



ITALIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

Editor-in-Chief: Silvio Scanagatta | ISSN 2035-4983

Introduction to the Special Section. Clean/Unclean Bodies: Childhood, Parenthood, and Society

Nicoletta Diasio^{*} and *Aleksandra Pawlowska*^{**}

Authors' information

^{*} Institut Universitaire de France, University of Strasbourg, France.

^{**} UMR 7367 Dynamiques Européennes, University of Strasbourg, France.

Contact authors' email addresses

^{*} nicoletta.diasio@misha.fr

^{**} pawlowska.alex@gmail.com

Article first published online

October 2017

HOW TO CITE

Diasio, N., & Pawlowska, N. (2017). Introduction to the Special Section. Clean/Unclean Bodies: Childhood, Parenthood, and Society. *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 9(3), 1-20. doi: 10.14658/pupj-ijse-2017-3-1



PADOVA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Introduction to the Special Section. Clean/Unclean Bodies: Childhood, Parenthood, and Society

Nicoletta Diasio and Aleksandra Pawlowska***

Bringing order to the world

Every morning, cleanness begins its dance against dirt: going to the bathroom, doing the dishes, taking a shower, making the bed, doing one's hair, these are all operations which reestablish borders between what is allowed by society or not, what should be evacuated, hidden or separated and what, on the contrary, has its place in the combined lot of human activities. And "every morning, through a thousand gestures and more, ordinary people reconstitute the foundations of an incredibly complex system. A system of order and classification defining the place of each thing in a network of agencies which, in spite of its apparent modesty, creates the foundations of all civilizations" (Kaufmann, 1997, p. 16).

In her seminal text *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas demonstrates the proximity between body hygiene practices of technologically advanced societies, and the purification rites of so-called traditional societies. She calls into question the distinction between norms inspired by the logic of hygiene and those inspired by the magical-religious beliefs of the so-called "primitive." For Douglas, we can assimilate what is considered "dirty," "impure" or "sullied" with things that do not belong, and that defy the rules of organization and classification of an ever-changing and complex reality¹.

* Institut Universitaire de France, University of Strasbourg, France. E-mail: nicoletta.diasio@misha.fr

** UMR 7367 Dynamiques Européennes, University of Strasbourg, France E-mail: pawlowska.alex@gmail.com

¹ These words and the concepts they designate are sometimes treated as equivalents, though they refer to widely diverse phenomena. This risk of assimilating vastly different things has in fact generated a certain amount of criticism on Douglas' theory.

Wiping away traces of the body's humors (menstrual blood, sperm, saliva, etc.), using different towels for different parts of the body, accepting to sleep with so-called domesticated animals, while at the same time rejecting others (spiders or ants), sorting the laundry, leaving one's shoes at the door or storing gardening tools in a shed and not in the bathroom, these are all actions that adapt the environment, the body and both animate and inanimate beings to a particular worldview. This labor of conforming is based, for the British anthropologist, on a homologous relationship between "the natural body," or rather, the individual organism, and "the social body" (Douglas 2002, p. 69). Practices of cleanness thus shape cultural categories and reveal positions and statuses. "Becoming clean" thus emerges as a genuine labor of incorporating ways of thinking and classifying reality in a given society.

However, dirtiness has its advantages and functions. It reminds us that order is temporary and fragile. It is partly ambiguous because it refers to both chaos and impurity, and to the force of the new and the informal. Disorder is where the dangers lie that threaten the world of order, and "what is not in its place" escapes any established category, as it contains a plethora of potential forms and opens to door to renewal. The play between cleanness and dirtiness therefore allows this oscillation between construction and destruction, repetition and creation, inclusion and exclusion.

This ambivalence is a characteristic of body products. Bodily fluids, blood, excrements, nails, hair, but also farting, nose bogeys, saliva, sweat and body odor, are at the same time linked to the body and separate from it: while these constitute elements to be managed with particular precaution, they can also be the basis of rituals. They refer to the power of what permeates the frontiers of the body, outlining the body's porousness, and are linked to the indefatigable possibility of the individual and of the social body to transform itself and to be transformed. Excreta thus raise the classical anthropological question of the relation between the body and its orifices, and, beyond that, of the dynamic and permeable lines between the self and the world, between order and disorder, and between cleanness and dirtiness (see also Leach, 1980; Katz, 1989). The way in which a society deals with everything that passes through the body's orifices allows us to grasp how that society constructs social demarcations and cultural frontiers. Consequently, any society will have its "marginal" people, whose presence

is connoted by doubts concerning their cleanness and by body practices that are deemed eccentric.

