



From outrage to normalization: Uses of psychoanalysis by the Spanish sexual reform movement (1920-1939)¹

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Abstract. The aim of this article is to analyze how psychoanalytic ideas were received within the context of the debate around sexuality which took place in Spain during the 1920s and 1930s. While this reception was initially marked by a questioning of the role that Freud assigned to sexuality, psychoanalytic discourse would later make an appearance in various proposals for reforming sexual customs and overcoming bourgeois morality. The paper also considers the use of psychoanalysis in normative environments such as sexual education and marriage legislation, highlighting the different uses of psychoanalysis in the movement for sexual reform on a scientific basis which culminated during the socio-political context of the Second Republic.

Keywords: Sexuality; Psychoanalysis; Sexual education; Legislation; Spain; 20th century.

Del escándalo a la normalización: Usos del psicoanálisis por el movimiento de reforma sexual español (1920-1939)

Resumen. El objetivo de este artículo es analizar la recepción de las ideas psicoanalíticas en el marco del debate en torno a la sexualidad que tuvo lugar en España durante las décadas de los años 20 y 30 del siglo XX. Si, inicialmente, dicha recepción estuvo marcada por el cuestionamiento del papel que Freud otorgaba a la sexualidad, más tarde el discurso psicoanalítico apareció en diversas propuestas de renovación de las costumbres sexuales y superación de la moral burguesa. Se estudia, asimismo, la utilización del psicoanálisis en ámbitos normativos como la educación sexual o la legislación matrimonial, y se pone de manifiesto los distintos usos que el psicoanálisis tuvo en la Reforma Sexual sobre Bases Científicas que culminó en el contexto sociopolítico de la Segunda República.

Palabras clave: Sexualidad; Psicoanálisis; Psiquiatría; Legislación; Educación sexual; España, Siglo XX.

Sumario. Introduction. 2. Background of the reception of Freudian theory on sexuality. 3. Administering sexuality: education and legislation during the Second Republic. 4. Conclusions.

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Introduction

In other times, it would have seemed daring to speak objectively about the problems of sexuality: but today this subject is part of the public domain. For some years now, such men of science as Kraft-Ebbing, Forel, Freud, Hirschfeld, Ellis and many others have dared to tackle these studies without fear of biting criticism from readers, and today the sexual problem has become a commonplace subject. [...] It was the Viennese mentalist Freud, original investigator of sexual problems and initiator of pan-sexualist trends in the explanation of the mechanisms which produce neuroses and madness, who developed a more comprehensive and daring conception of the matter before us. His theory of sexuality contains some points not yet fully accepted, which were quickly rejected, because they appear to wound our loftiest sentiments, but impartial analysis accompanied by honest and patient introspection or self-observation have slowly proven Freud right in many of his accurate observations.⁴

The above text is a passage from a 1918 article published by the well-known psychiatrist Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora in the newspaper *El Sol*, under the evocative title “The mysteries of sexuality.” It is significant that a national newspaper such as *El Sol* would find room on its pages for a subject traditionally restricted to the private sphere and ever shrouded in taboo, secrecy and prohibition. It was included in a section generically titled “Biology and Medicine,” thus conveying the idea that it was the scientific and medical consideration of sexuality which justified this interest. It spoke of a medicalized sexuality, seemingly disconnected from pleasure and desire, and of urgent intervention in the areas of education, health and public hygiene. Following on from this approach, there was a gradual shift from the private and individual sphere to the public sphere and general debate. Within this debate, it was considered essential to undertake sexual reform on a scientific basis, taking on the sexual morality imposed by the Church and the most conservative elements.⁵

The reference to Freud is in fact explained in relation to this goal. The man who had previously been considered a controversial author in Spain, with almost pornographic and depraved thinking in his approaches to sexuality, was now viewed as an expert on the subject. The legitimacy of psychoanalysis was defended in relation to the medical gaze on which his arguments were based, although this did not exempt him from passionate criticism which insisted on the immorality of his postulates and the extravagances of their author. The differences of opinion between the various standpoints extended *from outrage to normalization*⁶ with regard to the controversy

⁴ Rodríguez Lafora, Gonzalo: “Los misterios de la sexualidad,” *El Sol*, January 1, 1918.

⁵ Guereña, Jean Louis: *Les Espagnols et le sexe. XIXe - XXe siècles*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013.

⁶ With this dichotomy, we refer to a logic in the dissemination of psychoanalysis which, as a general framework for reception of the theory, created the conditions for its circulation to increase due to its sexual content. The different agents of reception issued their judgments with regard to the sexual content of psychoanalysis, falling between two poles: outrage, which led various authors to brand psychoanalysis a depraved and dangerous theory; and using its approaches as an argument legitimizing normative texts and discourse on sexuality. Furthermore, this distances us from the historiography which interprets criticism of psychoanalysis within a schema of “rejection” or “resistance” to the theory, which would involve a presumed failure in the dissemination and introduction of psychoanalysis in Spain (see, for example, Carles, Francisco; Muñoz, Isabel; Llor, Carmen and Marset, Pedro: *Psicoanálisis en España (1893-1968)*, Madrid, Asociación Española de Neuropsiquiatría, 2000).

around sexuality, delineating a logic which in the history of the circulation of psychoanalytic ideas, is common to virtually any country.⁷

Broadly speaking, it can be said that during the early decades of the 20th century, there was a dialectical confrontation in Spain between more conservative standpoints, defenders of Catholic morality and bourgeois norms, and more progressive attitudes, supporters of a sexual “modernity” which was inseparable from the necessary social change.⁸ The so-called sexual reform on a scientific basis⁹ involved a series of initiatives for science outreach,¹⁰ as well as political and social action aimed at updating postulates on sexuality.¹¹ There was an attempt to integrate sexual ideas, roles and values which had previously been taboo, and which were now incorporated on the basis of medical grounds and a concern for public health. In addition, based on eugenic, social defense and mental health criteria, arguments were put forward supporting the need to implement educational measures aimed at preventing mental disorders presumed to be related to the sexual repression and social vices associated with the modern city.¹²

In this context, from the point of view of positions considered to be progressive, it was understood that psychoanalytic ideas were an element of the scientific avant-garde and sexual liberation, while more conservative voices focused their criticism on what they considered a danger and a perversion of thought. Both standpoints helped to reinforce an artificial link between ideology and psychoanalysis, in which Freudian theory was understood to be part of a politically left-leaning reformist discourse. However, it should be noted that this link conceals a background of political, personal and professional conflicts which bear no connection to a scientific debate on the contributions of psychoanalytic theory, but which could be played out in relation to the same. There is nothing in psychoanalysis or its epistemology which leads us to ascribe its theory and praxis to a specific ideology, and in any event, it is the subject which lends it this political character.¹³

It is our understanding that the standpoints which were most critical of psychoanalysis functioned as important disseminators of an “outraged” version of the theory and its ideas regarding sexuality.

