

# A gendered “corporal” morality in french school textbooks on morality and hygiene (1880-1974)<sup>1</sup>

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## *Uma moral “corporal” generificada nos manuais escolares franceses de moral e de higiene (1880-1974)*

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### ABSTRACT

The study of French textbooks on Moral and Hygiene, from the end of the 19th century to the second third of the 20th century, allows us to describe the prejudices and gender stereotypes linked to the various themes present in these works. The few ruptures identified in them are more associated with changes in didactic procedures than with the issue of gender. In this area, treatment is quite different according to gender. Equally distinct are the themes found when it comes to self-care, prescriptions and body prohibitions. In recommendations to girls, patience, cleanliness, temperance, moral courage, order, and sobriety in food and drink are frequent topics; in advice to boys, discussions on courage, drunkenness, alcoholism, physical prowess, suicide, mutilation, work, and laziness arise. The remarkable events regarding the situation of women in the 20th century do not seem to have impacted on school textbooks, both in terms of chosen texts and iconography, with very few exceptions.

*Keywords:* Gender. Equality. Sex. Moral. Hygiene.

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## RESUMO

O estudo dos manuais escolares franceses de Moral e Higiene do final do século XIX ao segundo terço do século XX permite descrever os preconceitos e estereótipos de gênero ligados aos diversos temas presentes nessas obras. As poucas rupturas nelas identificadas estão mais associadas a mudanças nos procedimentos didáticos do que à questão do gênero. Nesse domínio, o tratamento é bastante diferente conforme o sexo. Igualmente distintas são as temáticas encontradas quando se trata do autocuidado, de prescrições e de proibições corporais. Nas recomendações às meninas, são frequentes os assuntos da paciência, do asseio, da temperança, da coragem moral, da ordem, da sobriedade na comida e bebida; nos conselhos aos meninos, surgem as discussões sobre a coragem, a embriaguez, o alcoolismo, as proezas físicas, o suicídio, a mutilação, o trabalho e a preguiça. Os acontecimentos marcantes quanto à situação da mulher no século XX não parecem ter impactado os manuais escolares, tanto em termos dos textos escolhidos como da iconografia, com pouquíssimas exceções.

*Palavras-chave:* Gênero. Igualdade. Sexo. Moral. Higiene.

A large number of articles by French and Anglophone authors dealt with the history of textbooks<sup>2</sup> and gender stereotypes<sup>3</sup>. When one tries, however, to specifically explore the problem of equality and relationships between boys and girls in French textbooks on morals and hygiene in the 19th and 20th centuries, literature becomes more than limited, almost non-existent, especially if one looks at the issue of body injunctions. This article is an introductory view of the subject. For this purpose, the moral and hygiene manuals were analyzed, allowing the continuity of researches carried out elsewhere (GLEYSE, 2008, 2014, 2020).

Epistemologically, we rely on the writings of Mary Douglas (1965) about the body taboos on an anthropological level, those of Norbert Elias (1973, 1975) about the civilization process and, of course, those of Michel Bernard (1974), for whom the body is “the symbol used by a society to speak of its fantasies”

2 Throughout the text, we will use the expressions “textbooks” and “school textbooks” as synonyms. We thank Cláudia Emília Aguiar Moraes and Bruno Medeiros Roldão de Araújo for the collaborative translation in some passages of this manuscript.

3 The scientific production on the subject is so great that it is impossible to point, at this time, to a partial revision of the literature. We point out, by way of illustration, the collection *Manuels du Monde et Sociétés* (French), the texts of the *Georg Eckert Institute for Textbooks* (Germany), the journal *History of Education and Children’s Literature* (Scotland), as well as the journal *Gender and Education* (multinational).

(BERNARD, 1974, p. 141). The works of Michel Foucault (1969, 1975) on biopower and micro-power will also be evoked.

The exploited archive is that of Study, Documentation and Research Center in History of Education (CEDHRE)<sup>4</sup>, located in the Faculty of Education of the University of Montpellier. This research center houses most of the textbooks published in France since the beginning of the 19th century, particularly since the Third Republic. Its collection is among the largest in France and in the world, containing more than 40,000 school and manual works, 20,000 numbers of educational journals and 6,000 educational movies.

One can criticise this research for juxtaposing different sources relating to morals. In reality, it is a homogeneous *corpus*, despite the two types of textbooks. Both types of documents are destined to the French school world and even to African or Asian colonial schools (primary, higher primary or secondary education). All of them deal with morality, namely with injunctions concerning the body.

