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“Freud for all:” psychoanalysis and mass culture in Chile, 1920-1950

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Abstract

This article deals with the circulation and early spread of Freudianism in mass culture in Chilean society at the turn of the twentieth century. It documents the first references to Sigmund Freud in the Chilean media, the announcement of Freudian-style self-help classes, the appearance of psychoanalysts as characters in some fantasy novels, and the open lectures on psychoanalysis given by the first juvenile court judge in Santiago, the lawyer Samuel Gajardo Contreras. It explores the expectations projected onto Freudianism by the Chilean elite, and how Freud's theories contributed to a rethinking of childhood, the family and emotional life in Chile from 1920-1950.

Keywords: psychoanalysis; mass culture; modes of consumption.

This article is part of a broader research project aimed at reconstructing the process of “psychologization” that occurred in Chilean society in the first half of the twentieth century, a project that explores new ways of investigating the reception, circulation and especially the implantation of “psy knowledges” in different parts of Chilean society. Here I will focus in particular on the circulation of Freudian psychological ideas in mass culture in Chile, arguing that they transformed the vision and representations both of subjects in regard to themselves and of various phenomena that began to be explained in a “Freudian” way. This approach aims to go further than historiographical traditions, which have centered exclusively on the institutional life (Davanzo, 1993; Casaula, Coloma, Jordán, 1991; Gomberoff, 1990; Arrué, 1991; Núñez, 1981) of what Freud (1914) himself defined as the “psychoanalytic movement,” and have treated the founding of official societies or the creation of different schools of psychology as the only historiographical referents.

“Psychologization,” however, implies a process in which “psy knowledges” – meaning the set of knowledges that refer to psychological or mental issues, made up of psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis (Dagfal, 2009; Rose, 1996) – became part of the public world, “forming, organizing, disseminating, and implementing truths about persons” (Rose, 1996, p.59). A discussion of this topic calls into question the definition of “culture” and the assumptions traditionally used to reconstruct Freudian thought in Chile. Historically, such studies have focused on what we might call “high culture,” the actions of the intellectual elite, who established the psychoanalytic canon and determined who legitimately belonged to “official” history. To paraphrase Thomas Glick (jan.-jun. 1999), the misnamed “precursors” to the official history of psychoanalysis would also be “vilified” as incapable of creating a “true” Freudian practice.

However, if we take a broader look at these concepts, the history of so-called “psy knowledges” shows that they spread well beyond official institutional circuits to saturate what is termed “mass culture.” While the problematic nature of these concepts must be acknowledged, it is worth pointing out, as Martín (2011) has done, that mass culture began emerging in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, thanks to the increasing industrialization of the system of production, the role of new, liberal political institutions and the effect of the media, all of which generated a set of dominant cultural discourses, objects and cultural practices actively directed at different social groups.

Thus, in Chile it is possible to identify how psy knowledges were received and used, gaining respectability and generating social expectations regarding their application. One example of this can be found in the remarks of the renowned journalist Joaquín Edwards Bello – who won the National Prize both for Literature (1943) and for Journalism (1953) – in his column in the daily paper *La Nación* on March 19, 1936, titled “How to combat the terrible decline in our character?” He claimed that

Education in popular psychology holds the elements necessary to our future health, happiness and success. [And here he adds the examples of Japan, Britain and the USA]. In our country we need this type of study because of the noticeable decline in the national character, which is due to racial conditions, living conditions, and primarily to the lack of teachers of deep, internal optimism (Edwards Bello, 2014, p.24).

Two years earlier, Edwards Bello (2014, p.24) had published a column entitled "The Freudians," in which he describes the spread of psychoanalytic ideas, at least in the city of Santiago:

A few days ago, I was walking down the Alameda when I saw a crowd pouring out of the university. Or rather, I saw a crowd dispersing from the doors: it included girls, youths, and ladies from all classes of society, but was dominated by the middle class. I couldn't restrain my curiosity and asked one of the people leaving what was going on, and was told that it was a lecture on psychoanalysis.

In this analytic framework, it is clear that several of the agents that helped usher psychoanalysis into Chile could be described socially under the heading "Freudian," and were recruited thanks to a variety of strategies and actions. Studies such as those of Edith Kurzweil (1989) and Hugo Vezzetti (1996) have shown the wide number of international and local circuits for spreading Freud's theories and examined how they gained followers in various areas of the societies that became affiliated with Freudian genealogy. Thus, for example, in Chile, besides Freudian psychiatrists there were also social medicine doctors, professors, writers, journalists and even a few politicians who were interested in Freud's ideas. This, I would argue, shows that the reception of psychoanalysis in Chile was a multi-layered phenomenon with different penetration speeds, involving different kinds of agents. The same can be said of countries like Brazil (Russo, 2002) and Argentina (Vezzetti, 1989, 1996; Plotkin, 2003; Plotkin, Damousi, 2009), where the penetration of Freudian ideas was of paradigmatic density, generating its own processes of reception and adaptation to local issues and readings. This makes it possible to argue that there was a pattern for the reception of psychoanalysis across Latin America that was facilitated by the particular conditions in each area where it was introduced.

In terms of background context, the central reference point of the period under examination (1920-1950) is the birth of Chilean welfare state, which, though riddled with contradictions, began organizing social welfare programs in a more consistent way. Thus, as Rodrigo De Castro (2015) has shown, Chile in the 1920s saw a series of social reforms, the birth of new political projects, and the overhaul of institutions in order to improve living conditions in the country, where "psy knowledges" were seen as belonging within a set of knowledges aimed at supporting desires for modernity and progress. It could also be argued that this period saw the birth of a large number of "revisionist" cultural productions that identified and stressed the need to do something for the rest of the population, who were living and dying unseen. Chileans were threatened by problems like urban poverty, crime, insanity and what were known as the "socially significant diseases" (syphilis and gonorrhea), affecting the sexual sphere, and there was an urgent need for action. The scientific worldview espoused the theory of degeneration – which argued that the origin of these problems was exclusively hereditary in nature – and eugenics, models that were largely deterministic. For example, Lombroso and Ferri's criminology, which was widely accepted in Chile, advocated the use of sterilization and imprisonment to prevent criminals from reproducing (Ruperthuz, Sánchez, 2015). There was talk of strengthening the "Chilean race," at a time when most social and cultural productions were marked by strong nationalist rhetoric (Cid, San Francisco, 2010).

