

<https://www.thelacanianreviews.com/lacan-in-caracas-forty-years-and-of-an-instant-of-seeing/>

Lacan in Caracas: Forty years and (of) an instant (of seeing)

Gerado Réquíz is an AMS (Analyst Member of the School) of the WAP and of the NEL. He currently resides in Madrid, Spain.

Interview conducted by Cristina Vírseda, a member of the ELP Community of Madrid.

By [LRO TEAM](#) | January 9th, 2021 | [LRO 266](#) (Lacanian Reviews Online)

Published

**From:** NLS-Messenger

**Subject:** [nls-messenger] 3612.en/ Lacanian Review Online 266: Lacan in Caracas: Forty years and (of) an instant (of seeing)

**Date:** 11 January 2021 at 09:18:18 GMT

References

[Overture to the First International Encounter of the Freudian Field : Caracas : 12th July 1980 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=11961) <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=11961>

[Seminar XIX: 1971-72: ...Ou pire ...Or worse : from 8th December 1971 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=706) <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=706>

Civilization and its Discontents: 1929: Sigmund Freud : SE XXI : Available at

[www.Freud2Lacan.com](http://www.Freud2Lacan.com) : See [here](https://freud2lacan.b-cdn.net/Civilization_and_Its_Discontents.pdf) [https://freud2lacan.b-cdn.net/Civilization\\_and\\_Its\\_Discontents.pdf](https://freud2lacan.b-cdn.net/Civilization_and_Its_Discontents.pdf)

# LACANIAN REVIEW ONLINE

Lacan in Caracas: Forty years and (of) an instant (of seeing)



- [View Larger Image](#)
- 
- Gerado Réquíz is an AMS (Analyst Member of the School) of the WAP and of the NEL. He currently resides in Madrid, Spain.

Interview conducted by Cristina Vírseda, a member of the ELP Community of Madrid.

Image credit – J. Diaz.

*.... Lacan's presence in Caracas in 1980 had the status of an event, initiating his internationalization. From that moment on, Lacan has spread throughout the world. This internationalization has built a country that has no borders.... The country of psychoanalysis, as Graciela Brodsky will call it*

*Another colleague from NEL will say that Lacan's arrival in Caracas is an open event that 40 years later has effects like the ripples of the waves..... The analysts in Caracas are still touched by the effect of Lacan's arrival and continue to make waves beyond the borders of their geographical country....*

*I was honestly unaware of the political, epistemic and clinical dimension of Lacan's arrival in Caracas, an exceptional dimension, I dare say after what I found out during*

*these months. That is why I decided to interview him. I am very grateful to Punto de Fuga and to you who agreed to be interviewed.*

Thanks to you for the invitation and to Punto de Fuga.

*You point out that there was a before and an after the meeting with Lacan in Caracas in July 1980. It resembled an instant of seeing, a foundational moment that was prolonged as a kind of perplexity. Thinking that you were a young psychologist, just graduated, how did the encounter with Lacan mark your training? Can you comment on your experience to the readers of Punto de Fuga?*

Yes, of course. That was a real event that definitely marked me. Not only for me, but for many others who had the privilege of experiencing it. For me it was an instant of seeing and trying to assimilate as much as possible everything that was happening with the little analytical training I had.

But, as you say, it was, above all, an event that scanned the history of psychoanalysis with a before and after that could be read retroactively in a short time. In a recent interview, Éric Laurent says that Lacan's presence in Caracas was a turning point in the internationalization of psychoanalysis; from there on, everything changed.

In 1980 I was a young man who had just graduated with a postgraduate degree in clinical psychology, starting to practice as a psychoanalyst. I came from an impregnation of the humanistic currents, which was very fashionable in the seventies. We cannot forget that Venezuela was enormously influenced by the United States, where these therapies flourished: Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, psychodrama and, from the psychoanalytic perspective, countertransference was in vogue due to the currents of the object relations that reigned in the local International Psychoanalytic Association. Freud remained forgotten in the faculties of psychology, taken over by cognitive behavioural therapies.

By that time Diana Rabinovich, Graciela Brodsky, Dudy Bleger, colleagues from Argentina who had gone into exile because of the dictatorship their country was suffering at that time, were already in Caracas.

I approached Diana Rabinovich in 1977 to organize a study group on Freud. Other analysts were then added, such as Manuel Kizer, who was a well-known analyst, former president of the local IPA, and had left it to go to the nascent Campo Freudiano. The local IPA began to be concerned that several of its members had gone to the Campo Freudiano, all wanting to understand Lacan.

