

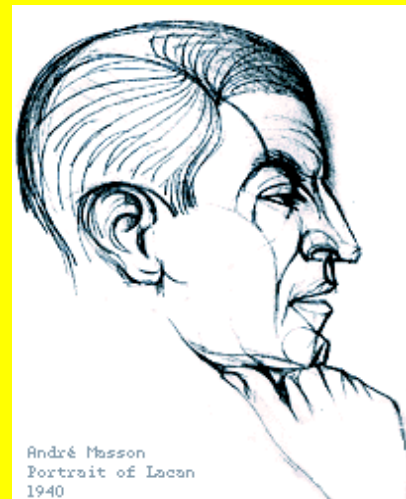
September 21, 2004  
Volume 1, Issue 1

# Lacanian Compass

*Psychoanalytic Newsletter of Lacanian Orientation*

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## Editorial

A compass is an instrument that indicates direction, used by mariners, aviators and other travelers to enable them to get from one place to another, it serves to find the way home and to travel safely in unfamiliar fields. The magnetic compass is one of the oldest and most reliable navigation instruments still in use today. Using a compass and a map or chart, a skilled careful navigator can direct a craft from one destination to another, even in fog or at night.

The goal of the *Lacanian Compass* is to guide and orient those who are interested in psychoanalysis through the teachings of Freud and Lacan, in USA. Psychoanalysis faces today many challenges, the main one being its survival in the XX<sup>I</sup>st Century. Is psychoanalysis as it is practiced today able to answer to what Freud called the discontents of civilization? We know that the world panorama is changing with globalization and the new distribution of power, politically and economically. These changes have an effect in the subject, and he or she expresses it through different symptomatic manifestations. There is a demand for quicker and more effective answers to human suffering. Science has risen to meet this challenge, with new medicine and new therapeutic techniques. Psychoanalysis of Lacanian Orientation is also ready to present and to sustain the results of its practice.

In the *Beacon* you will find articles about an important theoretical or clinical concept that will guide us to safe port.

The *Chart* contains a brief description of activities held by different groups in several communities in USA, and English speaking Canada, so you can find a place near your area where you can participate, research and study Freud and Lacan's teachings.

With our *Radar* we will explore cutting-edge topics.

This Section will alternate with the *Book Mark*, where we will review recent and important psychoanalytic publications.

The *Lacanian Compass* will appear bi-monthly.

Please join us in welcoming *Lacanian Compass*.

We hope you find it a valuable instrument.

New York, September 2004

## Beacon

### THE RETURN OF SHAME<sup>1</sup>

By Graciela Brodsky

On April 6, in Jackson, Georgia, Mr. Nick Ingram, a British citizen by birth, was temporarily saved from the electric chair. Federal Judge Horace Ward admitted a final and desperate appeal from his lawyers, the order to stay the execution arrived, like in the best movies, only 55 minutes before the appointed time.

"In order to condemn somebody to death, I have to look him in the eyes first"<sup>2</sup> was the argument used by the Judge. We don't know what Horace Ward saw in Nick Ingram's eyes, but the truth is that a few days later 2400 volts closed them forever.

A young man of 16, imprisoned in a detention center for sexually molesting his 9-year-old sister, has to prove before his family that he feels shame in order to obtain his liberty. To be ashamed is not in this case to admit the fault and to apologize to his sister, but to literally kneel down. Words are not enough, says Cloe Madanes, Director of the Family Therapy Institute of Rockville. He has to understand that what he did was so wrong that his body has to adopt a posture that shows repentance. In our culture, continues Mr. Madanes, one says, "I am sorry" to apologize for abusing one's sister or for spilling milk. The physical gesture is what marks the difference. Even if the young man was hesitant at the beginning, the other members of the family did kneel down to apologize to the girl for not having seen the signs of abuse, but after

a week of detention, the young man fell on his knees in front of his sister. Even though the procedures that involve minors are confidential in Maryland, the family of the young man accepted to videotape the session so it could be used as an educational tool.