Within this framework, a series of earlier works (Ruperthuz, 2016, 2015, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d, 2012; Vetö, 2013) have succeeded in generating the receptiveness and sensibility necessary to broaden the field under consideration and begin analyzing the relationship between Freud's ideas and the different sectors of national life, since Freudianism was presented as compatible with a vision of the country and a national political project. Thus, type of historical reconstruction I propose focuses on the relations between scientific knowledge – to which psychoanalytic knowledge was presented as belonging, which gave it more authority – and the rest of Chilean society. It is clear that from the early twentieth century on, the penetration of psychoanalysis into the different societies in which it was present substantially redefined the way that individuals thought about themselves and how they acted in light of its principles.

This approach is fruitful because it helps us understand how psychoanalysis – and also its founder – were presented and represented to the Chilean public in such a way as to become obligatory referents. In order to do so, we have to think of psychoanalysis as a transnational system of ideas and beliefs (Plotkin, 2003), bearing in mind that it arrived in the various countries via different intellectual routes, which allowed it to penetrate different fields of the national environment. From there, we can see that psychoanalysis “overran” the bounds of intellectual circles to permeate individuals’ daily life to a striking degree. Eva Illouz (2010) y Nikolas Rose (1996) have done crucial studies showing how human beings base their existence on images, values, beliefs and norms that often come from psychology as a scientific field; these guide individuals’ actions and above all provide them with explanations about themselves, assigning meaning to their actions and managing their relations with other people.

While each of these topics would require detailed research, they are part of a series of preliminary results that help map the early link between Freudian thought and the general public in Chile, as well as the various forms it took and the various agents involved in its transmission. Thus, this article will demonstrate that Freud was a well-known figure in Chilean society from the mid-twentieth century on. It examines correspondence courses offering “sessions” to overcome a broad range of psychic complaints; the attempts of a juvenile court judge, Samuel Gajardo Contreras, to democratize the teaching of psychoanalysis under the slogan “Any Chilean can be a psychoanalyst;” and the appearance of psychoanalysts as characters in fantasy novels by Chilean authors Juan Marín and Samuel Gajardo himself. I want to stress, too, how these materials illustrate the experiences – and suffering – associated with modernity, which affected subjectivity, making people’s lives increasingly rushed, with more demands and anxieties. In this sense, psychoanalysis appeared as a remedy to help deal with the accelerating pace of life in the city at the beginning of the twentieth century in Chile.

Freud as a public figure in Chile from the turn of the twentieth century on: the interest in “scientific sexuality”

For Chilean psychoanalysts, the “official” history of psychoanalysis in the country begins recently, with the founding of the Chilean Psychoanalytic Association (Asociación Psicoanalítica Chilena, APCH) in 1949, under the leadership of Fernando Allende Navarro (1890-1981) and Ignacio Matte Blanco (1908-1995), both of whom were trained according

to the International Psychoanalytical Association's (IPA) guidelines. Anything prior to that is considered "prehistory," a general category that includes experiences and personalities usually overshadowed because they do not match expectations for a true psychoanalyst.

Nevertheless, news about Freud and psychoanalysis began arriving in Chile long before the period identified by psychoanalysts. Specifically, Chilean newspapers were already talking about psychoanalysis at the start of the twentieth century. The earliest reference I was able to find is an indirect one in a work by Bernardo Subercaseaux, *A history of ideas in Chile (Historia de las ideas en Chile, 1997)*. Subercaseaux mentions a book critic who published under the pseudonym Bedel, who wrote a 1915 review of a book of short stories by Mariano Latorre titled *The psychoanalysis of Mariano Latorre (Psicoanálisis de Mariano Latorre)*. The text clearly refers to the link between Latorre's text and his life, comparing psychoanalytic investigation to an intimate examination of people's lives. Freud's construction as a public figure in Chile included an interesting process of symbolic capitalization, so as to present him to the public as a specialist on sexuality.

This was detected by the Chilean psychologist and author Benjamin Subercaseux (1927, p.9), who gave a series of lectures from March-June 1927 on the psychological theories of Pierre Janet at the Chilean Scientific Society (Sociedad Científica de Chile), in which he made the following remarks:

Some years ago, Freud stirred public curiosity, and the word 'Psychology' was bandied about, without anyone really knowing what was meant by it. Clearly the topic interested people, above all because there was a lot of casual talk about sexual life. But to begin with, Freud is complex and dangerous, because although his ramblings belong to an intellectual monument of our century, namely his Psychoanalysis, they do not provide the clarity of exposition nor the confidence in interpretation that is necessary for those who are starting out in Psychology. Thus all those pseudo-psychologists got royally bored of the Vienna School and its leader, abandoning Psychoanalysis and with it, the whole of Psychology.

The dismissal of Freudianism by this Chilean disciple of Janet stemmed in fact from the sexual emphasis in Freudian theory. We must not forget that sexuality – or rather accusations of pansexualism (Roudinesco, 2015) – were the most common feature of critiques of psychoanalysis. Chilean psychiatry and psychology were very influenced by French medical intellectuals, who rejected Freud because they considered his psychological explanation, in which sexuality was seen as an essential factor in life, too rudimentary a formulation.

Nevertheless, interest in Freud on the part of the general public in Chile lay precisely in the possibility of talking openly – and learning – about sexuality, beyond the terrain of professional discussions and ecclesiastical strictures. An example of this is the back cover of the Chilean edition of Freud's work *The question of lay analysis (Análisis profano)*, published in 1936, which posed the following question:

Is the domain of psychoanalysis reserved exclusively for doctors? Or can it also be penetrated by laymen? The lay person is not forbidden to enter these areas ... [.] although, in general, only university graduates may practice medicine, an exception should be made in regards to psychoanalysis.