Diana Rabinovich was leading the course. With her I controlled my cases during her stay in Venezuela. Then, well, the idea arose to talk to Jacques Alain Miller to invite him to Caracas. She travelled to Paris and told Miller that there was a group of Lacan's students in Venezuela, a very interested and serious group that provided a sufficient base to bring Lacan to Venezuela. "I came because I was told it was the right place to bring my students from Latin America," she said in her speech.

The Ateneo de Caracas offered us a space to bring the study group together. By the way, I should mention that El Ateneo de Caracas was a fundamental pillar in the organization of Lacan's visit to Venezuela, as was the newspaper El Nacional. In 1979 Miller arrived in Venezuela and gave his famous Caraqueñas Lectures. The anecdote of how Lacan's visit to Caracas was decided in front of a beautiful... is quite well known, so I will not repeat it.

Lacan had already founded the Freudian Field in Paris a few months before, but in that visit of Miller the seed of a new international of psychoanalysis was sown, which would be years later the World Association of Psychoanalysis (WAP), but initially what was installed were the Meetings of the Freudian Field directed by Judith Miller. The Freudian Field was nothing more than a signifier that brought together those interested in the teaching of Lacan.

*"The possibility of the meeting is inscribed in the very heart of the social bond that constitutes the school of Lacan," said Angelina Harari, president of the World Association of Psychoanalysis (WAP), speaking at the NEL Caracas Commemorative Event last July. Angelina Harari acknowledges that the moment of commemoration of the 40th anniversary of Lacan's arrival in Caracas is a very important moment not only for Caracas but also for the WAP, stating that its existence is a consequence of Lacan's teaching as it was first disseminated outside France. Miller for his part points out at some point that he saw the perspective of the World Association of Psychoanalysis right at the Caracas meeting. The significance of the WAP that would emerge years later is connected to that meeting and is projected later in the international meetings.*

*Give us your version that you were there and that you can make a reading of that event forty years later.*

Yes, I am not alone in saying this, other colleagues have highlighted that there was indeed already a desire to internationalize Lacan's teaching. Surely this internationalization was already in Miller's mind. The contributions of the great thinker that he was were not to remain in France but were to occupy a place like Freud's in psychoanalysis and thus extend internationally.

Lacan's teaching left no stone unturned with respect to what was the situation of psychoanalysis after Freud. He introduced questions into the institution and modifications in the practice that, as we all know, led to his expulsion from the IPA.

I am grateful to you for remembering the mention of the significant encounter that Angelina Harari highlights. It is a very interesting point because that is what happened when Lacan arrived in Caracas: a meeting. Lacan wanted to meet his readers outside France and he says, more or less in these terms: I come to see if I have taught something... I come to see those who have not seen me and I do not know them either because they do not go to my weekly seminars in Paris. This is how the encounter with Lacan took place, and among the analysts who attended from various countries. The significant encounter remained, and still remains today, in the Lacanian orientation.

Once the “Lacan event” was over, we had to make an effort to update his teaching and, at the same time, to sustain it at the local level. The French analysts, who were very young at the time, began to come, and those of us who stayed in Venezuela did our training with them: Jacques-Alain Miller, Judith Miller, Guy Clastres, Gerard Miller, Serge Cotett, Colette Soler, Michel Silvestre, Éric Laurent, who I remember now. Those who did not speak Spanish began to learn it.

At the beginning a recording booth was improvised at Diana Rabinovich’s house, Juan Luis Delmont was the interpreter. He was Lacan’s translator and interpreter in Caracas. The study group was composed of: Manuel Kizer, Clara Kizer, Dudy Bleger, María Enma Scull, Alicia Arenas, Juan Luis Delmot, Julieta Ravard, Graciela Brosky, Carmen Ramia and myself, as far as I remember at this time.

*Jacques-Alain Miller points out in several of his texts that psychoanalysis must find a way to inscribe its future in all circumstances so that anyone who wants to address it will find it as an interlocutor. In the same vein, you point out that the teaching of psychoanalysis cannot be separated from the political context of the time, stressing that there must be a rule of law for psychoanalysis to prosper. At another time you say that contingency put Venezuela on the political map when it was not a country with a psychoanalytic tradition. What conditions did Venezuela have at that time that Argentina did not?*

Lacan said that he was not going anywhere where the rule of law was not assured, which is the fundamental premise for psychoanalysis to thrive. If one cannot question the significance of the masters of a system and the identifications they induce, as Miller says, then psychoanalysis is truly impeded, since that is what psychoanalysis does to question identifications.

