

# *La infancia anormal en Chile y la pedagogía experimental de Wilhelm Mann (1860-1920)*

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## Resumen

Los análisis realizados por Michel Foucault hacia mediados de la década de 1970 dan cuenta del surgimiento de un poder disciplinario en occidente y de la figura del “débil mental” en el ámbito educativo. Este panorama impulsa la aparición de diversas elaboraciones teóricas y modalidades de intervención denominadas por el autor como “función psi”, que en el caso de la infancia alcanza una notable productividad en la Francia de comienzos del siglo XX. El presente artículo retoma estas cuestiones con el fin de indagar, en el caso de Chile, el despliegue de esos saberes y prácticas psicológicas que se ocupan de aquellos niños que, por motivos diversos, no logran adaptarse a las normas que impone el dispositivo escolar. Se utilizó un método de tipo historiográfico, mediante el trabajo de archivo y uso de fuentes primarias con un complemento de fuentes secundarias. Entre los hallazgos, se analizan los cruciales aportes de Wilhelm Mann, pedagogo alemán y figura pionera de la psicología en Chile, respecto de la infancia anormal a comienzos del siglo XX. Con esto, se explora y analiza una parte de su producción para iluminar el modo en que Mann se introduce en los debates y los modelos institucionales europeos y comienza a pensar una modalidad de intervención sobre la infancia a nivel local.

*Palabras clave:* infancia anormal, saberes psi, pedagogía, Chile, Michel Foucault, Wilhelm Mann.

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## *Abnormal childhood in Chile and the experimental pedagogy of Wilhelm Mann (1860-1920)*

### Abstract

The analyzes carried out by Michel Foucault in the mid-1970s show the emergence of a disciplinary power in the West and the figure of the "mentally weak" in the educational field. This panorama drives the appearance of various theoretical elaborations and intervention modalities called by the author "psi function", which in the case of childhood reaches a remarkable productivity in France at the beginning of the 20th century. This article takes up these issues in order to investigate, in the case of Chile, the deployment of the psychological knowledge and practices that deal with those children who, for various reasons, fail to adapt to the rules imposed by the school system. A historiographic method was used, through the work of archiving and using primary sources with a complement of secondary sources. Among the findings, the crucial contributions of Wilhelm Mann, a German pedagogue and a pioneer figure of psychology in Chile regarding abnormal childhood at the beginning of the 20th century are analyzed. Based on this, a part of his production is explored and analyzed to illuminate the way in which Mann introduces himself into European institutional debates and models and begins to think about an intervention modality on children at the local level.

*Key words:* abnormal childhood, psi knowledge, pedagogy, Chile, Michel Foucault, Wilhelm Mann.

## *A infância anormal no Chile e a pedagogia experimental de Wilhelm Mann (1860-1920)*

### Resumo

As análises realizadas por Michel Foucault até meados da década de 1970 tratam do surgimento de um poder disciplinar no ocidente e da figura do "débil mental" no contexto educativo. Esse panorama impulsiona a aparição de diversas elaborações teóricas e modalidades de intervenção denominadas pelo autor como "função psi", que, no caso da infância, alcança uma notável produtividade na França do início do século XX. O presente artigo retoma essas questões com o objetivo de indagar, no caso do Chile, o desdobramento desses saberes e práticas psicológicas que se ocupam daquelas crianças que, por diferentes motivos, não conseguem se adaptar às normas impostas pelo dispositivo escolar. Utilizou-se um método de tipo historiográfico, por meio do trabalho de arquivo e uso de fontes primárias com um complemento de fontes secundárias. Entre as descobertas, analisam-se as colaborações cruciais de Wilhelm Mann, pedagogo alemão e figura pioneira da psicologia no Chile, com respeito à infância anormal no início do século XX. Com isso, uma parte de sua produção é explorada e analisada para iluminar o modo em que Mann se introduz nos debates e nos modelos institucionais europeus e começa a pensar em uma modalidade de intervenção sobre a infância em um contexto local.

*Palavras-chave:* infância anormal, saberes psi, pedagogia, Chile, Michel Foucault, Wilhelm Mann.

### Introduction

In the mid 19th century, a fundamental period began in the organization of education in Chile -especially with regard to primary education- that lasted until the beginning of the 20th century (Cox & Gysling, 2009; Egaña, 2000; Labarca, 1939; Muñoz, 1918; Núñez, 1883; Serrano, Ponce de León & Rengifo, 2012). In fact, from the *Ley General de Instrucción Primaria* de 1860 [General Law of Primary Instruction of 1860] (Larraín & Larraín, 1871), a gradual institutionalization and state regulation of education began, which ended up being defined around 1920 with *Ley N° 3,654 of Educación Primaria Obligatoria (Dirección General de Educación Primaria, 1920)* [Law N° 3,654 of Compulsory Primary Education (General Directorate of Primary Education, 1920)], which established a complex process, whose trajectory does not seem to follow a progressive, uniform

or ascending movement. Within this context, this paper seeks to inquire about the knowledge and psychological practices that emerged from the useless residues produced by school discipline, that is to say, those children who fail to adapt -in different ways- to the rules imposed by school.

The most illustrative example of this useless residues at school is the "mentally weak" construct (Foucault, 2005), an aspect that the Kantian language has described early, evidencing a derogatory and segregating discourse, as the tone of the medical classifications of the 20th century in the contemporary psychiatry manuals (e.g., Kant, 1764/2018; Lapoujade, 2015; Lieberman, 2016).