And the writer adds:

The question of lay analysis is thus a true theoretical and practical manual for psychoanalytic treatment. Anyone who has not yet penetrated this system will find in this book everything needed to become introduced to the subject. It helps the reader to fix notions and concepts and, in short, to acquire a concise, orderly knowledge of the theory of modern medicine (Editorial Ercilla, 1936, back cover).

The same argument can be seen in Editorial Ercilla's "Freud Library" series (Biblioteca Freud), in a book entitled *Sex and the individual* (*El individuo y el sexo*, 1937) by Angelo Hesnard, who was first a critic and later a fervent proponent of psychoanalysis. A back-cover blurb declared that topics relating to sexuality were of great public interest, but that, in the editors' view, few people were seeking answers in the field of science. Most were letting themselves be carried away by "the disorderly appetite for sensuality" (Editorial Ercilla, 1937, back cover).

The promotional blurb for Hesnard's study told readers that in the book you will find a cool-headed, concise account of the evolution of the libido throughout human life and a study of the importance of instinctual life in human psychology, which was, until recently, believed to be limited to the intellectual faculties (Editorial Ercilla, 1937, back cover).

Those interested in psychoanalysis were the opposite of those described as "the intransigents," who

have always fiercely resisted delving into these arcane subjects. They will see their prejudices and limitations fall, they will understand that there is nothing demonic about sexual problems and must conclude that understanding them is the fundamental basis for arriving at knowledge (Editorial Ercilla, 1937, back cover).

From this perspective, any approach to sexuality should always obey "a purely scientific impulse" (Editorial Ercilla, 1937, back cover), and thus psychoanalysis and Freud were presented in accordance with this type of credential. The use of sexual impulses for socially sanctioned ends, thanks to the action of sublimation, was one of the central features of the reception of psychoanalysis in Chile. It is not irrelevant, then, that Doctor Gustavo Vila (1937, p.9), who translated and wrote an introduction to Hesnard's book, declared that "Freud says to Humanity: 'Men, what are you doing with that powerful and sublime force called the Sexual Instinct?'"

Some years earlier, Freud was presented to the residents of Santiago as a "famous Austrian scientist" via a supposedly exclusive interview given to *El Mercurio* – one of Chile's most reputable and conservative newspapers – which was published on October 9, 1927. The report cited Freud as saying that "[t]he Americans are ignorant about psychoanalysis; they think they understand it because they have heard of me," and "Bernard Shaw knows nothing about love" (Silvestre Vierick, 9 oct. 1927). The distance between Freud and Shaw – the Irish playwright and polemicist – stemmed from the importance of sexuality in Freud's theory. In the interview, Freud repeatedly stresses his belief that sexual impulses played a central role in human life. Clearly, in dealing with a conservative newspaper, he preferred to talk more of "love" than of "sexuality."

The article claims that Freud received a visit at his summer home in the Austrian Alps in September from the journalist Jorge Silvestre Vierick (9 oct. 1927), to whom he gave an exclusive interview for *El Mercurio*. Looking for background on this, I realized that this

interview circulated in later years under the title "The value of life" and the journalist, a German-American, was none other than Georg Sylvester Vierick, who published this interview simultaneously in the USA and Chile, and perhaps elsewhere. According to Ernest Jones (1976), this journalist visited Freud in June 1927, but did not conduct a formal interview; rather, they had a lengthy conversation, which Vierick then reformatted as an interview for his publication. As Freud confirms, this supposed interview was widely read, and given the response, Freud subsequently attempted to clear up certain points in a short paper titled *A religious experience* (*Una vivencia religiosa*, [1927] 1928). Clearly, this report was also read in Chile at the same time it was published in America. There are some unresolved questions about this story: how did the *El Mercurio* get hold of the interview? What connections did Vierick have with the Chilean paper's editors? And was it published in any other country in the region? Future research will surely answer these questions. However, what is clear is that Freud enjoyed enough international and local notoriety for one of the most important Chilean papers at that time to be interested in running an article on him. Also, the timing of the interview coincides with the return to Chile of the psychoanalyst Fernando Allende Navarro, who had trained in Switzerland under important figures such as Hermann Rorschach (1884-1922), and who would join the Chilean medical and academic field. Unfortunately, Allende Navarro was not very successful as a psychoanalyst; he was valued more as a neurologist, thanks to his training with Constantin von Monacow (1853-1930). I think it is important to clear up the historiographical prejudice that assumes there was "nothing" truly psychoanalytical going on earlier, and that before his arrival the country was entirely ignorant of Freud's new theories. Allende Navarro (1925, p.16) himself denies this *ex nihilo* vision, pointing out the breadth of psychoanalysis at that time:

Psychoanalysis, as we have said, is a whole world nowadays: it has been used as a therapeutic procedure ever since its birth, and its most fertile field has undoubtedly been the control of neuroses; but then the extra-medical applications of the Freudian method invaded almost every branch of our culture. It was applied to normal psychology, art, literature, and also philosophy, sociology, and pedagogy.

Psychoanalysts as characters in the novels of juvenile court judge Samuel Gajardo Contreras

This section aims to take a small example of what Anne-Cécile Druet (2013) calls the introduction of mental knowledges into the ambit of culture, specifically in novels written by judge Samuel Gajardo Contreras, whose background will be described later. Psychoanalysis also influenced other literary productions, however, such as the work of well-known poets such as Humberto Díaz Casanueva (a patient of Fernando Allende Navarro's), Pablo de Rockha, Winnet de Rockha and many others. The same is true of the surrealist group Mandrágora, spearheaded by Enrique Gómez-Correa's *The sociology of madness* (*Sociología de la locura*, 1942), which is full of references to psychoanalysis. However, I have chosen to go more deeply into the type of literary expression where the link to psychoanalysis is more explicit, examining the representations of psychoanalysis defined as

all those cases in which works contain explicit references to psychoanalytic theory, therapeutic practice or the job of the psychoanalyst, whatever their relation to Freudian (or Jungian or Adlerian) orthodoxy ... [T]he word 'psychoanalysis' and its derivatives are used when the characters refer to it as such (Druet, 2013, p.2; emphasis in the original).