To bring order, to rub, to wash, to soap are all ways of making the world conform, and these daily repeated gestures recast the foundations of a culture every day. However, this struggle against dirtiness which is repeated on a daily basis differs in shape and in the objects it uses depending on the society, the time, and the social group in question. The work of historians reminds us how, for a long time, cleaning oneself was much like rubbing one's hands and face, and involved a deep fear of water as this was supposed to soften the body and expose it to diseases (Vigarello, 1985). In the same way, fighting off bad smells and cleaning one's living space are recent practices (Corbin, 1982) and the 20th century became a period of crusades against everything that is too strongly allusive of animal nature, of the "raw" body, and of nature in general (Ashenburg, 2007). A large number of authors have discussed how a certain idea of cleanness and of self-control has characterized the transformations of European societies. According to Elias (1939) policing the body and containing its physical manifestations in public spaces is the result of a long process of incorporating behavioral norms to produce strategic and anticipatory attitudes. These techniques are generated by a new economy in interpersonal relations that sets in with historical modernity and is based on the repression of urges and drives, and on self-control. The "seizing of the self" redraws the lines between the public and the private (Ariès, 1987) and is supposed to reinforce a feeling of individual identity. Interiorizing the control over one's drives and urges causes the body to become the individual's alter-ego, which can be modelled according to the demands of social conformity (Le Breton, 1990). This sociological view, and especially the theory of Elias, finds opposition in Duerr's anthropological approach (1988) which criticizes the latter's eurocentrism and insists on the fact that throughout time all societies have invited their members to distance themselves from animal behavior by dissimulating nudity and controlling the body's orifices, and have shown a disgust with dirtiness and with bad smells. What changes is the way in which what is acceptable or not is defined, and the contexts in which this happens.

Interiorizing a discipline of body functions therefore does not happen outside of a social sphere that is governed by norms, interactions with other actors, effects of social class, gender, age, and assignations of "race" and

“ethnicity”. Whether it is read as a means to categorize, or as the reflection of a tension between individuals and society, the play between cleanness and dirtiness is part of the fundamental processes of a culture: to fashion the body, to make the person, and to create alterity.

Injunctions concerning cleanness are, however, appropriated and modified by the actors; they are dynamic and performative and share in the creation of new norms and practices. Practices constitute techniques of the body, in the sense of Marcel Mauss (1934), i.e. traditional efficient actions that produce habitus and that are rooted in a material culture. As Jean-Claude Kauffmann shows in his theory of household activities (1997), cleaning and tidying involve the total individual through a chain of gestures, through close contact between bodies and objects, and through a very complex emotional labor. Norms and habits are thus constantly reshaped through ruse, adjustment, action and the sensitive intelligence of the actor.

This issue questions the categories of cleanness and dirtiness as they are applied to young children. It aims to show how these categories have been constructed historically, more specifically in France and Italy, how they have been applied in the relations between educational institutions and families, and how all institutional, scientific and family norms concerning cleanness and dirtiness have been and still are part of the construction of childhood, of parenting and of the educational relationship.

The social changes that have affected the fields of childhood and parenting impose an updating of our view on children, who are here studied through the practices of body care and cleanness. This is a new approach and can be attributed to changes within the modern family configuration, and to the fact that couples have become more fragile, which has made children, as paradoxical contemporary figures, the guardians of family bonds (Bastard, 2006; Diasio, 2009). Some of the questions asked by the contributors in this issue therefore are: Since the 19th century, and depending on specific socio-historic contexts and situations, which views of the child and its family can be distilled from the recommendations concerning hygiene in school and within the family? Is there a connection between hygiene and cleanness? Is there one or are there several models of the child and the family that can be gleaned from norms on cleanness? What are the socio-political issues at stake in body techniques that are established at the crossroads of the intimate and the public domains?

Indeed, body care for children constitutes a classic theme in child ethnology (Bonnet & Pourchez, 2007), but it has been much less studied by sociologists and anthropologists working in the European fieldworks (except for Loux, 1987). This is therefore the first time that, thanks to the rather uncommon denominator of cleanness, we are able to bring together work that analyzes childhood and its contemporary representations from a socio-historical perspective, without the limitations of a restrictive view which represents children as incomplete beings.

Children's proper cleanness

Associating children with an absence of cleanness is a profound characteristic of the social representations of childhood in Europe: it is a common theme found in Heinrich Hoffmann's *Struwelpeter* (1845), in Fourier's famous slob, in "The child who refused to wash itself" by Bertolt Brecht, in the novels of Roald Dahl, and in characters featuring in *Lignes de faille* (2006) by Nancy Huston, who, in her attempt to give voice to four six-year-olds, confirms the difficulty of being "in the body of the children who are exploring their bodies. Children and blood, children and spit, children and piss, children and shit, children and crusts, children and dead skin, or dirt between the toes."² Crusts, spit and dirt refer to a so-called naturalness that is supposed to present the child as a being that is not entirely civilized or completely finished. On the other hand, in many European societies the age at which the excretions of babies are considered "dirty" varies, as if dirtiness and its management constituted an inevitable part of growing up and marked someone's entry into society as a whole and complete person.