In this sense, it is important to refer to the emergence of childhood abnormality in the 19th century Europe -mainly in France- in relation to the classification of *idiots* and *imbeciles* by the psychiatry of the time (Huertas, 2011, 2014), since it is in the light of these debates and problems that the transit

of these people to the educational world arises, in which the first techniques that allowed their detection, exclusion and relocation in various institutions are being unfolded.

Taking this into account, this article uses a series of concepts proposed by the philosopher Michel Foucault, with the intention of providing a theoretical framework that may serve as a reference to analyze abnormal childhood and the experimental pedagogy of Wilhelm Mann applied from the beginning of the 20th century at the *Instituto Pedagógico de la Universidad de Chile* [Pedagogical Institute of the University of Chile], which had a high impact on national education (Parra, 2015; Salas & Lizama, 2013). Thus, this article aims to show that the German pedagogue, a pioneer figure in Chilean psychology, was one of the first to tackle the problem of abnormal childhood at the local level.

In this way, the objective of the present paper was to analyze part of the author's production, especially the works published between 1905 and 1915 (Mann, 1905a, 1905b, 1906, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1912, 1915a, 1915b), where the first references to the problem of *abnormal children* -mainly the *weak and mentally retarded*- can be found, as a focus of concern for pedagogy in Chile. The way in which Mann gets involved in debates and institutional models that were installed in Europe to start thinking about an intervention modality for childhood is highlighted.

This work follows the historiographic method (Carr, 1993; De Mussy & Valderrama, 2010; Lappenbach, 2014; Rosa, Huertas & Blanco, 1996), through the use of primary sources -retrieved with a rigorous search carried out in various files- obtained mainly in the Research Room of the National Library of Chile. Added to these, is the complement of secondary sources, which allows for a review, reconstruction and exhaustive analysis of the object of study.

### **The emergence of mental retardation as a useless residue of school discipline and object of the "psi function"**

Between November 1973 and January 1974, Foucault presented his course on *The psychiatric power* at the Collège de France (Foucault, 2005), in which some themes that the author had presented in previous courses, such as *The Punitive Society* (Foucault, 2016) and *The Truth and Legal Forms* (Foucault, 2017), were resumed and expanded. Among them, the question of disciplinary power -or simply, discipline- addressed for the first time in the class of March 14, 1973, stands out (Foucault, 2016).

In this respect, Foucault proposes to explore the hypothesis about the existence of a *disciplinary power* in society (Foucault, 1999, 2005), which is distinguished from another

type of power that precedes it historically, called *sovereign power*. In order to show the characteristics, differences and relations between both concepts, the author undertakes a historical inquiry that, essentially, goes back to the 18th and 19th centuries, with a special interest in highlighting a series of transformations that take place in different spaces of the French society of the time, so as to give an account of its disciplinarization and to point out four main characteristics of this mechanism of power.

The first characteristic of disciplinarization is the total and exhaustive capture of the individual's behavior, body and time in its entirety, through, for example, military discipline and quartering, which appeared since the end of the 17th century. In the case of school, it is possible to appreciate. The imposition on children of a classroom space and an hourly load measures that regulate great part of their daily life (Foucault, 2005).

The second characteristic refers to the fact that disciplinary power implies a panoptic nature, while being perpetually in a situation of being observed (Foucault, 2005). In this sense, the discipline looks to the future, towards a stage in which "everything works by itself", in which the surveillance itself is unnecessary or barely virtual. As guarantees of this type of "permanent and global capture" of discipline, Foucault mentions, in addition to exercise, the writing, recording and annotation of what the individual does and says, which is later schematized and centralized in devices of control, such as the report card, the behavior record, the file or the clinical sheet, etc. (Foucault, 2005). This control and permanent visibility of one's own bodies provides the discipline with the possibility of a rapid execution of dominion and power. In fact, the discipline itself would tend to intervene even before the act occurs:

Even before the gesture is a reality, something must be identified, and the disciplinary power must intervene: intervene, in a certain way, before the very manifestation of the behavior, before the body, the gesture or the speech, at the level of virtuality, of disposition, of the will, at the level of the soul [...], a soul very different from the one defined by Christian practice and theory (Foucault, 2005, p.73).

As a third characteristic, it is mentioned that the disciplinary devices are isotopic (Foucault, 2005), which implies that they leave no room for chance or, at least, that they tend to reduce chance to its minimum expression, and that each of its components has a precise position with respect to others, determined by a strict hierarchy. Here, Foucault mentions, as an example, the school model of the Jesuits and the Brothers of the Common Life, in which the place that individuals occupied in the class depended on their

school results: the most successful occupied the first seats, the closest to the teacher, and their location moved away as they approached school failure (Foucault, 1990, 2005). Additionally, this isotopy, even implies an articulation between different disciplinary devices, such as school, hospital, the barracks, etc., where there is the possibility of people transiting from one to the other (Foucault, 1990, 2005). In fact, here school functions as a device that prepares the passage of subjects to other disciplinary systems.

Finally, as a fourth characteristic, it is pointed out that the disciplinary isotopy always implies the production of useless residues, of what remains outside, that escapes from the discipline and that collides with it. Thus, in addition to the deserter, who only exists from the constitution of a disciplined army, Foucault mentions the case of the *mentally weak* at school and the *madman*, who become the *useless residues* of all disciplinary spaces (Foucault, 2001, 2005, 2014a). These useless residues, which are not a mere accident or obstacle, but a specific effect of the discipline, give rise to new disciplinary spaces, whose purpose is to normalize them; such is the case of special schools for the *mentally weak*.

