

the situation of psychoanalysis¹

Interview with Ricardo Landeira²

*Toro de Psicanálise*³:

Could you describe the Lacanian Psychoanalytic movement in Uruguay, 100 years since Jacques Lacan's birth and two decades since his death?

Ricardo Landeira:

The Lacanian psychoanalysis movement in Uruguay began at the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies when a group of analysts got together to read Lacan's *Écrits* and some of the seminars that were available.

Later we started to link up with the analysts from the *Escuela Freudiana de Buenos Aires*, with whom our interchange became more intense, initially in transference to Isidoro Vegh, and then also with other analysts from that institution.

Some time passed, marked by conferences and publications, and then seven analysts decided, in 1982, to found the *Freudian School of Montevideo*, the first institution outside the I.P.A. in our region to dedicate itself to the transmission of Psychoanalysis and the formation of analysts.

From that era up to the present day there has been a lot of movement. The School grew through its production and through taking on new members who formed as Lacanian analysts. Both seminars and courses in Psychoanalysis were offered and these had an impact on Uruguayan culture. These activities were not without obstacles and painful moments.

Currently in Montevideo, in addition to our School, there are members of the *École Lacanienne de Psychanalyse* which also offers its own seminars.

So in more than twenty years of Lacanian Psychoanalysis in Uruguay we can say that it has a significant presence in the University, principally in the Faculty of Psychology, in the cultural milieu, and that, through our production, the demands for analysis have increased.

We organised the *Lacanoamerican Reunion of Psychoanalysis* on two occasions, the first at Punta del Este and then, in 1991, that of Montevideo. Our institution is part of the *Convergencia* movement, through which there is an ongoing interchange with colleagues from other cities.

Toro de Psicanálise:

How do interchanges usually occur between analysts and institutions of Uruguayan Psychoanalysis and other fields of knowledge and art?

Ricardo Landeira:

There have been various interchanges with other fields of knowledge and art, through our School and also within the University itself.

We psychoanalysts have to enrich ourselves with what other disciplines are able to bring to us, and not retreat the moment we are faced with an interchange, accepting to put our knowledge into question.

Usually this occurs through timely invitations and through interchanges following on from something that has been presented.

Toro de Psicanálise:

In what way does the publication of the psychoanalytic text occur, and how does it circulate?

Ricardo Landeira:

In Montevideo there is a great dissemination and sale of psychoanalytic texts that are produced outside the country. In this sense our capital city has been very open to currents of thought occurring in other regions.

In relation to our own texts, the *Escuela Freudiana de Montevideo* has published *Cuadernos de Psicoanálisis Freudiano* and more recently *erreseí* as official organs through which the production of the School comes to be known.

Apart from this there are personal publications that circulate both in our country and in our region.

Toro de Psicanálise:

In Uruguay, is there, in effect, a participation of the psychoanalytic discourse in questions concerning the social bond?

Ricardo Landeira:

Such participation is very scarce in my country, and, apart from some rare exceptions, we psychoanalysts have been slow to participate in anything to do with the social field.

This year I gave a seminar entitled: *A psychoanalytic question: the social, between the limit and the essence of subjectivity*. It was a seminar for which I was entirely responsible, and, as I proposed an articulation of Psychoanalysis and the social, endeavouring at the same time to analyse master-signifiers of the social, I think this opens us up to the possibility of having a more effective participation.

Currently, it is necessary for Psychoanalysis, through analysts, to be able to intervene in the so-called social bond.

We note that there is a time and place which is different to that of everyday and urgent matters, in which we can subtract ourselves from the imperative of the master, of masters, and of master-signifiers, in their different appearances:

Who has not heard, or even succumbed, to these offers?

Buy now! You want it, you take it! Hurry! Be different! Change your body! Change your mind! Do it now! Get rid of your symptoms straight away! Assert yourself! Take care of yourself! Be an analyst! Be something more than the others! You need it! Get the skills! Perhaps it stops short of saying: *Desire this ... now!* And in order to do so: *Dial now...!* And which, furthermore, says that it knows all you need and desire: *It's ready for you!* And of course... they also guarantee it.

Those who believe in this “present” lose all hope.

Here you have the call of a faceless master, or a master with a thousand borrowed faces, who hopes that we feel nominated and understood, precisely in the place where, within us, there are questions and doubts.

They unexpectedly seize us in the place in which we find ourselves, and they take us by the force of the medium, and say who you are and what you desire, in other words they give us the following order: “Enjoy! And with a pre-fabricated necessity.”

How is it that today even psychoanalysts are frightened? Some are already offering ‘light’ Psychoanalyses, in the form of focalised treatments, brief and with limited objectives!

Others are forecasting a bleak future, with no place for Psychoanalysis in a world in which things are rapidly resolved, in a “communications” world which is furthermore “unified in a global village”.

I object to this, we have *to give ourselves time to consider what we want to do with it, from Psychoanalysis.*

I have just said to you that Psychoanalysis, as it always was – note that I am not saying psychoanalysts, referring to all of them – I repeat that Psychoanalysis today is discontent in this culture, but this is not sufficient in itself, we must advance a little further and once again produce a veritable “Dis-content in culture” that is opposed to the technocratic, scientific, fascist or idyllic-romantic versions that put forward nothing but a grotesque caricature of the situation of the speaking-being.