Methodologically, the research was organized as follows: initially, we listed the 234 Moral and Civic Instruction and Moral Reading manuals, related to all school levels, as well as the 149 Hygiene manuals (also suppliers of moral precepts, in many cases beyond simple body hygiene). We then identify in the texts everything that concerns the so-called *duties to oneself* (there are also *duties to society, to God*, etc.). In this identification, we focus particularly on bodily matters, later verifying, in the same domain, the presence of specific injunctions to students of each gender. We strive to identify the hidden curriculum.

When studying body injunctions, the recurring themes in moral textbooks are: *a body preservation* (suicide, various mutilations), *the fight against laziness, luxury* (for the elderly), *gluttony, anger, alcoholism and drunkenness* or, conversely, the *appreciation of cleanliness, prudence, work, courage, temperance and sobriety*<sup>5</sup>. In hygiene books, the subjects concern *tidiness, physical activity, nutrition, alcoholism or sobriety*. By dwelling on these topics, our goal was to seek ruptures and continuities in the order of discourse (FOUCAULT, 1969, 1971), especially regarding the school and social context. Most of the identified themes strongly differentiate girls and boys in their behavior. The present manuscript will not be able to study all the themes, choosing some of those considered more significant for the assumed objective.

4 Centre d'Étude, de Documentation et de Recherche en Histoire de l'Éducation.

5 We also diagnosed the presence of the theme of *physical exercise* (the sport as a theme, appears around 1950). Due to methodological issues, we will not address it on this occasion.

## Anger and courage: male stereotypes

Already in the first moral writings studied, anger is presented as a form of madness, whose effect is to transform the human into an animal:

As said by a wise man, *anger* is quick *madness*. Look at the *man in rage*: his face contracts, his eyes come out of his head, his mouth has a convulsive movement. He utters words which would never be mentioned by him if he was calm, words he will regret having said. [...] In his behavior he exposes himself to committing irreparable actions, to insulting those he loves most, to whom he owes the greatest *respect*: his *friends*, his *relatives*, his *parents* (MÉZIÈRES, 1893, p. 84-85, emphasis added by the author).

Instead, patience is a fundamental virtue for civilized and socially acceptable behavior, *a fortiori*, for a woman. In any case, if anger is a capital sin for Catholicism, in itself it is not condemned by moral books. In fact, it condemns its consequence – that is, the fatal algorithm it possibly engendered – which leads to the worst extremes: killing someone, for example.

[The angry man] no longer knows what he does. [...] The discussion begins, then it gets lively, it gets heated, violent words are said, and from the words come the punches. Thus, unintentionally, in the furious ravages, friends killed *friends*, *brothers* killed *brothers*, *children* hurt even their *parents*. The guilty get desperate when the evil is done. They would have spared much remorse if they had begun to resist the temptations of wrath (MÉZIÈRES, 1893, p. 85, author's emphasis).

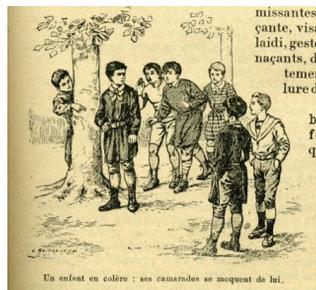
In a reiterated way, the works evoke this theme and in the discussion about the drunkenness, as we will see ahead, the famous example of Alexander the Great, killing his friend. It is observed, in these cases, the exclusive presence of men. Famous authors of antiquity are often quoted. We may look for women in these chapters of the textbooks, but we will not find them, although such works are meant for both sexes. The exception is the appeal to female sweetness to appease male cholera. The illustrative iconography below reveals this absence of women.

FIGURE 1 – A FIGHT WITH A FELLOW



SOURCE: MÉZIÈRES, 1893, p. 91.

FIGURE 2 – ANGERED CHILD



SOURCE: BRÉMONT; MOUSTIER, 1920, p. 133.

In this specific chapter of the textbooks, a number of behaviors considered calm are associated with women and sometimes, more rarely, with famous English personalities. This is the case of Mr. Humpden, a member of parliament, whose self-control is highly valued. Moreover, the works specifically destined to girls, stress a lot on the practice of patience, which must be taken into consideration, mainly by them.

A woman is almost always described as the guardian of tranquility at home. In 1895, a manual gave the following title to a chapter: “The Need for Patience for Women”. This topic concludes with the following maxim, probably to be learned by heart: “If sweetness is not a woman’s first virtue, it may be her most powerful means of happiness” (SEIGNETTE, 1895, p. 59). On the other hand, the worker, especially the drunk or intemperate, is the vector of violence and anger.