Now, separating from this disciplinary device, Foucault then refers to the family, not to characterize it as part of the disciplinarization, but to show that -towards the 19th century- it is constituted as a cell, a rest of that modality of power, previous and almost opposite to the discipline: *the sovereign power*. Despite this difference between disciplinary devices and the family, the latter plays an essential role in the framework of the disciplinary society that was established in the 19th century. In fact, this family was redefined and intensified, but limited to its nuclear format: the parental couple and their children (Goody, 2009; Smadja, 2013). "It is the instance of coercion that will permanently fix individuals to disciplinary apparatuses, which in a certain way will inject them into them" (Foucault, 2005, p.105). The imposition of compulsory primary education was only possible thanks to the intervention of family sovereignty.

The family even played an additional role as an anchorage point in the articulation between different disciplinary powers, as a social entity that guarantees the passage from one disciplinary device to another: from school to the workshop, to the barracks, to jail or to the insane asylum. A proof of this second function of the family in disciplinary societies is that, when an individual is rejected by some disciplinary system, he is sent back to his family (Foucault, 2005); and, in fact, the family is summoned or sued when a child begins to show signs of being a potential useless residue of school discipline.

Subsequently, Foucault noted the appearance, around the middle of the 19th century, of new disciplinary devices,

such as homes for abandoned children, orphanages, schools for poor children, schooling for the child laborer, and homes for juvenile delinquents, from which the concept of *childhood in danger* arises (Foucault, 2005; Larrosa, 1995). As a result of this, the so-called "psi function" emerged, used by psychologists, psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, criminologists, etc., "agents of the organization of a disciplinary device that will be set in motion [...] when a vacuum of family sovereignty occurs" (Foucault, 2005, p.101).

Thus, psychiatry emerged in response to family sovereignty unable to contain the individual, which later was extended to other disciplinary devices. By the early 20th century, the "psi function" became "the discourse and control of all disciplinary systems [...], it is the discourse and introduction of all the schemes of individualization, normalization and subjection of individuals within disciplinary systems" (Foucault, 2005, p. 111), which have the family as a constant reference: the emergence of psychopedagogy and educational psychology, the use of psychological evaluations to legitimize school decisions -such as school segregation in relation to learning pathologies-, and psychometrics of intelligence that established a relationship between educational and psychological practices, which, complemented by means of this new psychologizing knowledge, are examples -at the level of knowledge and discourse- of this "psi function" within the school discipline (Parra, 2015; Terigi, 2009).

In addition, Foucault (2005) proposed that the generalization of psychiatric power to educational and health establishments had as its main reference the figure of the child, and, to account for this hypothesis, it deals with presenting a double process: on the one hand, the theoretical elaboration of the notion of *imbecile* or *idiot* as phenomena that do not belong to the realm of madness; and on the other, the introduction of *idiocy* in the psychiatric space of the mental hospital. Thus, until the end of the 18th century, *imbecility*, *stupidity* or *idiocy* were considered by psychiatry as a type of madness, a particular form of the series of dementia (opposite to those in the form of fury), where delirium reaches its most acute and generalized point; but towards the middle of the 19th century a reelaboration of these categories was developed (Noll & Trent, 2004; Postel & Quénel, 2000).

In this way, although he mentions other authors -such as Esquirol and Belhomme-, Foucault stops at the *Moral traitement, hygiène et éducation des idiots et des autres enfants arriérés* [Moral treatment, hygiene and education of idiots and other retarded children] by Seguin (1846), who "proposes the fundamental concepts of the psychology and psychopathology of mental retardation that will develop throughout the nineteenth century" (Foucault, 2005, p.239),

where he is interested in highlighting the distinction made by this author between *idiots* and *retarded*, between those in whom development was interrupted and those in whom development is slower. Here, development is understood as a temporary process that affects all individuals, and can be considered as a norm or, rather, from a double normativity: in the case of the *idiot*, with respect to the adult (as a culminating point), and in the *mentally retarded*, with respect to other children.

Therefore, these two conditions, especially *mental retardation*, do not consist of diseases, but rather of types of childhood and varieties within the normative development of children: they are not sick children, but, in the case of the *mentally retarded*, they are abnormal children (Foucault, 2001, 2005) who, therefore, should not be treated as patients, but as children, and their cure will consist of imposing a psychoeducational approach (Foucault, 2005). Unlike the disease, the anomaly does not generate symptoms, but would have, as a positive phenomenon, the release of instinct, which is something that belongs to childhood, is present from the beginning and clearly appears in *idiocy* or in *mental retardation* (Foucault, 2005).

However, at the same time that this distinction was introduced, the incorporation of *idiocy* into the psychiatric space occurred; in principle, Foucault clarifies, in institutions of deaf-mutes. This was not the effect of the primary school regulations that took place in France in 1833 (Ravier, 2012), but rather of the question that arose regarding where to locate these children depending on the work of the parents. It is in this sense that it can be related to the opening of asylum rooms, nurseries, kindergartens and with the schooling of children. Taking this into account, in 1834 the *Instituto de Ortofrenia* [Institute of Orthophrenia] was founded for the treatment of poor children with mental deficiency (Voisin, 1843), with the purpose of locating them, later, in pavilions inside the hospices that were destined to the *mentally weak*, *idiots* and, often, *hysterical and epileptic*, who in all cases were regarded as children.

Now, Foucault did not venture into further courses, not even into the one devoted to *The abnormal* (Foucault, 2001), in the vicissitudes of abnormal childhood during the immediately following decades, and does not address a stage that could be considered fundamental in relation to the topic of interest here and that essentially takes place towards the beginning of the 20th century.