- 7 Regarding the transnational dimension of psychoanalysis and the history of its many patterns of reception and specific appropriations, see Damousi, Joy; Plotkin, Mariano (eds.): *The Transnational Unconscious. Essays in the History of Psychoanalysis and Transnationalism*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Also Plotkin, Mariano: *Freud en las pampas*, Buenos Aires, Sudamericana, 2003. In this regard, within the transnational history of psychoanalysis, our work would find its place as a specific case of reception, reinterpretation and reappropriation of psychoanalytic ideas based on certain historical, social and cultural coordinates.
- 8 Huertas, Rafael; Novella, Enric: “Sexo y Modernidad en la España de la Segunda República. Los discursos de la ciencia,” *Arbor*, 189 (764), (2013), a090. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3989/arbor.2013.764n6013>. See also Aresti, Nerea: “Sexualité et progrès en Espagne dans les années 1920 et 1930,” in Jean-Louis Guereña (ed.): *Sexualités occidentales*, Tours, Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2014, pp. 47–74.
- 9 The Liga Española para la Reforma Sexual sobre Bases Científicas was created in 1932 as a branch of the Weltliga für Sexualreform (World League for Sexual Reform) founded in 1928 in Berlin by Magnus Hirschfeld. See Huertas, Rafael; Novella, Enric: “Sexo y Modernidad.”
- 10 Álvarez, Raquel: “Publicaciones sobre la sexualidad en la España del primer tercio del siglo XX: Entre la medicina y la pornografía,” *Hispania*, 65 (3), (2004), pp. 947–960.
- 11 Sinclair, Alison: “The World League for Sexual Reform in Spain: Founding, Infighting, and the Role of Hildegart Rodríguez,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 12 (1), (2003), pp. 98–109.
- 12 Huertas, Rafael; Novella, Enric: “Wissenschaft, Politik und Wahn. Hildegart Rodríguez Leben und Tod (1914-1933),” in Gabriele Dietze And Dorothea Dornhof (eds.): *Metropolenzauber. Sexuelle Moderne und urbaner Wahn*, Cologne, Böhlau Verlag, 2014, pp. 197–213.
- 13 The historian Silvana Vetö writes that “there is nothing essential in psychoanalytic theory which might definitively tilt the scales of its institutional practices towards one side or the other of the political spectrum; the right or the left, the elite or the liberation of the oppressed, democracy or authoritarianism, among others. The history of psychoanalysis clearly demonstrates this point. Within psychoanalysis, there have been theoretical

The eclecticism with which some of the most representative concepts in psychoanalysis were incorporated and their assimilation into both general interest texts and medical publications made them a sort of conglomeration of divisible ideas, capable of being transformed depending on the author considering them, the context and the purpose for which they were being used.¹⁴ Even so, the translation into Spanish of the complete works of Freud (*Obras Completas*) in 1922 marked a milestone, and to a certain extent restricted the possibilities of molding Freudian thought, offering a unified version of what Freud himself had said.¹⁵

In the following pages, it is our aim to analyze the circulation of psychoanalytic ideas within the context of the interest in sexual reform and renewal carried out during the 1920s and 1930s. Although some previous studies provide a preliminary and useful introduction to this subject,¹⁶ it is our goal to highlight how doctors, psychiatrists and jurists used, interpreted and reformulated psychoanalytic ideas in the debate around sexuality taking place in Spain during the first third of the 20th century in a context of social change.

2. Background of the reception of Freudian Theory on sexuality

In 1905, Freud stated in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* that the development of sexuality had a decisive impact on the mental life of the subject.¹⁷ He also stressed the importance of early childhood experiences in the origin of human psychosexual development over five stages (oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital). His central argument put forward sexuality as a fundamental aspect of the life of all

trends which have fed authoritarian thoughts and practices, and others which have bolstered thought and praxis around liberation; institutions which have committed themselves against dictatorial regimes and others which have adapted to them,” in Vetö Honorato, Silvana: *Psicoanálisis en estado de sitio*, Santiago de Chile, FACSOL, El Buen Aire, 2013, p. 125.

¹⁴ It should be clarified that, as regards following the object “psychoanalysis,” we are employing a broad definition, according to which psychoanalysis is anything which an author says is psychoanalysis. This definition “considers psychoanalysis to be an accumulation of ideas which have the property of shifting, being received and used in different ways, even coming to permeate various layers of the society in which it is received. ... It is clear that this is an active process in which the different agents, at the time the ideas are received, also reinterpret them according to the requirements of their period. This is an active process and moves away from the idea of the existence of a presumed ‘correct’ way to read the concepts of psychoanalysis,” In Rupertuz, Mariano: “El ‘retorno de lo reprimido’: el papel de la sexualidad en la recepción del psicoanálisis en el círculo médico chileno, 1910-1940,” *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos*, 22 (4), (2015), pp. 1173–1197, p. 1175.

¹⁵ Spain had already been a pioneer in translating a text by Freud into Spanish. This was “Comunicación preliminar,” published along with Breuer in 1893 in the journal *Wiener Med. Blätt*. Although interest in this text cannot yet be attributed to an interest in psychoanalysis, as it is part of his studies prior to the establishment of psychoanalysis, it represents the first translation of Freud in Spain, with the second being Freud’s *Obras completas* in 1922. See Bermejo Frigola, Vicente: “La ‘primerísima’ traducción de una obra de Freud,” *Revista de Historia de la Psicología*, 12 (3-4), (1991), pp. 341–344; and Carles, Francisco; Muñoz, Isabel; Llor, Carmen and Marsset, Pedro: *Psicoanálisis en España*.

¹⁶ See the pioneering work by Glick, Thomas: “Psicoanálisis, reforma sexual y política en la España de entre-guerras,” *Estudios de Historia Social* (16-17), (1981), pp. 7–25; Updated in Glick, Thomas: “Sexual Reform, Psychoanalysis, and the Politics of Divorce in Spain in the 1920 and 1930s,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 12 (1), (2003), pp. 68–97. Also of interest is the monograph by Carles, Francisco; Muñoz, Isabel; Llor, Carmen and Marsset, Pedro: *Psicoanálisis en España*, pp. 83 ff. Although these authors mention the role of psychoanalysis in sexual reform, they do not devote a specific section to this issue.

¹⁷ Freud, Sigmund: “Tres ensayos para una teoría sexual,” *Obras Completas*, Tomo II, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 4º ed., 1981 [1905], pp. 1169–1237.

humans, without it being the exclusive territory of adult psychology. He also explained forms of human expression not clearly linked to a sexual purpose through the mechanism of sublimation, according to which the sexual drive can release its total energy into a non-sexual goal that is socially and culturally recognized.

These ideas lay behind the early criticism of Freudian works at the start of the 20th century, while also being those which aroused interest and led to the inclusion of psychoanalysis in reformist discourses on mental hygiene and sexuality from the 1920s. The social reforms and changes taking place made it possible for less outraged readings to emerge, placing emphasis on the medical formulations and political/social use of a theory which spoke about sex.