While the history of psychoanalysis and its relationship to literature is a broad field of research, this article aims to look beyond the issue of influences and to focus rather on representations. On that subject, we might mention that in the late 1930s, the journalist and author Samuel Sabella wrote a newspaper article titled "Sex in some novels in Chile" ("El sexo en algunas novelas de Chile"), criticizing a sea change in the treatment of sexuality in Chilean novels. Sabella's opinion piece was found in a newspaper clipping in a personal journal belonging to the juvenile court judge Samuel Gajardo, which recorded the majority of Gajardo's public appearances. I do not list the title of the newspaper in which it was published nor the date of publication, since the clipping did not include this information. However, since Sabella commented on Gajardo's novel *Sexual disharmony* (*Desarmonía sexual*, 1937) we may assume that it was an article from that time-period.

The journalist critiqued the "respectable and rather dangerous oblivion" (Sabella, s.d.) with which Chilean literature had treated the topic of sex. Before that time, Sabella says, sex never featured in local literary productions, which thus steered clear of any complications, offering simple stories with no deeper reality. However, the journalist points to a need to "destroy the 'taboo,' prove that man is both heaven and filth, and that the flesh has its own portion of interest; man in Chile needs to be portrayed in broad daylight, with his volcano of instinct" (Sabella, s.d.; emphasis in the original).

The value of this trend in local literature, Sabella wrote, was that it did not descend into the vilest type of pornography, but stemmed from an interest in showing all aspects of humanity, which nourished writing full of style and realism. He declared that "[i]f they peer underneath the clothing for unity of being, they do so moved by an urge to assemble Chilean man as he is, once and for all, to tell the whole truth, without cutting him off at the trunk to exhibit as a bluish bust" (Sabella, s.d.).

Thus, the interest in sexuality which helped psychoanalysis to spread into different fields (Ruperthuz, 2016) also permeated Chilean literature, which transmitted both a version of psychoanalysis and its clinical practice, and the psychic conflicts of literary protagonists. The plots contain characters with rich inner lives but whose instincts are in turmoil, which leads to tension between the forces yearning for expression and those opposed to it. Applied to everyday situations, these Freudian references became recurrent in the life of the characters.

Among the authors who rose to the challenge of the times, according to Sabella, was the first juvenile court judge in Santiago, the lawyer Samuel Gajardo Contreras (1894-1959). Gajardo was a great supporter of psychoanalysis, which he saw as a specialized tool for legal work: it helped understand the motivations for crime. He also felt that since the life force came from sexuality, people urgently needed sex education. "Tragic ignorance," in the judge's words, only led to pain and mishaps: unwanted children, transmission of venereal disease (syphilis and gonorrhea) and clandestine abortions (Gajardo, 1937a, p.8). Gajardo was a freemason and condemned the church's position that such issues needed to remain family secrets.

As a result, Judge Samuel Gajardo made a foray into the literary world with the novel *Sexual disharmony* (*Desarmonía sexual*, 1937b), in which the sixth chapter is actually titled "Psychoanalysis." In it, he tells the story of a couple: Ricardo Morel, his wife Águeda and their little daughter Mary. After living together for some years, the couple start having disagreements that turn into arguments, episodes of domestic violence and court cases. They become entangled in a dispute over who should care for little Mary; the father asks the judge to have Águeda assessed by a doctor to determine her skills as a mother, accusing her of being "neurotic and hysterical" (Gajardo, 1937b, p.41).

Thus, the mother is seen by Doctor Chanel, a psychoanalyst who introduces her to Freudian clinical technique, explaining that she needs "liberating" and should talk openly so he can learn more about her. The novel clearly shows the existence of hidden areas in all individuals. However, it is no easy matter to gain access to them, and not everyone is prepared to do so. Águeda is, however; she declares, "'I'm more than interested in the exam; I'm really curious to find out what I'm like.' 'If only everyone felt that curiosity; but no one wants to get to know themselves, and yet everyone believes they know themselves,' Chanel replied" (Gajardo, 1937b, p.43).

The woman suffers from anorgasmia, which the doctor interprets as a symptom of "sexual disharmony" of psychic origin. He hypothesizes that this must be due to unconscious complexes that need to be uncovered. To get at them, he explains to the patient, they need to go back to "the early days of your childhood" (Gajardo, 1937b, p.45), using the fundamental rule of free association: "You will close your eyes so as not to get distracted, and you will say out loud anything that comes into your mind, with no scruples. Stretched out on the couch, with her eyes closed, she began talking in a jumbled, incoherent way. Sometimes she would stop" (p.45).

Meanwhile, in 1949, Samuel Gajardo published the novel *When children don't sing* (*Cuando los niños no cantan*), inspired by his day-to-day experiences at work. Editorial Zig-Zag's description of the book on the back cover suggests that the judge's chambers are undoubtedly an "incomparable psychological and social observatory of Juvenile Court" (Editorial Zig-Zag, 1949, back cover). The editors claim that the novel offers a testimony to the times, which "will allow future historians to take the pulse of contemporary morals" (back jacket). The novel tells the story of a boy, Julián Aguirre, who is orphaned and adopted by Juan González and his wife Encarnación. She hates Julián and beats him whenever she can, belittling him and making him feel unwelcome. Under these pressures, the boy attempts suicide. The police take the case to the magistrate, who decides to bring in a specialist: Doctor Colbert, a proponent of Freud's theories. The stepfather takes the boy away from his wife and takes him to live on his farm in the country. He is very concerned about the consequences of the child's abuse, and asks Colbert:

When this child was living with me he suffered a lot, because my wife regularly punished him, sometimes cruelly; and to make matters worse, doctor, I believe she did so unjustly. Might that have something to do with his aggressive nature? You're thinking like a psychologist. What you suspect is highly likely. Those punishments made him feel impotent rebellion, which is now tending to manifest itself in revenge, unconsciously, in a way he himself can't understand (Gajardo, 1949, p.63).