Anthropologists, sociologists and historians have shown the relative, context-bound and historical nature of what is considered as clean and/or dirty. The "Culture and Personality" school that grew around Boas and Sapir has made childhood the pivot around which the interiorization of psychological structures and moral orientation evolves, and has thus given rise to monographs in ethnography where the chapter on "the education of children" discusses children's body techniques and looks at baby and

² Nancy Huston, interview in *Le Monde*, 22 May 2009.

toddler care. We are here referring, among others, to Bateson and Mead's work on Bali (1942) or to the initiation in sphincter control among Japanese children in Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946). However, children's cleanness is often questioned in studies that look at the relationship between psychology and anthropology, as shown by the work of John Whiting and Irvin Child (1935) on the processes of personality construction through cultural mediation. Meanwhile ethnographies of great interest have been carried out on the daily lives of children by a group of researchers who studied six different societies (in Kenya, India, Japan, Mexico, the Philippines, and the US) (Beatrice Whiting, 1963), and their indications on the conceptions of cleanness and dirtiness in non-Western societies are of central importance³.

In Europe, cleanness and dirtiness cannot be discussed without taking into account the historical context of hygienist theories or the role public health policies play in guidelines on children's development and in a reigning view of the child's body as a potential future citizen. As Michel Foucault has shown (1975, 1979) the emergence of hygienist approaches at the end of the 18th century was linked to the development of a disciplinary power that aims to combine exhaustive control over the body with its management of the body's efficiency. At the same time, the cleanness of individual bodies, of living spaces and of work environments has been put to the service of the nation in public health policies that aimed to enhance fertility and increase the birth rate. A lot of knowledge has thus been developed with the aim to produce new norms of hygiene, to transmit these to all the layers of society, and to ensure their application: clinical medicine and epidemiology now share ground with morbid anthropology, early child care and household education, as domains where socially shared norms on cleanness are produced.

The struggle against unsanitary environments and for cleanness of the body is thus part of the increased medicalization of society. The diffusion of discourses that promote better body hygiene is in fact part of a much wider governance of the body, represented by all the procedures, techniques and methods that guarantee guidance for people by other people

³ In order of publication of the monographs, these authors are: R.A. Le Vine and B.B. Le Vine, L. Minturn and J.T. Hitchcock, T.W. Maretzki and H. Maretzki, K. Romney and R. Romney, W.F. Nydegger and C. Nydegger, J.L. Fischer and A. Fischer.

(Foucault, 1978). This is why there was a strong increase in inquiries about hygienic and sanitary conditions in the 19th century, and in many cases the concern with hygiene corresponds to a domestication of the forces that threaten the social order (e.g. recently urbanized working classes, or rural populations), through a double and meticulous operation of civilizing barbarians and applying social control. In the words of the time, the hygienist doctor is the “magistrate of public health,” “a man of governance,” the “helmsman of the nation” and “the educator of the people.” French ideologists such as Hallé and Villermé, English sanitarians like Chadwick, or German liberal doctors such as Neumann or Virchow, also include in the struggle for hygiene the success of two postulates: 1) that the most important factors in morbidity are social conditions and individual behaviors which are included in the medical domain as topics to investigate, and 2) that the medical professions are vocations of an essentially pedagogical and political nature (Diasio, 1999).

During the same period there two movements profoundly affect the way the connection between healthy bodies, family and childhood is represented. On the one hand, we see a gradual extension of both the domain and the duration of the issues where the state takes charge of minors and their families (Segalen, 2010). This is often justified through sanitary and hygienic arguments, as is the removal of children from their families, or their placement, and social enquiries will often be based on medical and psychological exams (Meyer, 1977). Caring for the body, managing the population, and enhancing the live forces of the nation thus happen through interventions in the family. On the other hand, newly developed knowledge about childhood produces discourses on normality and health (Rollet, 2008; Turmel, 2008) through frameworks and devices that, like the “family health book,” keep records of measurements and other hygiene checkups, and produce a conformist image of children that becomes a goal to strive towards through daily practice. This knowledge changes over time, as the work of Neyrand on early childhood shows (2000). Moreover, in *L'Art d'accueillir les bébés*, Geneviève Delaisi de Parseval and Suzanne Lallemand show, through their comparison of differences and displacements found in a variety of guides on children's care aimed at young parents and published between the end of the 19th century and the 1980s, how the parents' uncertainty becomes an opportunity for sanitary ideologies and policies to impose themselves.

Through indications concerning body care, bathroom time, potty training and food “it is not so much “knowledge” that is expressed here, but rather a “desire,” and what is questioned in these books is not so much the child’s health or its development but the social integration of a future citizen and his/her mother” (2001, p. 16). Moreover in contemporary France this sanitary surveillance is accompanied by guidelines on care for children outside of the home, and this produces a strong mutual enhancement, even if this is slightly partisan (Norvez, 1990).

These norms diverge depending on the historical moment and the society in which they are observed. According to Delaisi de Parseval and Lallemand, sphincter control is considered particularly important in France, and much more so than in other societies where it has been studied, for instance among the Mossi who were investigated by Lallemand (1977): “the stool in the pot is the essence of cleanness because [...] it concludes, by its materialization, one of the longest and most ethically charged learnings of early childhood” (Delaisi de Parseval and Lallemand, 2001, p. 177). But learning sphincter control has given rise to very varying types of advice depending on the time: while today in France it is supposed to happen around ages 2-3, in the 60s potty training would begin around the age of 4 months, and children would be left to sit on the pot as soon as they could remain in sitting position, while parents would wash the washable diapers. Moreover, advice on children’s care would be situated on the affective register of blackmail rather than on the level of imitation as is the case in cultures like the Sioux’s, for instance (Erikson, 1966). Today sphincter control is very much linked to the child’s entry into the school system on the one hand, and to the advice not to force children on the other hand. These examples thus show how techniques of cleanness inform us not only about what is perceived as “normal” and “abnormal” at a certain age, but also teach us about legitimate manners of transmission, revealing the forms and registers of justification that are adopted to explain the exceptions to the norm, the material constraints that weigh on these norms, the evolution of prescriptions through time, and the ways in which they are applied.

