

## No Weft of a Lying Truth in a Trial

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In *The Stranger*<sup>1</sup> Meursault goes from his mother's funeral to the beach, where he meets a coworker by chance, and ends up on a date with her, leading to a romantic relationship. A few days later he kills a man who was his friend's enemy. In none of the situations does he express any emotions. At the trial for this murder, the prosecutor will present the case that he was a monster because he didn't have the capacity to express emotions. In his own defense, he says that the incident happened by chance.<sup>2</sup> His lawyer will formulate his defense around the misunderstandings created by the prosecutor, and by doing that will make the spectators laugh.

When interrogating a witness, the prosecutor asks if he had seen Meursault crying during his mother's funeral, to which the witness replies "no". The lawyer then asks the witness "in an exaggerated tone of voice" if he had seen Meursault *not crying*, to which the witness also replies "no". The lawyer then proceeds, "Here we have a perfect reflection of this entire trial: everything is true and nothing is true!"<sup>3</sup>

We can follow the sequence of speeches as a representation of an analytic experience. Prosecutor and lawyer will bring different narratives, different truths about the same scene, or a repeated memory. As Patricia Bosquin-Caroz points out in her argument: "For Lacan, truth does not go without a narrative that restores continuity to the subject's history"; but it is the idea of discontinuity that will sum up the description of an analytic experience in which "a discontinuous history made up of scattered bits, fragments, emergences and revelations [...] puts the idea of a single, univocal truth in question again."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Camus, A., *The Stranger*, trans. M. Ward, New York: Vintage International, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Added in the film by Ozon, F., 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Camus, A., *The Stranger*, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> Bosquin-Caroz, P., "VARIETY. Variations of Truth in Psychoanalysis". *Presentation of the NLS Congress Theme 2026*. Available at: <https://www.amp-nls.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/ARGUMENT-NLS-CONGRESS-2026-PBC.pdf>

However, as Miller teaches us, in the articulation of the analytic discourse, the analysand weaves “a grid of a lying truth, of a variable truth, of a truth that incessantly tips over into a lie, of a purely transitory truth”.<sup>5</sup> In this scenario, where two fictions are presented as versions of the same story, there is no weaving of the weft, as taught by Miller; the variations of truth remain isolated, being engulfed by one another.

After the prosecutor finishes his last speech, the judge asks Meursault if he had anything to add, and he said “I never intended to kill the Arab”; then, feeling ridiculous, he adds, “it was because of the sun.”<sup>6</sup> In search of other varieties of truth.

Fortunately, unlike a novel, an analysis does not simply end with one variety of truth, but rather on a real, that of jouissance.

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<sup>5</sup> Miller, J.-A., “The Lying Truth”, *The Lacanian Review*, 7, 2019, p.153.

<sup>6</sup> Camus, A., *The Stranger*; trans. M. Ward, New York: Vintage International, 1989, pp. 102-103.