In the novel, Julián is involved in various bouts of violence with his schoolmates, and is on the point of being expelled. Over time, he also discovers that his father was murdered by his stepfather, Juan González, which sets off a huge drama. In his anguish, he visits Doctor Colbert, who decides to help him. The description of the session helps us examine the representations transmitted in this work of the figure of the psychoanalyst and of psychoanalysis. Colbert tells his patient:

I want to be of use to you in the drama fate has dealt you in this life. But you are in good health; there's nothing the doctor can do; only the man, the psychologist, who wants to know your thoughts, like a lay priest who takes your confession, without showing any alarm, in a spirit of understanding, to guide you. There is nothing more useful than a well-timed piece of good advice. [He specifies] But it's not just that you mustn't lie; you must tell me everything in your consciousness, without leaving anything out. It's the only way to get to know your soul, shorn of all the veils that hide the truth (Gajardo, 1949, p.151).

Thus, elements such as the act of psychoanalytic confession, based on the rule of free association in order to arrive at deep truth, are explicitly transmitted. The psychoanalyst is represented as a confessor – very similar to a priest in function – and the text presents the idea that childhood is a crucial stage in life in terms of shaping future personality. We should remember Gajardo's recommendation that parents incorporate psychology as an interpretive and practical framework for "scientific childrearing," which would prevent neurotic conflicts from appearing in the future. Free association was presented as the mechanism that would facilitate development of unconscious conflicts, mainly of an impulse-driven nature. Judge Gajardo made appealing use of his courtroom experience – analyzed from a Freudian perspective, as I have shown elsewhere (Ruperthuz, 2012) – to popularize psychoanalytic ideas. Gajardo (1940, 1946) was a prolific writer who always made time for popularizing psychological and specifically Freudian material.

"Control your brain" psychoanalytic self-help classes to handle the problems of a "high-speed lifestyle"

Over time, suppliers of psychology or psychoanalysis gradually diversified and less orthodox representatives – who were doubtless little more than charlatans – began to appear. Their strategy was to present themselves as official representatives of psychoanalysis and thus enjoy the symbolic and social capital that the theory had earned. Two such examples have been found so far: firstly, on December 11, 1933, *El Mercurio* announced that a supposed disciple of Freud, the American neurologist Robert J. Botkin, would be opening a modern sanatorium for the mentally ill in the upper part of Santiago (Se aplicarán..., 11 dic. 1933). Background studies show (Ruperthuz, 2016; Vetö, 2013) that this individual was anything but a direct disciple of Freud. His past history revealed him to be a swindler, since he had hoodwinked a widowed Jewish millionairess. This doctor offered a bizarre type of therapy, which included, under the label of "Freud's healing methods" – the headline of the newspaper article – a wide range of techniques such as radiation therapy, hydrotherapy, heliotherapy, electro – and mechanotherapy and ... nudism. A second case is that of a Chilean woman

named Donna de Ortúzar, whom Ernest Jones denounced in a circular of Freud's *Secret Committee* on March 17, 1926. She practiced psychoanalysis in London, claiming to have studied with Sigmund Freud and Otto Rank and to hold all the relevant diplomas. Freud himself, in a letter to Jones on April 6, 1926, explained that Donna de Ortúzar was the aristocratic wife of a patient of his, the British naval doctor, John Stirling Gilchrist. Freud felt that neither the husband nor the wife was trained to practice psychoanalysis (Freud, Jones, 1993). Years later, in 1946 – the example I shall focus on in this article – a self-help correspondence class evidently inspired by Freudianism was advertised in Chile. Its title was "Control your brain!" This new mode of consumption offered a way to access "psy" services long-distance, promising that these "sessions" could help potential clients overcome a broad and incredibly varied range of problems, such as fearfulness, obsession, worries, blushing, complexes, discouragement, shyness, insomnia and feelings of inferiority. The promotional flyer invited readers to free themselves of such mental complications, announcing that "[w]ith 'brain re-education' sessions, you will free yourself of painful psychic impressions" (Controle..., 1946, p.1).

This course clearly ascribed to the Freudian theory of psychic trauma, stating that "[t]he war gave a considerable boost' to the treatment of nervous and mental disorders through 'brain re-education.' Soldiers suffering a whole range of psychic complications caused by memories of the terrible things they saw on the battlefield have been induced to forget them" (Controle..., 1946, p.4; original emphasis).

A year after the end of the Second World War, this course claimed to take the horrors experienced by soldiers on the battlefield as a resource for learning about modern life in the city. The course was based on the idea of "re-education," seen as a process of constant personal training in an attempt to forget this type of psychic imprint. Consumers would thus be taught the technique of "mental abreaction," seeking to discharge pent-up emotions. The publicity for the course suggested that it could help people who had lost their memories because of harmful stimuli. "Others who, due to psychic trauma, had forgotten even their own identity, were able to regain it" (Controle..., 1946, p.4).

The flyer suggested that unlike the supposedly cold and distant work of the laboratory, modern psychology dealt with ordinary people, offering them tailored solutions to their difficulties: "'Modern psychological studies' can do something unmatched by any Scientific Laboratory, in providing 'peace, psychic tranquility and happiness' to those who turn to it" (Controle..., 1946, p.2; original emphasis).