In this context, towards the end of the 19th century, the *Unión Francesa para el Salvataje de la Infancia* [French Union for the Salvation of Children] was founded (1887) and, three years later, the *Patronato de la Infancia y de la Adolescencia* [Board of Children and Adolescents], whose purpose was to educate and locate children who were *deviant*,

*lazy or juvenile delinquent* from 8 to 18 years of age. Laws on paternal deprivation were also promulgated -in 1889- and on the mandatory instruction of crimes committed by minors -in 1890- (Muel-Dreyfus, 1975).

Additionally, at this moment appears the figure of Alfred Binet, founder of the Journal *L'Année psychologique* -in 1894- and who, from the following years, already at the beginning of the 20th century, assumes the direction of the *Psychology Laboratory of the Sorbonne* (Binet, 1906). Particularly, in 1904, he participated in an interministerial commission led by Léon Bourgeois, which brought together educators, doctors, scientists and representatives of the administrative services concerned about studying the conditions under which the education of abnormal children should be provided (Binet & Simon, 1907). Within the framework of this research, he carried out a series of works with Théodore Simon -published in *L'Année psychologique*-, where he proposed "a method to measure intelligence based on the application of a scale of tasks ordered by their increasing difficulty according to the age of the children" (Huertas & del Cura, 1996, p. 127). As will be seen later, this method was widely accepted in many countries, and various researchers started to produce local versions of what was beginning to be known as the Binet-Simon Intelligence Test (García, 2016; García-Yagüe, 2010; Salas, 2012; Sánchez & Valderrama-Iturbe, 2001).

Bearing this in mind, in that period Binet intended to add two new categories to the classification system of abnormal children formulated by psychiatry up to that moment (*idiots and imbeciles*): the *retarded* and the *unstable* (Muel-Dreyfus, 1975). For Binet, the *retarded* did not have a well-defined anomaly of character, but did not benefit or benefited very little from the teaching commonly given with the usual methods, while the *unstable* -the medical term that corresponds to the more scholarly expression of undisciplined- showed mainly *abnormalities* in their character (Binet & Simon, 1904, 1907, 1908). However, an even more relevant distinction is the one made by this author between the *abnormal children of an hospice* and the *abnormal children of a school*, which aimed mainly to indicate the type of abnormal children to be admitted in the school setting, that is to say, those who would be able to make a living, or at least partially able to do so (Binet & Simon, 1907). This distinction left the *idiots* out of the pedagogical scope, but brought in the *imbeciles* and, even more so, the *mentally weak*.

At the end of this period, it could be considered that in France took place the enactment of the law on the creation of improvement courses annexed to public elementary schools and of autonomous improvement schools for retarded children, which was eradicated on April 15, 1909 (Huertas, 2008).

Now, after the presentation of this panorama on useless residues in the school discipline and the "psi function" in France, it is interesting to explore the characteristics of these concepts in Chile. To this end, it is necessary to focus on the modality in which childhood schooling is implemented there.

### **The "Teaching State" and the schooling of Chilean children towards the middle of the 19th century**

How is education in Chile organized in the process of transforming the country into a modern state? Without intention of exhaustiveness, one could begin by pointing out that, towards the middle of the 19th century, there were only 56 public schools in Chile, none of them located in its capital (Labarca, 1939). On the contrary, numerous conventual, private or municipal institutions functioned there, each with a particular stipend. In addition, the percentage of the schooled population was very low and amounted to only 1% (Labarca, 1939).

The task of imposing a system of free primary education at the national level was, without a doubt, the product of a process crossed by diverse and controversial projects, and its bases go back to the 1840s, during the presidency of Manuel Bulnes, in which, on the initiative of Manuel Montt, in his role as Minister of Justice and Public Instruction, the *Escuela Normal de Preceptores* [Training School for Preceptors] was created (Serrano et al., 2012). In this establishment, a particular value was attributed to the figure of its director, the Argentine intellectual, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, who was responsible for teaching courses on different subjects of the curriculum of that institution.

Within that framework, Sarmiento incorporated the experiences he collected in his trips by government commission to Spain, France, Italy, Germany and England, and, later, to Canada and the United States, to return to Chile in 1848 (Labarca, 1939), and, based on the report presented to the Chilean government, the following year the first edition of *Educación Popular* [Popular Education] was published (Sarmiento, 1896a). The proposals formulated by Sarmiento in this volume significantly influenced the debates on education in Chile during those years, especially in the bills that Antonio García Reyes and Manuel Montt presented shortly after (Tedesco & Zacarías, 2011).

For Sarmiento, according to what was stated in the introduction of *Educación Popular*, the education of the masses, due to its impact on the morals and intelligence of men, allowed to raise the dignity of the State. In addition, from a preventive perspective, Sarmiento stresses that the

level of cultivating reason and the moral feelings of the masses is directly proportional to their respect for life and property. For this reason, it becomes evident that education was considered an essentially civilizing, normalizing tool that managed to institutionalize social life in pursuit of the good of the State and national identity (Serrano et al., 2012).

In this regard, it is pertinent to refer here to the *Sociedad de Instrucción Primaria de Santiago* [Society of Primary Instruction of Santiago], founded in June 1856 by a group of young intellectuals, which included Miguel Luis Amunátegui, whose main objective was to combat ignorance, "which prevents the rapid and complete development of civilization in Chile" (Labarca, 1939, p.141). Thus, they took up the title of one of the most prestigious works by Sarmiento: *Civilización o barbarie* [Civilization or barbarism] (Sarmiento, 1896b), whereby school emerges as a civilizing mechanism that, beyond transmitting certain knowledge or contents, or even through them, seeks to introduce modifications and transformations that point to a civilization of behaviors (Salas, Scholten, & Rey-Anaconda, 2015).