By the second decade of the 20th century, references to psychoanalysis and sexuality can be found in the medical literature. However, there were still many reservations typical of a profoundly religious society in which sex was a deeply rooted taboo subject. Furthermore, Freud's status as a foreigner made it possible to gain some distance from his formulations, which, as early readers of his work pointed out, would need to first undergo a critical examination whose principal hypotheses were suited to the characteristics of Spanish society. These early, more descriptive and general readings undoubtedly set the stage for the arrival of a second generation of psychiatrists in the 1920s¹⁸ who were more familiar with the subject matter and psychoanalytic terminology, and interested in its practical possibilities within the Spanish medical landscape.¹⁹

The psychiatrist Rafael del Valle y Aldabalde was one of the first to write on Freudian theory. In 1913, he produced a text in which he discussed, among other matters, the possibilities of psychoanalytic practice within Spain, expressing his disagreement with the idea that "by means of psychoanalysis we must always find in the depths of the subconscious something sexual as a cause of psychopathic symptoms," and warning of the main dangers of Freudian doctrine:

When it is a matter of children or women, of awakening with a tendentious psychoanalysis, as practiced with similar prejudice, ideas, longings and even desires which the person treated in this way may not even have had until then, ideas, longings and desires which for this reason offer nothing beneficial to modesty and decency, under no circumstances should anybody, and much less the doctor, awaken them at the wrong time, even if doing so with the best intentions, it is true, but also based on a false premise, due to its dangerous exaggeration.²⁰

The theory of sexuality proposed by Freud was viewed as a danger and at the same time, as a point of great interest, provided that it was clarified. Of the same opinion as Valle was Misael Bañuelos, who stated that some had "raised objections

¹⁸ We are speaking of what is known as the "*Neurobiology Archives* generation" specifically because of their active role in efforts to organize a rigorous scientific psychiatry, using updated training and methods, and open to new developments from abroad. See Gracia Guillén, Diego: "Medio siglo de psiquiatría española: 1885-1936," *Cuadernos de Historia de la Medicina Española*, 10, (1971), pp. 305-339.

¹⁹ The first clinical cases treated based on psychoanalysis appeared during this period. They were Juarros, César: "Sobre un caso de obsesión por contagio curado por psicoanálisis," *Los Progresos de la Clínica*, 19 (115), (1921), pp. 11-17; and Mira y López, Emilio: "Un cas senzill de psicanalisis," *Analns de l'Academia i Laboratoti de Ciencies Mediques de Catalunya*, 15, (1921), pp. 407-413.

²⁰ Valle y Aldabalde, Rafael: "El psicoanálisis de Freud," *Revista de Medicina y Cirugía prácticas*, 9 (2), (1913), pp. 209-216, p. 216.

to the treatment recommended by Freud, saying that it is immoral, that it awakens still dormant appetites and desires, that it demolishes the innocence of young people regarding certain matters of sexual life, etc., etc.; but we believe that a doctor, intelligent and prudent, without being an astute psychologist, easily avoids these pitfalls.”²¹

Dr. Fernández Sanz was another of the psychiatrists who had the most influence on new developments in psychoanalysis during this period. In 1914, he wrote *Histerismo, teoría y clínica*,²² in which he devoted a chapter to “psychoanalysis.” His text is a detailed account in which he criticizes several points of the theory, which he ultimately describes as exaggerated and dangerous in its praxis. He rejects “the exclusivity of sexual phenomena in the territory of the unconscious” and the “attempt to subordinate to this all-embracing unconscious sexuality almost all psychic actions,”²³ declaring himself the principal critic of psychoanalysis during this period. However, in the 1920s he began to moderate his thinking, even stating the need to “closely follow the development of psychoanalysis and verify it in practice, although we are not supporters of that school, nor do we accept its dogma as true.”²⁴ In “*Algunas derivaciones eugénicas del problema sexual*,” he even includes Freud and Jung’s ideas on the concept of libido.²⁵ Nonetheless, despite this partial concession, associated with a context in which “at gatherings of cultured people, in the daily newspapers, at salons and even in novels, it is now common to speak of Freud’s psychoanalysis, and his points of view are discussed with greater or lesser wit, and always with more frivolity than precise knowledge,”²⁶ Fernández Sanz abandoned psychoanalysis. However, he did leave an extensive bibliography on the subject.

With these authors, there began some dissemination of psychoanalysis, increased in part by a sort of “outraged” seduction due to its content on sexuality. This caused it to be passed on by word of mouth, making it the subject of general interest in a wide range of debates and conversations. This is how it was described by Antonio Abaunza, a doctor at Hospital General de Madrid and student of Sanchis Banús, in the preface to the Spanish translation of the book by Auguste Marie *La Crisis del Psicoanálisis*:

And around 1920, at a scientific and literary gathering which I attended ... I heard Freud discussed for the first time. And at that scientific and literary gathering, which I later grasped was neither scientific nor literary, I heard the most bizarre things. The incredibly fierce diatribes that emerged from the lips of all led me to imagine Freud with the horns and body of a goat. Like one of those satyrs, whose symbolic meaning is the negation of intelligence. Inexperienced, I kept silent. However, objection on hearing them speak about something with which one might suspect they were unfamiliar asserted itself over the course of my thought.²⁷

²¹ Bañuelos, Misael: “Breve examen y juicio crítico del psicoanálisis y del froidismo,” *Revista de Especialidades Médicas*, 18, (1913), pp. 745–762, p. 759.

²² Fernández Sanz, Enrique: *Histerismo: Teoría y Clínica*, Madrid, Los Progresos de la Clínica, 1914.

²³ Fernández Sanz, Enrique: “El psicoanálisis,” *Los progresos de la clínica*, 3, (1914), pp. 257–283, p. 266.

²⁴ Fernández Sanz, Enrique: “La técnica del psicoanálisis como instrumento terapéutico,” *El Siglo Médico*, 71 (3628), (1923), pp. 597–601, p. 598.

²⁵ Fernández Sanz, Enrique: “Algunas derivaciones eugénicas del problema sexual,” *El Siglo Médico*, 75 (3728), (1925), pp. 525–529.

²⁶ Fernández Sanz, Enrique: “La técnica del psicoanálisis,” p. 597.

²⁷ Abaunza, Antonio: “Prólogo,” in Auguste Marie: *La Crisis del Psicoanálisis*, Madrid, Central de Ediciones y Publicaciones, 1930, p. VIII.

The effusiveness with which these ideas were debated undoubtedly facilitated the context in which the publication of Freud's *Obras Completas* in 1922 could be seen not only as an undertaking of scientific interest, but also as a profitable publishing venture. And indeed, it was, as according to data from the publisher Biblioteca Nueva, some 15,000 copies were sold up to the Civil War alone.²⁸ Many were those who sought to become acquainted with the theory, resulting in a real increase in psychoanalytic literature. Having a reference text in Spanish guided the debate and made it possible for the criticism and insults which some authors leveled at Freud and his thinking –primarily as regards the “hyperbolic expansion of sexuality’s sphere of influence”²⁹– to be accompanied by the appearance of useful elements in the interest of modern society.

During this period, there was some equating of psychoanalysis with sexuality, which radicalized the standpoint of the more reactionary elements, who saw the need to disseminate their warnings against the dangers of the psychoanalytic contagion, also contributing to dissemination of the theory.

If the development of the modern city brought with it the idea of vices and perversions which represented a source of seduction for less critical minds or the psychology of certain individuals, psychoanalysis, as a product of this context, was generally understood in one of two ways: as a profoundly depraved and immoral discourse, “spawn of a feverish mind,”³⁰ or as expert knowledge on these matters, incorporating its formulations into the management and organization of the city’s ills. Generally speaking, this is the background against which psychoanalytic ideas were debated in the context of the Spanish sexual reform movement.