These cases, to which we could add many more, like putting brightly colored license plates to distinguish people arrested for driving under the influence, publishing in a newspaper the names and photographs of people who offer or solicit sex for money in order to eradicate prostitution, freeing thieves on probation, with the condition that their victims can go into their houses and take whatever they want in front of the neighbors, are only examples of a new branch of Justice, currently on trial period in some states in the USA, called **expressive justice**. Its two pillars are shame and stigma, and the debate about its pros and cons involves judges, church ministers, sociologists, psychologists, and the like. Newsweek ran the story in the center pages of its February 6 issue, and the Minister of Justice of Argentina has deemed it necessary to enter the debate with an editorial published in La Nacion, on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, where he claims shame is a feeling that rehabilitates and leads to repentance, but he condemns the accompanying humiliation.

Why couldn't we psychoanalysts also enter this debate? We have widely expressed our opinions on distributive justice and we have learnt, following Lacan, the essence of the law. It is

not superfluous for us to say what we have to say in this field, which, being related to the law, would seem reserved more so to the symbolic register of what is real, when we highlight the capricious and ferocious character of the superego law. But now, in the temple of justice -blind to weigh its decisions no matter who is involved- we see images and gazes arriving.

Nothing new under the sun, we could say. It is the old debate of the virtues of gesture over words to reveal the truth. Or we could verify once more the always current debate of the supposed antinomy between truth and appearances. We could also find here the opportunity to reopen the discussion over the circularity of history, to prove that these so-called "shameful condemnations" go back to antiquity. The most famous one used the pillory as its instrument, and its predecessor was, precisely, the stone of shame. The pillory allowed several variations: not only living persons were exposed. Body parts separated or cut were also tied to the stake of shame. A painting with a saying by Bruegel the Elder shows a stake and a hand: "It was cut from a felon", he writes, "and its now exposed in the stake of shame for chastisement."

The key to the pillory is in the words of Bruegel: shame for chastisement. That is why the punishment of the pillory supposed the participation of the people in the punitive action. Choosing market days and bringing musicians provoked the cooperation of the masses. It was a spectacle whose punitive



**Beacon (cont'd from page 3)**


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effect resided in an opposition between the sinner and the community. As the criminal was defenseless and incapable of escaping, it was not strange to hear cases where the people attacked or mortally wounded the condemned, but there was also the possibility of the community taking his side.

In truth, the public punishment did not target the criminal; it answered to the search for an exemplifying effect on the community. If the system begins to fail, it is, as Foucault pointed out, because the executioner ends up being seen as a criminal and the people end up discovering the frequency of his crimes. Then the punishment stops being public: public sentence but hidden punishment behind the walls of the prison.

In accordance with the utilitarian maxim, the general purpose of the law is to increase the overall happiness of the community and accordingly, to exclude anything that tends to diminish it. In this way, the utilitarian perspective, which prevails over the retribution inspired by the law of Talion, sustains the usefulness of isolation. From exemplification to protection. The pillory is replaced by the dungeon, which meets the utilitarian formula through locking up, deprivation of light, and hiding away. Then modern Humanism adds to isolation the ideal of reform of the condemned so he can be reinserted in society after doing time.

But Newsweek alerts us that something has failed again. Virginia Irick, whose teenage daughter was murdered last year in Philadelphia, says: "I

go to Court and a guy looks at you as if saying, what is your problem? So what if I killed your daughter?" Of 1200 families that receive aid in USA for having lost a child as Mrs. Irick did, only 10 have seen signs of remorse in the person who killed their loved ones. Less than 1%. The reporter argues then for the return of shame: it is not enough to have our faces red from anger; we want to see red faces from guilt, faces of remorse, even mortification.

Has the pillory returned? The Newsweek journalist asks this question, but we psychoanalysts can say something more about this claim for public shame.