At the didactic level, the classes of younger children are directed to fables and models of identification, while the classes of older students, the illustrious predecessors and the maxims to be learned by heart are strategies that are most commonly used. In this direction are the *Little Moral Readings* – by Marie Pape-Carpantier and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Delon – published by Editora Hachette. Intended for the first preparatory year, this manual employs personalized and identifying fables, aiming at holding the child’s attention through scenes of daily life. When it comes to the issue of anger, however, the target of the stories read by the teacher are never the girls:

The anger. What a fuss we heard in the room! – It is the little Armand who is angry. He broke all his toys, knocked over a chair. He cries, he screams, he provokes. He hits his feet on the ground and clenches his fists.

He has red eyes and face: he's disheveled and his physiognomy brings a horrible face. [...] His mother holds him gently; she takes him to the mirror. Armand sees himself, thinks he is ugly, and resumes his temper (PAPE-CARPANTIER; DELON, 1900, p. 23).

In this case, Armand is at the center of the parable. The girls do not seem to be present in this specific chapter of the moral textbooks, full of recommendations. The hygiene books, of course, do not deal with this topic. As in all the other topics to be discussed, since the 1950s most of the texts have been personalized (taking into account the age group of the students) and, above all, increasingly formulated in terms of personal appropriation ("I do", "I"), and no longer in terms of duty ("we must", "it is necessary").

Physical courage is also linked to boys and men. The moral modality of this virtue, on the other hand, is more connected to girls. The examples concerning war are numerous in the moral books. Throughout the 20th century the image of Assas's knight sacrificing himself for the battalion of Auvergne, shouting during the battle of Clostercamp: "For me, Auvergne; they are our enemies!" is recurring. Thus the "national narrative" is forged.

From the 1930s on, courage is associated with work, with the boy who saves another from drowning by putting his own life at risk, and less and less with war. In this sense, the textbooks of that time differ from the previous ones. The virtue in question is similarly linked to a working child in difficult conditions, as well as to prudence. In fact, irrational courage is, at least since 1920, if not since the turn of the century, considered harmful because it can relate to suicide. Prudence consists in being courageous, but without risking death unnecessarily. Therefore, temperance makes it possible to distinguish between true and false courage. A 1920 didactic book brings us the following reflection:

Courage does not belong only to the soldier  
it does not belong only to the man who fights  
To defend a country that thinks and works!  
Life itself is a battlefield  
Where each worker has his own courage  
Running away from work to do is still running away.  
[...] Life is a combat. I want to fulfill my task  
The one who runs away from the work field is a coward [Jean Aicard, *Livre des Petits*, Delagrave, Edit.] (BRÉMONT; MOUSTIER, 1920, p. 152).

In this quotation from the Brémont and Moustier textbook, we see the association of the work, theme of the previous chapter of this same book, with courage. This, however, manifests itself in its regular and cautious version, we could say apollonian and not Dionysian, taking part more in reason than in drive, passion or emotion.

Since the 1940s, courage has been increasingly associated with sport and physical exercise, especially the possibility of going beyond one's own limits to achieve a sporting achievement (the famous "overcoming oneself") (GLEYSE, 2018). The physical dimension of courage, however, will remain essentially masculine. In fact, if we continue to take the reference to heroicity, after the Second World War it is more and more frequent to designate daily difficulties as acts of courage: overcoming fear, temptation, producing a physical or intellectual effort, working hard. Finally, one talks about *everyday heroes*.

Different didactic techniques are used in this field. As always, we can find recourse to prestigious authors, famous men, war heroes, but also to other children, called as models of identification:

Children play. One of them falls, seriously hurts his/her head and loses consciousness. Frightened by the child's sight of blood and immobility, their peers fall into the weakness of running away. Only one has the presence of mind to wash the comrade's wound and, after wrapping it with a handkerchief, helps the comrade to get to his/her parents' house when the help arrives. This child showed courage (CURÉ; HOUZELLE, 1895, p. 141).