This context –together with the introduction of the sexological movement, primarily based on translations of the works of Havelock Ellis³¹ and August Forel,³² which began to circulate in the 1910s³³– was accompanied by the idea of a sort of neurotic threat derived from problems and dysfunctions of a sexual nature.³⁴ The moral impositions and sexual taboos typical of a deeply traditional and Catholic

²⁸ See Carles, Francisco; Muñoz, Isabel; Llor, Carmen And Marset, Pedro: *Psicoanálisis en España*, p. 85.

²⁹ Fernández Sanz, Enrique: “El psicoanálisis,” p. 258.

³⁰ Villaverde, José María: “Algo sobre el movimiento psicoanalítico de la actualidad,” *Medicina Ibero* 18, p. 208.

³¹ Ellis, Havelock: *Estudios sobre psicología sexual. Hombre y mujer*, Madrid, Hijos de Reus editores, 1913.

³² Forel, August: *La cuestión sexual expuesta a adultos ilustrados*, Madrid, Bailly-Bailliére, 1912.

³³ Carles et al. assert that the translation of the Forel and Ellis texts had a negative influence on the reception of psychoanalysis, as neither of them fully accepted Freudian thought, and they even criticized his publications, leaving their readers predisposed to discount the neurologist’s work (Carles, Francisco; Muñoz, Isabel; Llor, Carmen and Marset, Pedro: *Psicoanálisis en España*, p. 34–35). Nonetheless, this interpretation is guided by an idea which supports the existence of a favorable or true understanding of psychoanalysis, which would function as a guide, defining elements or situations which move us closer to or further away from it. The history of psychoanalysis would thus be defined as a process in which we describe the various vagaries by which certain agents or others were able to read and understand Freud according to the dictates of their own education, institutionalized after 1910 by the International Psychoanalytical Association. We do not follow Carles in this conception. Firstly, it is our understanding that interest and debate around sexual subject matter during these years helped create the conditions for the dissemination and reading of psychoanalysis, with critical standpoints participating equally in this process. Secondly, our historical tracking of psychoanalysis, described in note 11, also differs from Carles’s approach.

³⁴ Hugo Vezzetti describes this idea in the context of Argentina when he points out that sexological discourse had a clear public importance, whether it was due to the “eugenic vision and the health of the species” or “that discovery of a collective neurotic threat resulting from sexual dysfunctions.” Vezzetti, Hugo: “Historia del freudismo e historia de la sexualidad: el género sexológico en Buenos Aires en los treinta,” *Prismas*, 1, (1997), pp. 211–218, p. 213.

culture were understood as the causes of significant social pathologies.³⁵ This was behind the implementation of a series of eugenic and prophylactic measures which viewed sexual education as the suitable device for prevention and the regeneration of the population. The new demands of society made it necessary to reorganize control mechanisms, setting up new devices for the new social organization, where “not without debate concerning its suitability, child sexuality became the subject of pedagogy, and tackling it would make possible both the individual channeling of the future citizen and the collective internalization of the risks which sexuality entailed.”³⁶ A reorganization of discourses in which psychoanalysis offered valuable tools for understanding and identifying normal and pathological sexuality based on the sought-after parameters of scientific postulates.

In this corner of medicine, both more conservative and resistant to psychoanalysis, it is worth making mention of José María Villaverde. In this psychiatrist’s texts, it is unquestionably possible to identify fierce opposition to the importance which psychoanalysis placed on sexuality. In 1924, he wrote an article titled “Algo sobre el movimiento psicoanalítico de la actualidad,” in which he stated that psychoanalysis was no more than a “collection of crazy ideas”³⁷ which should not be taken seriously. Its appearance on the medical landscape was considered by this author to be a passing fad which had been “spread by the meekness of the so-called neuropathologists who are absolutely devoid of critical sense,”³⁸ undoubtedly referring to authors such as Lafora³⁹ and Sacristán, who were interested in the new developments of psychoanalysis, and ideologically opposed to the ideas of Villaverde, an acknowledged supporter of the monarchy.⁴⁰ For Villaverde, the principal danger of psychoanalysis was its pseudo-scientific discourse, under which, on medical grounds, it presented “to those who were ignorant of everything a splendid program of sexual refinements, which to the most intelligent amateur will seem a little shocking.” The belief that “whenever there is distress, there is something sexual behind it, and systematically

³⁵ In 1908, Freud wrote the text “‘Civilized’ sexual morality and modern nervous illness”, in which he sets out a history of the evolution of the drive linked to the different forms of sexual and cultural morality, and their various degrees of sexual repression, to which the production of pathological symptoms as forms of replacement can also be attributed. Thus he states that “if this evolution of the sexual instinct is borne in mind, three stages of civilization can be distinguished: a first one, in which the sexual instinct may be freely exercised without regard to the aims of reproduction; a second, in which all of the sexual instinct is suppressed except what serves the aims of reproduction; and a third, in which only legitimate reproduction is allowed as a sexual aim. This third stage is reflected in our present-day ‘civilized’ sexual morality.” Freud, Sigmund: “La moral sexual ‘cultural’ y la nerviosidad moderna,” in *Obras Completas*, Tomo II, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 4^o ed., 1981 [1908], pp. 1249–1276, p. 1253.

³⁶ Del Cura, Mercedes; Huertas, Rafael: “Medicina y sexualidad infantil en la España de los años treinta. La aportación del psicoanálisis a la pedagogía sexual,” *Hispania*, 64 (218), (2004), pp. 987–1002, p. 989.

³⁷ Villaverde, José María: “Algo sobre el movimiento,” p. 208.

³⁸ Villaverde, José María: “Algo sobre el movimiento,” p. 208.

³⁹ Two events brought Lafora and Villaverde into conflict in a professional environment. The first was the vacancy in the leadership of the neuropsychiatry service at the Hospital Provincial de Madrid following the sudden death of Sanchís Banús in 1930; and the other was due to the competition for the vacant seat left by Cajal at the Royal Academy of Medicine after he died in 1934. From the two episodes, it seems clear that what was playing out was a struggle between progressives and conservatives within the medical and psychiatric establishment. See Huertas, Rafael: *Los médicos de la mente: de la neurología al psicoanálisis: Lafora, Vallejo Nágera, Garma*, Madrid, Nivola, 2002, pp. 50 ff. Also, Rey, Antonio; Martí Boscà, José Vicente: *Un monárquico y un anarquista. Debate sobre el psicoanálisis (1924-1928): José M^a Villaverde e Isaac Puente*, in Ricardo Campos Marín, Olga Villasante and Rafael Huertas (eds): *De la “Edad de Plata” al exilio. Construcción y “reconstrucción” de la psiquiatría española*, Madrid, Frenia, 2007, pp. 73–93.