Since the end of the war had brought world peace, psychology would now be enlisted to serve in the battles specific to modern life. People were beginning to talk about the fatigue associated with a tightly-scheduled life, which confirms that a new temporality was being ushered in: the rushed life, with linear time which demands that individuals be productive, making them physically and mentally ill. Therefore, "emotional education" is presented as a way out, facilitating the process of "preventing, healing and discarding." Problems are prevented, complications are healed and those parts of oneself that are no longer useful can be cast off. This is the new triad of mental hygiene. Modernity, therefore, was represented as the cause of various problems for Chileans. Living in a developing country meant that the pace of life was accelerating, leading to what was defined as a "high-speed lifestyle:"

Contemporary life, with all the inventions of a hectic civilization, with no peace to be able to concentrate, a continual barrage of images and ideas, trips, business affairs, movies, radio, social life, excessive intellectual and manual labor, failures, etc. turn our 'psychic life' into a 'high-speed lifestyle.' This leads to confusion, insomnia, nervousness, worries, phobias, fears, jealousies etc. that get worse and multiply, giving rise to a whole host of worries and woes. Control your imagination and your nerves. Apply today for the healing 'sessions' of brain re-education (Controle..., 1946, p.12; original emphasis).

In the period under scrutiny (1920-1950), this correspondence course was one of the first calls for mass consumption of a self-help brand of psychotherapy. Up to that point, clinical advertising was nonexistent, since the general public was generally invited to "learn about" Freud's hypotheses, rather than to have a therapeutic experience. Uffa Jensen (2016) has discussed this, arguing that psychoanalysis had (and has) the ability to create true therapeutic regimes in a transnational manner. Certain emotions are seen as problematic, and new types of solution are introduced.

The advertisement for the course assumes that it is necessary to combat painful impressions lodged in the subconscious (or unconscious), which are directly causing the sufferings people are experiencing. It describes the clinical work involved as follows:

The 'sessions' of 'brain re-education' of 'modern psychological studies' transform your dejection and give you 'courage, strength and willpower.' The 'brain re-education sessions' give those who 'blush' easily the necessary exercises to 'root out' the exaggerated sensitivity that leads to blushing, 'caused,' in most cases, by a vivid event long ago that became deeply engraved on the subconscious (Controle..., 1946, p.5-6; original emphasis).

Lastly, the flyer describes in more detail the process whereby conversion symptoms form, explaining to the public how the body receives and expresses mental conflicts: "The mind, unable to contain the excess of received emotion, uses the body to release it; the consequences of this are a series of physical imbalances that can produce harmful effects" (Controle..., 1946, p.7).

The flyer was aimed not only at the general public, but also at a specific audience: the country's professors and teachers, who were envisaged and represented as shaping the future. It presented teaching work as a mainstay for the nation, reinforcing the idea that children were the future resource in which Chile should be investing. Nationalist calls depicting children as the hope for the future imbued various discourses with a strong patriotic spirit: "Teachers are largely responsible for the acts of the men and women of tomorrow. Forming complexes in children and young people is a real crime. 'Purchase,' 'sessions' of 'brain re-education' (Controle..., 1946, p.9-10; original emphasis).

Lastly, the flyer included recovery testimonies by people from different countries in the region: Venezuela, Peru, Argentina, Brazil, Panama and Bolivia. To purchase the course, applicants were directed to write to the Center for Modern Psychological Studies (Centro de Estudios Psicológicos Modernos) at the following address: Clasificador 682, Correo Central, Santiago (Controle..., 1946, p.15). The flyer did not name any personalities or doctors, either in Chile or abroad, as endorsing or promoting the course; nor were there any official medical or scientific societies mentioned. The key to its value lay in the convincing nature

of its arguments, which could apparently be decoded by any ordinary Chilean. I have not been able to obtain further details about this Center, the methodology it used or whether its strategy was successful. The most important task, I would argue, is to analyze the object itself in order to understand it.

"Any Chilean can be a psychoanalyst:" lay analysis and psychoanalytic courses by Judge Samuel Gajardo

To conclude, psychoanalytic heterodoxy sparked a massive recruiting and teaching effort by the "Freudians:" this included an open school of psychoanalysis directed by Samuel Gajardo, who made a series of important attempts to spread psychoanalysis beyond professional circuits. Clearly, his work as a magistrate fed some of his preoccupations with what he called the "evolution of the human soul" (Gajardo, 1946, p.258). Gajardo read Freud as a source of ideas for understanding the social and criminal problems he saw every day in court. He stated, based on psychoanalysis, that the individual subject had made significant advances, since external coercion of his impulses had been replaced by internal repression exerted by the superego, which Gajardo saw as the moral conscience driving society's most sublime ideals. Thus Gajardo's civilizing project is described as follows:

[in] the child's development we can observe the process of this transformation, which turns him into a moral and social being. This strengthening of the superego is one of the most valuable psycho-cultural factors, since the individuals in whom it occurs cease to be adversaries of civilization and become its firmest guardians. As a result, the more there are of them, the safer civilization will be, and it will be able to dispense with external forms of coercion (p.258).

The pedagogical interest of Freud's theories for Gajardo lay in the hope that human beings could be reconciled with their own childhoods by learning about the infantile part of themselves. He was radically opposed to violent repression of the instincts and openly recommended that educators avoid such practices through an unbiased understanding of the nature of childhood. He even thought of the possibility of intermingling psychoanalytic treatment with academic learning, since "it very soon succeeds in suppressing nervous symptoms and undoing nascent character modifications" (Gajardo, 1946, p.115).

The judged declared that:

Psychoanalysis frequently proves that the cause of certain nervous illnesses lies in an excessively severe upbringing, and the normality demanded of children is obtained at the cost of their capacity for productivity and joy. Psychoanalysis also shows that the child's perverse and antisocial instincts can make valuable contributions to the formation of his character when, rather than being subject to repression, they are diverted from their primitive goals by the process of sublimation and directed towards other, more valuable ends. Our best virtues are born as reactions and sublimations on the ground of our worst inclinations. As a result, education should studiously avoid wasting those precious sources of energy and confine itself to supporting processes that channel such energies in good directions. From this we can deduce that an education based on psychoanalytic knowledge may constitute the best individual prophylaxis against neuroses (Gajardo, 1946, p.290).

