed to a specific public, since there is a concern to define precisely in its Regulation those who had unrestricted access to the museum, i.e. those authorised by the museum or by the agency of the Ministry of Education responsible for primary education. It is suggested that the target audience of the institution was composed by people involved in education, such as teachers, specialists, and school officials, among others. Thus, the French republicans outlined the mission of the Pedagogical Museum along the lines of other museums that Ferdinand Buisson had known, especially the English museum, which was geared towards training for industrial work. In the French context, however, the major concern was the training of teachers needed to implement the new education laws. In this sense, in January 1882, an *avis* determined:

In order to assist the preparation of candidates for teachers training schools, primary inspection and nursery schools, a circulating library is instituted at the Pedagogical Museum in Paris (Rue Llomond Street, 42).⁵⁶

This library consisted of three sections: Arts (grammar, critic and literary history, general history, and geography); Sciences (arithmetic, geometry and elementary algebra, physics and chemistry, natural history, agriculture, and hygiene), and Pedagogy (psychology, morals, civics, general education, teaching methods, school legislation).⁵⁷ Certainly, the teacher candidates would be submitted to these contents in the examinations.

Moreover, the Pedagogical Museum sent catalogues of the library to the people who requested them through a letter sent to the director of the institution. To candidates non-resident in Paris, the museum still provided an on-demand book delivery service. Such request should be addressed to the Minister of Public Instruction with the subject

⁵⁵J. Ferry, *Bulletin Administratif du Ministère de l'Instruction Publique*, 1879.

⁵⁶"En vue d'aider la préparation des candidats au professorat dans les écoles normales d'instituteurs et d'institutrices, à l'inspection de l'enseignement primaire et à celles des écoles maternelles il est institué au Musée Pédagogique de Paris (Rue Llomond, 42) une bibliothèque circulante": J. Ferry, *Extrait du Bulletin Administratif du Ministère de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts 1882, Avis*, p. 1.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

“Circulating library of the Pedagogical Museum – book request” and should contain the title of the work to be lent; the period which could not exceed two months, as well as the applicant address, with an indication of the train line and station to the respective applicant’s residence.⁵⁸ The first demand should contain the approval of the academy inspector or primary inspector, to whom it should be stated that the applicant was actually preparing for the referred examinations. The document further detailed that such requested books would be sent to the applicant by the director of the Pedagogical Museum through a postal package and that they should be returned to the museum in the same way at the candidate’s expense. Each package could not exceed the weight of 3 kg. A second package would be sent to the applicant only after the return of the first one and the applicant would have the delivery suspended in the case of a delay in return occurred twice in a row. In case of damage to the books, the applicant would need to pay the catalogue value or replace the volume to the museum.

This notice demonstrates the use of the Pedagogical Museum for the education advancement, according to Ferdinand Buisson and his predecessors. Once the compulsory and free school laws were approved, the need for teachers and hence the accomplishment of admission examinations to the professorship were imposed. Candidates spread throughout the territory of rural France, in turn, needed to know the contents required in the examinations. The book acquisition by the Ministry through the Pedagogical Museum did not solve the access problem for candidates residing very far from Paris. It is assumed that the book lending service, in this respect, would solve the problem satisfactorily.

Thus, although several international models have inspired the creation of the French museum, the Pedagogical Museum of Paris is outlined according to the needs of national education. It is interesting to observe that the museum project of 1872 discussed public access to museum collections and decided that only books could circulate by lending.⁵⁹ The Decree of 1879 did not create the library as “circulating”. It is suggested that this was only instituted when the need for preparing the candidate was imposed on members of the Republican Ministry.

An information centre of teaching and a circulating library

The writings of Ferdinand Buisson allowed characterising a transnational network of subjects linked to public instruction, which promoted the circulation of ideas and the exchange of educational practices and artefacts. In this way, foreign experiences were appropriated for enhancing processes that had not yet been developed at the national level. The contact, *in loco* or through the world expositions, allowed Ferdinand Buisson to know current practices and follow certain aspects from England and United States models in order to design the Pedagogical Museum of Paris.

Within the scientific and civilising movement of nineteenth-century museums, national pedagogical museums, in contrast, were characterised by a singular appropriation of the notion of museum, less linked to the desire for conservation and enjoyment. The project of the French Pedagogical Museum was outlined as an information and

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Possamai, “Exhibition, Collection, School Museum.”

research centre, developed to train teachers who were needed to implement public instruction. Under the label of the Pedagogical Museum, this project museum brought together a plurality of desires, ideals, and dreams, all of them put at the service of a greater ideal: republican education put into practice through the public school.

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