Venezuela for the time being did guarantee the rule of law, and Lacan agreed to go to Caracas, and this was done. Lacan should have travelled to Argentina, which was, let us say, the country of psychoanalysis, but the fierce dictatorship that ruled there did not make it possible in Lacan’s eyes. However, his choice of Venezuela produced negative reactions. In his own words: “...the appearance, indeed, indicates that this Meeting bothers many people, and in particular, those who make a profession of representing me without asking my opinion. So, when I show up, they necessarily lose their temper.” Venezuela was not a country with a psychoanalytic tradition, but circumstances led Lacan to land in Caracas.

*You spoke at the Commemoration Ceremony held in NEL Caracas last July about how Lacan maintained the syntagm of the Freudian Cause to the point that a school is made of this term. For you Lacan took this causality to extraordinary extremes. On the other hand, you point out that even though the Real becomes unbearable in institutions if it is caused, it cannot stop sustaining the social bond. And this also connects me with another phrase, which is “it is not I who will triumph but the discourse I serve.”*

*Can you expand on this point?*

Indeed, as you say, Lacan takes causality to its ultimate consequences. Miller has stressed this in his course, and not only to found a school that will carry this signifier: the School of Freudian Cause. He maintains the cause of Freud, the cutting edge, as he says, of the Freudian discovery that had been crushed above all by the American way of life that took over psychoanalysis. Lacan's work on causality is unprecedented and truly extraordinary. He distinguishes causality from determination, which was what Freud was talking about with regard to symptoms. The final contribution on the cause had first to go through clearing the imaginary from the symbolic, passing from the symbolic to the logic of the cure, from the logic of the cure to the mathematics. But already, some time before, in the seminar *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, the development on causality begins and will continue until its last teaching. I am recalling well-known but fundamental things such as Lacan's unpublished contribution on the position of the analyst in the cure, precisely as a cause of the desire for analysis.

"Being at the service of the cause," which you mention in your question, is associated in practice with several aspects. To what I mentioned before, it is added that at the end of the analysis, the analyst's fate, I think it is Miller who says it graphically, is to be left hanging on the coat rack. That is, he stops pretending to be the cause of desire, but he has served the cause until its end. From this perspective, there is no room for imposture with knowledge, nor for excesses of certainty on the part of the analyst, there is no imposture with anything other than serving the cause and that is why personal analysis is necessary in order to assume the function of the cause. Lacan is precise on this point: the object of an analysis is to form an analyst so that in the end he can assume the role of the cause.

*Punto de Fuga was created by several colleagues, students of the Clinical Section of Madrid (Nucep), of the ELP. There is a very enigmatic phrase that I always read when I am questioned. I would like you, you who have a long experience as a teacher, to clarify it for me and for so many of us who approach Lacan's teaching: "Not giving in to the real issues at stake in education is a principle of Lacanian politics formulated by Miller." In other words, not giving in to the transference effects of his teaching.*

*How do you interpret this phrase?*

This phrase is very interesting because it is at the heart of the Lacanian orientation. Not to give in to the real means not to give in to the impasses it may produce. In analysis, and this is exclusive, it can be said, of the Lacanian orientation, the analyst does not go on the hunt for meaning in order to modify the enjoyment of the symptom. On the contrary, the encounter with the real is what is expected in the analytical session in order to intervene by separating it from the meaning that fixes it, on the way to better cope with the jouissance of the symptom. This goes hand in hand with an unprecedented notion of interpretation that takes it totally away from its hermeneutic use. It should be developed.

Lacan follows in Freud's footsteps on drive satisfaction to construct his notion of jouissance as a form of the real. The same happens with the lost object that Freud already introduces in the interpretation of dreams. It is surprising that the concept of jouissance has only been taken up in Lacan's field, despite being implicit in Freud.

Finally, the clinic of the real, the Lacanian one, is equivalent to the clinic of the symptom, insofar as the symptom contains something of that ineliminable real. And in the cure we go to the encounter with the real because it is at the heart of suffering, even if we know that it cannot be said, that the real is bordering on it, that it can be cantoned in some way, what we can do is give it a nomination, as Lacan proposes and insists. It is also worth mentioning that not yielding to the real is at the basis of the psychoanalytic treatment of psychosis that Lacan does not disregard, quite the contrary.

And the real, to continue with your question, acquires greater preponderance from *Seminar 19, ... Or Worse*. Miller talks about a change of paradigm in Lacan, in which, among other things, he proposes the One as first, not the symbolic. With this, Freudian psychopathology is reworked. On the other hand, instead of working on psychosis from neurosis, he works on mental psychism through psychosis; he is Lacan's reader of Joyce, as Freud was of Schreber.