⁴⁰ Villasante, Olga; Rey, Antonio and Martí Boscà, José Vicente: “José M^a Villaverde: retrato de un desconocido,” *Medicina e Historia*, 1 (4^a época), (2008), pp. 1–15.

looking for a sexual genesis,⁴¹ were denounced by Villaverde, who sought to crudely ridicule the controversial theory, resorting to a moralizing tone alien to scientific arguments:

Today there is a desire to explain everything by [psychoanalysis], without paying any attention to whether or not there is any rationale, which is the least of the concerns. ... The god 'Libido,' who lives and exists behind everything created, will strike down with his lightning bolts those who do not accept his dogma ... It would be highly amusing to see all those gentlemen preaching homosexuality—even 'sublimated' according to the religion of Freud—handing out excommunications and founding a science and a morality on the intangible basis of having sexual tendencies towards the mother or being homosexual, they are two mysteries which must be accepted without discussion, despite the fact that it is profoundly repugnant to anyone with some common sense, even in such an amount as might be administered with an eyedropper.⁴²

In response to this criticism, the journal *Medicina Ibero* published a letter signed under the pseudonym "A rural doctor."⁴³ It asked the distinguished Dr. Villaverde to justify his disrespectful words in a calm and reasoned manner. The anonymous author was Isaac Puente, a young doctor and supporter of anarchist ideology who at the time was beginning to express some of his more radical ideas on social medicine, sexology and eugenics.⁴⁴ This letter was followed by others in which the two authors, adopting a vicious tone, far from achieving some sort of formal concession, reaffirmed and radicalized their positions: conservative and paternalistic moralism versus sexual liberation and opposition to bourgeois morality. This debate undoubtedly touched on issues of greater importance and societal scope than those covered by acceptance or rejection of psychoanalysis. However, these were set out in relation to this. Beyond the scientific position of psychoanalysis, it also occupied a political and cultural position, intersected by a complex network of beliefs and values which cannot be disassociated from the agents of reception and the historical context.⁴⁵

The fact is, along with the professional elite of doctors and psychiatrists who argued scientifically for the need to reform sexual customs, it was the anarchist-inspired "anti-system forces" that most broadly undertook the struggle for sexual liberation as a necessary chapter in the fight against bourgeois morality and the revolution.⁴⁶ This is true of the psychiatrist Félix Martí Ibáñez, a young anarchist who, among other posts, was the director-general of health and social welfare for the Govern-

41 Villaverde, José María: "Algo sobre el movimiento," p. 210.

42 Villaverde, José María: "Algo sobre el movimiento," p. 210.

43 Un Médico Rural: Incitación al Dr. Villaverde, *La Medicina Ibero*, 18(1), (1924), p. 205 (front page).

44 Rey, Antonio; Martí Boscà, José Vicente: *Un monárquico*, pp. 73–93.

45 Regarding this, Plotkin illustrates the idea by describing psychoanalysis as a "cultural artifact defined in more general terms—in other words, as a polysemic object—and not just as a formalized psychological theory or therapeutic technique." Plotkin, Mariano Ben: "Psicoanálisis y *habitus* nacional: un enfoque comparativo de la recepción del psicoanálisis en Argentina y Brasil (1910-1950)," *Memoria y sociedad*, 13 (27), (2009), pp. 61–85, p. 62.

46 See Cleminson, Richard: *Anarquismo y sexualidad (España, 1900-1939)*, Cádiz, Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Cádiz, 2008. Also Nash, Mary: "La reforma sexual en el anarquismo español," in Bert Hofmann; Pere Tous and Manfred Tietz (eds.), *El anarquismo español y sus tradiciones culturales*, Frankfurt-Madrid, Vervuert-Iberoamericana, 1995, pp. 281–296.

ment of Catalonia, and one of the leading supporters of the legalization of abortion in Catalonia in 1936. This enterprise, which was clearly eugenic and class-based in nature, shared with other reforms—such as the Divorce Act, which we will discuss in greater detail in the following section—a concern for protection and the sexual health of women.

Along the same lines, from 1936 to 1937, during the war, the magazine *Estudios* created a “psychosexual problem page” in which Martí Ibáñez responded to questions posed by readers, primarily on the subjects of psychology and sexuality.⁴⁷ His responses were intended to alleviate the sexual problems of the Spanish people and were marked by a clear libertarian slant. In them, he employed and discussed the thinking of authors such as Hirschfeld, Stekel, Adler and Freud, as well as the endocrinological notions of Gregorio Marañón. He thus contributed to disseminating these ideas in the popular working-class press through the anarchist cultural publications to which he was a regular contributor.⁴⁸ In addition to Martí Ibáñez, it was common to find in the pages of this magazine other authors of anarchist ideology—such as the aforementioned Isaac Puente, an editor at the publication until his execution in Vitoria at the start of the Civil War—who were concerned about sexual liberation, homosexuality, topics related to eugenics, the liberation of women, conscious parenting and birth control. Also of interest is the work *Psicoanálisis de la Revolución Social Española*, in which Martí Ibáñez made a comparison between totemism in the Social Revolution and the stages of the psychoanalytic Oedipus complex.⁴⁹

3. Administering sexuality: education and legislation during the Second Republic

The years of the Second Spanish Republic (1931–1939) provided the political and legal conditions for all of these reformist initiatives and discourses. Major figures such as Gregorio Marañón, José Sanchis Banús, Gonzalo Rodríguez Lafora, Angel Garma and César Juarros in psychiatry and medicine; and Luis Jiménez de Asúa and Quintiliano Saldaña in the law, took an active part in these reforms, incorporating psychoanalytic ideas and terminology. Psychoanalytic concepts were regularly brought into lectures and texts which reflected the eugenic and hygienic concerns of their authors. The creation of institutions such as the Spanish League for Sexual Reform on a Scientific Basis (1932) and the passing of Spain’s first Divorce Act in 1932 reflected this enterprise, cloaking it in a scientific and legislative rationale. The idea was to enlighten society in the area of sexuality, educate from childhood, prevent disease and legally protect the rights and institutions—marriage and family—created around it, while at the same time modernizing its categories.

⁴⁷ Martí Ibáñez, Félix: *Consultorio Psíquico-sexual (De la revista Estudios), 1936-1937*, Barcelona, Tusquets, 1975.

⁴⁸ Martí, José Vicente; Rey, Antonio (eds.): *Antología de textos de Félix Martí Ibáñez*, Valencia, Generalitat Valenciana, 2004.

⁴⁹ Martí Ibáñez, Félix: *Psicoanálisis de la Revolución Social española*, Barcelona, Tierra y Libertad, 1937. On this work, see Llavona, Rafael; Bandrés, Javier: “Psicología y anarquismo en la Guerra Civil española: la obra de Félix Martí-Ibáñez,” *Psicothema*, 10, (3), (1998), pp. 669–678.

In 1927, at the first meeting of the Social Education League held at the Tabaquera Federation, César Juarros stated that “the child has sexuality.”⁵⁰ As we have already seen, the assertion of child sexuality had been considered one of the biggest perversions of psychoanalysis, but in this context, it was taken up as a scientific argument for focusing hygiene and pedagogical measures on the child and their sexuality. The idea was to prevent certain behaviors and mental disorders presumed to be related to sexual repression, entrusting the specialist with the arduous task of educating children and parents “in sexuality.” This subject had previously been neglected, relegating it to secrecy and sin. “Sexual education!” demanded a young 26-year-old doctor in the pages of the newspaper *El Sol*, asking:

Is there any place where sexual education is offered? Because it does not seem to me that a system which in fact consists of hiding all of the evils labeled “mysteries of sex” from the adolescent can be called an educational method. It is absurd to hope that an atmosphere of silence and mystery could be enough to deflect natural sexual curiosity.⁵¹

There had been debate on sexual education in Spain for several decades.⁵² Some doctors had already been pointing out its usefulness in preventing certain mental disorders,⁵³ but once again it was José María Villaverde who attacked psychoanalytic content and approaches in sexual education:

Anyone who when dealing with girls of ten or twelve, knowing how young ladies of the Spanish middle class are educated, does not refrain from asking them if they masturbate, if they do it with their left or right hand, if they dream of something elongated which, translated into psychoanalytic language, can only mean the male member of her father, would not in truth even deserve to treat them.⁵⁴

Villaverde’s mocking tone reflects the dialectical confrontation between two ways of understanding sexuality in which morality and science were forever intersecting. In contrast to Villaverde’s discourse, the most important contribution to the discussion around sexual education from the field of psychoanalysis was provided by Ángel Garma.⁵⁵ In his publications, Garma discusses the concept of “sexual enlightenment” (*sexuelle Aufklärung*), noting that this must be something more than an “intellectual explanation,” as it is necessary to “convey to the child not only what adult sexuality is, but also what child sexuality is and how to handle their childhood

⁵⁰ The expression is taken from a lecture titled “Sexual equality” which César Juarros gave at the Cigarreras y Tabaqueras Center and which was published in *El Sol* on November 27, 1927.