However, norms can also diverge during one and the same period in one and the same society. Looking at the advice about baby care given to young mothers, Séverine Gojard (2010) takes an interest in the plurality of the advice-givers. This diversity is translated by a plethora of child-care advice,

which can nonetheless all be summarized in the equation “respecting the norms or childcare = good mother.” These norms are sometimes contradictory, which should incite us to look more closely both at the advice-givers and at the ways in which the advice is received and appropriated. All this allows us to analyze the relationships between parents and children on the borders between education, social control and affective judgment.

While all these injunctions happen in a period when body care is increasingly medicalized, the question of cleanness exceeds the health dimension. It enters the domain of moral qualities, as the dirty and the unclean are joined together in social representations. Indeed cleanness also refers to conformity of class and of collective behavior. It is used in the attribution of age and gender statuses and does not apply in the same way to males and females, or to people of ages 3, or 10 or 15. The categories of dirtiness and cleanness and the know-how, the techniques of the body and the techniques of the self that concern body care and are transmitted, validated and disqualified, thus constitute a point of entry to understand how a “good parent” is constructed in contemporary societies, and how that parent then “manufactures” a “good child.” It therefore seems to us that studying the early stages of cleanness can give access to that “establishment of a number of new prescriptions concerning the parent-child relation which, though they are too general and vague, nonetheless end up shaping a new “parental order” (Bastard 2006, p. 16).

Cleanness and parenting norms

One of the assumptions underlying this issue is that the struggle against dirt sheds light on the social norms governing parenting. This is all the more the case when we are looking at a redefinition of parenting, which comes with an increase both in the responsibility laid on the parents and in the amount of injunctions that concern education as a result of the increasingly central place given to children in Western societies (Le Pape, 2012). Paradoxically, when children were promoted to subjects in the second half of the 20th century, this did not happen without a number of deviations in terms of competence both of the parents and of the children. When it comes to children, good health or a clean body can thus be applied

to define the mother's competence, as was shown by Prout (1986), or in order to give "proof of competence" (Edgerton, 1967). Institutional scientific and family norms concerning cleanness and proper behavior allow us to show the diversity in the representations that lie beneath the idea of the "good parent." The adjective "good" covers different views of the roles, knowledge and parental practices depending on the perspective and the social situation. It refers to the loving and affectionate parent whose image is transmitted through the dominant psychological models in contemporary European societies, to the capacity of parents to socially integrate their children, and to parents who have appropriated the medical and hygienic norms and the norms applying to proper behavior and sociability. The word also allows a delimitation of gender-based practices: the "good" mother thus takes a different approach to her children's body care than the "good" father. Finally it also refers to taking the moral initiative, a role which parents are supposed to take on with their children and with other parents. When taken closely this link between cleanness and parenting can be used to find and point at situations that are borderline and exceptional – poverty, ineptitude, cultural difference – and that are likely to invite social intervention. It allows us to see what kind of pressure is put on parents, to check the increase and variety of parental responsibilities, in the way described by Gavarini (2006). Good parents are therefore people who manage to find their way in this forest of norms which, like Macbeth's forest, is dark and always in motion.

However, in spite of the heuristic dimension of this subject, there are very few studies about the link between cleanness and parenting norms. In other words, researchers rarely take cleanness as their main perspective for analyzing these norms, and the post-doctoral research of Pawlowska is an exception to this⁴. Apart from that, the subject is studied in larger research projects which tackle questions and issues relating to health (Odena, 2002; Boltanski, 1969), or studies that look at the relationship between parents and professionals in places dedicated to childcare or to other types of social assistance (Bouve, 1999; Tillard, 2008; Rollet, 2008), while it is the specialists in medical and educational history who seem to be most

⁴ The post-doctoral research *Propreté de l'enfant, les catégorisations sociales et la fabrique des compétences parentales et enfantines (Children's cleanness, social categorizations and the making of parent and child competences)*, was carried out within the Idex (initiatives of excellence) and was made possible thanks to funding from the University of Strasbourg.

interested in the topic of cleanness itself (Goubert, 2010; Parayre, 2008, 2011).