From the perspective of a modern national state, the school has a key role to play in the construction of a basic shared culture that promotes cohesion of its inhabitants, build a past and project a future. These guidelines and educational standards facilitated the governmental essential objective: to generate a national unity through shared values, culture and common idiosyncrasy (Parra, 2015). For this reason, this idea was mainly driven and supported by state authorities, and not so much from the demands of the work environment or the families of the popular classes, which came to consider school more as an obstacle than as an incentive (Egaña, 2000).

This is regarded, even in terms of a historical contest between school and street, the latter understood as synonymous with barbarism and as a space free of rules, authorities, schedules and habits (Illanes, 1991). In many cases, the everyday customs of the community were fought, even with the provision of space and time of the school system to become the preceptors of civilizing agents who had to be a model, even from the most basic issues related to grooming and clothing.

This is how the teaching State and the schooling of children, backed by the "psi" knowledge within pedagogy, established the existence of evaluation and classification systems based on their cognitive abilities, and this led to selection, normalization, hierarchization and centralization processes, constituted by a disciplinary power, where science -in this case, psychology and pedagogy-, carried out, as Foucault (2014b) affirmed, a disciplinarization of knowledge.

Finally, on November 24, 1860, towards the end of the second presidential term of Manuel Montt, the National Congress of Chile promulgated the *Lei Jeneral de Instruccion Primaria* [General Law of Primary Instruction] (Campos, 1960; Larraín & Larraín, 1871), which sought to provide some basis for the national educational system, in addition to attributing to the State the responsibility for elementary education and establishing its gratuity and the inclusion of both sexes.

However, one of the main problems faced by the Chilean school system for several decades continued to be low enrollment and, eventually, school dropout (Rojas-Flores, 2010). In fact, school discipline did not come to be imposed in a clear and forceful way; many never managed to enter the institution and, some even deserted or were withdrawn by their parents in order to cooperate in the household economy: these could not be considered useless residues, but they became part of the *uncivilized* that remained outside their field of action. In the case of children, they mainly called attention because of their miserable economic situation, which not only prevented them from acquiring school supplies (pen, notebooks, books), but even a decent dress.

On the other hand, the observations on the behavior and attitude of school children rarely refer to insolence or bad behavior; however, in these cases, the measures taken were mainly repressive: corporal punishment was a common resource, although it was increasingly condemned (Egaña, 2000). As the end of the century approached, a greater sensitivity towards corporal punishment developed, especially in those cases that showed excessive cruelty. Thus, the *Reglamento para la enseñanza i régimen interno de las escuelas elementales* [Regulation for the teaching and internal regime of elementary schools] of 1883 (Ministerio de Justicia, Culto e Instrucción Primaria, 1833), although did not explicitly prohibit corporal punishment, pointed out as punishment the counterclaim, the deprivation of recreation, the inscription in the reprobation board, communication to parents and, eventually, expulsion, as in fact could be seen in the case of the *Escuela Normal* [Training School for Teachers] (Labarca, 1939).

On the other hand, the first Pedagogical Congress, held in Santiago in 1889 (Núñez, 1890), was presented as a space of controversies on school educational practices that allowed reconsidering the scientific value of pedagogy. Two members of the board of directors of that event stood out as intense activists for education: Claudio Matte, president of the Society of Primary Instruction since 1892, who showed a marked concern for how and what was taught and learned; he was the author of the syllabary that, since 1894 and for many decades, constituted a privileged literature for the teaching of reading and writing in Chile; and José

Abelardo Núñez, who became General Inspector of Primary Instruction, and shared with Matte a true fascination with the pedagogical orientations that emerged in Europe, especially in Germany.

At the same time, the French model that had been imposed until then in the training of teachers was abandoned in pursuit of the German model, which lasted for about twenty years (Salas, 2012; Salas, Norambuena, Scholten & Torres-Fernández, 2018) and began with what is called -recalling the expression of Collier and Sater- the "German haunting" (De la Barra, 1899). This coincides with the views of Amanda Labarca, who points out the counterweight that German culture begins to present before the French influence that was imposed until the 1880s; an impact that is not limited to the pedagogical scope, with the arrival in Chile of professors coming from Germany to the Chilean normal schools (Caiceo, 2011), but that extended even to the local army itself.

Additionally, during the presidency of José Manuel Balmaceda (1886-1891), a broad education improvement plan was launched that included the creation of the *Instituto Pedagógico de la Universidad de Chile* [Pedagogical Institute of the University of Chile], in the year 1889 (Ciudad, 1989; Fuentealba, 1964; Mellafe, 1988; Mellafe & González, 2007), institution whose mission was to train teachers for the different specialities that would be taught in the lyceums and for its first academic body, made up of an overwhelming majority of German teachers hired by the State. Among these professors was Dr. Georg Heinrich Schneider, who was commissioned to teach the chairs of Philosophy and Pedagogy. Within this framework is possible to introduce the contributions of Wilhelm Mann, with which the initial approach to the problem of useless residues from the school discipline at the local level can be delineated.