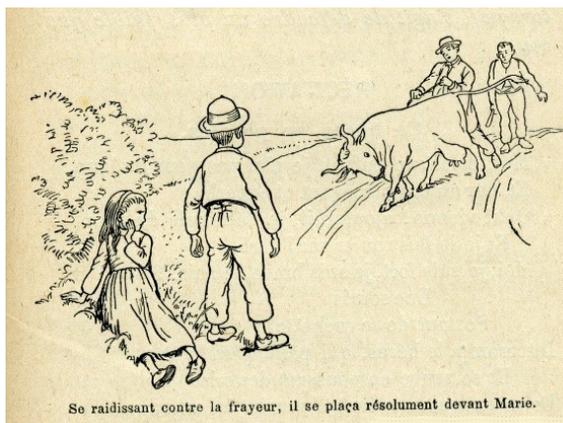
It is clear that physical courage is not an ill-considered act, but a rational attitude within everyone's reach... the boys. For girls, only moral courage will often be present, along with kindness, patience or even stubbornness.

Still on the didactic techniques, we emphasize the use of binary opposition relations:

The brave man: preserves his will and his full reason. He never despairs. He overcomes obstacles. He is brave especially in misfortune. He always does his duty. The fearful man: his will and reason are annihilated. He maintains a passive and humiliating resignation. He lets himself be carried away by difficulties. He loses his temper in danger or misfortune. He does his duty only when there is little merit in doing so (CURÉ; HOUZELLE, 1895, p. 141).

For textbooks, it seems decisive to clearly distinguish the two human characteristics, as well as to differentiate between fear, cowardice and prudence. This last virtue is easily combined with courage. In fact, unconscious courage is not appreciated. In fact, in a kind of oxymoron, “prudent courage”, or at least reasonable and sensible courage, is valued. The images on this subject, likewise the iconography of anger, redouble the discourse, always excluding girls from this discursive order. Boys invariably save girls from angered oxen, wild wolves, or any other dangers.

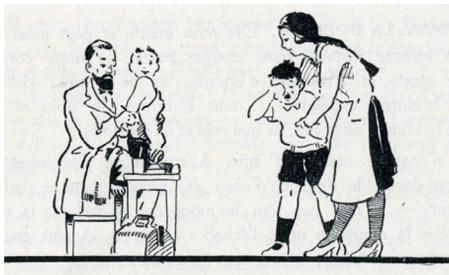
FIGURE 3 – THE BOY SAVES THE GIRL



SOURCE: PIERRE; LETRAIT; BODIN, 1909, p. 93.

Girls or women will be brave in situations of daily life where the physical aspect is less important, such as accompanying children to the doctor or not committing suicide in a situation of distress. Even when it comes to courage in the face of illness, disability, or carrying “a burden of life,” men are pointed out as being an example. In general, both in stories and iconography, including textbooks addressed to both sexes, women are poorly represented.

FIGURE 4 – WOMEN IN CARING SITUATION



SOURCE: EISMENGER; COUPIN, 1928, p. 73.

FIGURE 5 – WOMEN IN MISERY

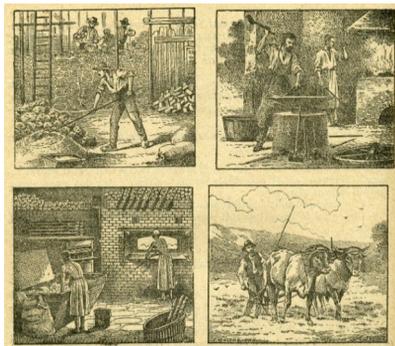


SOURCE: BRÉMONT; MOUSTIER, 1920, p. 121.

## Work and laziness: still masculinity stereotypes

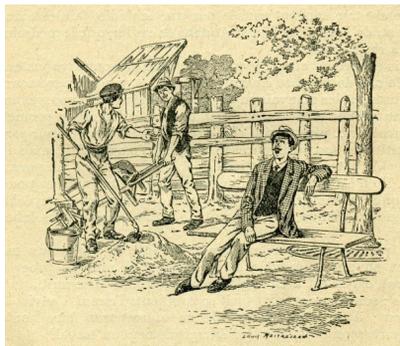
The iconography below says almost everything about the place of girls and women when it comes to situations related to work or laziness. In both cases, in books for both sexes, they are almost absent.

FIGURE 6 – THE WORK



SOURCE: BRÉMONT; MOUSTIER, 1920, p. 158.

FIGURE 7 – THE LAZINESS



SOURCE: BRÉMONT; MOUSTIER, 1920, p. 164.

At best, we will find them in the images about domestic work and the family sphere until the 1950s. In these areas, we will find the rare illustrations in which women are present (for example, when it comes to deformities in the spine, consequences of female labor).

FIGURE 8 – BAD POSTURE



FIGURE 9 – SCOLIOSIS DEVELOPMENT



SOURCE: NONUS; POIRE-CHOQUET, 1890, p. 27.