Expressive modern justice, even if it wants to be retributive, doesn't have an exemplifying purpose. Its effect is searched on the subject, but no longer from the perspective of reeducation, and if, in a certain way, it makes obvious the failure of any reformist perspective of Humanism in justice matters, it is also true that, confronted with the failure of isolation and rehabilitation, justice has discovered that the criminal is a subject and not an individual equal to others in the face of the law, that a paradox lies in the universal law, and that if one wants to reduce the high sums of money spent by the State in rehabilitation programs because of repeat offenders, which is the utilitarian goal of expressive justice, it is better to remove the blindfold in order to learn more about the "origin of inequality between men". Expressive justice seems to have realized, finally, that one cannot make a subject confess what he doesn't

know, that is why the State doesn't expect much from the Unconscious. This will allow the State to save in truth serums, torture machines and jail psychologists.

It is not the first time that justice wants to see. Jeremy Bentham once built a penance house, the Panoptic, which expresses in its name its essential purpose: to see at a single glance everything that takes place within its walls. But in the Panoptic (Jacques-Alain Miller wrote an article about it) the relation between seeing and being seen is dissociated. In the outer circle one is totally seen without ever seeing. In the central tower, everything is seen without being seen. It is the justice of the gaze, and when the prisoners are exposed to the public, they are covered by masks.

On the other hand, expressive justice is the justice of the image, better than television, better than virtual reality; it is the "justice show", live and direct. In a certain sense it could be compared with the theater: there are the actors, the director, the public, those who will read Newsweek and will see the videotape, also the camera, that technical device which aspires to solve the unrepeatable factor of the theatrical scene. Nevertheless, it is not theater, because we are missing the text, and in the theater, even silent, the text is always intended and the public tries to decipher it. It is a theater that pretends to be rid of the fiction of words. It is a theater that pretends to be unmasked, no makeup, red from shame, and with "a giorno"



## Beacon (cont'd from page 4)

illuminated orchestra. A theater where actors and public have to look into each others' eyes.

What role for each?

Actors must show, by means of an upward displacement, his "shame" in his face. But here expressive justice fools itself. Shame is not a sign of repentance; there is shame because he sees himself being seen. This clarifies the role of the public, because otherwise why would it be called justice if it didn't have a lesson to give and an exemplifying purpose?

The public has to tear the veil of modesty, which is different from shame. The latter concerns the action, the former the judgment. That is why modesty, which Lacan recognizes as the only virtue,<sup>3</sup> prevents us from feeling shame.

Expressive justice not only discovered the subject in the criminal, but it also discovered that he "enjoys it", and even if somehow we can all identify with him because we are also guilty of a first crime, it is not the identification which matters, that is why it is not exemplifying. Its interest is that enigmatic obscure *jouissance* that the criminal must sacrifice. Expressive justice is somehow Freudian. It knows that the reconciliation with culture demands the sacrifice of *jouissance*. The eyes of the public – the ilotes of justice – will be the instruments. When they encounter the eyes of the criminal, his face will show the stigmas of castration.

But something happens. An unscheduled alchemy takes place in the scene; what is visible doesn't convince at all

the spectator. What if behind all the blushing the criminal is still hiding something? Perhaps as in the story of Alphonse Allais, they would want to take his skin off. The public is avid, possessed, and as Freud explains to us, he envies in the criminal that libidinal position we perceive as inexpugnable<sup>4</sup>.

The scene has been inverted, and in front of what remains veiled behind what is shown, the spectator remains "lost in the ineffable *jouissance* of a fascinating image"<sup>5</sup>. Years later, Lacan will talk of the *jouissance* of the spectator devoured by the amusing gadgets science puts before his eyes. But what expressive justice puts before his eyes is not a gadget, it is a subject, that is why when the young man kneels and lowers his eyes, maybe an off voice from the set will resound, addressing the spectator, saying "you don't see me from where I see you".