### **The first references of psychology to childhood abnormality in Chile: the experimental pedagogy of Wilhelm Mann**

The figure of Wilhelm Mann has been the object of analysis of numerous historical investigations that are concerned with locating him as a pioneer figure of psychology in Chile (Barrera, 2010; Salas & Lizama, 2013; Urzúa, Vera-Villarroel, Zúñiga, & Salas, 2015). Born in the city of Bielefeld, Germany, in 1874, he studied philosophy at the University of Frankfurt and arrived in Chile in 1903 to direct the Chair of Pedagogy of the Pedagogical Institute of the University of Chile, a position vacated by his compatriot Georg Heinrich Schneider, upon retirement (Letelier, 1940). Towards 1905 the first texts that Mann dedicates

to the subject of experimental pedagogy are published in the *Anales de la Universidad de Chile* [Annals of the University of Chile] (Mann, 1905a, 1905b, 1906), and from then on, most of his written production was dedicated to topics that connected the avatars of the educational field with psychological knowledge and practices (Mann, 1908, 1909, 1912, 1915a).

In October 1906, Mann began a trip in which, for six months, he visited several cities in Europe and the United States, as well as Buenos Aires, to observe the organization of various laboratories and select the instruments that would be optimal for the installation of a cabinet in Chile. Upon returning to Santiago, he wrote an extensive report that was published in two parts (Mann, 1908, 1909), and installed, at the Pedagogical Institute, a psychology laboratory, the second in the country (Salas & Lizama, 2013) after the foundation of the *Laboratorio de Psicología de la Escuela Normal de Copiapó* [Psychology Laboratory of the Teacher Training School of Copiapó] (Ramírez & Navarrete, 1932).

From the texts he published -in various denominations- during his stay in Chile, Mann dealt with the problem of abnormal childhood, and among these, the article called *Orientación general sobre las anomalías mentales, como base del tratamiento pedagógico* [General orientation on mental anomalies, as a basis for pedagogical treatment] (Mann, 1912) stands out, although he had already dealt with this subject a few years before, even in his first publications, of a rather theoretical nature (Mann, 1905b, 1909, 1910).

In his *Memoria sobre la Instalación del Laboratorio de Psicología Experimental* [Report on the Installation of the Experimental Psychology Laboratory] (Mann, 1908), he deals with several cases in which the application of experimental methodology is articulated with the problem of childhood abnormality in Hungary, Austria and Belgium, in addition to addressing the work done in the laboratory installed in the *Asilo de Villejuif* [Asylum of Villejuif] in France, for the diagnosis of the mental state of patients and "the exact determination of any individuality" (Mann, 1908, p.303) by Toulouse and Piéron. In addition to this, the research carried out by Alfred Binet at the *Sorbonne Psychology Laboratory* and the *Normal Pedagogy Laboratory* is highlighted, which, as previously commented, allowed for the elaboration of a procedure for the diagnosis and relocation of abnormal children.

In particular, the picture that presented the French scenario prompted Mann to a brief but forceful conclusion about the status of the abnormal within the framework of psychopedagogical inquiries: "Wherever psychological experimentation has been applied on a larger scale to questions

of education, researchers have been led to the presence of abnormal psychic phenomena" (Mann, 1908, p. 305).

In the case of France, the work of the *Sociedad libre de Estudio Psicológico del Niño* [Free Society for the Psychological Study of the Child] stands out. It has various commissions dedicated to the study of specific psychological problems and disseminates its research through its bulletin. But, more concretely, Mann draws attention to the particular interest of the French in "the investigation of normal states of consciousness" (Mann, 1908, p.306) and for the use of hypnosis (and suggestion) as a experimental and therapeutic method on the part of Charcot, Ribot and the School of Nancy. From this, he proposed, as one of the tasks to be performed in the local laboratory, to test the hypotheses that establishes "the possibility and necessity of curing certain disturbances of the intellectual being or the moral being of the child, by means of suggestions provided to him in the hypnotized state" (Mann, 1908, p.306). To this end, he even contemplated acquiring some instruments, such as, for example, a Vernin hypnotization device.

In this same article, when accounting for the general characteristics of experimental psychological studies, he dealt with the application of psychological experimentation in relation to pedagogy, which would have given rise to experimental pedagogy (Mann, 1908), a discipline that deals with studying the educator and the student and, in the case of the latter, both in their normal aspects as in their particular and individual characteristics.

These studies will serve as the basis, according to Mann, for a completely new orientation of educational practice, complementary to current school activities, and that would allow to organize "formal exercises of the elementary skills of consciousness" (Mann, 1908, p.330), and implement a renewed education that would have a beneficial impact on *abnormal children*. In fact, Mann affirmed that auxiliary or advanced courses for these cases had already been created.

Naturally, this is not about idiots or imbeciles, but about those who can become useful members of society, but who require a special, corrective education. Children in this category are almost without exception in each school, where they prevent the teacher from progressing with the speed that corresponds to the average term of the students and where at last, despite all their efforts, they themselves fail. These deficient or late children must be subjected to an experimental diagnosis, whereby the factors that cause their mental retardation are verified (Mann, 1908, p.331).

These last aspects, together with the proposals made by Mann on the impact of the Spencerian doctrine in the field of pedagogy (Mann, 1905b), are taken up shortly after



in an article that comes to light under the title *El cultivo de la individualidad en la enseñanza escolar* [Cultivating individuality in school education] (Mann, 1910), where he deals with two particular and different types of individuals: the supernormal students and the children with reduced aptitudes, each of whom requires different approaches. Indeed, while rejecting the idea of creating special establishments for students with extraordinary talents, he raised the difficulties generated by the admission of the *mentally weak* in public schools.