However, the absence of women returns in parables or edifying stories, occasions in which men appear as characters. The speeches are at best undifferentiated, but most often reinforced by a masculine iconography.

With the following quotation, the chapter dedicated to this subject in several textbooks is closed: “Glory to the work! Glory to the man of the field, glory to the man who fertilizes the soil! Picard, Breton, Limousin, Cévenol, glory to the one who leads the oxen to the pasture! Glory to the peasant man!” (LAUNEY, H.; LAUNEY, J.; RASCAL, 1921, p. 135).

Other sayings like this are also presented: “Work enriches, laziness impoverishes”. Most textbooks have a chapter on this theme, often entitled Work and Laziness, although sometimes the discussion only revolves around labor.

In France, the repeated motto to infinity in textbooks is well known: “Laziness is the mother of all vices”. Laziness is also a capital sin in Catholicism. In textbooks, we perceive an exaltation of labor at the expense of the depreciation of laziness. In this field, all pedagogical procedures are called for to promote the learning of what is described as a law of nature, at least at the beginning of the century. Later, the following sentence will be constantly employed: “Work is the human law” (POIGNET; BERNAT, 1919).

Moreover, hand labor – perhaps more than intellectual labor – is often highlighted, always for men, especially at the beginning of the century, a temporal location that can be understood in view of the socioeconomic context of the time. The figure of the “Brissot Carpenter” (a man, of course) is particularly present in the works. He says he is happy with his occupation

and affirms: "the work [...] is my health. The day when my arms no longer press the planer, I will no longer eat with the same appetite and will no longer have the same vigor" (DEVINAT, 1920, p. 131).

Based on this subject, a fable by La Fontaine entitled *The Farmer and His Children* (again, only men) returns regularly as leitmotiv. The text begins with the statement "The work is painful, take the effort: there is little left to the background" and ends with the following sentence: "show them, before dying, that work is a treasure". Naturally, for students in elementary and middle school, the fable must be memorized. A book from 1920 speaks directly of the "holiness of work" (BRÉMONT; MOUSTIER, 1920, p. 158). This work also specifies: "All work is useful, whether intellectual or manual, as long as it is done with courage and intelligence. There are no noble or degrading trades. Every conscious worker has the right to respect and esteem" (BRÉMONT; MOUSTIER, 1920, p. 161).

For many contemporary sociologists, from 1880 to 1968, labor practices were at the center of society. In contrast, according to other researchers, leisure seems to have replaced it from the 1980s and 1990s (DUMAZEDIER, 1962, 1989; DURAND; MERRIEN, 1991). The moral textbooks of the studied collection finish in 1964, while the hygiene ones are still published until 1974. It would be difficult to argue that the creativity on the subject now discussed in these textbooks would not be the result of the growing presence of intellectual work in the social structure. In any case, the work remains essentially manual, physical and male in the entire corpus studied.

Moreover, no place is given to women in this sphere, even though they were already numerous in the textile industry, in tertiary work and in certain manufacturing tasks that require precision, and despite claiming rights to exist in the social and labor space since 1920. The exception, as discussed, consists of some sewing services or domestic care.

## **Tidiness and hygiene: very female practices**

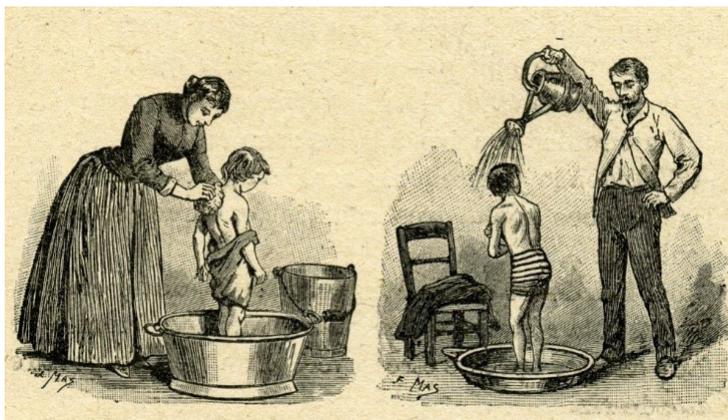
The theme of tidiness is present in moral and hygiene textbooks. This second modality, of course, is based on scientific precepts and focuses mainly on the fight against microbes, since the discovery of these microorganisms. In moral textbooks, physical cleanliness is in a way the reflection of a pure soul, until the moment when this type of religious discourse (linked to the sacrament of baptism, for example) is eliminated by scientific discourse since the 1930s. In

this field, unlike the previous one, female characters are extremely represented both in iconography and in the texts offered to children for reading. The idea of a dirty woman seems completely unbearable to the authors of these books.