The socio-historical analyses of the impact of injunctions concerning hygiene, and the social changes that affect family life and society in general, generate precious information that increases our understanding of the construction of parenting norms. Indeed from the 19th century onwards children have been the main vector to get to the family, and it is through the child that the power of normalization exercises its control over the lower classes, which it deems dangerous (Rollet, 2008; Parayre, 2008; Boltanski, 1969; Bouve, 1999), and this covers institutions, daycare centers, schools, and centers for the protection of mothers and children. The project of regenerating a society thus takes aim at the parents behind the child, and more particularly at the mother, and attempts to make her apply the new rules concerning hygiene and cleanness. Because it is especially the working class mother who is most often suspect. Indeed the way institutions put in place children's cleanness (washing frequently and combing hair, for instance) are not unanimously accepted. There is also resistance coming from professionals, like doctors who believe in the health benefits of dirt (Bouve, 1999; Loux, 1978). However, this resistance is mostly relative, as among the more wealthy and educated households it is the mother who played a very important role in implanting the body care habits of the end of the 19th century, which refutes the tendency among researchers to identify it too easily with traditional cultures (Goubert, 2010).

Teaching hygiene within the family or the institution entails a transmission of norms concerning cleanness and of self-preserving behavior or behavior to protect others, and it is thus a part of the process of socialization. However, the selection of norms and values that will be integrated will depend on the group or the organization in which the acquisition happens. At the same time there is no single definition of cleanness: it varies with time, place and family and cultural habitus. Moreover, the rules of cleanness often do not correspond to norms on hygiene, as Goubert remarks: "the criteria for cleanness are essentially cultural, while the foundations of hygiene are solely scientific" (2010, p.

50)⁵. As we pointed out, 20th century European ideology of progress is linked to cleanness, and the experts on hygiene confuse this notion with the notions of order, hygiene and good behavior, whereas these are notions that are not necessarily associated with each other, neither in the past nor in the majority of societies (Goubert, 2010). This probably explains the legitimacy of institutional injunctions that are issued in the name of the struggle against disorder and grub, especially in the educational and hospital environment. In other words, the rules concerning cleanness and dirtiness which every individual constructs over the course of their social trajectory takes shapes that differ from the ones developed by hygiene specialists. Contrary to what is generally believed, hygiene, whether individual, collective or public, is not an immutable and universal dogma, but is a variable representation of what is clean and what is dirty, of what is sullied and what is pure, and is linked to knowledge and ideology, to the specific economic constraints of a given society, and to its respective history.

In this delicate transmission of cleanness norms to children, the intermediaries are the professionals and the family, who have also absorbed the numerous conceptions their society holds concerning cleanness. They therefore constitute their own habitus of rules on cleanness and dirt depending on their professional, personal and biographical cultures. The studies of Odena (2002) and Bouve (1999) about the relationship between families and daycare methods clearly show that the practices of hygiene and cleanness are at the heart of these relationships, and that they constitute genuine stakes in the educational process. Between the two parties hygiene is discussed, negotiated, and can be the cause of conflict just like any other key moment in a child's socialization. Indeed, the clean/dirty dichotomy constitutes yet another tool for the social categorization of parents and

⁵ The notion of cleanness belongs to a number of diverse registers (religion, health, history, sociology, rules and regulations), and therefore has a variety of meanings and usages. It is at the same time one of the principles of hygiene, a moral value and a behavioral norm. It emerged with the hygienist movement of the 19th century and corresponds to a set of rules, precepts, and usages that supposedly will keep humanity in good health. The reason why in Europe the two notions are often confounded is because the Pasteurian discoveries in Western medicine bound together and confounded the notion of cleanness with that of hygiene, prophylaxis and asepticism.

children, and this is clearly borne out in the post-doctoral research of Pawlowska.

Through a comparison of varying social environments in France and Poland Pawlowska analyzes the norms of cleanness applied in pre-school, and their reception both by parents and by young children. The findings show that practices linked to cleanness and body care in pre-school environments are not only shaped by the institutional or scientific norms in place, but are also based on representations among the personnel, which can vary according to their status, their own professional and personal culture, their know-how of body care, the household environment in which the care might happen, as well as the image these people have of the child and its family⁶. There was thus a notable difference between daycare centers, where those who work with working class children showed a much more on-hands approach than those who were caring for children from wealthier households. Indeed whatever their own social background was, the staff could be seen to be more careful with children from wealthier households. This was observable through an increased physical distance from the children, whether that would be on an affective level of closeness or distance, such as in kissing the child, or putting it on one's knees, but also in manipulating its body when doing its hair, helping it to get dressed or undressed, and other concrete gestures that involve touching the child.

When it comes to cleanness, the child's body is never or hardly ever exposed and mobilized. In the French context we could talk about a disappearance or a concealment of children's bodies. Here the specificity of children's care is that it is centered on acquisition and learning, in view of later achievements in school, which entails that any question concerning the child's body is marginal compared to all the intellectual competences the child is supposed to acquire. In France, kindergarten is pervaded by school norms and this has obscured the specific nature of children who come with their own emotional baggage, of which the body and its needs are an integral part (Gasparini, 2012). Children's bodies and their treatments are much more visible in Polish pre-school places, but when it comes to more intimate questions, we found similar characteristics in both countries.

⁶ This research project entailed a long-term immersion (almost 2 years), with long periods of participatory observation, and interviews with the various professional individuals in two pre-school establishments in Ile-de-France, which are on opposite ends as far as geographical location and social class of the children and their families are concerned.