In this way, he took care of explaining the particular characteristics of the auxiliary or improvement courses installed by Dr. Joseph Anton Sickinger in the city of Mannheim, Germany, from 1905. By presenting in great detail their divisions and articulations, he was interested in showing that this system allowed a greater individualization of educational practice, while appreciating the value of "the principles established by the science of economics of psychic energies" (Mann, 1910, p. 311), to design, from a hygienic perspective, the schedules, duration and space for the classes, as well as the feeding of the students.

Finally, as mentioned above, in 1912 Wilhelm Mann published a relatively extensive article to address the issue of mental anomalies and the role of pedagogy in their treatment. There, he resumed the Spencerian matrix, palpable early in his work (Mann, 1905b), and responded to the possible objections that were raised against the education of *mentally abnormal children*: on the one hand, he said, education can raise their level and transform them into positive elements of the community; and, on the other hand, even if education and charity were unconcerned about them, they would also find a way to preserve themselves and act in this way as a disturbing element in society: "a proof of this is the fact that most of the core of criminals come from their contingent of abnormal individuals" (Mann, 1912, p.596).

Within this "contingent", Mann considered that the most interesting are those who occupy an intermediate degree between normality and obvious or notorious abnormality, as they used to pass unnoticed and even occupy positions of authority in society, from which it was possible for them to exert a damaging influence. One way to avoid this scenario was to install a selection system in schools, but Mann found it particularly important to spread knowledge about mental anomalies among educators, and it was for this purpose that he wrote this article.

To this end, starting from the definition of psychic anomalies or "psychopathological defects" as "phenomena that are based on deficiencies of nervous constitution or functioning" (Mann, 1912, p.599), he proposed to initially distinguish two classes: partial mental disturbances -that do not attack the entire personality or do not do it

permanently- and psychopathies -morbidly modifying the personality-. But, at this point, Mann included a variety of intermediate degrees between normality and obvious abnormality within a third class: the "subnormal states" (Mann, 1912, p. 599).

To this aim, he relied on the developments of the German psychiatrist Julius Ludwig August Koch on *psychopathischen minderwertigkeiten* [psychopathic inferiority], which they define as "minor deviations from the psychic norm, either congenital or acquired [...] as border states of the great domain of neuroses [...] especially as mild forms of instability, asthenia and hysteria [...] as forms of slight mental weakness" (Mann, 1912, pp. 599-600). In general, this inferiority, as pointed out by Mann, is characterized by excessive naivety, so that those who present it fail to understand the situations in which they find themselves and are unable to adapt to them: their behaviors tend to show clearly childlike characteristics.

Most of the article is dedicated to the second of the three groups listed by Mann: psychopathies, which include psychosis -whose symptomatology is mainly mental-, neuroses -with a predominantly physical symptomatology- and moral degeneration - controversial category, crossed by the debates on the relationships between intellect and morality. In the case of psychosis, he distinguishes between organic -defects of intelligence- and functional- in which intellectual decline is not noticeable, such as pure melancholy, manic-depressive madness and paranoia-. Although their treatment is of medical concern, Mann raised the possibility of intervention of the auxiliary school for *abnormal children*, especially in those cases that lead to mental weakness, such as dementia.

The main psychological symptom in organic psychoses is intellectual deficiency, whether congenital - arrest of brain development-, or acquired - that never occurs before ten years of age-, such as dementia. The latter rather consists of a regression of mental faculties and a "progressive impoverishment of the content of consciousness and of the capacity of mental functions" (Mann, 1908, p.408), and Mann stops in the hebephrenic form of early dementia, which should not be confused by the educator with a lazy or careless subject.

Likewise, Mann distinguishes, within organic psychosis, three degrees of mental weakness: *idiocy* -extreme case of impossible education-, *imbecility* and *light weakness*, to which a differentiation should be added between those cases of mental weakness due to central causes -in which it is practically impossible to attack the direct cause- and for non-central causes. Among the latter, Mann mentions the respiratory difficulties due to adenoid vegetations and

some infectious diseases -scarlatina, diphtheria, measles or typhus- whose cure, by means of medical treatment, leaves space for the contributions of an auxiliary school that adapts to this type of treatment cases.

Also, Mann mentions some cases of apparent mental weakness, which often consist of vision or hearing abnormalities that can be confused with mental weakness or lack of will; and in other cases, it can be *pedagogical backward*, people who may have excellent mental skills, but who have not exercised them.

Subsequently, Mann goes on to consider the neuroses condition, beginning with the case of neurasthenia, in its two forms: *unstable* -the undisciplined child at school, who has a marked nervous excitability- and *asthenic* -individually only capable of very limited tasks due to the weakness of their nervous system-. And he mentions that in cases in which transitions from one of these two forms to the other take place, "a special educational treatment should be applied" (Mann, 1912, p.419), one that considers the particularities of their psychic energies.

After considering these forms of neurasthenia, the author addresses the case of hysteria, which, according to the article, is presented under very different appearances: alterations of movement or sensation, excessive and unstable emotionality, or a too preponderant role of the self in their interests and behaviors, which should receive exclusively medical treatment, except in cases in which hysterical symptoms are concentrated in the intelligence, since an educational intervention of corrective type is possible by virtue of their particular characteristics:

In ordinary school, these hysterical children suffer from impressions and demands that are above their nervous forces and are also a danger to others, as proven by the epidemics of hysteria that because of the contagion, have taken over entire school courses. (Mann, 1912, p 421).