⁵¹ “Lo que piensan los jóvenes. Opinión de D. Julio Martín de Pereda. Médico. Veintiséis años (Madrid),” *El Sol*, 15 January 1930.

⁵² Seoane, José B.: *El placer y la norma. Genealogía de la educación sexual en la España contemporánea*, Barcelona, Octaedro, 2006.

⁵³ Fernández Sanz, Enrique: “Sobre educación sexual. Su importancia para la profilaxis de las psicosis y psiconeurosis,” *El Siglo Médico*, 62, (1915), pp. 386–389.

⁵⁴ Villaverde, José María: “Algo sobre el movimiento,” p. 208.

⁵⁵ Ángel Garma was the first Spanish psychoanalyst to be recognized by the IPA (International Psychoanalytical Association). His attempts to establish an orthodox psychoanalysis education group were cut short by the Civil War. He went into exile, first in France and later in Argentina, and became one of the founders of psychoanalysis in that country. See Markez, Iñaki: *El bilbaíno Ángel Garma (1904-1993) fundador del psicoanálisis argentino*, Bilbao, BBK, 2005.

sexual tendencies.⁵⁶ For this author, sexual education should thus begin as soon as the child demands some sort of explanation, as in his opinion, enlightenment which takes place at puberty or later has very little value and may even be counterproductive, especially if previous education has been associated with sexual repression. In fact, the adolescent educated to reject or deny their sexuality may develop a resistance to this later enlightenment, which would lead them to stoke their repressions and distrust the people around them.

In short, for Garma, truthfulness and tolerance are the two fundamental elements which a responsible adult must bear in mind when dealing with child sexuality from a medical and pedagogical perspective. In terms of tolerance, the attitude of the adult –parents or educators– regarding masturbation is obviously a key issue in this regard. For Garma, “the child satisfies his genital desires by means of masturbation.”⁵⁷ What is more, masturbation is viewed as the most natural possibility available to the boy (and girl) for “releasing” their libido (sexual energy). Consequently, Garma counsels tolerance that is, not interfering in what forms part of the normal evolution and development of child sexuality: “If [the child] is forbidden to masturbate, threatening them with all sorts of punishments, the child will continue to masturbate in secret; but this masturbation will be accompanied by feelings of guilt and therefore, remorse and neuroses.”⁵⁸

As we can see, Garma’s goal in relation to sexual education was not focused, at least not explicitly, on either a behavioral morality or sexual reform. His proposals were intended to enable the child or young person to sublimate the course of the libido, avoiding repression and feelings of guilt –which would result in neurosis– and preventing this sexual energy from getting stuck at an early stage of its evolution (oral, anal-sadistic or genital), causing perversions in the adult. In short, his goal was no other than to prevent psychic disorders which were presumed to have their origin in a repressed childhood sexuality. Albeit without setting out to do so –as Garma’s focus was predominantly clinical and preventive– there is nevertheless no doubt that his psychoanalytic approaches clearly pointed to sexual modernity, promoting a change in customs and beliefs around sexuality.

In a similar vein, in a lecture given during Mental Hygiene Week, held in 1936, Jerónimo Molina –one of Garma’s most notable followers– stated that based on the psychoanalysis carried out with adults, it was possible to verify the importance of “childhood experiences, even when they seem to have been forgotten by the subject, and we see that if the childhood events had gone another way, the subject’s neurosis would have evolved differently or would not even have emerged.” He therefore stressed the importance of the beneficial effects of “a good education, with knowledge of the processes of the child’s soul” as this “allows us to facilitate the phenomenon known as sublimation, by virtue of which a part of the spiritual energy is displaced and satisfied in highly useful things, altruistic work, sports, art, etc. With intense repression, proper sublimation is not possible, and such individuals live in

⁵⁶ Garma, Ángel: *El psicoanálisis, la neurosis y la sociedad*, Madrid, Ediciones de Archivos de Neurobiología, 1936, pp. 118–119. Other contributions by this author to the subject at hand are Garma, Ángel: “Consideraciones psicoanalíticas sobre la vida sexual,” *Archivos de Neurobiología*, 12 (4), (1932), pp. 543–566; and Garma, Ángel: “Psicología de la aclaración de la sexualidad en la infancia,” *Revista de Escuelas Normales*, 12 (103), (1934), pp. 98–103.

⁵⁷ Garma, Ángel: *El psicoanálisis*, p. 43.

⁵⁸ Garma, Ángel: *El psicoanálisis*, p. 118.

the background, separate from society, they have little love for work and are not happy.”⁵⁹

In addition to these important contributions to the education of individuals, it is worth considering the fact that some authors viewed the role of psychoanalysis in hygiene and sexual education not at the individual level, but on a more social and collective plane. In the book *Los horizontes del psicoanálisis*, a compilation of a series of lectures given by Juarros at the Academy of Jurisprudence in Madrid, the author stressed the importance of the issue of sexuality from the perspective of psychoanalytic understanding. He began the text by analyzing the origins of Spain’s rejection of this theory: “prejudices,” “sanctimoniousness” and “fear,” which were reduced to one single thing: sexuality.⁶⁰ This lecture by Juarros was consistent with his reformist mentality, so we will not be surprised to learn that from 1922, he was president of the Prostitution Abolitionism Society, an organization which in addition to the regulation of prostitution, advocated an extensive hygiene and sexual education campaign.⁶¹ However, it was also the reaction resulting from the banning of the First Eugenics Conference, during the Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, as it was believed to be conducive to “pornographic delight.”⁶² Juarros, who was one of the organizers, stated on the matter:

Prejudices are an essential factor. As strange as it may seem, about no other function do the common people have such a mistaken idea as that which they have regarding the sexual mission. From being ignorant of the existence of child sexuality to denying desire a physiological category. A crusty and short-sighted *sanctimoniousness* hinders the true examination of the forms of the instinct and its objectifications. ... Lastly, in not a few cases, the rants against psychoanalysis are due to the *fear* that the sexual mystery itself will be discovered. There are people who, not being ignorant of their abnormality, pretend not to know it, trembling in horror at the possibility of having to peer into the painful truth.⁶³

Shortly afterwards, in 1929, the magistrate Quintiliano Saldaña also wrote that sexual life in Spain appeared “to be a tremendous avoidance. ... It is a wonder that the race has not become extinct and the people vanished. Such is the ‘taboo’ that emerges regarding all social access to the sex reserve.”⁶⁴ These words are from his work *Siete ensayos sobre sociología sexual*, in which, as the name (*Seven Essays on Sexual Sociology*) suggests, Saldaña sought to provide an analysis and critique of the social life of the Spanish people based on the example of their sexual life:

The work of Sigmund Freud tears open the hymen of mystery, offering sexual Sociology tempting scientific and social domains. It will be –perhaps– all Sociology, reconstructed from the sexual visual angle. ... We have said: “Positive science op-

⁵⁹ Molina Nuñez, Jerónimo: “Higiene mental del niño,” lecture on the occasion of Mental Hygiene Week given over Unión Radio, *Los progresos de la clínica*, 5, (1936), p.VII.