Although Elie Pécaut's course does not distinguish between girls and boys (but we must remember that he is focused on men), he proposes a daily tidiness whose procedures could be considered simplistic in our eyes at the beginning of the 21st century:

The habit of washing one's face and hands every morning is enough on this point, the hygienist would not have much to say. But it should be noted that many people, especially numerous children, do it in a very succinct way (PÉCAUT, 1882, p. 100).

FIGURE 10 – COLD ABLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN



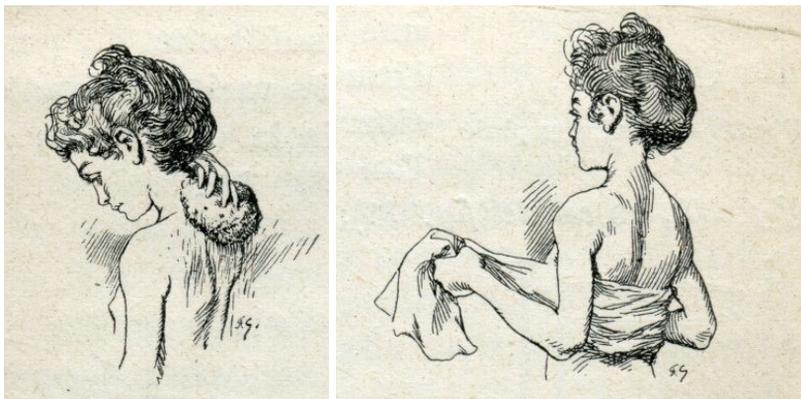
SOURCE: GALTIER-BOISSIERE, 1921, p. 131.

Hair was washed only once a week and it was recommended to take baths fortnightly at the end of the 19th century. This requirement is surprising, since the public spaces offered by the municipality for shower baths are rare in France at that time, characterized by being quite rural. Only the bourgeoisie could bathe as easily as today. Most houses are not equipped with showers, much less with bathtubs. For this purpose, vats or simply large basins are used, usually in the only heated area of the house: the kitchen. In the peasant environment, ablutions are not uncommon in rivers and other water sources.

However, when it comes to tidiness and filth, the recipients of parables are mainly girls. A text and some images from a 1920 manual attest to this:

Berthe Longuet always has dirty hands. A circle of impurities covers her wrists; a layer of dirt extends through her fingers; a black, greasy border contours her nails; her face looks dull and without freshness. [...] “Then go wash your hands,” says your mother. [...] Wash yourself – this is the eternal refrain that sings to her. [...] You will be unhappy because of your own fault. And the most serious thing, you will be very unpleasant to others. [...] When we have the honor of being human, miss, we must know to respect ourselves. *To be dirty is to disrespect yourself* (DEVINAT, 1920, p. 113-114, author’s emphasis).

FIGURES 11 AND 12 – COLD LOTION AND FRICTION AFTER THE LOTION



SOURCE: CAUSTIER; MOREAU-BERILLON, 1911, p. 65.

On the other hand, profound changes occur over time, always at the didactic level, because, as in other topics, we experience the transition from an injunction, which sometimes mobilizes illustrious authors in order to legitimize themselves for an increasing personalization. The following excerpt, for example, witnesses to the perspective of moral prescription: “1. The tidiness testifies to the respect we have for society and for ourselves (Bacon). What purity is for the soul, tidiness is for the body (Epithet)” (DEPOIS; LABERENNE, 1910, p. 123). In contrast, little by little texts will be noted whose scope is the appropriation, by the subject himself, of the hygienic determinations – which is seen by the appearance of the pronoun “I” – even in the case of younger children:

I feel very pleased to be extremely clean. "Every day I take care of my face, my hands, my teeth, my hair". I clean my clothes, my hat, my shoes; *I* take a bath quite often. *I* find uncleanness disgusting. *I* don't like to shake a dirty hand or kiss a dirty face (BOURCEAU; FABRY, 1949, p. 200, author's emphasis).

We can see the existence of hedonistic propositions, bordering on eroticism, in which girls are always at the forefront of concerns. Thus, in a book at the end of the period studied, a text by Colette, could practically appear in an erotic collection, when in fact it is intended for elementary school children:

What a pleasure to feel this fine rain falling on me, in which a thousand little needles sting my skin! The delightfully warm water flows along my spine. Pleasure also to soak vigorously with a delicately perfumed soap (VILLARD, 1964, p. 6).