However, this partiality in taking children's bodies into account can paradoxically also be understood as the indirect result of a double bind: indeed the way we look at children and childhood has changed, but so has the way we look at parenting. Compared to the preceding decades, there is less and less room for children's cleanness in educational programs and practices. That does not mean that it is now completely ignored by the professionals, but the specific treatment given to children happens in a more circumspect and less explicit way, and is included in a delicate and informal rearrangement of the competences, knowledge and educational parenting practices concerning cleanness. At the same time children are more and more visible and present as a separate category with previously unknown capacities and therefore requiring more and more valorization and respect, which can be seen from various ways of learning, and through different manipulations of the body. The existence of such a variety of practices and discourses therefore raises the question as to the age and parameters we can apply to decide that a child's body belongs integrally to the child? It is when we authorize manipulations of the body that we can question our definition of the child, since we go from a child as a passive being (a dependent being, an object of affection) to the child as an active master of its own body. Moreover, the switch is accompanied by another phenomenon, namely the early and increased responsibility given to children. This in turn cannot be dissociated from the fact that parents are given increased responsibility and face more expectations than ever, and here the first casualties are parents in low income families whose inadequate parenting is the focus of every critical debate.

Are cleanness and dirtiness treated differently depending on social class? There are very few studies on this, but it would seem that more modest social environments are characterized by a rather "hygienist" definition of cleanness, and apply norms taught by the French Child Protection Agency (P.M.I - Protection Maternelle et Infantile), norms which focus essentially on cleanness of the body, the laundry, the objects and the living spaces (Odena, 2002; Kaufmann, 1992). On the contrary, in wealthier and more educated households hygiene is also extended to other fields of health, and here its definition is completed by other elements such as food, sleep, biological clocks and physical exercise. These findings raise the following question: why would the lower classes still retain the marks of old stigmata applied in the name of cleanness and order? The

explanation might be that the definition of a “good parent” implies respect for norms on cleanness mixed with norms on hygiene and proper behavior, even though these are more or less concealed in contemporary society. If this is the case, we would be looking at something that has more to do with conforming to the dominant norms than with following a line of conduct that marks social class, which is what these results seem to indicate. In the case of the above-mentioned post-doctoral research, what seems most obvious among the lower income families is a concern with appearance and propriety while the middle and upper classes seem to master the expert norms, are able to apply them, and even refer to them in their discourses.

These questions about the differences between social classes also concern educational styles. Classic work on parenting distinguishes two main types of educational strategies: conformism and autonomy (Kohn, 1959; Kelerhals & Montandon, 1991; Bergonnier-Dupuy, 2005). Conformism includes politeness, obedience, cleanness, order, honesty, respect for others, and discipline, while autonomy refers to initiative-taking, intellectual curiosity, creativity and playfulness. Middle class parents thus favor respect for others, self-control, independence, autonomy and creativity, while lower class parents prefer obedience to the rules, order, cleanness and politeness. In terms of communication, the difference here is that among the working classes this most often takes the shape of justification, while in wealthier environments communication is more negation. We can thus also note the disappearance of traditional authority and its valorization among the working classes (Fize, 1990, 2000; Schwarc, 1990; de Singly, 2000, Van Zanten, 2009; Le Pape, 2009, 2012). That being said, several recent studies have allowed us to call into question this class-based division of education (Fize, 1990, 2000; Schwarc, 1990; de Singly, 2000; Van Zanten, 2009; Le Pape, 2009, 2012). With the recent transformation of Western societies, we see more uniformity in educational values, which makes the affirmation of different educational styles for different social classes obsolete, though this does not imply a complete homogenization of values, and even less of practices.

The study of how representations of childhood and family are shaped through the lens of cleanness and dirtiness is far from finished, and much work remains to be done, notably investigations into professional and family practices, and more particularly, studies that take into account children’s point of view. These are all new perspectives and research

projects to be taken up by researchers with an interest in childhood and parenting.

Approaching the clean/unclean body from a range of perspectives

The papers included in the present special issue combine several methodologies and disciplinary approaches (sociology, history, anthropology, educational sciences) to the categories of cleanness and dirtiness, and to their role in the making of childhood, parenthood, education, and social work in European societies. This issue begins with a background article that retraces the historical evolution of norms concerning cleanness since the 19th century. Séverine Parayre's contribution, *The Cleanliness of the Child between Social Standards and Care Concerns (16th-20th centuries, France)*, shows how these norms vary and move with social change and with the current dominant theory produced by medical discoveries. The project of a "sanitization" of society thus invades institutions and consequently pre-school environments, where cleanness and rules on hygiene then become central to what needs to be taught, which also allows the stigmatization of the working classes' habits and practices.

This first contribution is followed by Ghislan Leroy's work: *The Origins of the Contemporary Responsibility of Children for Their Own Cleanliness. A Sociological Analysis of French Nursery Schools*. In this paper, the author questions the recommendations and hygiene practices in French pre-schools since the 19th century, based on the image of the child. His research shows a distancing from children's bodies in school environments, based on the evolution of the image of children as children, pupils and future citizens. This socio-historical analysis of the way children's bodies are seen reveals a transfer of responsibilities from the parents to the children and an educational relation that is gradually purged of physical closeness, intimacy and the expression of emotions. In the space of 150 years, we would thus have gone from strong and direct injunctions concerning cleanness to a concealment of these questions in the school environment, in spite of the existence of increasingly stronger normative prescriptions.