Gajardo inclined, therefore, towards what was known as “lay analysis,” and entered the debate by declaring that medicine could not claim an exclusive right to psychoanalytic practice. He attacked the lack of training of doctors of the life of the soul, and argued against prohibiting analysis by lay people – among whom he surely counted himself – for three important reasons, namely (a) for the patients’ sake: since sufferers did not care too much whether the analyst was a doctor or not, the main issue was whether analysts possessed the personal qualities to carry out therapeutic work, which for Gajardo (1946, p.114) meant that they needed to be “people with academic training, PhDs, educators and certain gentlemen of great experience and outstanding personality;” (b) for the doctors’ sake: he argued that making psychoanalysis part of medical training was not advantageous, since it would complicate things for future doctors and psychoanalysts by prolonging their training; and (c) for the sake of science: Freudianism, he argued, was a powerful tool for investigating human nature. It was therefore crucial for it to overcome the limitations of medicine. Gajardo (1946, p.114) specified that:

As a psychology of the abyss or science of the unconscious mind, it may become indispensable to all sciences that deal with the history of the origins of human civilization and its great institutions, such as art, religion and the social order. It has already made considerable contributions towards solving problems in these sciences, but these are minor in the light of what will be achieved if men of science devoted to studying the history of civilization, the psychology of religions, philology etc., decide to start using psychoanalysis for themselves, without being forbidden to do so. Using analysis for treating neuroses is merely one possible application, and the future may perhaps demonstrate that it is not even the most important. This is another reason for not prohibiting lay analysis.

Samuel Gajardo was appointed juvenile court judge in 1929, and he saw the courtroom as a kind of laboratory of the sublime and grotesque aspects of Chilean society (Gajardo, 1957). From early on, Gajardo became a guest speaker at a wide number of venues, such as the University of Chile (Universidad de Chile), the Civil Guard School (Escuela de Carabineros), the Investigative Police (Policía de Investigaciones), various working-class and professional societies, the news media, and radio programs, which helped him become known as an expert on Freudianism. His crusade was based on a wish that many Chileans might overcome their prejudices and learn about sexuality along with their children.

One example of this is seen in a report in *El Mercurio* of June 24, 1937, about a talk by Gajardo at the Society for Business Employees (Sociedad de Empleados del Comercio) titled “Sexual ethics” (“Ética sexual”). The article gives a detailed explanation of the judge’s arguments:

Mr Gajardo set out in the first place to demonstrate that the sexual problem, because of the characteristics involved, and also its consequences, deserves to be considered one of the fundamental problems of human society. He then explained that this problem stems from the biological function of the individual and the demands of society. He cited numerous cases that he has observed in the course of his duties as juvenile court judge; he has seen over five thousand cases of seduction, all the product of defective sexual education, since parents believe their children are ignorant of sexual matters, when in fact they are only practicing hypocrisy. He laid out these problems from

primitive times to the present, showing that despite the paths indicated by Freud, a great deal of ignorance still prevails as a result of poorly understood morality, which causes errors with dreadful consequences both for society and for individuals. At the end of his speech, Mr. Gajardo received much applause (Sobre..., 24 jun. 1937).

Gajardo's efforts to publicize psychoanalysis became more official; along with other collaborators, he helped create the Freud and Shenstone Foundation (Fundación Freud y Shenstone), which was presented as an "institution designed to promote the psychic improvement of human beings" (Fundación..., 1950, p.2).¹ This foundation, which functioned in Santiago, gave free, popular courses on psychoanalysis, open to anyone who cared to take them. Under the banner "Any Chilean can be a psychoanalyst," these courses were advertised in the press and were taught in the University of Chile's Law School by Judge Gajardo. The initiative was described in the following announcement:

Everyone can now learn psychoanalysis and receive methodical and simple introduction to the complex and important studies by Freud and other world-renowned psychoanalysts. The course recently launched at the Law School, taught by juvenile court judge Samuel Gajardo and sponsored by the Freud and Shenstone Foundation, will make this possible. And it must be added that this course will be at no cost to applicants. It is and will remain absolutely free (Gajardo, s.d.).

Gajardo himself, when asked about the course, stated that, "First of all, you should know that the institution sponsoring the course is devoted to promoting psychoanalytic psychology as a means of improving knowledge of the human personality, so as to overcome the conditions of social life" (Gajardo, s.d.). The course, he said, offered a complete overview of Freudian ideas, and was designed to cover a year's worth of lectures, with weekly meetings on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. Gajardo added:

So far, various people have shown an interest in coming to hear my lectures, even though the project is just beginning. I am sure that from one Wednesday to the next, since that is the day of the week when this valuable education is being provided, there will be more and more people interested in finding out about the doctrines that made Freud and other notable psychoanalysts so famous (Gajardo, s.d.).

Samuel Gajardo's teaching focused on the contributions of Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung and Alfred Adler. The audience consisted primarily of university medical and law students, but the publicity called for open participation to unravel the "secrets of the soul, [making them] accessible to all" (Gajardo, s.d.). From this perspective, Freudianism was synonymous with a knowledge that would help improve society by overcoming obscurantism and the attitude espoused by religious and conservative circles of Chilean society, which reduced sexuality to a private matter, exclusively confined to the life of the family and reproduction. For Gajardo, "Catholic dogma does not contain any principle incompatible with the sexual education of children, that is, with learning about natural laws" (Gajardo, 1940, p.10). Scientific knowledge of psychoanalysis, he felt, should be disseminated throughout society on a national level, so as to achieve a greater degree of freedom and social improvement. He himself declared in his book *Sexual education for children and adolescents* (*La educación sexual del niño y del adolescente*) – in which chapter 12 was titled "The data from psychoanalysis" –

that “this is a difficult task because it requires overcoming errors, prejudices and feelings, but that is the enterprise facing any revolution. There is always a Bastille to demolish. Prejudices and errors are usually more solid than granite boulders” (Gajardo, 1940, p.9).