Moreover, in iconography, women almost always take care of children's tidiness, with rare exceptions:

FIGURE 13 – CHILDA VAT



SOURCE: PIZON, 1930, p. 178.

FIGURE 14 – COLD ABLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN



SOURCE: GALTIER-BOISSIERE, 1921, p. 131.

Thus we can see how during the 20th century French moral and hygiene textbooks functioned on the basis of gender prejudices and stereotypes regarding sexual roles. Although there are certain disorders of this order in the course of time, they concern more the pedagogical dimensions than the stereotypes. Equality between girls and boys is far from being achieved in these works, at least with regard to the sharing of work and household tasks, as well as the

division of other activities associated with socially sexual behaviors. Gender stereotypes are also evident in the themes of the relationship with alcoholic beverages and drunkenness.

## **Women to calm men drunkards and alcoholics with order and good food**

Whatever the modalities of the textbook and the period of its publication, alcoholism is strongly criticized, although moderate wine consumption in particular is accepted – especially at the beginning of the 20th century. On the other hand, manifestations of alcoholism and especially drunkenness are rejected: in works of hygiene, rejection is naturally based on health reasons; in moral books, human and social decadence resulting from drunkenness is used as the basis for rejection:

You should not drink alcohol

- "Drunkenness is a shameful vice." It inspires horror, since it makes man lose his reason, and degrades him; it also inspires fear, because it turns a drunk man into an angry and, therefore, dangerous animal.

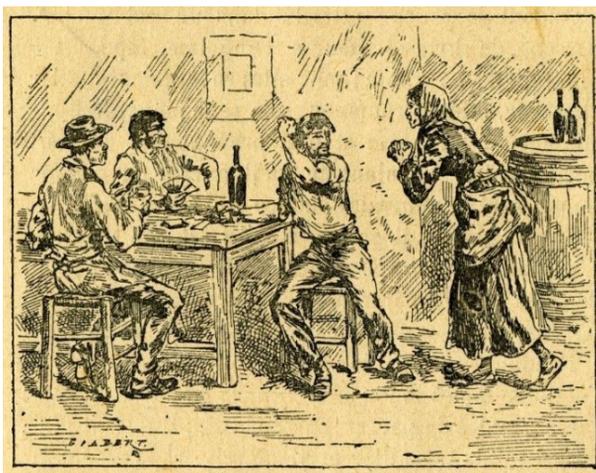
- The abuse of alcohol makes more victims than plague or cholera. It causes all sorts of illnesses, makes a person idiotic or crazy. "I will refrain from strong liquors" and resist all malattraction (BOURCEAU; FABRI, 1949, p. 214).

A vicious circle is often described, similar to the strategy from which one has come to grips with the subject of wrath. The example of Alexander the Great, murdering his best friend, is again brought up in order to build up the older students. Drunkenness and alcoholism are supposed to lead to the same criminal and antisocial behavior, both towards strangers and acquaintances. Drunkards are always men, never women. These, on the contrary, try to pacify situations and regularly become victims of drunken men.

The image below shows the honorable wife, trying to keep her husband away from the drunkenness in which he immersed himself. The green fairy – that is, the absinthe – is then considered the worst enemy of the virtuous woman. The Leagues of Virtue, in fact, will be created many times by female initiatives, and will be mobilized mainly by the prohibition of the drink in question. Such positioning will be registered on March 16, 1915, in France:

The best known and most deadly of the appetizers is absinthe, a real slow poison, which kills those who use it daily, reducing them to the most miserable state (epilepsy, mania); the effect of this terrible liquor does not end in the unfortunate one who dies; his children, from birth, are marked by the sad seal of idiocy and can later inherit the paternal epilepsy (PÉCAUT, 1882, p. 42-43).

FIGURE 15 – THE MOTHER OF THE FAMILY LOOKS FOR HER HUSBAND AT THE BAR



SOURCE: MÉZIÈRES, 1893, p. 51.

In all cases, temperance when drinking (alcohol and other beverages) and eating, is prescribed in both moral and hygiene manuals. If gluttony is a capital sin and temperance, therefore, a virtue, whose roots are in Catholicism, with alcohol the situation is different. Although its consumption is banned in Islam, it is not banned in the Catholic Church, a relatively powerful institution at the beginning of the 20th century. The blood of Christ in the Eucharist is symbolized by a chalice of wine, then called “mass wine”. Numerous monasteries manufacture several alcoholic beverages, from the beer of the Belgian Trappist monks to that of the Carthusians of the Alps.