Today as in the past, social control is put in place through the question of cleanness, and cleanness remains a social delineator, as is shown in this issue by Bernadette Tillard, who analyses practices of cleanness as they occur in the domestic space in the presence of social workers. She demonstrates in her paper, *The Origins of the Contemporary Responsibility of Children for Their Own Cleanliness. A Sociological Analysis of French Nursery Schools*, how the arguments against what is designed as “grubbiness” are no longer as directly and openly loaded with morals, but not conforming to the norms of cleanness can easily become a cause for stigmatization. These questions also show how social vulnerability, material needs and infrastructural conditions required for body care have become difficult topics to discuss, even though they remain at the heart of the educational and family relationship.

In Francesca Zaltron’s contribution, *Children's Bodies and Construction of Parental Adequacy. A Qualitative Study of the Daily Hygiene Practices of Mothers and Fathers in Italy*, the author shows how the way dirtiness is dealt with underlies different views of the child that mingle an image of the vulnerable child, the child-subject, and the child that blooms through play with its own body. However, disciplining the child’s body and making it clean and decent are also part of a concept of “appropriate parenting,” and shed light on expectations concerning parental competences, as well as on the socially shared representations of the “good parent.” Starting from fieldwork carried out in Italy, Zaltron shows how “expert” (especially medical and pedagogical) knowledge, much more than knowledge transmitted by generations, shapes modern hygiene techniques and marks the disciplining of children’s bodies. This is the type of knowledge that parents trust in order to perform their duties in a socially appropriate way.

How, during the transformation into adolescence, do children learn to govern their bodies? The last contribution by Nicoletta Diasio, *Domesticating Instability and Learning New Body Care: An Ethnographic Analysis of Cleanness Practices on the Threshold of Adolescence (France and Italy)*, reveals the point of view of children on this question, and shows that learning new techniques of the body linked to transformations due to age, constitutes a complex trajectory that is scattered with obstacles and pervaded by an interiorization of norms, and how all this is freely adopted and spread out over time. Moments of passage from one stage and from one age to the next are indeed particularly useful to analyze the practices and

the norms linked to body care. Situations of instability and uncertainty such as age changes and changes in the body constitute privileged moments to analyze informal learning in daily life through language, mimesis, material culture, senses, and judgments. These moments are interspersed with a new relation to the body and its governance, and reveal a redistribution of the roles everyone in charge of this “body policing” plays. This study, whose fieldwork was carried out in eastern France and in Italy, thus shows that the linear and hierarchical educational relationship in these matters is blurred, and highlights the active role played by children, and their capacity to negotiate and to juggle knowledge and techniques of the body and to adapt them according to the social situation and their personal experiences.

Nicoletta Diasio wrote the sections *Bringing order to the world* and *Children’s proper cleanness* while Aleksandra Pawlowska wrote *Cleanness and parenting norms* and *Approaching the clean/unclean bodies from several perspectives*.

References

- Ariès, P. (1987). Pour une histoire de la vie privée. In P. Ariès, G. Duby (Eds.), *Histoire de la vie privée* (pp. 7-22). Paris: Seuil.
- Ashenburg, K. (2007). *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized History*. Knopf Canada.
- Bastard, B. (2006). Une nouvelle police de la parentalité? *Enfances, Familles, Générations*, 5, 11-21.
- Bateson, G., & Mead, M. (1942). *Balinese Character*. New York: New York Academy of Sciences.
- Benedict R. (1946). *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword: Patterns of Japanese Culture*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Bergonnier-Dupuy G. (2005). Famille(s) et scolarisation. *Revue française de pédagogie*, 151, 5-16.
- Boltanski L. (1969). *Prime éducation et morale de classe*. Paris: La Haye Mouton.
- Bonnet, D., Pourchez, L. (2007) (Eds.). *Du soin au rite dans l'enfance*. Paris-Ramonville: IRD-Erès.
- Bouve, C. (1999). Confrontation des pratiques éducatives entre familles et crèches collectives. *Recherches et prévisions*, 57-58, 45-58.