*What does the School form suggest to you as a possible treatment of group dynamics or what Miller called his secret doctrine, according to which everything in it is analytical? This formula allows you to treat your impasses with the same principles of praxis. It is a formidable idea that modified psychoanalysis in the world.*

*In what sense? I ask myself.*

Much has been written about why Lacan took the School form for his institution. This fact is of such importance for the existence of psychoanalysis that Miller, if I remember correctly, says that the School is the fifth fundamental concept of psychoanalysis. Lacan takes it in the sense of the ancient School, of the School where ethics were rectified, where knowledge was transmitted in another way, by transference, we would say today; and it is from there that he draws his inspiration to make his School. A space, moreover, where the analyst is the subject of his own experience, where he goes as an analyst to present his work and expose himself, and where what remains constant and permanent is the question: What is a School, how can it exist? Because it cannot be formulated and said: It exists. It is not a foundational statement that would give existence and install inertia; it must be made to exist every day. The School is interpreted as if it were a subject. In it, collective symptoms and ghosts appear. In short, all this constitutes the great challenge of what it means to do School. And it must be put into action every day, in every action, to prove that it really is the School of Lacan, where everything about it, as you rightly say in your question, is analytical.

*What can the institution do?*

This important question places the question on the level of desire. Of the desire to make School with the unique style of each one, with the differences and the arrangements with the jouissance that he has found in his analysis. And there is no Other to tell us how to do it. On the other hand, one cannot appeal to activism to make its members work. The institution can provide the means for the analyst to be trained within the context of the transference of work, such as the poster device, but that is as far as it goes. Being in school implies having a desire to put the analytical cause into action. Lacan said that he expected little from people and everything from

functioning. I believe that this phrase puts things in the right perspective for a School of Psychoanalysis from the corpus of doctrine that Lacan left us.

With respect to the decision to demand entry into the School, that must pass through personal analysis. The person who wishes to do so and does not dare to take the step can be encouraged, I do not see why not, but there is no formula for it. In reality, the institution can do little in the face of an act like that which depends on the moment in the analysis one is in and the link one has with psychoanalysis as such.

*The following question comes to mind in the wake of what you say: What do you think of this formula that Miller uses “the inhumanity of the analyst”, he said at the Analyst’s Banquet?*

Ah, yes, the inhumanity of analysis is a statement that circulates in the therapeutic media, and they are right! Psychoanalysis is not a humanism, it is not a conversation, it is not a desire for the good of the other, as Freud already said, warning us against the furor of the curandis; it is not a question of taking anyone by the hand through life, that is done by family, friends, therapies do it. There are already enough humans to humanize the suffering and enough self-help books to appease them. The analyst, at least in the Lacanian orientation, is not an ally of the person, he is an ally in any case of the unconscious of the subject, to say it briefly. Nor is it a practice of two unconsciousnesses vibrating in unison, as we were taught when I was in graduate school. There is no empathic alliance with the individual, with the person as such in a well conducted analysis. The analytical practice goes to the encounter of the real, goes against identifications, goes in the way of obtaining the absolute difference, all this is the opposite of what humanism pretends. Sounds harsh, doesn’t it? But our work has nothing to do with what the Beatles said: All you need is love!

*Taking up again the commemoration of 40 years of Lacan’s presence in Caracas, tell me about this important seminar called the Caracas Seminar, invite us to read it, tell us the reasons why we should know it.*

Before trying to answer your question, I will tell you an anecdote of that event that I still remember vividly and that comes to mind regarding the presence of the body in the cure. I attended a lunch at a large table in the building of the Ateneo de Caracas, which was still under construction, with Lacan two bodies away, the presence of Lacan gave me a strange and disturbing feeling. Above all, I remember the strength of his gaze. When he looked, because he hardly spoke, it was penetrating, direct, difficult to hold. It was certainly well known to those who frequented him in Paris, but it was new to us. Other colleagues have referred to that penetrating gaze of Lacan at that time, because it is unforgettable. The effect of his bodily presence, which went beyond the idealization that preceded his arrival, was as if it embodied the real, which is precisely what the presence of the body in the session serves, I understood much later. It was not a terrible meal like the one Graciela Brodsky tells us about. There were more people at this one, and, in the face of Lacan’s silence, others spoke fortunately.