⁶⁰ Juarros, César: *Los horizontes del psicoanálisis*, Madrid, Mundo Latino, 1928, pp. 12–13.

⁶¹ Juarros, César: *Normas de Educación Sexual y Física*, Madrid, Renacimiento, no year.

⁶² Barrachina, Marie-Aline: “Maternidad, feminidad, sexualidad. Algunos aspectos de las Primeras Jornadas Eugénicas Españolas (Madrid, 1928-Madrid, 1933),” *Hispania*, 64 (3), (2004), pp. 1003–1026, 1008.

⁶³ Juarros, César: *Los horizontes*, pp. 12–13 (italics in the original).

⁶⁴ Saldaña, Quintiliano: *Siete ensayos sobre sociología sexual*, Madrid, Mundo Latino, 1929, p. 18.

erated towards the –physical and social– exterior. Now, new science indicates that truth, again, resides *in interiore hominis*.” Psychoanalysis appears to supplement Physioanalysis. And thus, psychoanalytic Sociology, from one of its coordinates, is sexual Sociology.⁶⁵

For the magistrate, the sexual problem in Spain lay in the possibility of its modernization, for which it became necessary to reestablish society within that explanation from which it had fled and on which two of its principal elements of national decline were based: ecclesiastical celibacy and prostitution, leading to an exclusively pleasurable sexuality, which infects man and ruins the race.⁶⁶ Healthy sexuality was that which took place under the shelter of an allowed union, based on love and within the parameters of legal protection of marriage, as outside of this, “the sexual relationship is penetrated by egoism (desire now becomes a physiological tendency towards possession).”⁶⁷ This is also how it would be characterized by the educator Joaquín Xirau in his speech at the 5th Assembly of the Spanish League for Mental Hygiene, held in Granada in 1932, when he stated that the sexual problem was not only of a physical nature, but there are also numerous factors involved in sexual life. Nonetheless, what gives it a moral value is its connection with love, which turns the erotic relationship into a relationship between people, between humans and not animals. Here, Xirau highlights sublimation as an extremely valuable tool in attaining this goal, and so, just as medicine locates “health or illness” in erotic life, the law locates in it “justice or injustice, the social ‘forms’, its appropriateness or inappropriateness, ... religion, its holiness,” and ethics illuminates these in relation to love.⁶⁸

In general, the use of psychoanalytic ideas for sociological diagnosis and analysis would turn them into categories of medical dissemination capable of blurring the lines between a normal psychology and an abnormal one, locating the possibilities of the pathological origin in any manifestation of *everyday life*.⁶⁹ Under the social threat of triggering neuroses or surrendering to the seductions and vices of the modern city, the only possibility is not to neglect these issues and devote oneself to the citizens and precautions which the specialists put forward as medical/moral formulas that would prevent the pathological and immoral development of societies.

In the legal realm, the passing of the first Divorce Act in 1932 is without a doubt the most important development in the area of marriage legislation during the Second Spanish Republic. We will not focus here on either the ideological assumptions

⁶⁵ Saldaña, Quintiliano: *Siete ensayos*, p. 22. In Saldaña’s words, it is possible to identify a shared existence of theories and discourses which we would deem irreconcilable today, but which nevertheless demonstrated great discursive flexibility, allowing them to be presented as complementary. Thus psychoanalysis was combined with endocrinology, psychometry, Lombrosian positivism, and even, during the Franco period, the exercise of the Catholic faith. See Lévy Lazcano, Silvia: “Prevenir, rehabilitar y sancionar. La incorporación de las ideas psicoanalíticas a la psiquiatría forense. 1930-1950” in Ricardo Campos Marín; Ángel González De Pablo (eds.): *Psiquiatría e higiene mental en el primer franquismo*, Madrid, La Catarata, 2016, pp. 145–174.

⁶⁶ Saldaña, Quintiliano: *Siete ensayos*, p. 19.

⁶⁷ Saldaña, Quintiliano: *Siete ensayos*, p. 31.

⁶⁸ Xirau, Joaquín: “Educación sexual,” *Archivos de Neurobiología*, 15 (1), (1935), pp. 109–115.

⁶⁹ Here we refer to the title of Freud’s work *The Psychopathology of everyday life*, which had been translated into Spanish as part of the *Complete Works* of Freud in 1922 (Freud, Sigmund: *Obras Completas*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, tomo 1, 1981 [1901], pp. 755–931). However, an interpretation of the content of this work had been disseminated in 1911 through the text by Ortega y Gasset titled “Psicoanálisis, ciencia problemática” (Ortega y Gasset, José: *Obras Completa*, Madrid, Revista de Occidente, vol.1, pp. 216–136) on which he based a large part of his arguments.

or the political significance of the law,⁷⁰ but rather on the medical and psychoanalytic arguments used in its defense. Presented to the Congress of Deputies on December 4, 1931, the bill was drafted by jurist Luis Jiménez de Asúa, who was advised on psychological matters by Dr. José Sanchis Banús. Both were socialist MPs, but also prestigious professionals with an interest in incorporating psychoanalysis into criminology and psychiatry. Years earlier, Sanchis Banús had acted as an expert in a canonical annulment suit in which it was stated that the practice of *coitus interruptus* imposed by the husband had caused the wife severe neurotic problems deriving directly from the anxiety resulting from an unsatisfied and repressed libido.⁷¹ In addition, he had associated certain mental disorders with lack of sexual satisfaction: “In 70 percent of the psychoneurosis illnesses which I have treated, I have come to be of the firm conviction that there was a profound gap between what they desired and what they had achieved in terms of sex.”⁷²

It is interesting to note how this interest in preventing mental disorders related to sexual repression or dissatisfaction shifted from the individual to the collective. In fact, the psychoanalytic arguments used to defend the bill for the Divorce Act in the Spanish Parliament were firm in this respect. Divorce was thus a way to prevent hysteria, to provide the woman with a legal means to protect herself and to avoid a “reaction due to a lack of defense.” In the face of the women’s defenselessness within marital life, in the face of the husband’s impositions, in the face of “society’s conspiracy against the rights of women,” divorce emerged as a path to personal liberation and mental prophylaxis:

How can we be surprised that the woman has reactions of a hysterical type, if we shut down the normal route of the reaction? I maintain not that we enshrine hysteria, but that we nullify hysteria caused by marriage, when we give the woman a legal means to cancel the marital bond.⁷³

In short, the Divorce Act constitutes a very significant example of how Freudian psychology, sexual reform and the defense of women’s rights joined forces in response to the problem of marital dysfunction. The same was not true with other important aspects of sexual problems. In fact, Jiménez de Asúa himself later rejected the possibility of presenting a bill to decriminalize abortion, which as we have seen, was only passed by the Government of Catalonia in 1936.