To be able to realise this, two things are necessary: giving a place to the impossible as such through Psychoanalysis, and being able to realise the “de-completion of the social” that comes to us from the Other.

Toro de Psicanálise:

Two thousand and one was the year of the *Lacanoamerican Reunion of Psychoanalysis of Recife*. What is the importance of that event at this juncture?

Ricardo Landeira:

As the *Lacanoamerican Reunion of Psychoanalysis* is a device that has a minimal organisation and a maximal production, I think that it continues to be an excellent instrument for the realisation of the letter and its circulation.

It continues to be a conversation in which we come together, with what we believe to be the best of our production. And from this comes its value.

Recife signified a welcoming city, hosts who gave us a warm and cordial framework very necessary for transmission, and an organisation that allowed an interchange to occur.

United with this was an excellent level of papers amongst those I was able to hear, and yet again with those that came to me in different ways and which I then read.

This *Reunion* allowed me to renew my wager on the “Lacano”.

Toro de Psicanálise:

Paraphrasing Lacan, how could you describe “The Situation of Psychoanalysis in 2001”? And, in light of these elements, what can you say regarding the future of Psychoanalysis?

Ricardo Landeira:

A century of Psychoanalysis has finished. Allow me to answer you using a bit of humour.

What is it that has finished? Are we finalising or are we finanalysing? Perhaps we are refining it!

Psychoanalysts, it's time to risk the future, once we get over the finish! What has been done up until now and what remains to be done?

By putting just three cents into a slot-machine the future will appear and perhaps a recommendation!

Look in your pockets, perhaps you will find a few coins, it doesn't matter if they are not current ones nor if they come from some distant country, even if that country has disappeared or has become alienated.

It's a question of putting it in, in order to make the thought machine work.

There is a warning, it is clear that the future that emerges for each one will be very different, as will be what they might put in the machine.

So, what else can we aspire to? It's not erroneous to say that the future is within reach of your pockets, even if when you put your hand in, you notice that there is nothing there.

That is no reason to be afraid, it's difficult initially when it happens, since there is always a symptom that comes to hand. And with this the Psychoanalysis machine starts working.

Thus we note that the times never stop bringing new problems; and there are those who consider that the “psychoanalytic bibles” had already prognosticated, and further, that in them would be encountered the solution to all the problems to come: “as it says in the Bible...” The answer to these new times is along the path of the modern psychoanalytic religions.

Others, when they put in something to make the machine work, find the figure of someone charismatic, powerful and wise, who demands fidelity and confidence from them in order to take them beyond the finish. This, in exchange for their affiliation to his organisation; one that promises them the future, which he of course already knows, even if he doesn't yet say so. The new image of the master and an organisation “that functions well” is another of the alternatives: it's the best option for those for whom it is very difficult to do without a master.

You will be thinking that what we feed into the machine is nothing other than a question of structure and of personal moments. And you won't be wrong.

This does not prevent Psychoanalysis from continuing to exist, because nothing is possible outside of this.

What I find in this machine when I place my wager, is the school.

I am putting forward that, for me, the only school is that of the written, which is when a psychoanalytic discourse acquires the dimension of the Lacanian “written”.

Even if my school is that of the written, I don't renounce psychoanalytic institutions to which I belong, even if they are irremediable in both its meanings.

I am referring to institutions that we all know, those that grow, become fragmented, multiply, congregate, and become universalised in a constant movement, attempting to affiliate themselves with a group of analysts that is bigger and bigger in number and importance.

Very often, we find that this proliferation is nothing other than the symptom of a discourse where it is no longer possible to sift the Real in any other way.

I have no doubt that one manner of functioning or other, that one mechanism or another, allows for a greater possibility of interchange and transmission.

Having said this, we know that there cannot be a corporative solution, which is yet another illusion; however good the organisation is that we are able to realise, the Real and the jouissances of the analysts are still there.

No matter how necessary mechanisms that promote production might be, this by itself is not sufficient.

What makes school, in other words the written, is what in the end will determine the existence of the psychoanalytic destiny of institutions, organisations and mechanisms, even those that are no longer.

The written is transmitted however it is able to be, at times creating mental organisations that are sustained only by their efficacy, even if the lines they choose are not direct.

This is nothing other than what occurred with the Freudian text in different regions of the world, creating bonds in the minds of different people and cultures. It was transmitted by the dimension of the written, even if the international organisation endeavoured to monopolise it institutionally.

Something similar occurred with the Lacanian text, which brings us together here. In a century we have to have learnt at least that.

Just as the persistence of the symptom gives continuity to the psychoanalytic clinic, the creation of a written that makes school is the only possibility for a certain advance of Psychoanalysis.

An advance that allows us to write “the same” in another way, to knot the new drives of the Real in our societies in another way. And, beginning from this, we can reconsider the foundations of Psychoanalysis.

And if this were to be realised, will we be as open to receiving it as we are to sustaining the necessity of its existence?

The experience of this century of Psychoanalysis has to be of value to us, the few of us who are asked by others to accompany them, and these others who will be the analysts to come.

Far from mantras and auguries, arts that are closed to me, for the moment I am keeping in my pocket the answer that I put into the machine, waiting for a new era that is approaching.

(Translated from Portuguese by Michael Plastow)

References

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³ *Antígona* is a journal of *Toro de Psicanálise* (Torus of Psychoanalysis). Here *Toro de Psicanálise* is the editorial committee that formulated the interview.