What is known as Lacan’s last seminar was actually the intervention he made for the opening of the Meeting on the teaching of Lacan and psychoanalysis in Latin America



which inaugurated the series of meetings of the Freudian Field in the world and which are held to this day every two years.

You ask me why I read this seminar. Well, beyond the obvious answer because it is a text by Lacan, I would tell you that this seminar is rich in brief punctuations of the teachings of his seminars, particularly the latest ones. In that seminar he first of all clarifies the difference with Freud and at the same time declares himself to be a Freudian and follows his path.

Secondly, he gives an account of an event: at the age of eighty he dissolved his School and came to Venezuela: “You know the problem I had with my School in Paris. I solved it properly, taking it at its root. I mean, by uprooting my pseudo-School from the root,” really an act of teaching. He also gives his readers in Latin America the Borromean knotting to “orient us in practice.” He continues with an allegory of the woman using a painting by Bramantino: “There is a painting that has been dancing in my head for a long time...it is by Bramantino. Well, this painting is well done to testify to the nostalgia that a woman is not a frog, which is dead upside down in the foreground of the painting. What struck me most in the painting is that the Virgin, the Virgin with the child, has something like the shadow of a beard. This makes her look like her son as he is painted as an adult.” In short, there is a lot more that can be read in his Seminar in Caracas. For those of us who were just starting out with his theory and hardly knew anything about his work on language and symbolism, this was disconcerting and fascinating at the same time.

Lacan spent the weekend listening to all the papers that were subsequently published in 1982 by the Ateneo de Caracas. Among them was one by Jacques-Alain Miller whose title I do not remember but which is known as “The other Lacan, the one of the real.”

*To conclude, 90 years ago the Malaise in Culture was published – Civilization and its Discontents. How do you see this pandemic moment, what validity does this work have in the present moment, and what connections would you make with this moment?*

Freud’s text *Civilization and its Discontents* is more relevant than ever because jouissance and reality are more and more present in civilization and in various ways. The progress of science, which is extraordinary and produces so much benefit, brings with it the discourse of total well-being and the idea that the effects of the real can be eliminated. The underlying idea of progress is a legacy of the Enlightenment. We put a rocket on the moon, but we still have the same problems with the social bond that the Greeks had 2000 years ago, so what progress are we talking about? Freud’s text can be taken as an answer to all the illusions of making the real disappear from the human scene.

*To conclude, what do you think of the virtual?*

It is such a current topic that it deserves an extensive commentary that I cannot do. I would simply say that the virtual gives Plato the right to postulate that reality is a construct. The world, in the representation that the subject is made, has always been virtual, that is to say phantasmatic, what happens is that before there were more solid

references that obtained consistency from the existence of the Other, now that consistency has fallen and “reality” is already less distinguished from fiction, despite the efforts of science.

I like the virtual. I don't think it should be demonised. It is fascinating to see what the universe of networks is doing in the world. Smart phones are already part of our body scheme, it is practically unthinkable to live without them. The question now arises about the consequences around the virtual. On the limits and the ethical question, on the effects it produces, the symptoms it creates, the effect on the family; how it affects education, how it affects social ties, sexuality, but also the role it plays as an intermediary and even as a defence against the real that is put at stake in the encounter of the body, as well as the responses given by science, politics, academia, even the States in their health institutions. There is always a remainder associated with the real, and psychoanalysis deals with that remainder.

*The last question is: what does it mean for the future of psychoanalysis?*

I would like to think that it will last, although some predict its death. But psychoanalysis “is hard to kill.” And what we see is that it does not stop expanding in the world. I believe, as Michel Silvestre said in a “Tomorrow Psychoanalysis”, the Lacanian. It remains to be seen. But today we are in the Freudian Field, working on “Tomorrow the psychoanalysis” – which is the title of one of his books from the eighties – and it is so, in spite of all the changes in the subjectivity of the time that threaten psychoanalysis.

Moreover, and this seems to me to be the fundamental thing, since the malaise in culture is ineluctable and more valid than ever, then long life to psychoanalysis. New arrangements around jouissance will continue to be produced, which we recognise as new symptoms and collective ghosts that are also new and their effects on the speaking being. So, in reality, the future of psychoanalysis is in the hands of psychoanalysts. We are in the task of coupling our practice to those symptoms and to those new envelopes of the real, to see how to deal with the need for immediate jouissance that today's world demands, with the imperative of happiness in which we live, etc., and to be attentive to how that becomes suffering for the subject; there psychoanalysis has its field of action.

*Thank you very much.*

By LRO TEAM | January 9th, 2021 | LRO 266