All prescriptions regarding permitted doses are always directed to men or children. Women are never involved in recommendations about alcoholic beverages or drunkenness:

A strength worker may drink a liter of wine at 10 or 12 degrees a day; but a sedentary man should only drink a maximum of half a liter. Children are *offered a small amount and always mixed in water*. Wine mixed with food has less action; it is recommended not to drink between meals (FOULON-LEFRANC, 1944, p. 44, author's emphasis).

Wives, however, will be commonly blamed for the alcoholism of their husbands. In this case, the *organization* is evoked, which according to the manuals should be one of the main female qualities. Therefore, the wife's disorganization would cause the husband's drunkenness:

We see many sober young people *become husbands and alcoholic parents!* Still in this case it is necessary to accuse the ignorance, the ignorance of the woman, her disorder, the defects of her character. How many wives of workers and wage earners ignore the art of running a house! They have *not learned how to cook*, and instead of healthy, varied and appetizing food, they serve badly cooked or burnt food, and a spicy delicacy that causes thirst. They have *not learned how to clean*, and the untidy beds, the unwashed clothes, stacked on chairs or hanging from window locks, the kitchen utensils scattered everywhere, the dust present, create an interior where no one feels well [...] How many men are thus driven to cabaret by a woman's carelessness and the disorder of an unwelcoming home! (FOULON-LEFRANC, 1944, p. 26, author's emphasis).

This observation is totally paradoxical, since women actually save men from drunkenness, according to the same moral or hygiene textbooks:

When the woman is the well-organized and clean cook, the skillful and careful housewife, who knows how to vary the food, present it with good taste and make the meals a small party calm and cheerful; when she is the loving wife, of equal humor, the attentive mother who knows how to make the home pleasant and comforting for all, who knows how to teach the children tenderness and respect for the working father, she believes that the bright and peaceful home will rarely be exchanged for the smoky and noisy bar (FOULON-LEFRANC, 1944, p. 27-28).

Women are often called victims of beatings by drunken men; other texts even speak of the murder of a wife and children by a husband in an alcoholic rage attack. On the other hand, during part of the 20th century the works refer to a supposed hereditary transmission of the disease or the madness of the alcoholic to his children. Even in the middle of that century, however, workers were not recommended the same doses of alcohol today, as we pointed out earlier.

## **Conclusion**

A "weak woman's" imaginary haunts all moral and hygiene textbooks in France from the end of the 19th century to the second third of the 20th century, thus helping to teach this understanding to students. In the same perspective, the image of a woman focused on aesthetics, patience, domestic space, organization and cleanliness is over presented. The man, on the other hand, is described as physically brave, strong, but also alcoholic, drunk, violent, suicidal, hard-working or lazy.

Although at the beginning of the 20th century and at the end of the 19th century the process of segregation is very explicit, since gender is mostly naturalized in sex, the movement that leads to gender equality in these works is more than tenuous. The change in mentalities and prescriptions, if any, must be sought in the field of physical activity, an area in which female visibility began to become real from the 1950s on. However, the themes remain largely differentiated by gender. Both iconography and the texts themselves bear witness to this, functioning regularly in a tautological way.

In the analyzed corpus, the most significant ruptures can be perceived in the didactic dimension. At the beginning of the studied period, injunctions of the type "you must" and "you need" are essentially proposed. As we reach the second half of the 20th century, learning is more and more personalized. Learning becomes "internalized": more and more "I", "I do", "I have" is used, even using hedonistic positions, that is, associating pleasure with certain practices like bathing or physical exercise.

Regarding the question raised at the beginning of the article – are French school textbooks on morals and hygiene sexist from the end of the 19th century to the last third of the 20th century? –, the answer is yes. In this direction, these materials served to teach the different modalities of sexism through the specific fields of morals and hygiene. They were based, at least until the first third of the 20th century, on essentially Catholic – or, more broadly, Christian – religious prescriptions, notably the seven capital sins and their corresponding seven

cardinal virtues. It remains to be seen whether this pedagogical practice really bore fruit and, therefore, whether the students really learn what they were taught. This would require further investigation.

Indeed, this study would help validate the idea, already worked on by Nicole Mosconi (1989), that the school works or has worked on the logic of implicit learning of a "male neutral". At the very least, the school institution would be based on the learning of distinct masculine and feminine roles, especially regarding moral and body hygiene behaviors, materialized in various behaviors. The moral and hygiene books, through hidden curricula, probably teach more about being a female and male student than about being a student in general.

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