In closing this text, in addition to summarizing the content of the article, Mann refers to the pedagogical devices that began to be installed especially for the case of the *mentally weak* and for *neurotic children*. In this sense, he argued that the special education of abnormal children "is capable of preserving and developing their poor flow and thus represents a work of the highest social importance" (Mann, 1912, p.442).<sup>1</sup>

However, beyond the precision and proposals put forward by Mann, this scenario does not correspond with what was being done at the local level in the field of education in those years. Although confinement spaces for psychiatric cases had been established long ago, there were still no devices to deal with *childhood anomalies* and it was necessary to wait at least a decade before spaces and practices were available for the detection and treatment of the mentally weak. It was not until the mid-1920s that both from the knowledge of psychology and the State administration the useless residues of school discipline became a major focus of concern in Chile.

## Dicussion

Indeed, with respect to the regulatory provisions, it was necessary to wait for the educational reforms that took place a few years later to project a series of institutions that dealt with abnormal childhood. Although a law for the protection of underprivileged children had already been promulgated in 1912, it only sought to resolve issues such as parental abandonment, child abuse and some forms of labor exploitation. The same can be said about the First National Congress for the Protection of Children that took place that same year (Vial, 1912).

Eight years later, in 1920, the *Ley de Educación Primaria Obligatoria* [Law of Compulsory Primary Education] (*Dirección Jeneral de Educación Primaria*, 1920) [(Directorate General of Primary Education, 1920)] was approved, which replaced the legislation that had been enacted in 1860, and which managed to resolve a long series of emerging debates, among other issues, regarding the imposition of compulsory school education, which had already been implemented in several European, and even Latin American countries. However, this legislation does not indicate anything about the situation of those who, for various reasons, could be turned down by the School device.

Very soon after this law was enacted, the deficiencies became evident when it failed to impose the compulsory nature and massiveness to which it aspired, but it managed to promote an educational reform that began to be implemented towards the end of the 1920s. Among its innovations, the ones that stand out are those related to the education of subjects with some type of mental deficiency who, until then, "had to resign themselves to not receiving education and, in some cases, to live locked up in their homes" (Rojas-Flores, 2010, p. 344). In fact, the decree with force of law

<sup>1</sup> It is striking that, in subsequent publications, Mann almost does not return to deal with the issue of abnormal childhood. In fact, in one of his few later references to psychopathology, he argued that the "systematic study of the different kinds of mental anomalies" on the part of students not only lacks practical value, but may even

have an unfavorable influence on the calm development of their spirit (Mann, 1915b).

(DFL) n° 5291 or *Ley de Enseñanza Primaria Obligatoria* [Law of Compulsory Primary Education], promulgated in November 22, 1929, allowed to clearly appreciate these novelties: it mentions, in addition to the schools for the blind and deaf-mute -that were already in existence several decades ago- the establishments for the *mentally weak*, which were considered as *Escuelas de Experimentación Amplia* [Schools of Extensive Experimentation]. In addition, this new law stipulated the establishment of an *Escuela Experimental de Desarrollo* [Experimental Development School] in Santiago.

However, the new institutions that were created were insufficient to produce a substantial change in the fate of many of these children, to which it is added that "there was no treatment either for the more moderate alterations" (Rojas-Flores, 2010, p.344). In the latter case, it was necessary to wait until the middle of the following decade, when the *Clínica de Conducta* [Behavioral Clinic] was created under the auspices of Claudio Matte Pérez, president of the *Sociedad de Instrucción Primaria* [Society of Primary Instruction] (Agüero-Correa, 1938).

In the strictly academic-professional field, one of the successors of Wilhelm Mann, Luis Tirapegui, Ph.D., from Columbia University, took responsibility for disseminating certain techniques that allowed intervention in the context of childhood abnormality. He took charge of the *Laboratorio Experimental del Instituto Pedagógico* [Experimental Laboratory of the Pedagogical Institute] in 1923 and assumed the task of adapting the main intelligence tests to the Chilean scenario. In 1925, Tirapegui published *El desarrollo de la inteligencia medido por el método Binet-Simon* ["The development of intelligence measured by the Binet-Simon method"] (Tirapegui, 1925), a document that mentions for the first time the revision of the French intelligence scale carried out at Stanford by Lewis Terman, based on which Tirapegui proposed its local implementation. This project seems to have resonated within the framework of the policies that the Chilean State was beginning to implement, so the adaptation of the Tirapegui test was published and distributed by the Ministry of Public Education, which imposed its application on Chilean children during several decades (Sánchez, 2014).

In order for the "psi function" to succeed in Chile, it was not enough to count on the theoretical developments or on the institutions that decades ago had been prepared to deal with the case of *abnormal children* in Europe and that quite early Wilhelm Mann began to disseminate in Chile. In light of the problems that the installation of the School device was posing, it was necessary for the local context to enable and encourage the search for the tools that the government authorities could use to solve them. Within this framework,

according to recent research (Leyton, Palacios, & Sánchez, 2015; Sánchez, 2014), the problem of intelligence was articulated with the gradual deployment of eugenics in Chile.

In conclusion, Foucault's analysis of school as a standardized institution allowed both the State and the school to establish significant differences with regard to the conception of childhood, since parameters of normality and abnormality were established, supported by the "psi" knowledge. This generated distinctions and segregations that finally contributed to both specialized teacher training and the creation of particular centers where the maladjusted or abnormal were to be detained, segregated and categorized, according to their abilities. Mann, in a normalizing effort, managed to homogenize the educational process, which along with the approaches of authors such as Binet and Simon, among others, established the central foundations of the Chilean educational system and, with it, the definitions of childhood.

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