Despite everything, it is clear that certain actions were strengthening an understanding of sexuality that medicalized pleasure and normativized its practice, both in the sphere of education and in the courts, through the work of psychiatric experts. Several authors put forward a new way of understanding crime and the psychology of the criminal based on the psychic dynamism proposed by Freudian thought. The threat represented by those who could be dangerous or potentially dangerous to so-

⁷⁰ Daza, Jesús: “La ley de divorcio de 1932. Presupuestos ideológicos y significación política,” *Alternativas. Cuadernos de Trabajo Social*, 1 (1992), pp. 163–175.

⁷¹ Sanchis Banús, José: “Acerca de los trastornos nerviosos originados en la mujer por la práctica sistemática del coitus interruptus y su patogenia,” *Los progresos de la Clínica*, 26, (1923), pp. 196–230.

⁷² Sanchis Banús, José: “La cuestión del psicoanálisis,” *Archivos de Medicina, Cirugía y Especialidades*, 15, (1924), pp. 136–142.

⁷³ Sanchis Banús’s speech can be found in the *Diario de Sesiones de las Cortes Constituyentes de la II República*, nº 57, October 15, 1931, pp. 1759–1764.

ciety as a result of having succumbed to the satisfaction of an uncontrolled sexual drive marked the interest in these formulations. As Vázquez and Moreno puts it: “The sexualization of criminal conduct would become a cliché. Given a crime, the psychiatrist will decipher the components of perverse sexuality which may have instigated it.”⁷⁴ Psychoanalysis served as a technique for shedding light on the sexual origin of the crime, presumed to be inscribed in the psychological background of the criminal, and the subconscious motivation which must have triggered the criminal act. It was jurist César Camargo y Marín who most extensively gave an opinion on the matter in his work *El psicoanálisis en la doctrina y en la práctica judicial* (1931),⁷⁵ a thick volume in which he discusses some contributions of Freudian theory and puts forward the concept of “*psychoanalytic criminology*, in which we will extensively study the subject of *sexual aberrations*.”⁷⁶ According to Camargo, the criminal is guided by the desire to satisfy the criminal libido, which he designated *premeditation*, and based on the mechanism of sublimation proposed by psychoanalysis, it can be guided towards an end which can be found within the parameters of established public order enshrined in the penal code. He thus maintains that:

The laws reserved their most severe punishments for the *normal sexual act*, but forgot the perverted or abnormal forms, which are left unpunished or given the mildest penalties. Among crimes against morality and custom appear, first, those classified as *public indecency*. The penalty is justified, because they offend the sentiments of the majority of the group and because they excite passions and may give rise to falsely directing the libidinous impulse.⁷⁷

Along with Camargo, Luis Jiménez de Asúa was another of the jurists who produced psychoanalytic material on the subject during this period.⁷⁸ And psychiatrist Emilio Mira, in his *Manual de Psicología Jurídica* (1932),⁷⁹ proposes the expert use of psychoanalysis, combining it with psychometric measuring devices which allow the “*hunt for complexes*” to be carried out “almost mathematically”⁸⁰ in the courts.

4. Conclusions

The process of social modernization which took place in Spain during the early decades of the 20th century gave rise to a change in discourses and customs around the sexuality of the Spanish people, shifting its management from the private domain to the public. The scientific consideration of psychoanalysis made it possible to use its

⁷⁴ Vázquez García, Francisco; Moreno Mengibar, Andrés: *Sexo y Razón. Una genealogía de la moral sexual en España (Siglos XVI-XX)*, Madrid, Akal, 1997. p. 262.

⁷⁵ Camargo, César: *El psicoanálisis en la doctrina y en la práctica judicial*, Madrid, M. Aguilar, 1931. On these authors and the incorporation of psychoanalysis into legal psychiatry, consult Lévy Lazcano, Silvia: “Delitos inconscientes. Psicoanálisis y teoría penal durante la Segunda República española,” *Culturas Psi/Psy Cultures*, 6 (2016), pp. 34–64; and “Prevenir, rehabilitar y sancionar...”

⁷⁶ Camargo, César: *El psicoanálisis en la doctrina*, p. 93 (italics in the original).

⁷⁷ Camargo, César: *El psicoanálisis en la doctrina*, p. 28 (italics in the original).

⁷⁸ Jiménez De Asúa, Luis: *Valor de la psicología profunda (Psicoanálisis y Psicología Individual)*, Reus, Madrid, Ciencias Penales, 1935.

⁷⁹ Mira y López, Emilio: *Manual de Psicología Jurídica*, Barcelona, Salvat, 1932.

⁸⁰ Mira y López, Emilio: *El Psico-análisis*, Barcelona, Arnau de Vilanova, pp. 85–86 (italics in the original).

ideas in the discourses and strategies of the movement for sexual reform on a scientific basis. However, this reformist vision coexisted with a more conservative standpoint, which viewed psychoanalysis as an aberration of thought and was opposed to what it considered a danger and an outrage to the moral rectitude of Spanish culture. The two standpoints enabled this knowledge to circulate at different levels of the country's scientific and political culture, incorporating several of its concepts into the psychiatric language of the period. Psychoanalytic ideas, employed as an argument in favor of discourse around prevention and sexual education, likewise played a part in the political and social transformations of the Second Republic. Psychoanalysis placed the role of sexuality at the genesis of the phenomena of everyday life, and defined normal and pathological profiles in relation to it. This line of argument was used to support the protection and social defense strategies of the 1930s, as it made it possible to identify profiles of social dangers and propose to correct them.

It was therefore the various social problems and positions of the different actors which adapted and formulated one set of ideas or another according to their own interests, viewing psychoanalysis as an additional resource for discussing sex, whether it be to criticize it, administer it, rationalize it and/or judicialize it. In this regard, in relation to psychoanalysis, both conservative and more progressive standpoints constructed a space intersected by beliefs, values and political positions, in which their ideas ranged *from outrage to normalization* in moral, legal and political terms, conveying various messages, which were not necessarily scientific in nature.

Lastly, as to methodology, this article is positioned within a recent line of research on the cultural history of psychoanalysis.⁸¹ From this perspective, the reconstruction of the history of psychoanalysis moves beyond distinctly psychological and/or intellectual channels of communication to open up a much larger field of analysis, one which intersects with the political and social problems of a period and local agents who, in the process of reception, reformulated the theory based on their own interests. In this regard, in historical terms, we are employing quite a broad definition of psychoanalysis, which encompasses the non-orthodox uses, appropriations and adaptations of this knowledge to the particular features of the local environment. This approach also places the emphasis on the processes involved in the local reception of psychoanalysis and its relationship to the processes of the international circulation of psychoanalytic ideas.

⁸¹ See Damousi, Joy; Plotkin, Mariano (eds.): *The Transnational Unconscious*; Plotkin, Mariano: *Freud en las pampas*; Rupertuz, Mariano: *Freud y los chilenos*, Santiago de Chile, Pólvara, 2015; Vetö, Silvana: *Disputas por el dominio del alma. Historia Cultural del Psicoanálisis en Chile, 1910-1950*, Universidad de Chile, unpublished doctoral thesis, 2015; and Levy Lazcano, Silvia: "Prevenir, rehabilitar y sancionar."