Translated by Maria Cristina Aguirre

### Footnotes:

1. Title of the article of Newsweek, February 6, 1995
2. Clarin, April 8 1995
3. Lacan, Jacques. Seminar XXI. Les-non dupes errent. (unpublished) Lesson of March 12, 1974
4. Freud, Sigmund, Introduction to Narcissism. Complete Works. Amorrortu Editors, Bs.As. 1979, page. 86
5. Lacan, Jacques. Fonctions de la Psychanalyse en criminologie. Ecrits, Editions de Seuil. 1966, page. 149

### Bibliography

- Freud, S. Civilization and its discontent
- Lacan, J. Seminar, Book 7
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- L'Ane No. 21, April-June 1985. Dossier "Prisons: par delà les murs"
- L'Ane No. 5, May-June 1982. Dossier "Aujourd'hui le théâtre"
- Mari, E.E. La problemática del castigo. Bs. As. Hachette. 1983
- Miller, J.A. La Machine Panoptique de Jeremy Bentham. Ornicar? No. 3 May 1975



Chart

**Houston, Texas**

Houston Freudian Field Library

**On-going activities:**

**Reading Seminar XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis**, Jaques Lacan

Frequency: Bi-weekly, starting August 17, 2004, 5:30 to 7 pm

Coordination: Carmen Navarro, Isabelle Perreau, Mercedes Perez

**Responsible:** Carmen Navarro

**Contact:** [carmenavarror1@hotmail.com](mailto:carmenavarror1@hotmail.com)

**Miami, Florida**

**Nel-Miami**

**Nueva Escuela Lacaniana del Campo Freudiano**

**On-going activities:**

**School Nights:**

Personal research on:

"Indications and Counter-Indications for Psychoanalytic Practice"

Frequency: Weekly

Coordination: J.F. Arango, L. Kruszel, M.Prandi

**Florida Institute for Research and Development in Psychoanalysis**

Introduction to Psychoanalysis I, II, III

A. Arenas, J.F. Arango, M. Prandi, L. Kruszel

**Research seminars:**

Psychoanalysis with children

Coordination: J. F. Arango, M. Prandi

Contemporary feminine symptoms

Coordination: Alicia Arenas, Liliana Kruszel

**Special Events:**

Lecture

**"The Super- ego for the Lacanian Orientation, that which doesn't allow us to enjoy life"**

Guest Speaker: Yasmine Grasser  
October 16, 2004

**Responsible:** Liliana Kruszel, M.A, LMHC

**Contact:** [Nelflorida@aol.com](mailto:Nelflorida@aol.com)

**New York, New York**

**New York Freud Lacan Analytic Group**

NYFLAG

**On-going activities:**

**Reading Seminar V - The Formations of the Unconscious**, Jacques Lacan

Frequency: Bi-weekly, Wednesdays, 8 pm, starting September 8, 2004

**Reading Seminar XXIII - Le Sinthome**, Jacques Lacan

Frequency: Monthly, Sundays 7:30 pm, starting September 12, 2004

**Readings** in preparation for Seminar Symptoms and Woman's Jouissance

September 15, September 29, October 13, October 27, 2004 at 8 pm

**Special Events:**

Lecture

**Ordinary Psychosis**

Guest Speaker: Russell Grigg

Sunday, October 3, 2004, 6:30 pm

Maison Française of Columbia University

International Seminar of the Freudian Field

Lecture

**"What makes Woman Suffer Today"?**

Friday, October 29, 2004, 8 pm

Seminar

**"Symptoms and Woman's Jouissance"**

Saturday, October 30, 2004, 9 am to 6 pm

Guest Speaker: Marie-Helene Brousse

Maison Française of Columbia University

**Responsible:** Maria Cristina Aguirre, PhD

**Contact:** [NYFLSG@pilot.cpmc.columbia.edu](mailto:NYFLSG@pilot.cpmc.columbia.edu)

**Lacanian Ink**

**Special events:**

Presentation of Lacanian Ink # 24

on Eroticism

Guest Speaker: Slavoj Zizec

November 29, 2004, 7 pm

Deitch Projects, New York City

**Responsible:** Josefina Ayerza

**Contact:** [Perfume@lacan.com](mailto:Perfume@lacan.com)

**Omaha, Nebraska**

The Center for Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis

**On-going activities:**

Seminar

"The Psychoanalytic Wager"

Frequency: Monthly, Fridays, 10:30 to 12:30, starting October 2004

Coordinator: Tom Svolos

**Special Events:**

**Readings:**

In preparation for APW Conference,

Center for Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis

September 1 and 15, 2004

Clinical Workshop

**"Rethinking Personality and Personality Disorders"**

Guest Speakers: Dan Collins, Bruce Fink and Dany Nobus  
September 23, 2004

Conference

**"Working with the Symptom"**

6th Annual Conference of the Affiliated Psychoanalytic Workgroups

Keynote Speakers: Barry O'Donnell, Rivka Warshawsky  
September 24-26, 2004.