- Bouve, C. (2010). *L'utopie des crèches françaises au XIXe siècle: un pari sur l'enfant pauvre*. Berne: Peter Lang.
- Corbin, A. (2006). *Le Miasme et la jonquille. L'odorat et l'imaginaire social, XVIIIe-XIXe siècles*. Paris: Flammarion.
- de Singly F. (2000). *Libres ensemble: l'individualisme dans la vie commune*. Paris.
- Delaisi de Parseval, G., & Lallemand, S. (1980). *L'art d'accommoder les bébés. Cent ans de recettes françaises de puériculture*. Paris: Odile Jacob.
- Diasio, N. (1999). *La science impure. Anthropologie et médecine en France, Grande Bretagne, Italie*. Pays Bas: Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.
- Diasio, N. (2009). Comment l'enfant fait-il la famille? Ou Les enfants: objets et sujets du désir. *Revue des Sciences Sociales. Désir de famille, désirs d'enfants*, 41, 8-12.
- Donzelot, J. (1977). *La police des familles*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit.
- Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and taboo*. London: Kegan.
- Douglas, M. (1970). *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London-New York: Routledge.
- Duerr, H. P. (1988). *Nacktheit und Scham. Der Mythos von Zivilisationprozess*. Frankfurt am Mein, Suhrkamp.
- Edgerton, R. B. (1967). *The cloak of competence*. Berkeley-Los Angeles, University of California Press.
- Elias, N. (1939). *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*. Basel: Haus zum Falken.
- Erikson, E. (1966). *Enfance et société*. Neuchâtel, Delachaux et Nestlé.
- Fize, M. (1990). *La démocratie familiale. Évolution des relations parents-adolescents*. Paris: Presses de la Renaissance.
- Fize, M. (2000). *À mort la famille! Plaidoyer pour l'enfant*. Ramonville-Sainte-Agne: Érès.
- Foucault, M. (1975). *Surveiller et punir*. Paris, Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1978). La gouvernementalité. In *Dits et écrits*, vol. III, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, (pp. 635-662).
- Foucault, M. (1979). La politique de la santé au XVIIIe siècle. In *Dits et écrits*, 1994, vol. III, 257 (pp. 725-742).
- Gasparini, R. (2012). Le doudou à la maternelle: un 'objet transitionnel' privé dans un monde scolaire public. *Revue française de pédagogie*, 181, 71-82.
- Gojard, S. (2010). *Le métier de mère*. Paris: La Dispute.
- Goubert, J.-P. (2010). *Une histoire de l'hygiène. Eau et salubrité dans la France contemporaine*. Artheme fayard.
- Kaufmann, J.-C. (1992). *La trame conjugale. Analyse du couple par son linge*. Paris: Nathan.
- Kaufmann, J.-C. (1997). *Le cœur à l'ouvrage. Théorie de l'action ménagère*. Paris: Nathan.
- Kellerhalls, J., & Montandon, C. (1991). *Les stratégies éducatives des familles*. Neuchâtel, Delachaux et Niestlé.
- Kohn, M. L. (1959). Social Classes and Parental Values. *American Journal of Sociology*, 4, 337-351.
- Le Breton, D. (1990). *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*. Paris: PUF.
- Le Pape, M.-C. (2009). Être parent dans les milieux populaires : entre valeurs traditionnelles familiales et nouvelles normes éducatives. *Informations sociales, CNAF*, 88-95.

- Le Pape, M-C. (2012). *L'art d'être un bon parent : quelques enjeux des nouvelles normes et pratiques éducatives contemporaines*. *Les Cahiers français: documents d'actualité*, 371, 36-42.
- Loux, F. (1978). *Le jeune enfant et son corps dans la médecine traditionnelle*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Mauss, M. (1934). Les techniques du corps. In *Sociologie et anthropologie* (pp. 363-386). Paris: PUF.
- Meyer, P. (1977). *L'enfant et la raison d'État*. Paris: Seuil.
- Neyrand, G. (2000). *L'enfant, la mère et la question du père: un bilan critique de l'évolution des savoirs sur la petite enfance*. Paris: PUF.
- Norvez, A. (1990). *De la naissance à l'école. Santé, modes de garde et préscolarisation dans la France contemporaine*. Paris: PUF-INED.
- Odena, S. (2002). *Contribution à une sociologie des interactions entre familles et institutions de garde de la petite enfance*. LEST.
- Parayre, S. (2011). *L'hygiène à l'école : Une alliance de la santé et de l'éducation, XVIIIe-XIXe siècles*. Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne.
- Parayre, S. (2008). La question de la santé au coeur des relations familles-écoles (XVIIIe-XIXe siècles). *La revue internationale de l'éducation familiale*, 24, 41-56.
- Prout, A. (1986). Wet Children and Little Actresses: Going Sick in Primary School. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 8, 113-136.
- Rollet, C. (2008). *Les carnets de santé des enfants*. Paris: la Dispute.
- Schwartz, O. (1990). *Le monde privé des ouvriers: hommes et femmes du Nord*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.
- Segalen M. (2010). *A qui appartiennent les enfants?* Paris: Tallendier.
- Tillard B. (2008). Santé, éducation et usages du corps chez l'enfant. *Revue internationale de l'éducation familiale*, 24.
- Turmel, A. (2008). *A Historical Sociology of Childhood. Developmental Thinking. Categorization and Graphic Visualization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Zanten, A. (2009). Le travail éducatif parental dans les classes moyennes et supérieures: deux modes contrastés d'encadrement des pratiques et des choix des enfants. *Informations Sociales*, 154.
- Vigarello, G. (1985). *Le propre et le sale. L'hygiène du corps depuis le Moyen-Age*. Paris: Seuil.
- Whiting, B. B. (1963) (Ed.). *Six Cultures. Studies of Child Rearing*. New York-London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Whiting, J. W. M., & Child, I. L. (1953). *Child Training and personality. A Cross-Cultural Study*. New Haven-London: Yale University Press.