Lastly, Judge Gajardo pointed to the sociological implications of the spread of psychoanalysis to paint an ideal picture: training social workers – who were already central to the juvenile courts in Chile, along with the first psychologists – so that they could advocate at a grass-roots level for a healthier society with fewer neuroses. On this point, Judge Gajardo (1946, p.115) was explicit, envisaging psychoanalysis as a tool mediating between the instinctual demands of the individual and the rectifications appropriate to life in society:

Is it too fantastical to hope that, despite the difficulties it faces, psychoanalysis will be called on to prepare men for such a rectification? Maybe there will be another American who decides to devote part of his fortune to the analytical training of social workers in his country, to form an auxiliary army designed to combat neuroses that are the result of civilization. A new kind of Salvation Army.

Final considerations

Given this brief overview of some of the background to the arrival, impact and spread of psychoanalysis in Chile beyond exclusively medico-psychiatric circles, what took place in Chile seems to confirm what also occurred in other countries in the region – especially Brazil (Plotkin, Damousi, 2009) – where construction of the public image of psychoanalysis was linked to the possibility of speaking “scientifically” about sexuality. This helped reinforce state strategies on the sexual conduct of the population, since it was compatible with a project of modernizing the nation. The word “psychoanalysis” in Chile became synonymous with a set of serious ideas about sexuality. Acceptance of Freud’s principles made the idea of the existence of child sexuality acceptable and facilitated the move away from more determinist theories, such as the theory of mental degeneration. Freud, as we have seen, was valued as an expert on love and intimacy. Sexual drive was recognized as a factor in human beings, who need to find ways of channeling their impulses towards socially accepted ends. Therefore, the reception of psychoanalysis was facilitated by this context of a new paradigm, which introduced the idea of humans being inhabited by aggressive sexual impulses than must be domesticated in order to achieve desirable civility.

At the same time, psychoanalysis made possible the ideas of the transformation and malleability of human beings, of environmental influence and above all of formation. This was a period heavily imbued with nationalist projects aimed at making Chile great, and there had been discussion of the role of the welfare state from the 1920s on. Children, for many people, were a key national resource for the future, so measures for reducing infant and child mortality, the number of cases of syphilis and gonorrhea, and the number of clandestine abortions began to be discussed. Gradually, the idea of attending to psychological needs began to be added to the discourses on physical health.

The existential tension inherent in psychoanalysis led, as shown earlier, to the visibility of new figures and discourses that were soon elevated and validated as representing good training and collective moral rectitude. This was the case with juvenile court judge Samuel

Gajardo Contreras, who enjoyed social validation and respectability, and who institutionalized a mode of consumption and practice of psychoanalysis within Chile: the mass diffusion of Freud's theories directed at the working classes. Gajardo's social position and reputation greatly facilitated this process. His respectability and leadership on childhood issues was a significant help in getting wide coverage for all his work. The use of the psychoanalyst as a character in his novels shows the mass recognition of a new social figure, one who taught the public as a possible alternative for ailments of the "soul." Psychology, pedagogy and social medicine were permeated by Freudian ideas. Likewise, amateur proponents of psychoanalysis like Judge Samuel Gajardo Contreras made it possible for psychoanalysis to spread across various media: fantasy novels, talks and lectures and open classes on psychoanalysis aimed at the general public. This judge's respectability lasted for many years, and he was eventually named one of the most influential Chileans of his time.

At the same time, references to Freudianism became socially respectable enough – as Silvana Vetö (25 jun. 2013) puts it – to become the focus of actions by charlatans, impostors and bizarre claims. The cases of Doctor Robert J. Botkin, Donna de Ortúzar and the self-help classes "Control your brain" are a clear example. These cases help to demonstrate the wide range of possibilities, agents and audiences that emerged once "psy" knowledge came to be seen as a tool for managing subjectivity.

Psychoanalysis also accompanied the incipient process of modernization of the country and the transformations taking place in Chileans' lives. The establishment of a capitalist model of life reconfigured personal and social relations. The adoption of a pressured lifestyle brought with it a new temporal regime. The "high-speed lifestyle" began to affect both the dominant class and the working class. Emotional stress appeared, and it became necessary to come up with new therapeutic offerings. The Freudian-style self-help classes indicate that psychoanalysis became a sort of matrix of intelligibility for talking about spiritual pain. Freud was never openly cited in them, but the flyer was constructed in those terms. Psychoanalytic orientation, therefore, was a language for talking about personal and family conflicts. In this context, the idea of personal emotional development was introduced, and "sublimation" was the mechanism chosen for the task. If everyone had a potentially dangerous "id," then education was the principal mechanism for forging normal, well-adjusted citizens. This was the overlap of the "medicalization" and psychologization models for society in Chile (Ruperthuz, 2016).

In conclusion, it is worth carrying out an analysis that distinguishes between classes: travel, business affairs and the cinema, for example, were life experiences of the wealthiest class in Chilean society. On the other hand, delinquent children – as they were termed then – and their families needed to be educated, normalized and subjected to sublimation. Social workers, psychologists and professors were seen as "soldiers," in charge of containing the instincts of the "dangerous" masses and leading them towards normality and adaptation. There were two parallel circuits, the wealthy who were stressed by the "high-speed lifestyle" and the working class conquered by mass culture and transformed into the object of the modern temporal regime, the reign of linear time. Sublimation, therefore, was valued for its ability to transform potential dangers into acceptable products for society. Freud's theories probably contributed to liberating sexual morality by making it grounds for a discussion

in which governments of the era openly declared the need for people to receive sexual education. However, there remain questions for future research: were there readings that resisted this model for human beings and society? Were there groups that critiqued the psychoanalytic view of human beings? These questions are more than rhetorical, since, as I have argued in previous work, one has to be careful not to see psychoanalysis everywhere. One also has to integrate the adjustments to Freudianism made by many local agents in order to introduce it into conservative, proletariat environments. Such readings would help explain these discoveries, and point to other circuits of reception that remain unexplored.

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NOTE

¹ So far, I have found no further references to this institution. There is only one book published under its imprint, from which I took the previous citation: Fundación..., 1950.

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