Contact:

<http://cpp.creighton.edu/apw2004>.

**Responsible:** Thomas Svolos, MD

**Contact:** [tsvolos@radiks.net](mailto:tsvolos@radiks.net)



## Radar

### PSYCHOTHERAPY AND EVALUATION

This past August there have been many articles published in the news related to mental health Articles on depression, antidepressants for adolescents and children, talk therapy versus pills, global prevalence of mental illness and so on.

The Radar selected an article that deals with the debate on the outcome of psychotherapy and the need for evidence.<sup>1</sup> The author says there is a "civil war going on in psychology...on one side are experts who argue that what therapists do in their consulting rooms should be backed by scientific studies proving its worth, on the other there are those who say that the push for this evidence threatens the very things that make psychotherapy work in the first place."

The debate or the battle is also triggered by the influence health insurers have on this field, determining how much and what treatment will they reimburse and how much the "estimated 20 million Americans who enter psychotherapy each year have to pay out of their own pockets".

It will also influence how young therapists are trained and what techniques practitioners will use in the future.

We know that many things threaten the survival of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Should psychoanalysis yield to this demand and alter its fundamental principles to

satisfy the need for evaluation or shall it resist? What are the risks and consequences? Can psychoanalysis remain silent and not participate in this debate?.

The question is of crucial importance.

In this dispute over the nature of psychotherapy - intuitive process, more art than science, or specific procedures to be followed by the therapist- we also have our word to say.

Jacques Lacan emphasized in his later teachings that psychoanalysis is not a science in the sense of what science represents today. It is true that Freud aspired to make psychoanalysis a science as he understood science in his time.

Psychoanalysis today is not a science, among other things, because we cannot reproduce the experiment or the clinical trials. We cannot divide our population in groups of two, one given therapy and the others a placebo and measured after a set period of time. What is the placebo for therapy?

As Jacques-Alain Miller demonstrated recently in Paris it is the duty of the psychoanalyst to participate in the debates of the city, especially if it concerns our field of mental health, and we should aspire to become a recognized talking partner in the dialogue and the decisions to be taken by politicians and administrators that will determine the future of our practice.

"The evaluation operation makes one being go from his or her unique state of being

into the one-among-the-others state...he accepts to be compared, he becomes comparable, he accesses a statistical state...but in psychoanalysis we are attached to the unique, we do not compare...we receive each subject as if it was the first time, as incomparable"<sup>2</sup>.

What we deal with is the subject, and each one is unique. The subject cannot be reduced to a common diagnosis or a list of symptoms or problems.

The need for an empirical approach and accountability, besides bringing more credibility, says the article, aims to discredit fringe therapies or those that promise instant healing.

But isn't this precisely what insurance companies are requesting, demanding to see results after eight sessions?

We need to be out there and be accountable for what we do to relieve the contemporary discontents and sufferings and ways of *jouissance*. We need to be swift and efficient, but we should not surrender our principles. The key to the matter is to find in our practice, in our concepts and in our methods our own tools for evaluation. As Eric Laurent sustained in the last Congress of the World Association of Psychoanalysis, held in Brazil this past August, the challenge is to go from the private language, what is said in the privacy of an office and among our professional peers, to the public language and public debate.

New York, September 2004  
**Maria Cristina Aguirre**

### Footnotes:

1. Benedict Carey, For Psychotherapy's Claims, Skeptics Demand Proof, New York Times, August 10, 2004
2. Jacques-Alain Miller, Jean-Claude Milner, *Voulez-vous être évalué?*, Figures, Grasset, Paris, 2004

